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The Development of American Policy on Palestine
in the United Nations: 1947 - 1950

by

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ABSTRACT

The role of the United States in the Palestine problem, particularly during the decisive period of the establishment of the State of Israel, was undoubtedly the major landmark in the history of the United States' encounter with the Arab world. It has also conditioned, perhaps decisively, the United States' later policies in the area, whether in a positive or a negative sense.

Although there had been some earlier, not insignificant connections between the United States and Palestine (and even the problem of Palestine), the impact of the United States' role was not effectively felt until after the close of World War II and the coming of the Truman Administration. The First Chapter of the present study will concern itself with the immediate background of Britain's decision of February 1947 to refer the Palestine problem to the United Nations, and with the local and international factors which decided American policy on that question during that period and some time thereafter.

The later Chapters will try to give a somewhat detailed account of the development of American official attitudes on the Palestine problem during its evolution in the several following years, using the debates and actions of the major United Nations organs as a focal point for the study. The approach followed will be a combination of the

analytical and the chronological approaches, and it will try to relate the various aspects of American policy on Palestine to its general local and international setting. The emphasis in most of these chapters, however, will be less on the analysis of local factors and considerations in the process of American policy-making than on the more observable aspects of that policy, particularly its development in the United Nations. An intervening chapter — Chapter VII — will try to pull the reader back to the domestic American scene, from which American policy ultimately emerged, in order to preserve the organic link between the two aspects of the policy.

As the reader will observe, the first three Chapters which follow the background Chapter deal with the development of the problem in the United Nations, and American policy thereon, up till the adoption by the General Assembly of the partition resolution on 29 November 1947. Chapters V and VI are concerned with the United States' attitude (or attitudes) in the Security Council and in the General Assembly during the irregular Arab-Israeli clashes before the official establishment of the State of Israel. They end with Israel's "declaration of independence," its sudden de facto recognition by the United States, and the beginning of the regular Arab-Israeli war on 15 May 1948. Chapter VII, to which reference has already been made, tries to give a retrospective

interpretation of the events recounted in the preceding Chapters from a domestic American angle. The two final Chapters deal with the United States' policy in the Arab-Israeli war, and end up with the conclusion of the Arab-Israeli Armistice Agreements and the emergence of the present Arab-Israeli stalemate late in 1949.

The year 1950 has been chosen as the end of the period studied because of one major reason. That year witnessed the end of the successive dramatic developments of the Palestine problem after which the present status quo, with more or less limited modifications, came into existence. The Tripartite Declaration of 1950 set a seal on the major phase of the effective establishment of Israel as a sovereign state.

The reader will not find a final chapter devoted to over-all conclusions and judgements. Moral and legal appraisals are irrelevant to the purpose of this study as the writer envisages it; general statements, even of fact, would be perhaps misleading and artificial in character in view of the vivid and dynamic nature of the subject-matter. The reader, however, will come across a number of inferences and conclusions throughout the study that are of less sweeping and, the writer hopes, of less pedantic character than is perhaps bound to appear in a chapter of over-all conclusions and evaluations.

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CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND

When, on 2 April 1947, the British Labor Government requested the United Nations Secretary-General to summon a special session of the General Assembly on the question of Palestine, the Labor Government had been led to that decision not only by the inherent complexity of the problem but also by the pressure of international circumstances.

The policy of the British Government in Palestine was based on the 1939 White Paper which had neither been wholly approved by the Arabs nor accepted by the Zionists. The White Paper put some restrictions on Jewish immigration and land-purchase in Palestine in an attempt, perhaps, to neutralize Arab hostility to Britain in the impending war, particularly after the British Government had violently smashed the major Arab uprising in Palestine of 1936 - 39. The Arabs, however, kept insisting on British withdrawal and on the termination of the process of creating a "national home" for the Jews in Palestine, which had started with the inception of the mandate.

On the other hand, the policy of the White Paper brought upon the Mandatory intense Zionist hostility, and accelerated the development of Zionist tactics in the direction of force and armed terrorism against Britain in Palestine, which in fact started shortly after the end of

the War. Furthermore, American opinion resented this British policy and the American Government, under President Truman, later expressed its resentment in the form of strong pressure on Britain. The Nazi policy of Jewish persecution, culminating during the War in a ruthless policy of extermination, had increased European and American susceptibility to the Zionist contentions which had received their first international endorsement in the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate instrument. This sympathy with Zionist aspirations, particularly by the American public, seems to have grown so uncritical that when the militant and "activist" elements gradually took over in the Zionist Movement there was little questioning by the American public of the expanding Zionist demands, much to the embarrassment of the more responsible circles in the American Government. These growing demands, manifesting themselves initially in the "Biltmore Program" of 1942, were soon to develop into a strong force in American political life, expressing itself in a remarkable form of effective domestic lobbying and pressure politics,¹ unmatched by a counterbalancing increase of public awareness of American international responsibilities.

All this was taking place in the context of an

¹ Informative reports, though from a Zionist point of view, on Zionist activities in the United States appear in: Zionist Organization of America, The Palestine Year Book, 5706, v. I (Washington, D.C., 1945), pp. 357 - 422 and 5707, v. II, 1946, pp. 447 - 500.

America gradually drawn into an active involvement in international life, taking over from an experienced, but now weakened ally, and faced with the signs of an increasingly widening international rift — the Soviet-Western rift. The Near East, including Palestine, was an area where this situation was clearly reflected.

The State Department and military circles in the United States were much ahead of the general public in their appreciation of the facts of the situation in the Near East and of American requirements and commitments in that area. As far back as 1943 there was an awareness in official circles of the need for Arab good will in the carrying out of a successful allied war strategy in the area. One important factor in that assessment was oil. "Throughout most of 1943," wrote former Secretary of State Cordell Hull, "we at the State Department had been giving intensive study to the problem of oil reserves outside the United States. We had before us the statements of many experts that reserves inside the United States were dwindling and that the demands for oil during the war and the postwar period would be greatly augmented."² Hull also indicated "full realization of the fact that the oil of Saudi Arabia constitutes one of the world's greatest prizes, and that it is extremely

² The Memoirs of Cordell Hull (New York, 1948), v. II, p. 1517.

shortsighted to take any step which would tend to discredit the American interest therein."³ There was also an awareness in those official circles, during that period, of the general "danger of antagonizing the sixty million Arabs there at a moment when their help in a strategic area of the war was so vital."⁴ But there was, on the other hand, that equally (if not more) influential factor of domestic opinion, which was generally sympathetic to the Zionist aspirations, considerably ignorant of the "technicalities" of the situation in the Middle East and Palestine, and skilfully manipulated by Zionist organizational and propagandistic efforts.

Yet, the incompatibility of Zionist demands and pressure at home, on the one hand, and the concrete considerations of a realistic policy in the Arab world, on the other, was not unobserved by the American Government. In the words of the then Secretary of State, "the continuing Zionist agitation in the United States began to have increasingly serious repercussions among the Arab states in the Near East, according to reports we were receiving in the State Department late in 1942 and early 1943."⁵ But public opinion, and therefore Congress, were not as involved in responsibility as these governmental organs

³ Ibid., p. 1521.

⁴ Ibid., p. 1521.

⁵ Ibid., p. 1532.

which were directly entrusted with the formulation and implementation of foreign policy. They only heard the Zionist point of view and could not, by the nature of the case, be sensitive to the reaction a pro-Zionist policy would produce. So, early in 1944 the Senate and the House of Representatives both introduced two bluntly pro-Zionist resolutions and were about to have them adopted. An embarrassed administration had to find a way of persuading Congress to shelve these resolutions, without doubting the Administration's sympathy with their contents.⁶

The President — the person who usually is the target of domestic pressure but who is constantly tied to the responsibilities of a policy-maker — was naturally prone to play a double-role. Roosevelt's assurances to King Ibn Saud in May 1943,⁷ and his successive assurances to the Arab States on many subsequent occasions, seem to indicate a routine pattern of the procedure followed whenever the State Department, or the President himself, felt that the pro-Zionist public gestures of American politicians had provoked too much Arab bitterness. The outcome of this policy was that, as Roosevelt's Secretary of State put it, "the

⁶ Ibid., p. 1534.

⁷ A comprehensive account of Roosevelt's meeting with King Ibn Saud and the former's assurance that no action would be taken by the United States on Palestine if not acceptable to the Arabs, is to be found in: Eddy, William A., FDR Meets Ibn Saud (New York, 1954).

President at times talked both ways, besieged as he was by each camp."⁸

An illustration of the extent to which American political life was then committed to Zionism are the Republican and Democratic platforms of the 1944 presidential elections. Both platforms promised, or at any rate supported, free immigration to Palestine and the removal of restrictions on land purchase. When the Democrats explicitly stated that Palestine was to be a "Jewish Commonwealth," Presidential candidate Dewey countered by committing the Republicans to the same position.⁹ President Roosevelt, who was working for re-election, made another commitment to the Zionists in October of that year in a letter addressed to the Convention of the Zionist Organization of America. He endorsed, in that letter, the Democratic plank on Palestine and asserted that "if re-elected, I shall help to bring about" the "establishment of Palestine as a free and democratic Jewish Commonwealth."¹⁰ Naturally the Secretary of State was, as always, not happy about these statements. On 26 July, Hull wrote to the President: "I believe that it would be advisable for leaders of both parties to refrain from making statements on Palestine during the campaign that might tend

⁸ Hull, op.cit., p. 1536.

⁹ See, for instance: Hurewitz, J.C., The Struggle for Palestine (New York, 1950), pp. 213 - 214.

¹⁰ Crum, Bartley, Behind the Silken Curtain (New York, 1947), pp. 37 - 38.

to arouse the Arabs or upset the precarious balance of forces in Palestine itself."¹¹

Under Roosevelt's successor, Harry S. Truman, the difference between the President and his military and foreign affairs experts grew wider. Truman lacked the national prestige of his predecessor and, therefore, could not afford to risk his electoral position by conforming to his Palestine experts' advice, particularly as the deteriorating situation in Palestine prompted those experts to urge more and more restraint, while the worsening conditions of the Jewish Displaced Persons drove the Zionists towards more persistence. The result was the struggle which prevailed inside the Truman administration and which the late Secretary of Defense Forrestal reported in some detail.¹²

But that was not the only result. Another wide difference was now emerging between the British and the American Governments as a result of the growing incompatibility of their two approaches to the Palestine problem. This growing incompatibility of approaches was to no small extent precipitated by the American White House's public support of some basic Zionist claims, against the experts'

¹¹ Hull, op.cit., p. 1536.

¹² Reference to Forrestal appears later in this Chapter. A more detailed account of the struggle within the Truman Administration and Forrestal's role therein appears in Chapter VII of the present study.

advice for more restraint and appreciation of Britain's difficult position in Palestine. The State Department and the military experts were in a better position to understand Britain's position and the general strategy required in the Near East in the light of international realities, because they were less susceptible to domestic considerations. The President's non-compliance with their advice, therefore, entailed a conflict with Britain's policy on Palestine. Prime Minister Attlee later described the situation: "The President went completely against the advice of his State Department and his own military people. The State Department would tell us one thing and then the President would come out with the exact opposite. The State Department's view was very close to ours, they had to think internationally, but most of the politicians were influenced by voting considerations."¹³

The British Labor Government was becoming increasingly sensitive to any criticisms of her attitude on Palestine and to any unappreciative interference with her delicate task of trying to work out a solution for this complex problem. She was all the more sensitive because it was only after the Labor Party had come into office that the complexity and delicacy of the situation in Palestine became

¹³ Williams, Francis, A Prime Minister Remembers: The War and Post-War Memoirs of the Rt. Hon. Earl Attlee (London, 1961), p. 180.

clear to it. Prior to that, in the December elections which had brought the Labor Party into office, the Party had had an extremely pro-Zionist plank.¹⁴ But in office the Labor Party was directly confronted with the realities of the situation in the Near East, and came to face the responsibility of having to work out, solely and against great odds, a practical solution for the existing problem. The sudden revelation of this experience was later expressed by Lord Attlee: "We'd started something in the Jewish National Home after World War One without perceiving the consequences; it was done in a very thoughtless way with people of a different outlook on civilization suddenly imported into Palestine, a wild experiment that was bound to cause trouble."¹⁵ The Labor Government now felt she could neither repudiate the 1939 White Paper nor allow mass Jewish immigration into Palestine without causing bloodshed and civil war in the country and perhaps in other parts of the Arab world. If not for any additional reasons, at least war fatigue and Britain's vital interests in the Near East were good reasons for the reconsideration of electoral planks.¹⁶

¹⁴ For a comprehensive source on pre-1945 Zionist pronouncement by the Labor Party see: Levenberg, S., The Jews and Palestine: A Study in Labour Zionism (London, 1945), pp. 197 - 318.

¹⁵ Williams, op.cit., p. 180.

¹⁶ For a very informative account of Britain's international position during that period and its effect on her Middle Eastern policy, see: Monroe, Elizabeth, "Mr. Bevin's 'Arab Policy'," Middle Eastern Affairs, St. Antony's Papers, No. 11 (London, 1961), pp. 9 - 48.

But Britain's major ally, the United States, was not indicating a responsible appreciation of Britain's position or readiness to aid in the implementation of any alternative policy it might suggest. This latter attitude had, from the point of view of the Labor Government, already been reflected in the communications conducted by the new American President, Truman, to the British Prime Minister, urging him "without delay to lift the restrictions of the White Paper on Jewish immigration into Palestine."¹⁷ When again on 31 August 1945 President Truman, at the recommendation of his nominee to the Inter-Governmental Committee on Refugees, urged that 100,000 Jews be admitted into Palestine, Prime Minister Attlee decisively replied that his Government was both committed to the White Paper and to the view that any other course could "set aflame the whole Middle East."¹⁸ More indignant, however, were both the British Government and public at the publicity and tone of approval with which the American press received the growing pace of anti-British terrorism in Palestine, which was launched by the Zionists in October-November of that year.¹⁹

The American State Department was not ignorant of

¹⁷ Memoirs by Harry S. Truman, 2 vs. (New York, 1955-1956), v. II, pp. 135 - 136.

¹⁸ Ibid., 137 - 140.

¹⁹ On this terrorist campaign in Palestine see, for instance: Begin, Menachem, The Revolt: Story of the Irgun (New York, 1951).

the difficult situation the British were facing in Palestine, and of the over-all picture of the political scene in the Middle East. Nor could President Truman himself be accused of (or perhaps credited with) such ignorance, with the State Department advising him continuously on restraint in Palestine. In the early days of his Presidency he was called on by Dr. Stephen S. Wise, Chairman of the American Zionist Emergency Council. Two days before the meeting, that is, on 18 April 1945, Truman received a "special communication" from Secretary of State Stettinus, apparently in anticipation of the meeting, which read: "It is very likely that efforts will be made by some of the Zionist leaders to obtain from you at an early date some commitments in favor of the Zionist program which is pressing for unlimited Jewish immigration into Palestine and the establishment there of a Jewish state. As you are aware, the Government and people of the United States have every sympathy for the persecuted Jews of Europe and are doing all in their power to relieve their suffering. The question of Palestine is, however, a highly complex one and involves questions which go far beyond the plight of the Jews in Europe.

"There is continued tenseness in the situation in the Near East largely as a result of the Palestine question, and as we have interests in that area which are vital to the United States, we feel that this whole subject is one that should be handled with the greatest care and with a

view to long-range interests of the country."²⁰

Truman comments in his memoirs on the note by criticizing the "striped - pants boys" of the State Department and their attitudes, particularly on Palestine. He criticizes the ideas embodied in the note and then continues: "And before Rabbi Wise left, I believe I made this clear to him."²¹

Two weeks after Stettinus' note, Acting Secretary of State, Joseph C. Grew, sent another memorandum on the same subject to the President. In the memorandum Truman was informed that Roosevelt had authorized the State Department to assure the different Near Eastern Governments that "in the view of this Government there should be no decision altering the basic situation in Palestine without full consultation with both Arabs and Jews." Acting Secretary Grew also warned Truman that if the United States followed a policy interpreted as hostile by the Arabs, "it would be impossible" to restrain them from "rallying with arms, in defense of what they consider to be an Arab country."²²

Again, the State Department on 16 June 1945 renewed its recommendations to President Truman and the President, under that influence, formally renewed the assurances of

²⁰ Truman, op.cit., v. I, pp. 68 - 69.

²¹ Ibid., p. 69.

²² Ibid., v. II, p. 133.

his predecessor in letters to the Arab Governments.²³

But the President was besieged from the other side too. He was, in fact, more forcefully pressed by the Zionists, who were now becoming nervously persistent. Truman records his own impressions about that part of the story: "The Zionists were impatiently making my immediate objective more difficult to obtain. They wanted more than just easier immigration practices. They wanted the American Government to support their aim of a Jewish state in Palestine."²⁴

In September the State Department sent Truman another memorandum explicitly pointing out the disparity between the President's policy and his country's ability to implement it. The memorandum read: "No government should advocate a policy of mass immigration unless it is prepared to assist in making available the necessary security forces, shipping, housing, unemployment guarantees [etc.] ." It characteristically concluded by recommending restraint, and that "the British Government, as the mandatory power, should accept primary responsibility for the policy and be responsible for carrying it out."²⁵ Truman wrote that he was annoyed by this memorandum. But

²³ Ibid., pp. 134 - 135.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 140.

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 136 - 137.

certainly more annoyed was he when, early in October, Secretary of State Byrnes suggested to him that they should publish President Roosevelt's assurances to Ibn Saud in connection with Palestine, on the grounds that "that would make it plain to the American public that we would not endorse the Zionist program." President Truman, always more sensitive to "the American public" than his permanent officials, refused to release the statement from the White House, and ordered Byrnes to release it, if he wished, from the State Department. "I saw no reason... why," Truman reports, "I, by a public statement, should take a position on a matter which I thought the United Nations ought to settle."²⁶

But Truman had already taken a position on that matter, regardless of what the United Nations were to say. Since 31 August, when he first wrote to Prime Minister Attlee requesting the admission into Palestine of 100,000 Jews,²⁷ this had become the official position of the American White House. On the other hand, the American Government was expressing no readiness to share in the implementation of such a policy - a fact that caused much irritation to the British Government. Moreover, there was now some debate in American political circles about pressure

²⁶ Ibid., p. 140.

²⁷ See above, p. 10.

on Britain through the loan the United States was arranged to grant to Britain soon, and Secretary of Defense Forrestal reports about such pressure by the American Government as actually taking place.²⁸

On 19 October the British Government, apparently in an attempt to relieve herself from American pressure and to induce the United States to share responsibility for a Palestine policy, formally invited the American Government to form a joint Anglo-American Committee on Palestine and related problems. On 13 November, the two Governments were finally able to announce their agreement on the plan and on the terms of reference of the Committee. Owing to Truman's insistence,²⁹ the terms of reference of the Committee established a link between the conditions of European Jewish D.P.s and the "political, economic and social conditions in Palestine as they bear upon the problem of Jewish immigration and settlement therein."³⁰ Truman also did not fail to publish concurrently with the announcement of the formation of the Committee, his August letter to Attlee in which he had asked for the admission into Palestine of 100,000 Jews.³¹

²⁸ Millis, Walter, ed., The Forrestal Diaries (New York, 1951), p. 180.

²⁹ Truman, op.cit., v. II, p. 142.

³⁰ Hansard, Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, Fifth Series, v. 415, Col. 1929.

³¹ Truman, op.cit., v. II, p. 145.

The general political climate in Britain, in which the Committee came into existence, was one of increasing apprehension of Soviet designs in the Middle East. Only one month before, the Soviet Union had organized a coup d'état in Azarbaijan, Iran, and was now opening a vigorous propaganda offensive against Turkey and against alleged Anglo-American imperialist policies in the Middle East.³² Bartley Crum, one of the six American members of the Committee, reports that Harold Beely, the British Secretary of the Committee, told him together with another member of the Committee, while on their way to London, that "the Palestine issue ... must be seen in the framework of strong Soviet expansionism. The Soviets planned to move down into the Middle East. The United States, therefore, would do well to join Britain in establishing a cordon sanitaire of Arab states. If Palestine were declared an Arab State, it would be a strong link in this chain."³³ Crum's accuracy in reporting is not totally beyond question; he himself describes his book as "in no sense a disinterested book,"³⁴ and the man was associated, before and after the mission, with Zionist activities in the United States. However the

³² See, for instance: Hurewitz, op.cit., pp. 246-247. also Kirk, George, Survey of International Affairs: The Middle East 1945 - 1950 (London, 1954), pp. 21-27, 57-61.

³³ Crum, op.cit., p. 33.

³⁴ Ibid., p. vi.

quotation about Britain's policy serves to shed some light on the global setting in which the Committee set out to carry its task.

The Anglo-American Committee held hearings in Washington, London and in other parts of Europe and in the Middle East. Its report was published on the night of 30 April - 1 May 1946. For reasons perhaps not unrelated to the fact that the American members of the Committee had been chosen by President Truman and his advisors,³⁵ the report of the Committee went a long way to meet Zionist demands. It endorsed the claim for the admission of 100,000 Jews into Palestine, and recommended the removal of the 1939 White Paper's restrictions on land-transfer. The report also recommended trusteeship and binationalism for Palestine.³⁶ But neither the Arabs nor the Zionists accepted the Committee's recommendations.

On the same day of the publication of the report, President Truman published a statement endorsing the "immediate objectives" of the report — the admission of 100,000 Jews — but withholding endorsement of the other recommendations pending "careful study... which I will take under advisement."³⁷ This act, naturally, brought a violent

³⁵ This is implied in the introductory chapters of Crum's book.

³⁶ For text of the report see: United States, State Department, Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, State Department Publications, No. 2536.

³⁷ See: United States 79th Congress, 2nd Session, Senate Document No. 182, p. iii.

reaction from the British Government, and produced, in the words of Richard Crossman (the decidedly pro-Zionist British member of the Committee), "lamentable" repercussions in Britain.³⁸ London no doubt understood Truman's act in terms of the political motives of his Party in the Congressional elections of that year — a year characterized by the fact that the Zionists were "injecting vigorous and active propaganda to force the President's hands with reference to the immediate immigration of Jews into Palestine."³⁹ Attlee later told it to his biographer. "There is no Arab vote in America," Attlee said, "but there's a very heavy Jewish vote and the Americans are always having elections... There were crucial elections coming up at the time, and several big Jewish firms had contributed to Democratic Party funds. Domestic issues of that kind often affected American international thinking... American Jews were very extreme and quite uninterested in any reasonable solution."⁴⁰

Nor was the spirit of approval, with which the American press and some political circles received the news of the intensified anti-British Zionist terrorism in Palestine, to help the deteriorating Anglo-American relations. An influential sector of the American public believed in

³⁸ Palestine Mission (London, 1947), p. 189.

³⁹ Millis, ed., op.cit., pp. 188 - 189.

⁴⁰ Williams, op.cit., pp. 180 - 181.

the justice of the Zionist cause and, therefore, supported morally and with funds the armed anti-British terrorism which was growing in Palestine, on the ground that it was a legitimate fight for freedom. Leading American papers carried advertisements for the Zionist terrorist organizations, and the funds raised were all tax-free. The British Government and public felt deep indignation at this American attitude.⁴¹

On 1 May the British Prime Minister, commenting on the report of the Anglo-American Committee, made clear that "the Report must be considered as a whole in all its implications." He then expressly mentioned the United States, directly bringing into question her readiness "to share the resulting additional military and financial responsibilities," and postulated some basic conditions for the acceptance of the report.⁴² But Truman had gone as far as he could in his support of Zionist demands. He himself later admitted that "while there was much clamour in the United States that something be done, the country was neither disposed nor prepared to assume risks and obligations that might require us to use military force."⁴³

⁴¹ This British attitude is particularly noticeable in the Parliamentary debates on Palestine throughout 1946 and 1947.

⁴² Among these conditions was the disbanding of all "illegal armies" in Palestine. (Hansard, op.cit., v. 422, Col. 197.)

⁴³ Truman, op.cit., v. II, p. 149.

This paradoxical American attitude merely served to increase general British irritation and arouse the bitterness of the man directly involved — Mr. Bevin, the Foreign Secretary. By June, Bevin was so bitter about the American attitude that he publicly attributed, at his Party's annual conference, American pressure for large-scale Jewish immigration to Palestine, to the Americans' unwillingness to admit Jews into their own country.⁴⁴

The Anglo-American controversy and polemical exchanges had gone quite far when the two Governments undertook their last joint attempt to adjust their policies to one another in the summer of 1946. Truman had reluctantly agreed that experts from the two countries should meet to study the practical implications of the Anglo-American Committee's report and how the two Governments could coordinate their policies to meet the concrete requirements involved. The two delegations met, and the outcome of this attempt was the Grady - Morrison plan, which was drawn up jointly by American and British Cabinet members and which provided for the cantonization of Palestine under some form of trusteeship.⁴⁵ Neither the Arabs nor the Zionists welcomed the new plan. Truman invited the six American members of the Anglo-American Committee to present

⁴⁴ See: Kirk, op.cit., p. 189.

⁴⁵ Hansard, Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, Fifth Series, V. 426, Cols. 961 - 971.

their views on the plan; they rejected it⁴⁶ and Truman, to the "great disappointment" of the British Government, as Prime Minister Attlee put it,⁴⁷ abandoned the plan.

Britain had now to proceed alone in its effort to bring about an Arab-Zionist modus vivendi on the basis of the Grady - Morrison proposal or any other plan acceptable to both parties. In September she invited for consultation in London the representatives of the Arabs and Zionists. The Zionist spokesmen held firmly to their new formula of "a viable Jewish State in an adequate area of Palestine."⁴⁸ The Arabs, on the other hand, rejected "any scheme for partition" or "continuous immigration."⁴⁹ The discussions came to a deadlock. Lord Attlee's biographer, Francis Williams, attributes the failure of the London talks to the Americans who, he claims, supported any intransigent attitude taken by the Zionists. He goes on to say that "when proposals emerged from these discussions which seemed to Bevin to open the way to a possible settlement, they were at once repudiated by the American Zionists. And the American Zionists were in control. No

⁴⁶ See the account of one of these six members, James G. McDonal, of the story: My Mission in Israel, 1948-51 (London, 1951).

⁴⁷ Williams, op.cit., p. 200.

⁴⁸ Kirk, op.cit., p. 227.

⁴⁹ See interview with correspondent of The Times, 5 Feb., 1947. p. 4.

voices counted but theirs."⁵⁰ Nor were the London talks helped by President Truman's statement of 4 October in which, apparently under the pressure of strong electoral considerations,⁵¹ he again urged mass immigration into Palestine and endorsed the new Zionist line of "a viable Jewish State,"⁵² thus committing his country to the partition of Palestine.

Zionist terrorism in Palestine had, in the meantime, redoubled.⁵³ It was now not only the "extremist" Irgun Zvai Leumi and the Stern Group that were conducting the campaign, but also, as an authoritative document by the British Government affirmed,⁵⁴ the Haganah and the Palmach -- the official military organizations of the Jewish Agency. This caused much irritation for the British Government who had, immediately after the publication of the Anglo-American Committee report, declared that the

⁵⁰ Williams, op.cit., pp. 200-201. The militant wing, considerably influenced by the American Zionists, in fact gained control of the Zionist Movement in the December Congress. See: Trevor, Daphne. Under the White Paper (Jerusalem, 1948), pp. 293-294; also Hurewitz, op.cit., pp. 267-269.

⁵¹ See below, Chapter VII.

⁵² See: Hurewitz, op.cit., pp. 264-265; also Hansard, op.cit., v. 433, Cols. 1906-8.

⁵³ Begin, op.cit., p. 319.

⁵⁴ Colonial Office, Palestine: Statement of Information Relating to acts of Violence, Presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for the colonies by Command of His Majesty, July 1946, London, (Cmd. 6873). The Leader of the Irgun Zvai Leumi, Menachem Begin, described this document as one "in which there were scarcely any distortions." (Begin, op.cit., p. 185).

disbanding of these military organizations was a prerequisite for any general settlement of the problem,⁵⁵ but had received no American support in that policy. President Truman's October statement only gave moral backing to the Zionist position.

By February 1947, Britain had exhausted all her efforts, in vain, to bring about an agreement between Arabs and Zionists and to achieve a realistic coordination of policy with the American Government.

Meanwhile, the international scene was witnessing an increasingly widening rift between the West and the Soviet Union, characterized by propaganda war and mutual policies of pressure and counter-pressure. The United States was now taking over from Britain, on various Western fronts, the responsibilities of Western leadership and the task of isolating the Soviet Union. Hence, the Palestine problem had become at that stage, in the expressive words of Professor Hurewitz, "an Arab-Zionist contest within an Anglo-American controversy about to be drawn into the Soviet-American 'cold war'."⁵⁶

On 14 February, Foreign Secretary Bevin announced that His Majesty's Government was referring the Palestine problem to the United Nations.

⁵⁵ See above, footnote N° 42.

⁵⁶ Hurewitz, op.cit., p. 301.

CHAPTER II

UNSCOP AND ITS REPORT

The British Government, on 2 April 1947, formally requested the United Nations Secretary-General to summon a special session of the General Assembly "as soon as possible." The item she proposed for discussion was the constitution and instruction of a special committee to prepare for the consideration of the question of Palestine at the second regular session of the Assembly.¹ On 21 and 22 April, the five Arab state members of the United Nations — Iraq, Syria, Egypt, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia — requested from the Secretary-General the inclusion of the following additional item in the agenda of the special session of the General Assembly: "The termination of the mandate over Palestine and the declaration of its independence."²

But when the first special session of the Assembly was opened on 28 April, only the item proposed by the United Kingdom was on its agenda. The item submitted by the Arab States had been rejected by the General (Steering) Committee,³ and it was now for the General Assembly itself to

¹ United Nations, Official Records of the First Special Session of the General Assembly, v. I, Plenary Meetings, p. vii.

² Ibid., pp. 183 - 186.

³ Ibid., Annex 9, pp. 194 - 195.

decide whether to abide by the suggestion of the General Committee or not. The Arab representatives opposed the recommendation of the General Committee which provided that the General Assembly place on its agenda and refer for consideration to the First Committee (the Committee on Political and Security Questions) the item proposed by the British Government. This Arab opposition was based on the claim that what had to be discussed was the recognition of the independence of Palestine, and not the formation of a special committee to report more than four months later.

During that procedural debate came the first Arab reference to the United States policy. The Iraqi delegate, Mr. Fadhil Jamali, commenting on the general situation in Palestine, said: "I assure you that every new influx of immigration [into Palestine] is more petrol added to the fire. I address this to my American friends. They should know that those who preach more immigration into Palestine are adding more petrol to the fire."⁴ Obviously, this was an Arab reply to President Truman's statements, as well as those of other important American politicians, which urged the admittance into Palestine of 100,000 Jewish refugees. It was an indication of the strong irritation the Arabs felt then at these statements and at the pressure the American

⁴ Ibid., p. 21.

Government was putting on Britain to relax its restrictions on Jewish immigration into Palestine.⁵

When the item proposed to be placed on the agenda by the Arab States was later put to the vote, it was defeated. The United States voted against it; the Soviet Union voted for it. Thus the Assembly adopted only the item submitted by the United Kingdom providing for the setting up and instruction of a special committee on Palestine.

The Soviet support of the proposal for the termination of the British mandate was understandable. The Soviet Union, in its increasingly deteriorating relations with the West and its general offensive against Western influence in the Middle East and elsewhere, naturally wanted the British out of Palestine. Furthermore, in its proclaimed role as the champion of national independence and the struggle against imperialism, the Soviet Union was expected to take such a stand as it did with regard to the Arab proposal for independence.

On 3 May, the Polish delegate proposed the invitation of the Jewish Agency to appear before the plenary meetings of the General Assembly and present its views on the composition and terms of reference of the envisaged committee.⁶ The Soviet representative strongly

⁵ See above, Chapter I.

⁶ United Nations, Official Records of the First Special Session of the General Assembly, v. I, Plenary Meetings, pp. 70 - 71.

supported the Polish proposal.⁷ The American delegate, however, took the position that non-governmental organizations should only be heard before committees, and, although favorable to the idea of hearing the Jewish Agency, suggested that it be heard before the Political Committee rather than the Assembly in its plenary meetings.⁸ The long discussion which followed was only settled by a vote in which the Polish proposal was defeated and the United States view upheld.

Another proposal was then put to the vote. It provided for the invitation of the Jewish Agency before the First Committee and the sending to that Committee, for its decision, communications from other representatives of the Palestinian population. Opposed by the Arabs, who objected to its discriminatory attitude in favor of the Jewish Agency, but supported by the United States, the resolution was eventually adopted by the Assembly.

During the discussion in the Assembly, an event of some significance occurred. "A group of American Liberals," as the London Times put it, circulated on 5 May among the members of the Assembly a proposal for the solution of the Palestine problem. The proposal provided for the reinclusion of Transjordan in the territory under the Mandate, and the

⁷ Ibid., pp. 78 - 82.

⁸ Ibid., pp. 71 - 75.

partition of Palestine and Transjordan into Jewish and Arab States under the temporary authority of the U.N., as well as the deployment of an international police for the preservation of security. 250,000 Jews would be immediately admitted.⁹ This was one of the earlier signs that the idea of the partition of Palestine had been introduced in the lobbies of the United Nations.

Now meeting as the First (Political) Committee, the General Assembly, under the Chairmanship of Mr. Pearson of Canada, began considering the terms of reference and composition of the proposed committee, and opened by discussing the possibility of representation for the Arabs of Palestine. Accepting the testimony of the British representative that the Arab Higher Committee was the main representative body of the Palestine Arabs, the First Committee, with American approval, granted a hearing to the Arab Higher Committee.¹⁰ The Arabs, however, continued to protest that the invitation of the Jewish Agency by the General Assembly in its plenary session was a legal discrimination prejudicial to the status of the Arab Higher Committee. When the Indian representative proposed that a plenary meeting of the Assembly be immediately held

⁹ The Times, 6 May 1947, p. 4.

¹⁰ United Nations, Official Records of the First Special Session of the General Assembly, v. III, Main Committees, First Committee, pp. 30 - 78.

to extend an invitation to the Arab Higher Committee, the United States did not object, and the proposal was adopted by the First Committee. Nor did the representative of the United States oppose in the Assembly the invitation of the Arab Higher Committee before the First Committee, when a draft solution to that effect was introduced and ultimately adopted.

From the very beginning of the discussion in the First Committee, the United States submitted a draft resolution defining the terms of reference of the proposed committee of inquiry and its composition. The terms of reference suggested by the American delegate were broad and elastic, and the list of membership excluded the five permanent members.¹¹ The list included: Canada, Iran, Czechoslovakia,¹² Netherlands, Peru, Sweden and Uruguay. The American delegate, Mr. Austin, was primarily interested in defending the idea of excluding from membership in the inquiry committee the big five who, he said, had "special interests involved."¹³

The Soviet Union and other Communist countries, on the other hand, were of the opinion that the five permanent members ought to be on the committee, and they defended this

¹¹ Ibid., p. 367. See also Document A/C. 1/151.

¹² Czechoslovakia had not yet become a communist state.

¹³ United Nations, Official Records of the First Special Session of the General Assembly, v. III, Main Committees, First Committee, p. 81.

position vigorously. When asked about his Government's opinion on the point, the British representative answered that his Government "would find itself, if it were a member of that committee, at times on the witness stand, and then a moment or two later it would resume its seat among the members of the jury."¹⁴ The American delegate hastened to associate himself with the British position, introducing the formula of "all or none", thereby making it impossible to any permanent member to be represented in the committee if any other permanent member was unwilling to be itself represented. Mr. Austin then reiterated that "the United States adheres to the idea of a special committee which excludes the permanent members."¹⁵

Dr. Jorge Garcia - Granados, Guatemala's representative during that session and after, wrote later in his book that the objective of the American tactic in the Political Committee was "to forstall" the Soviet block from presenting its own list of membership in the inquiry committee, which was known to include the permanent members. The United States, Dr. Garcia - Granados also wrote, wanted to keep the Soviet Union out of the Middle East, and feared that Soviet membership in the special committee might serve the Soviet design of entering into the area.¹⁶ With the

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 131.

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 132 - 133.

¹⁶ Garcia - Granados, Jorge, The Birth of Israel: The Drama as I saw it (New York, 1949), pp. 5 - 6.

international situation of growing bipolarity and tension in the background, Dr. Garcia - Granados' explanation of American behavior appears logical. The "cold war" had its implications in the Palestine situation.

While the debate was continuing in the United Nations, the United States Secretary of State made a statement of some significance on the Palestine policy. On 7 May, Mr. Marshall said that his Government had not changed its view — contained in various Presidential statements the year before — on Palestine, but "was not pressing these views" in the General Assembly.¹⁷ Of course the Presidential statements referred to by Mr. Marshall were all to the effect that 100,000 Jews should be immediately admitted into Palestine. The President's statement of 4 October 1946, had, in fact, gone as far as endorsing the Zionist demand for a "viable Jewish State," thereby committing in principle the United States to the policy of partition.¹⁸

The British delegate, Sir Alexander Cadogan, made on 9 May his first major statement at the special session, defining the official position of his Government with regard to the whole issue of Palestine and the United Nations. Sir Alexander emphasized that although his

¹⁷ The Times, 8 May 1947, p. 3.

¹⁸ See above, p. 22.

Government would respect any decision by the Assembly, "we should not have the sole responsibility for enforcing a solution which is not accepted by both parties [i.e. the Arabs and the Zionists] and which we cannot reconcile with our conscience."¹⁹ Following that statement by Sir Alexander Cadogan, the British Government consistently reiterated that same position throughout the different stages of development of the Palestine problem in the United Nations until the termination of the Mandate and the final withdrawal of British forces from Palestine. This British attitude immediately brought to the forefront the problem of the enforcement of any decision on Palestine that the General Assembly might take, and become a major consideration in the calculations of the American policy-makers with regard to Palestine. At one time, that position earned the British Government bitter criticism by an influential sector of the American press and by many American politicians.²⁰

The discussion on the composition of the inquiry committee was temporarily suspended, and the First Committee focused its attention on its terms of reference. The

¹⁹ United Nations, Official Records of the First Special Session of the General Assembly, v. III, Main Committees, First Committee, p. 184.

²⁰ This conflict between the American and the British policies on implementation came into the open during the debate on partition. (See below, pp. 56 - 59, 60.)

main difference in the Committee now crystallized around the point of whether to insert or leave out an explicit reference to the independence of Palestine as an ultimate aim of the future recommendations of the inquiry committee. The Arab States, this time backed by the Soviet Union, insisted upon the insertion of "independence" in the terms of reference. The United States opposed that on the ground that the mentioning of "independence" in the directives of the proposed committee would be "a prejudgment" of the issue. For, said the American delegate frankly, "the Jewish representatives are proponents of the Zionist State," and any commitment, in advance, in favor of the early independence of Palestine would have been incompatible with this Zionist aspiration.²¹

The debate on this point dragged on for some time. The American representative held strongly to his position while several proposals and compromise amendments were being presented by other members. Finally, he moved slightly from his position to propose the following item to be added to the terms of reference: "The special committee, in studying the future government of Palestine, shall give full consideration to guarantees of the rights necessary to the peace and independence of its peoples."²² But

²¹ United Nations, Official Records of the First Special Session of the General Assembly, v. III, Main Committees, First Committee, pp. 202 - 205.

²² Ibid., p. 288.

this American proposal only served to provoke a strong attack from the Arab representatives who recognized in the use of the term "peoples" a partitionist hint. The Syrian delegate, Mr. Faris El-Khoury, went as far as to describe the American proposal as "the worst" of all the proposals hitherto submitted.²³

The final outcome of this long debate was the deletion of any reference to "independence" from the terms of reference. The majority of the Members, who followed the American lead, outvoted the Arab States and the Soviet block.

The attitude of the Soviet Union on this question of including or leaving out the reference to the independence of Palestine was, clearly, a logical continuation of its attitude in the General Assembly during the debate on the agenda, prompted now as then by the same motives.

The discussion on the composition of the special committee was now revived. The earlier difference between the United States and the Soviet Union on whether to exclude or include the permanent members in the membership of the committee came again into sharp focus. Both held firmly to their respective positions; and when the vote was finally taken, it was only by the narrow majority of two votes that the American view prevailed over that of

²³ Ibid., p. 290.

the Soviet Union. The Soviet delegate, Mr. Gromyko, questioned the moral weight of the vote and even its legal validity, but the Chairman ruled against the Soviet objections.²⁴

By that time the American representative must have had some reasons to digress from the substantive discussion to declare that his Government was not "coercing" and "unduly influencing the trend of decision" in the Committee.²⁵ In any case, however, the final composition of the committee of inquiry was only an enlargement of the original American list — an enlargement to which the United States representative, again, actively contributed.²⁶ To the original American list of seven were now added, presumably on a geographical basis: Guatemala, India, Australia and Yugoslavia.

The Political Committee was adjourned on 13 May, and on the next day its report and recommendations were submitted to the General Assembly in its plenary session. For two days the Assembly considered the composition and terms of reference of UNSCOP (the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine). During that discussion the Soviet Union revealed its tentative stand on the substance

²⁴ Ibid., pp. 345 - 347.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 348.

²⁶ Ibid., pp. 341 - 357.

of the Palestine problem. The Soviet representative expressed his Government's sympathy with "the aspiration of the Jews to establish their own State."²⁷ He, however, gave priority in the attempt for finding a solution to the Palestine problem to "the establishment of an independent, dual, democratic, homogeneous Arab-Jewish State." Mr. Gromyko then added that "if this plan proved impossible to implement... then it would be necessary to consider the second which ... provides for the partition of Palestine into two independent autonomous States, one Jewish and one Arab."²⁸ The American delegate did not mention partition.

Throughout the special session the Arab spokesmen reiterated their arguments against the claims of Zionism and against the continuation of the mandate over Palestine, and they advocated an independent Arab Palestine with full guarantees to all minorities. They made it clear that any departure on the part of the United Nations from that line of action would have to be enforced against the will of the Arabs of Palestine, and they "reserved the right" of their Governments with regard to their "future attitude."²⁹ When the final Votes were taken in the Assembly on the

²⁷ United Nations, Official Records of the First Special Session of the General Assembly, V. I, Plenary Meetings, p. 132.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 134.

²⁹ Ibid., pp. 127, 135, 145, 157, 158.

composition and directives of UNSCOP, the Arab representatives, as well as the Communist delegates, consistently voted against or abstained. The American delegate, who had played the major role in directing the course of action in the Political Committee, naturally endorsed in the Assembly the recommendations of the First Committee.³⁰ The recommendations of the Committee were all endorsed by the General Assembly.

So the Palestine question was now left in the hands of UNSCOP — a committee of non-permanent members invested with "the widest powers to ascertain and record facts, and to investigate all questions and issues relevant to the problem of Palestine." Although the "relevant" issues were not specified in the terms of reference, the Zionists felt confident that the problem of European refugees was one of them. A report on this question in the London Times, on 14 May, stated that "the Jewish Agency have had a partial success in their efforts to include the problem of European Jewry among the relevant issues. There is no specific mention of it in the terms of reference, but the thought in the minds of many delegations which supported the giving of the committee permission to hold investigations where it pleased was that they ought to visit displaced person's camps."³¹ The Arab position, of course, had consistently

³⁰ Ibid., pp. 174 - 177.

³¹ p. 4.

been opposed to any linking of the Palestine problem to the problem of Jewish D.P.s.

UNSCOP was instructed to record its findings and recommendations and report to the General Assembly not later than 1 September 1947.

When UNSCOP embarked on its momentous task, it had become obvious that it could not be totally detached from the influence of some concrete considerations in the situation. The two major powers of the world, the United States and the Soviet Union, whose active subscription to the enforcement of the prospective solution could hardly be minimized as a decisive element in the success of that solution, had already favored, in one form or another, the partition of Palestine. The Soviet Union's reservation that partition should be resorted to only after it had become evident that the demands of the Arabs and the Zionists could not be reconciled, was more theoretical than actual, because the demands of the two communities were clearly irreconcilable. The United States had declared its sympathy with the Zionist aspiration for a Jewish State in Palestine in the President's statement of 4 October 1946. The large section of the American public which was not indifferent to international affairs was sympathetic to Zionist aspirations, and an influential sector of it actively supported these aspirations. The influence of this latter

group was demonstrated by the remarkable success of Zionist fund-raising in the United States which often expressly defined its aim as the aid of the Zionist terrorist organizations in their gurrilla war against the British Administration in Palestine.³² These Zionist funds were all tax-free. American papers were mobilized to advertize appeals on their behalf.³³

This atmosphere in which UNSCOP was born was bound to influence its approach and judgment. As the Arabs watched with nervous apprehension the birth and the progress of UNSCOP's activity, Zionist circles showed more optimism and confidence in the prospective recommendations of the special committee. The London Times wrote on 15 May: "The decisions taken at Lake Success have been received with restrained satisfaction by the Jews in Palestine, and with more or less unrestrained dissatisfaction by the Arabs." It continued that "the impression has taken hold among both Jews and Arabs that the pointer has again swung round to partition, and the majority of Jews are pleased, while the Arabs are not."³⁴

³² See: Lilienthal, Alfred M., What Price Israel (Chicago, 1953), pp. 102 - 108.

³³ Significantly, on 15 May - the first day in the life of UNSCOP - the New York Herald Tribune carried a full-page advertizement signed by the play-right Ben Hecht, on behalf of the American League for Free Palestine, appealing to the American people for funds to equip the Zionist anti-British organizations in Palestine. The General Assembly, with American concurrence, had appealed the day before to all groups in Palestine to refrain from the use of violence pending the outcome of UNSCOP's investigation.

³⁴ p. 4.

In anticipation of the arrival of UNSCOP in Palestine, Jamal Husseini, Vice - President of the Arab Higher Committee, gave on 20 May a statement to the Times' correspondent in which he said: "The fact-finding committee is composed of representatives of small nations which, unlike the great Powers, have no direct interest in the fate of Palestine, but which are susceptible to Jewish pressure, especially financial, from the United States or in their countries. If a solution contrary to the principles of democracy is forced on Palestine then British forebodings of strong Arab reaction will come true."³⁵ Later, the Arab Higher Committee, convinced that the future recommendations of UNSCOP would inevitably substantiate the fears voiced by Mr. Husseini, decided to boycott UNSCOP.

The Jewish Agency, on the other hand, was more cooperative, although Zionist terrorism, as J.C. Hurewitz puts it, "thrived as never before."³⁶ While UNSCOP was actively conducting its investigations and collecting its data, the hide-and-seek game between the Mandatory authorities and the Zionist terrorist organizations, aided by the Haganah,³⁷ was culminating violently. A

³⁵ The Times, 21 May 1947, p. 3.

³⁶ op.cit., p. 290.

³⁷ See above, p. 22.

few executions took place, but they were promptly retaliated against by the Zionists' terrorists. Illegal immigration into Palestine had its most dramatic manifestation in the much-publicized story of the ship Exodus 1947, which arrived in Haifa harbor (perhaps deliberately) while UNSCOP was still in Palestine, and was returned by the Mandatory authorities.³⁸

UNSCOP finished up its investigation in Palestine, met the representatives of the Arab States in Beirut and then left for Geneva on 27 July. It there, significantly, decided to send a sub-committee to investigate the Jewish D.P. camps in Europe. On 31 August, UNSCOP had its report ready for the General Assembly.

The report analyzed the problem of Palestine and reviewed the various attempts made previously at solving it. It stated that the Committee approved unanimously several principles, among them: that the Mandate for Palestine should be terminated and independence granted at the earliest practicable date; that the economic unity of Palestine should be preserved; that the political system of the new state or states should be democratic, that the sacred character of the Holy Places should be preserved and adequately guaranteed; and that the General Assembly should immediately make an international

³⁸ See: Wilson, Major R.D., Cordon and Search (Hampshire, 1949), pp. 134-139; also Hurewitz, op.cit., pp. 291 - 292.

arrangement by which the problem of Jewish D.P.s in Europe is effectively dealt with. The Committee could not, however, unanimously approve the principle that "it be accepted as incontrovertible that any solution for Palestine cannot be considered as a solution of the Jewish problem in general."

The report then stated that the members of the Committee were divided in their view of the proposed solution into two groups, the majority (the representatives of Canada, Czechoslovakia, Guatemala, Netherlands, Peru, Sweden and Uruguay) recommending partition and the minority (the representatives of Iran, India and Yugoslavia) recommending a federal state. The representative of Australia abstained.

The majority plan proposed the partition of Palestine into two independent Arab and Jewish states, which would be economically united, and an international zone for the city of Jerusalem administered by the Trusteeship Council. The plan proposed the abrogation of the 1939 White Paper regulations for immigration and land purchases, and the admittance of 150,000 Jewish immigrants into the borders of the Jewish State during the proposed two-year transitional period under the Mandatory and afterwards. Economic unity between the two States was to involve the permanent supervision of the United Nations. The boundaries of the two envisaged States were defined in the report.

The minority report proposed that a federal State of Palestine be created following a transitional period not exceeding three years during which responsibility for administering Palestine would be vested in the United Nations. The two constituent states of the proposed federal State would enjoy local autonomy, and the central government would direct foreign relations, national defence and immigration. The legislative body would be bicameral, with proportional representation in one house and equal representation in the other.³⁹

The reaction of both the Arabs and the Zionist to the recommendations of UNSCOP was immediate. UNSCOP's report was published in the evening of 31 August, and the Palestinian Arab Higher Executive announced its rejection of the two plans recommended the following day.⁴⁰ The Arab press had been consistently rejecting partition since the beginning of the year, and had referred many times, during the investigations of UNSCOP, to the prospect of a partition recommendation by the Committee. On the same day on which the Arab Higher Committee rejected UNSCOP's report, Mrs. Meyerson, representing the Jewish Agency, expressed implicit acceptance of the majority report and discussed some of its details.⁴¹ On the following day, the London

³⁹ United Nations, Official Records of the Second Session of the General Assembly, Supplement N° 11, United Nations Special Committee on Palestine, Report to the General Assembly.

⁴⁰ See: The Times, 2 Sept. 1947, p. 4.

⁴¹ Ibid.

Times correspondent wrote: "The powerful Jewish lobby in the United States is certainly well pleased with the principles, if not with all the details, of the majority report." He then said: "Most Jews now express satisfaction."⁴²

For some time, the American Government remained silent.

⁴² p. 4.

CHAPTER III

PARTITION

The second session of the General Assembly was opened on 16 September 1947, and Mr. Aranha (of Brazil) was elected President. The general debate was opened on the 17th, when several representatives gave general speeches on the international situation. Among these speakers was George Marshall, Secretary of State of the United States, who made in the course of his general statement a specific reference to the Palestine question. Marshall expressed the intention of his government to do all in its power, at that session of the General Assembly, "in finding a solution" for that problem. He "highly commended" the efforts of UNSCOP, then added: "we realize that whatever the solution recommended by the General Assembly, it cannot be ideally satisfactory to either of the two great peoples primarily concerned. While the final decision of this Assembly must properly await the detailed consideration of the report, the Government of the United States gives great weight not only to the recommendations which have met with the unanimous approval of the Special Committee, but also to those which have been approved by the majority of that Committee."¹

¹ United Nations, Official Records of the Second Session of the General Assembly, Plenary Meetings, v. I, 16 September - 13 November 1947, p. 21.

In their general speeches, the representatives of the five Arab member States devoted primary concern to the Palestine problem, and four of them specifically criticized Mr. Marshall's statement. Nuri As-Said of Iraq, on 18 September, referred to Mr. Marshall's statement, warning against commitment prior to a detailed discussion of the problem. He also implied that UNSCOP had been influenced by Zionist propaganda and by Zionist intimidation of all non-Zionist voices.² The Lebanese delegate, Camille Chamoun, contrasted the American support of the territorial integrity and independence of Greece and Korea with the American tentative endorsement of UNSCOP's majority plan which amounted, according to Mr. Chamoun, "purely and simply to the mutilation of ... Palestine." Mr. Chamoun also denounced the activities of some nationals of the United States (which he did not mention by name) "who are encouraging illegal immigration on a large scale" - an act which Chamoun described as hostile to the Arabs and to Palestine.³

When the Egyptian delegate took the floor, he only made a brief criticism of UNSCOP's majority plan,⁴ leaving the task of elaboration to his more militant

² Ibid., pp. 108 - 110.

³ Ibid., pp. 166 - 167.

⁴ Ibid., p. 180.

Syrian colleague, Faris El-Khoury. Mr. el-Khoury dwelled at some length on the Palestine problem, using Mr. Marshall's statement as his starting point. After a more or less detailed criticism of UNSCOP's majority report, he turned again to the United States, "whose money finances the widespread Zionist propaganda and their terroristic underground activities." He concluded by saying that "it requires a great amount of tolerance and hypocritical courtesy to refrain from denouncing" such an attitude as that of the United States in that respect.⁵ Prince Faisal Al-Saud, of Saudi Arabia, expressed his hope that the members of the Assembly "will have the courage not to be influenced by the words of General Marshall."⁶

When, on 23 September, the recommendation of the General Committee for the establishment of an Ad Hoc committee on Palestine was brought up in the General Assembly, two Arab spokesmen opposed the recommendation. This Arab opposition to the procedure recommended by the General Committee, foreshadowed some later developments with which American policy was closely associate. The Arab representatives seem to have been all the time strongly apprehensive of the prospect of external pressure, applied inside the United Nations, to the detriment of their cause.

⁵ Ibid., pp. 198 - 203.

⁶ Ibid., pp. 248 - 249.

So, supporting his colleague Dr. Fadhil Jamali - who had opposed the establishment of an Ad Hoc committee on Palestine and proposed the consideration of the Palestine question in the Political Committee⁷ - Dr. Charles Malik of Lebanon said: "I want to state frankly another consideration which worries us; that is, that if you set aside a special committee to consider this problem, we feel that it is more possible to have certain pressure groups exert their influence to the maximum upon such a special committee than if the question were dealt with by the Political Committee which would, at the same time, be examining all the other important questions."⁸ But, notwithstanding Arab opposition, the General Assembly set up on the same day an Ad Hoc committee on Palestine, composed of all members of the Assembly, which started its work two days later.⁹

The Ad Hoc Committee had on its agenda the following items:

1 - Question of Palestine: item proposed by the United Kingdom.

2 - Report of the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine.

⁷ Ibid., pp. 272 - 273.

⁸ Ibid., p. 274.

⁹ Ibid., p. 275.

3 - Termination of the Mandate over Palestine and recognition of its independence as one State : Item proposed by Saudi Arabia and by Iraq.

At the suggestion of the Chairman (Dr. Evatt, Australia's Minister of Foreign Affairs), the Committee invited the Arab Higher Committee and the Jewish Agency to be present during the deliberations of the Committee. On 26 September, the deliberations were opened by a statement by Mr. Greech-Jones, the British Secretary of State for Colonial Affairs. Mr. Greech-Jones expressed his Government's support of UNSCOP's recommendations with regard to the termination of the Mandate and Palestine's independence. He, however, drew a distinction, in connection with the problem of implementing a United Nations resolution, between "accepting a recommendation, in the sense of not impeding its execution by others, and accepting responsibility for carrying it out by means of a British Administration and British forces." The British Government, he said, was willing to cooperate with the United Nations, and was ready to implement any plans on which both Arabs and Jews agreed. Yet, if the Assembly were to recommend a plan not acceptable to both Arabs and Jews, the United Kingdom would not implement it. To indicate good faith, however, Mr. Greech-Jones announced the determination of his Government to withdraw from Palestine if no early settlement was found by the General

Assembly.¹⁰

Mr. Greech-Jones' statement, the main burden of which was a reiteration of Sir Alexander Cadogan's statement at the special session (9 May), underlined the seriousness of the problem of implementation, which the United Kingdom was only complicating by its attitude. The Zionists, whose hopes had been raised at UNSCOP's majority recommendations and at the American tentative acceptance thereof, felt the pain of the setback caused by Mr. Greech-Jones' statement. In Palestine, Mr. Ben-Gurion addressed his Jerusalem Assembly on 2 October: "It is all a question of effectuation, for both the United Nations and ourselves. Perhaps the whole design of Mr. Greech-Jones' statement was to stampede the United Nations, and make the decision harder. Very well, let us provide the catalyst... We, therefore, tell the world that we will ourselves discharge it, that we are willing, fit and ready to gather up the reins of government instantaneously." He continued: "No more protests and clamour, not another day of a vacuum in theory, jurisdiction and ethics. We shall bear the grave responsibility ourselves."¹¹

¹⁰ United Nations, Official Records of the Second Session of the General Assembly, Ad Hoc Committee on the Palestinian Question, Summary Records of Meetings, 25 September - 25 November 1947, pp. 2 - 4.

¹¹ Ben-Gurion, David, Rebirth and Destiny of Israel (New York, 1954), pp. 215 - 216 and 217.

These words heralded the launching of a vigorous Zionist campaign, the diplomatic, political and propagandistic aspects of which certainly influenced - to no small extent, as later events were clearly to illustrate - the policy of the United States on Palestine.

Following the British representative, the Ad Hoc Committee listened to statements by the representatives of the Arab Higher Committee and the Jewish Agency. The Arab Higher Committee rejected both the majority and the minority plans of UNSCOP, on the basis of the familiar Arab arguments and positions and proposed a general plan for a unitary independent state of Palestine. The Jewish Agency, also on the basis of its traditional arguments, rejected the minority plan but announced its acceptance, subject to certain territorial and other modifications, of UNSCOP's majority plan which provided for partition.¹²

In the several meetings which followed, spokesmen of several countries expressed their governments' views on the Palestine question in general. From the very beginning, the representative of Czechoslovakia voiced the awareness of the Ad Hoc Committee that enforcement was the major problem with which United Nations was expected to grapple. The Arab representatives repeated their arguments

¹² United Nations, Official Records of the Second Session of the General Assembly, Ad Hoc Committee on the Palestinian Question, Summary Records of Meetings, 25 September - 25 November 1947, pp. 5 - 19.

against the contentions of Zionism and about Arab rights, criticizing the report of UNSCOP. (They had, several days before, won two additional spokesmen for their case - Yemen, an Arab State, and Pakistan, a Moslem State - both of which had been welcomed to membership in the United Nations by Mr. Marshall at a plenary meeting of the same session of the General Assembly.)¹³ Sir Mohammad Zafrullah Khan, of Pakistan, strongly supported the Arab position, and eloquently constructed their case. The representatives of Uruguay (Fabregat) and Guatemala (Garcia-Granados) vigorously advanced the traditional arguments of the Jewish Agency, and supported the basic thesis of the majority report.¹⁴ The general feeling in the Committee, as reflected in the speeches of the various spokesmen, was no doubt opposed to the continuation of the Mandate over Palestine. As Ben-Gurion put it, on the 2nd of October of that year, "The Mandate is to end. That is the common denominator uniting majority and minority at Lake Success and in Whitehall."¹⁵

¹³ United Nations, Official Records of the Second Session of the General Assembly, Plenary Meetings, v. I, 16 September - 13 November 1947, p. 313.

¹⁴ Alfred Lilienthal wrote that the arguments of these two Latin American diplomats "were astonishingly replete with Zionist philosophy, data and symbols." He also wrote that the two diplomats "presented the straight Jewish Agency line." Lilienthal added, in this connection that "both Garcia-Granados and Fabregat have lectured for Zionist groups, and in Israel today there are streets having their names." (op.cit., pp. 53, 57-58, 53). The two diplomats, incidentally, had been members of UNSCOP.

¹⁵ Ben-Gurion, op.cit., p. 212.

As Garcia-Granados wrote in his book, most of the Asian and European delegates were not happy about having to vote for or against partition and be thus involved in conflict with one of the parties.¹⁶ On 8 October, the Polish delegate gave a speech in the Committee which indicated an inclination towards UNSCOP's majority report, but no definite commitment was made. Then, on 11 October, Mr. Herschel Johnson, the American delegate, announced his Government's support of the "Majority plan ... which provided for partition and immigration." He introduced some minor amendments and additions, such as more constitutional guarantees and few territorial modifications (Jaffa, for example, was proposed to be included in the Arab State). Mr. Johnson emphasized his Government's conviction that the responsibility for the administration of Palestine still rested with the Mandatory Power. He made a brief reference to the question of implementation, expressing his Government's willingness to participate in any United Nations efforts to help the political settlement through either contribution in the financial and economic field, or in meeting the "problem of internal law and order" during the transitional period. For this latter purpose Mr. Johnson suggested a "special constabulary or police force recruited on a volunteer basis by the United Nations,"

¹⁶ op.cit., p. 247.

but he avoided the discussion of the possibility of violence, asserting his belief that "the Charter would be observed."¹⁷

Two days later, the Soviet delegate, Mr. Tsarapkin, announced in the Ad Hoc Committee his Government's support of partition, which "offered more hope for realization" than the "impracticable" minority plan. He, however, pointed out the need for more "careful examination" of the plan, and for some amendments.¹⁸

As soon as the Arab delegates heard Mr. Johnson's statement in support of partition, they were provoked into a strong campaign of criticism against the American stand. They openly attributed the United States policy on that issue to Zionist influence, and Dr. Fadhil El-Jamali of Iraq even spoke of the "electoral season" in the United States, and the "strength of the Jewish vote" in that country.¹⁹ Later on, after the Soviet delegate announced his support of the majority plan, the policies of the two Governments, the Soviet and the American, were jointly criticized by the Arab representatives.

¹⁷ United Nations, Official Records of the Second Session of the General Assembly, Ad Hoc Committee on the Palestinian Question, Summary Records of Meetings, 25 September - 25 November 1947, pp. 62 - 64.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 70.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 101. The reference was, evidently, to the impending Presidential elections of 1948. More will be said about the influence of that elections in the following chapters.

The Zionists, on the other hand, were expecting American support of partition but were not sure of Soviet support. The American attitude had been expressed as far back as Truman's October 1946 statement, which had favored partition, and had been again expressed in Mr. Marshall's statement of 17 September 1947. But the Soviet position had not been yet authoritatively stated. So the declaration of Soviet support of partition now meant much to the Zionists. It was, as a member of the Zionist delegation later described it, "surprising, encouraging, and even sensational news."²⁰

Before the closure of the general debate, Mr. Greech-Jones made a statement in which he admitted that his Government had failed to reconcile the two conflicting communities in Palestine. He criticized, for the first time, the "connivance and assistance of some governments" in the acts of illegal immigration to Palestine - evidently hinting at the United States primarily.²¹ He reiterated his Government's position of declining the responsibility for the enforcement of any United Nations settlement which was not acceptable to both Arabs and Zionists, "either alone or in a major role."²²

²⁰ Horowitz, David, State in the Making (New York, 1953), p. 239.

²¹ See above, pp. 38 - 39.

²² United Nations, Official Records of the Second Session of the General Assembly, Ad Hoc Committee on the Palestinian Question, Summary Records of Meetings, 25 September - 25 November 1947, pp. 96 - 98.

Finally the Ad Hoc Committee, at the suggestion of its Chairman, set up three sub-committees: one to draw up the details, and modify, the majority (partition) plan; another one to draw up a detailed plan for a unitary state of Palestine, along the lines suggested by the Arab spokesmen; and the third to try to effect a reconciliation between the Arabs and the Zionists. Sub-Committee I (for partition) was composed of: Canada, Czechoslovakia, Guatemala, Poland, South Africa, the United States, the Soviet Union, Uruguay and Venezuela. Sub-Committee II (for a unitary state) was composed of the six Arab States, with Afghanistan, Pakistan and Colombia. The third sub-committee was formed on a personal basis.

In Sub-Committee I, the United States followed her familiar tactic of keeping both itself and the Soviet Union out of any controversial positions, such as the chairmanship of any of the working groups in the Sub-Committee, and having other smaller states in those positions. It, however, joined with the Soviet Union (and Canada and Guatemala) in the membership of the working group on implementation,²³ which was clearly the crucial problem of the Sub-Committee. In fact the report of Sub-Committee I expressly recorded that it was the problem of implementation which was "the most difficult problem facing the Sub-Committee."²⁴

²³ Ibid., Annex 19, p. 244.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 245.

Garcia - Granados reports that as the idea came up in the United Nations that the forces of the Big Five might be used for enforcement, "the United States opposed having Soviet troops in Palestine precisely as it had opposed the idea of the Soviet Union being a member of UNSCOP."²⁵ Having been himself a member of Sub-Committee I, Garcia - Granados asserts that the United States, until after the setting up of the Sub-Committee, remained convinced that Britain would consent to be the governing authority in Palestine during the transitional period, until the emergence of the two proposed states.²⁶ Hence, for quite a while, the representatives of the United States and the Soviet Union could not agree in the Sub-Committee on the implementing authority and on the length of the transitional period. The American delegate wanted Britain to play a major role in implementation; the Russian delegate wanted her out of Palestine soon, with a United Nations commission to supervise Jewish and Arab militias keeping order in Palestine. Finally, on 10 November, a compromise was arrived at, providing for: British withdrawal no later than 1 May 1948; a transitional period of two months under a United Nations commission supervision; and the establishment, with the help of the

²⁵ op.cit., p. 249

²⁶ Ibid., p. 251.

United Nations Commission, of the Arab and Jewish States no later than 1 July 1948.²⁷

But on 13 November, the British representative attending the meetings of the Sub-Committee made a statement which influenced the course of action in the Sub-Committee. He reiterated his Government's position that she would not enforce a settlement either against the Arabs or against the Jews, and added that his Government would not obstruct the task of the United Nations Commission for implementation. But, when questioned in the Sub-Committee about the details of his Government's position, the British representative expressed no readiness to cooperate with the United Nations Commission in any way that would involve endorsement of a settlement unacceptable to any of the conflicting communities in Palestine. This attitude of ultimate non-cooperation with the implementing United Nations authority was described later by Sir Mohammad Zafrullah Khan, the Pakistani delegate, as the main problem that faced Sub-Committee I.²⁸ Garcia - Granados reports that this statement by the British delegate of 13 November, forced the members of the Sub-Committee back to work, in order to modify their earlier plan in accordance with the realities of the British position. He adds that

²⁷ Ibid., pp. 252 - 254.

²⁸ Zafrullah Khan, Sir Mohammad, Palestine in the U.N.O. (Karachi, 1948), p. 9.

it was only then that the Americans became convinced of Britain's non-cooperative design.²⁹

In any case, the report of the Sub-Committee indicates that the British statement in fact forced the Sub-Committee into a reconsideration, but the members seem to have found no better position than an escapist one. In the final report no reference was made to any prospective constabulary force; all that was provided for was that in the case of contingency, the matter would be placed in the bosom of the Security Council.³⁰ And there are good reasons to believe, given the mood of the American policy-makers and public opinion then, that the United States played no small role in this "plan" for implementation.

Sub-Committee II, which had been entrusted with the task of drawing up a detailed plan for a unitary Palestine state, finished its work³¹ more than a week before Sub-Committee I. The Ad Hoc Committee had, therefore, to wait until 19 November, to be able to consider the two reports jointly; and on that same day the discussion of the two reports officially commenced.

²⁹ op.cit., pp. 254 - 256.

³⁰ United Nations, Official Records of the Second Session of the General Assembly, Ad Hoc Committee on the Palestinian Question, Summary Records of Meetings, 25 September - 25 November 1947, pp. 245 - 247. For the report of Sub-Committee I to the Ad Hoc Committee see Annexes 19 and 19a, pp. 242 - 266.

³¹ See Annex 25, Ibid., pp. 270 - 303.

As the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee was opening the general debate, he announced that the Sub-Committee of reconciliation (which was composed of him, his Vice-Chairman and the Rapporteur of the Ad Hoc Committee) had, after exerting great efforts, come to the conclusion that there was "little prospect of success" in the field of reconciliation.³²

By 22 November the battle of partition in the United Nations had finally crystallized. The main picture was now that of a tug-of-war in which the partitionists and the anti-partitionists were vigorously involved, each party trying to gain as many adherents as possible to its cause. On that day, the representative of the United States made a statement in the Ad Hoc Committee in which he said that "a most difficult situation" had been created by the uncooperative attitude of the British Government on the question of implementation. He strongly advocated the adoption of the partition plan which had been drawn up by Sub-Committee I, though admitting its "unavoidable imperfections."³³ Again, on the same day, the American delegate repeated in another statement his earlier assertions that Britain's policy did not help matters. He again admitted the fact that the plan was "far from perfect", but urged support for it.³⁴

³² Ibid., p. 146.

³³ Ibid., pp. 168 - 169.

³⁴ Ibid., pp. 180 - 181.

The Soviet Union also supported the partition plan with some enthusiasm; and it was now obvious that the leaders of the two major Blocks were determined to have the plan of Sub-Committee I adopted by the Ad Hoc Committee. When the resolution submitted by Sub-Committee II (unitary Palestine state) was put to the vote on 24 November, both the United States and the Soviet Union voted against it, and the resolution was defeated. Then, on 25 November, the resolution submitted by Sub-Committee I (partition) was put to the vote. With minor amendments, the resolution was adopted by the Ad Hoc Committee; both the United States and the Soviet Union voted in its favor. The resolution was opposed by 13 states and supported by 25, thus, although carried in the Ad Hoc Committee, yet short of the two-thirds majority necessary for its adoption by the General Assembly.

The Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Palestine³⁵ was introduced in the General Assembly on 26 November. On that day the British delegate, Sir Alexander Cadogan, expressed his regret that no solution agreeable to both Arabs and Jews had been found, and announced his Government's intention to withdraw from Palestine by 1 August 1948. He added that the British Government would not "obstruct the carrying out of any decision which the

³⁵ See Annex 33 (Document A/516) in: United Nations, Official Records of the Second Session of the General Assembly, Plenary Meetings, v. II, 13 November - 29 November 1947, pp. 1628 - 1637.

General Assembly may take, but would not implement it if it does not enjoy the endorsement of both Arabs and Jews.³⁶

The American delegate, Mr. Johnson, passionately advocated the adoption of the Ad Hoc Committee's plan for partition. He said that his delegation thought the plan was not "perfect in every detail", but that it offered "the best practical present opportunity and possibility of obtaining, in a future foreseeable to us now, a peaceful settlement in Palestine." He defended the legal competence, under the United Nations Charter, of the General Assembly to adopt the resolution proposed. Then he said that although the boundaries between the envisaged Arab and Jewish States had been clearly defined, he hoped that those boundaries would be "as freely crossed as the boundaries which separate the individual states within the United States, and as friendly as the boundary which runs for three thousand miles between Canada and the United States." The American delegate however, made no reference in his speech to enforcement or the possibility of violence.³⁷

Dr. Mahmoud Fawzi, the Egyptian delegate, spoke right after the American delegate. He referred to the pressure that had been put on members of the Ad Hoc Committee, in favor of partition. He did not mention, in that connection, the name of the United States but clearly

³⁶ Ibid., pp. 1323 - 1324.

³⁷ Ibid., pp. 1325 - 1327.

meant it. He said: "We have been told about the situation in which one of the great Powers finds itself, about the predicament in which it thinks, or perhaps feels, that it is entangled. We have been told concerning that great Power, that being confronted with the imminence of a general national election, its candidates seek the vote of a single component state, and that vote depends on the Jewish electorate of a single city.³⁸ Thus is its policy dictated with regard to a Palestine which is more than five thousand miles away."³⁹

For obvious reasons, the atmosphere in the Assembly was extremely tense and hectic. Back-stage maneuvers had become no more discreet, and the battle for votes had become blunt and rather too outspoken. Mr. Chamoun of Lebanon, on that same day, went farther than his Egyptian colleague in describing the "pressure" and "maneuvers" to which the members were subjected "during the last thirty six hours." He referred to the "tyrannical system of tackling each delegation in hotel rooms, in bed in corridors and ante-rooms, to threaten them with economic sanctions or to bribe them with promises." He also

³⁸ The reference is evidently to the city of New York in the State of New York, which was of great significance in the calculations of the presidential candidates of the 1948 elections. (See below, Chapter VII, particularly pp. 149 - 157.

³⁹ United Nations, Official Records of the Second Session of the General Assembly, Plenary Meetings, v. II, 13 November - 29 November 1947, pp. 1329 - 1330.

mentioned, later, the name of the United States explicitly.⁴⁰

When the Polish delegate took the floor of the Assembly, he manifested no signs of Cold-War antagonism to the United States. Instead, he paid tribute to "the friendly cooperation" of the United States and the Soviet Union in drawing up the details, and supporting jointly the partition plan in the Ad Hoc Committee.⁴¹ But Mr. Gromyko, the Soviet delegate, was less friendly to the West when he took the floor. While strongly supporting the partition plan, he attacked, with vehemence and in detail, the attitude of the United Kingdom, and, strangely enough, referred condemningly to the "maneuvering and manipulating" of votes which was taking place in the Assembly - the context indicating an insinuation at the United States.⁴²

On that same day, 26 November, three significant events took place. Belgium, which had abstained from voting in the Ad Hoc Committee, now announced that it was going to vote in favor of partition.⁴³ Haiti, which had abstained in the Ad Hoc Committee, now explained why she had done so, and announced that she was going to oppose partition.⁴⁴ General Romulo, the Philippine Minister of

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 1341.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 1336.

⁴² Ibid., pp. 1358 - 1363.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 1365.

⁴⁴ Ibid., pp. 1353 - 1354.

Foreign Affairs, strongly opposed partition, which he called "clearly repugnant to the valid nationalist aspirations of the people of Palestine." He also said: "We cannot believe that [the majority of the General Assembly] would sanction a solution to the problem of Palestine that would turn us back on the road to the dangerous principle of racial exclusiveness and to the archaic doctrines of theocratic governments." He then added that his delegation could not "approve of or participate in a solution of the Palestine problem that would involve the encouragement of political disunion and the enforcement of measures that would amount to the territorial mutilation of the Holy Land."⁴⁵ What is significant about the two latter announcements - by Haiti and the Philippines - is that they **were** eventually contradicted by the behavior of the two Governments during the vote.

Since 27 November was Thanksgiving day, the Assembly did not sit on that day, but resumed its meetings on the 28th. The first meeting was opened by Zafrullah Khan, the Pakistani delegate, who gave a long speech advancing the Arab position and criticizing the partition plan. At the outset he referred to the pressure to which the members were subjected, and in the course of his speech he pointed out to the paradoxical attitude of the American

⁴⁵ Ibid., pp. 1314 - 1315.

Government which opposes the settlement of the Jews outside Palestine, particularly in the United States itself.⁴⁶

The maneuvers in favor of partition, and the peculiar American - Soviet agreement on Palestine at that stage of its development, were referred to by the Colombian delegate, who said: "It would seem to all unprejudiced observers that, but for that all-powerful backing, the proposal would never have made its way to the General Assembly. Here it may eventually be adopted, but we submit that reluctant votes, recruited with irrelevant eleventh-hour appeals, will not improve its position in the opinion of the outside world."⁴⁷

In a last effort to loosen the partitionist - antipartitionist deadlock, the French representative proposed the postponement of the vote for twenty four hours, during which attempts would be made to bring about some sort of rapprochement between the Arabs and the Zionists. The proposal was not strongly opposed in the Assembly, and the United States representative had nothing to say against it. It was, therefore, easily carried.

⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 1366 - 1369. Some interesting facts about the relationship between the pro-Zionist sympathies of a major section of the American people and the strict immigration laws of the United States appear in footnote 1 of Kirk, op.cit., p. 189.

⁴⁷ United Nations, Official Records of the Second Session of the General Assembly, Plenary Meetings, v. II, 13 November - 29 November 1947, pp. 1396 - 1397.

29 November was the day of the vote. Belgium, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Liberia and France, who had abstained in the Ad Hoc Committee, had just decided to vote in favor of partition. Haiti and the Philippines, who, two days earlier, had attacked partition and announced that they would vote against it, eventually cast their votes in its favor. Paraguay, who had been absent during the vote in the Ad Hoc Committee, now voted in favor of partition. Siam, who had voted against partition, was now unable to vote because of a sudden coup d'état at home. But Greece, who had abstained earlier, and Chile who had voted in favor of partition, now shifted to the positions of opposition and abstention respectively.

Thus, by a vote of 33 to 13, the partition resolution was adopted by the General Assembly, much to the satisfaction of the American White House and the Zionist movement.

CHAPTER IV

MANEUVERS BEHIND PARTITION

As the debate on partition was progressing during November, it became increasingly obvious that the issue was going to be decided primarily by the outcome of back-stage maneuvers and the interplay of some unpredictable forces. Although the Soviet block and the American Government had officially declared support for partition since the first half of October, the competition between the Arabs and the Zionists on the votes that were to determine the ultimate outcome was a neck-to-neck race. The enthusiastically pro-partitionist attitude of the Soviet Union (which Ben-Gurion later claimed "Israel does not forget"),¹ was not by itself decisive, and the Zionist cause required a more active and effective agent in the General Assembly. Back-stage maneuvers with the floating votes were therefore conducted by the Zionist spokesmen in close cooperation with American influence. When official American policy was unwilling to go far enough in its vote-chasing efforts, the White House was less unwilling, and the Zionist leaders had a nearly steady access to it, as has already been indicated and as will become more evident soon.

This active cooperation seems to have been the decisive factor in the ultimate adoption of partition. The

¹ Ben-Gurion, op.cit., p. 478.

prominent Zionist spokesman, David Horowitz, expressly confirmed this when he stated that "the way the final vote turned out" must be ascribed to "the weight of United States influence."² How accurate it is to describe it as "pressure", is perhaps a semantic question. The anti-partitionists said it was, and even some governments which voted for partition, as will appear later, thought it was. Sir Mohammed Zafrullah Khan wrote in a speech which was read by his alternate after the vote had been taken: "We entertain no sense of grievance against those of our friends and fellow representatives who have been compelled, under heavy pressure, to change sides and to cast their votes in support of a proposal the justice and fairness of which do not commend themselves to them. Our feeling for them is one of sympathy that they should have been placed in a position of such embarrassment between their judgment and conscience, on the one side, and the pressure to which they and their Governments were being subjected, on the other."³ More than one Arab delegate had already referred to such "pressure."⁴

The close cooperation in the United Nations between the efforts of the Zionists and the influence of the White

² Horowitz, op.cit., p. 301.

³ United Nations, Official Records of the Second Session of the General Assembly, Plenary Meetings, v. II, 13 November - 29 November 1947, p. 1426.

⁴ See above, pp. 62 - 64.

House (an influence, as will become more evident later, not always consistent with the policy of the State Department) was perhaps established late in October or early in November. Zafrullah Khan, in a paragraph that is quoted below,⁵ referred to the fact that this influence was clearly felt in the Ad Hoc Committee. But the first concrete manifestation of the understanding between the Zionists and the White House in the United Nations is perhaps the following one which is recounted by Dr. Weizmann about the second week of November.

In that "feverish" week, as Weizmann puts it, the Zionists learned that the American delegation was going to recommend the exclusion from the "Jewish State" of the southern part of the Negeb, which includes Aqaba. Alarmed by this, Weizmann sought to meet President Truman and met him on 19 November. He spoke to the President of the meaning which the Negeb has in the Zionist program, and asked him that Southern Negeb and Aqaba be included in the would-be "Jewish State." Ambassador Johnson, the American delegate to the United Nations, had arranged a meeting on that same day with the representative of the Jewish Agency, Mr. Shertok, to inform him of the decision of the American delegation, and actually received Shertok at about 3 in the afternoon. In the midst of the meeting, Johnson was called to the telephone; the President was on

⁵ p. 76.

the other end of the line. When the American delegate (and his aide) emerged from the telephone booth, the Zionist representative received the news of a reversed American decision.⁶

In the meantime another lesser factor, which is difficult to categorize, was steadily operating in favor of the Zionist cause in the U.N. The role played by Mr. Trygve Lie, the U.N. Secretary - General, in the furtherance of the partition plan, cannot be separated from the nexus of deliberate factors leading to the ultimate triumph of the Zionist cause in the U.N. on 29 November 1947. On the basis of the presently available documents there is no way of telling authoritatively whether there was deliberate coordination, or mere coincidence of direction, between the activities of the highest U.N. official, on the one hand, and those of the Zionist and American spokesmen, on the other. At any rate, Mr. Trygve Lie is frank enough about his role in those critical days, and does not deny (in the book he later wrote) the fact that his pro-partitionist activities aroused the anger of the Arabs. "As Secretary - General," he writes, "I took the cue and, when approached by delegations for advice, frankly recommended that they follow the majority plan [partition]."

⁶ Weizmann, Chaim, Trial and Error (New York, 1949), pp. 457 - 459.

Behind-the-scenes discussions soon became hectic, and some Arab spokesmen attacked me openly; but I could not yield."⁷

Elsewhere in his book, Trygve Lie is not less explicit about his role and his sympathies:

- "I am proud of the United Nations' role in aiding the establishment of Israel, but I could be far prouder."

- "As Secretary - General, I stood by the early recommendation to partition Palestine, subsequently endorsed by the General Assembly, and I make no apologies for that."

- "Israel was admitted to membership in the United Nations on May 11, 1949 - a decision which pleased me greatly."⁸

- "[The United States'] reversal [of February - March 1948] was a rebuff to the United Nations and to me, because of my direct and deep commitment."⁹

The declared sympathies of the Secretary - General are significant for the evaluation of an episode recounted by Sir Mohammed Zafrullah Khan about a decisive pro-partitionist act, allegedly undertaken by Mr. Trygve Lie, in the critical days which preceded the November resolution. Zafrullah Khan reports that on November 26, a rumor went

⁷ Lie, Trygve, In the Cause of Peace; Seven Years with the United Nations (New York, 1954), p. 162.

⁸ The three above quotations are all from Trygve Lie, op.cit., p. 194.

⁹ Ibid., p. 171.

around at about half-past three p.m. that the session scheduled for that evening would not be held. At that time the anti-partitionists had secured, as Zafrullah Khan asserts, enough votes to ensure the defeat of the partition resolution if the voting was held at the evening session of that same day, and it was almost certain that some states would be "persuaded" to reverse their anti-partitionist stand if voting was postponed for an adequate time. Zafrullah Khan says that he went with Fadhil Jamali to the President of the Assembly to ask him about the matter. The President replied: "I am not going to announce a session for the evening as tomorrow is 'Thanksgiving Day' and the Secretary - General tells me that it would be hard upon the staff to work at night." Zafrullah Khan recalled that the Assembly had gone into session the year before on Thanksgiving Day; but the President would not respond, and the session was postponed to the 28th - a delay which proved of decisive effect in favor of partition.¹⁰

That the Secretary - General had deliberate political motives behind his recommendation to the President might very well be the case. The question which is of primary interest in this study, however, is: how much was this recommendation a symptom of coordinated

¹⁰ Zafrullah Khan, op.cit., p. 20.

efforts between the pro-partitionist group and the sympathizing Secretary - General ? Perhaps this sort of question is too difficult to settle on the basis of authoritative documents.

This brings back the discussion to its more limited scope: the cooperation between the American and the Zionist spokesmen during the struggle - for - partition stage. This coordination of efforts between the American officials and the Zionist spokesmen at the U.N. reached a climax in the few days which preceded partition and led to the adoption of that resolution. This period of concentrated efforts can be roughly defined as starting on 26 November, and ending on 29 November. During that decisive period, as the leading Zionist Emanuel Newman writes, "every clue was meticulously checked and pursued. Not the smallest or the remotest of nations, but was contacted and wooed. Nothing was left to chance."¹¹ The American and Zionist officials jointly exerted tremendous efforts to enlist through the various means of persuasion, the support of the U.N. majority for the plan of partition. "What happened at the United Nation", writes Kermit Roosevelt, "was a reperformance of what had already happened in the United States. Using the same methods [of political pressure and propaganda] that had

¹¹ Quoted by Lillenthal (op.cit., p. 60) from American Zionist, 5 February 1953.

been so successful here, and having the United States Government to assist in their use there, the Zionists succeeded in what they wanted."¹²

Sumner Welles, the strongly pro-Zionist former ^d Under-Secretary of State, frankly admits: "By direct order of the White House every form of pressure, direct and indirect, was brought to bear by American officials upon those countries outside of the Moslem world that were known to be either uncertain or opposed to partition. Representatives or intermediaries were employed by the White House to make sure that the necessary majority would at length be secured."¹³ Elsewhere Welles asserts that "the United States exercised the full measure of its influence in order to secure the approval of the Assembly for the partition plan."¹⁴

Between the 26th and the 29th of November, this coordinated American and Zionist pressure was able to outmaneuver the efforts of the anti-partitionist group which had already secured in the Ad Hoc Committee enough votes to block partition in the General Assembly and was now trying to increase the number of these votes. In fact

¹² Roosevelt, Kermit, "The Partition of Palestine: A lesson in Pressure Politics", Middle East Journal, v. II, N° 1, January 1948, p. 15.

¹³ Welles, Sumner, We Need Not Fail (Boston, 1948), p. 63.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 85.

there are good reasons to believe that the anti-partitionists were progressing in this respect. Zafrullah Khan, the prominent spokesman of the anti-partitionists, claims that during the last stage of debate in the Ad Hoc Committee, the anti-partitionists "got promises from some delegations that though they would abstain from voting in the [Ad Hoc] Committee, they would vote against partition in the Assembly. The reason was that they were under great pressure from the United States Government and they did not want to show their hands too soon and we had every reason to believe that these delegations would vote against partition."¹⁵ So by 26 November, as Zafrullah Khan reports, the pro-Arab block had secured, in addition to the 13 votes of the Ad Hoc Committee, the votes of the Phillipines, Greece, Liberia and Haiti (all of which had abstained or been absent in the Ad Hoc Committee), and were trying to influence Colombia to vote against partition instead of abstaining.¹⁶

It was at this point that intensive American and Zionist efforts were directed against these states and several others, to have them shift their positions and support partition. As Zafrullah Khan reports: "The State Department got in touch by telephone and cablegram with the Governments of some of the delegations and persuaded them

¹⁵ Zafrullah Khan, op.cit., p. 17.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 19.

countermand their instructions."¹⁷ In the meantime the Zionist representatives were not loosening their hold on what they had secured among the Latin American votes. As one of the then representatives of the Jewish Agency, David Horowitz, puts it: "Explanations, cajoling, pressure, and use of pull - all these [were] operated with skill and success."¹⁸ Yet, at the same time, the main Zionist emphasis was on winning over the few decisive votes which the anti-partitionists had apparently won already. Kermit Roosevelt says that those states were primarily: Haiti, Liberia, the Philippines, China, Ethiopia and Greece.¹⁹ He writes: "... The Zionists took the fight into their own hands. Rallying a group of influential Americans and selecting their targets with care, they exerted all possible influence - personal suasion, floods of telegrams and letters, and political and economic pressure." Roosevelt adds: "The delegates of those six nations and their home governments as well were swamped with telegrams, phone calls, letters, and visitations. Many of the telegrams, particularly, were from Congressmen, and others as well invoked the name and prestige of the United States Government."²⁰

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 21.

¹⁸ Horowitz, op.cit., p. 259. More details could be found on pp. 258 - 259.

¹⁹ All except Greece eventually changed their positions.

²⁰ Roosevelt, op.cit., pp. 14 - 15.

It is evident that in these pro-partitionist representations the official and personal capacities of many prominent Americans overlapped, and the official governmental line seemed often quite undistinguishable from the activities of non-governmental Zionist agencies and individuals. The American Jewish writer Alfred Lilienthal claims that the three American "master minds" of partition were: New York's Judge Joseph Proskauer, head of the American Jewish Committee, Washington's economist Robert Nathan, and White House Assistant for Minority Affairs, David Niles.²¹ Horowitz mentions also the efforts of Mrs. Roosevelt, Sumner Welles and Bartley Crum.²² Dr. Weizmann mentions in his memoirs the role played by Judge Proskauer and George Backer, Edward M. Warburg, Henry Morgenthau Jr., Edward Jacobson and Herbert Bayard Swope ("particularly the latter.")²³ He also pays tribute to Bernard Baruch who "used his influence freely" in favor of partition.²⁴ Lilienthal mentions also President Truman's assistant, Clark Clifford, but emphasizes the role of David Niles - an emphasis that coincides with the story of ex-Secretary of Defence, Forrestal, about Under-Secretary of State Lovett's complaint (21 January 1948) that the State Department was "seriously

²¹ Lilienthal, op.cit., p. 64.

²² op.cit.; for example pp. 253 - 254.

²³ Weizmann, op.cit., p. 457.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 437.

embarrassed and handicapped by the activities of Niles at the White House in going directly to the President on matters involving Palestine.²⁵

The efforts of all the above-mentioned people, as well as of many other well-known or obscure men, jointly produced the ultimate reversal (or determination) of positions, and secured the required majority in the General Assembly. More specifically, Kermit Roosevelt reports about the reversal of the Liberian vote as follows: "A well-known economist also close to the White House [clearly, Robert Nathan], and acting in a liaison capacity for the Zionist organization exerted his powers of persuasion upon the Liberian delegate."²⁶ Lilienthal confirms the story and gives more details: "The Liberian delegate, Mr. Dennis, was simply told that Nathan would go after his good friend Stettinus, former Secretary of State, who at that time was attending to his enormous business interests in Liberia. The Liberian diplomat considered this to be attempted intimidation and so reported to the Department of State. Finally, however, by some strange coincidence, Liberia's vote was cast in favor of partition!"²⁷ Forrestal gives another detail;

²⁵ Millis, ed., op.cit., p. 361.

²⁶ Roosevelt, op.cit., p. 15.

²⁷ Lilienthal, op.cit., p. 64.

he reports that Under-Secretary Lovett told the Cabinet on 1 December 1947 that "the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company, which has a concession in Liberia, reported that it had been telephoned to and asked to transmit a message to their representative in Liberia directing him to bring pressure on the Liberian government to vote in favor of partition."²⁸ An article by the pro-Zionist journalist Drew Pearson, referred to by Lilienthal, tells the story of how Harvey Firestone, "owner of vast rubber plantations in Liberia", used his influence with the Liberian Government in behalf of partition.²⁹

The final stage of the story is recounted by Zafrullah Khan. Shortly before the adoption of the partition resolution, the Liberian delegate, who had promised to vote against partition, said apologetically to Zafrullah Khan: "We, as the delegation, are still determined to vote against partition and in your favour. But last night when I came back from the Assembly our Ambassador rang me up from Washington and tried to persuade me to vote in favour of partition. I have declined but he is an ex-President of the Republic of Liberia and is held in great prestige. Now the trouble is that they will get on to the President of Liberia and instructions will be issued to us to vote against^{- sic -} partition and then

²⁸ Millis, ed., op.cit., p. 346.

²⁹ Lilienthal, op.cit., p. 64.

we will be helpless."³⁰ Liberia ultimately voted in favor of partition.

The story of Haiti's vote is similar. Lilienthal, again reproducing a story told by the pro-Zionist reporter, Drew Pearson, writes that in the decisive days preceding partition, Adolph Berle, legal advisor to the Haitian Government, "talked" to Haiti's President on the phone urging Haiti's support for the partition plan.³¹ Kermit Roosevelt mentions no names; he reports that "an ex-Governor, a prominent Democrat with White House and other connections, personally telephoned Haiti urging that its delegation be instructed to change its vote. He spoke firmly, and might be presumed to speak with authority."³² Zafrullah Khan reports about the last stage of the episode. Shortly before taking the vote, writes Zafrullah Khan, the delegate of Haiti came to him; "there were actually tears in his eyes." The delegate said: "What am I to do? I have spoken under instructions from my Government; I have announced that we shall vote against partition and I have now received instructions to vote for partition."³³ Again, the final vote indicated a reversal in favor of partition.

³⁰ Zafrullah Khan, op.cit., pp. 21 - 22.

³¹ Lilienthal, op.cit., pp. 65.

³² Roosevelt, op.cit., p. 15.

³³ Zafrullah Khan, op.cit., p. 22.

The Philippine delegate, who had absented himself from the Ad Hoc Committee, gave a forceful speech on 26 November, condemning partition and announcing his Government's determination to vote against it.³⁴ Zafrullah Khan claims that the Philippine delegate had absented himself from the Ad Hoc Committee in order to avoid the pressure of the American and Zionist representatives, by their not being "able to get hold of him" until after the vote.³⁵ But on the 29th, the Philippine vote was cast in favor of partition. Lilienthal gives his explanation: when President Roxas of the Philippines and Ambassador Elizalde grew aware of the situation, they agreed that "it would be foolish to vote against a policy so ardently desired by the U.S. Administration at a time when seven bills were pending in the U.S. Congress in which the islands had a tremendous stake", particularly after their Government had received a telegram from "twenty six pro-Zionist U.S. Senators" and "drafted by New York's Robert F. Wagner", hinting unmistakably at the possibility of retaliation against a disobedient vote.³⁶

Lilienthal also claims that this same Congressional telegram which was allegedly responsible for the reversal in the Philippine position, was also sent to twelve other

³⁴ See above, pp. 64 - 65.

³⁵ Zafrullah Khan, op.cit., pp. 18 - 19.

³⁶ Lilienthal, op.cit., p. 66.

U.N. delegations, "changed four votes to yes, and seven votes from nay to abstention. Only Greece risked antagonizing the United States Senate, and stuck to no."³⁷ In fact the vote in the General Assembly marked a shift in the Greek position from abstention to opposition.

In the Latin American field, where the activities of the Zionists have been quite frankly described by Horowitz, Lilienthal detects the effect of American activity. He writes that "informal hints to various South American delegates that their vote for partition would greatly increase the chances of a Pan-American Road project, then under consideration, seem to have improved traffic in the General Assembly."³⁸ And with respect to the French vote, Lilienthal writes that "when partition prospects looked particularly grim, Bernard Baruch was prevailed upon to talk with the French who could not afford to lose Interim Marshall Plan Aid."³⁹

The story of the Siamese vote has something more mysterious about it. A sudden coup d'état took place in Siam shortly before voting day, but no immediate withdrawal of credentials from the Siamese delegation was issued by the new government. The Siamese Embassy in Washington then received a word that the credentials of

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 64.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 65.

the delegates had been withdrawn, and that new credentials would not be forwarded soon. Zafrullah Khan comments on this incident: "whether that telegram came from the Government of Siam or from some other source, we do not know."⁴⁰ It is, of course, very difficult to answer this question. But the important fact is that the effect of that telegram was the automatic elimination of the anti-partitionist vote of Siam.

It is apparently in view of such instances of pressure-politics as those recorded earlier that James Forrestal indignantly told a visitor on 3 February 1948 that "the methods that had been used by people outside of the Executive branch of the government to bring coercion and duress on other nations in the General Assembly, bordered closely onto scandal."⁴¹ Nor were the nations of the General Assembly the only target of pressure. "Eleanor Roosevelt," writes Lilienthal, "... was incessantly prodding her husband's heir, Harry S. Truman, to put pressure on the State Department, whose officers were probably limiting their efforts to peaceful debates with foreign delegates."⁴² And the President was not the only source of pressure on the State Department. Under-Secretary of State Lovett reported to the Cabinet on

⁴⁰ Zafrullah Khan, op.cit., p. 19.

⁴¹ Millis, ed., op.cit., p. 363.

⁴² Lilienthal, op.cit., pp. 64 - 65.

1 December 1947, that "he had never in his life been subject to as much pressure as he had been in the three days beginning Thursday morning and ending Saturday night.. The zeal and activity of the Jews had almost resulted in defeating the objectives they were after." (Chief among those whom Lovett mentioned as the leaders of the pro-partitionist campaign were Robert Nathan and Herbert Bayard Swope.)⁴³ Lovett was so much irritated by Zionist pressure that when, on 13 December 1947, he was approached on the question of Palestine by Justice Felix Frankfurter, he refused to enter into the discussion. To the annoyance of the Judge, Lovett bluntly said that "he had had enough of Palestine for a time and did not want to hear of it again."⁴⁴

Forrestal reports that he was told by Loy Henderson of the State Department, on 9 January 1948, about the "very great pressure" he and Lovett had been subjected to by the Zionist spokesmen during the debate on partition in the U.N. Henderson also told Forrestal, in that connection, how "Felix Frankfurter and Justice Murphy had both sent messages to the Philippines delegate to the General Assembly strongly urging his vote."⁴⁵

⁴³ Millis, ed., op.cit., p. 346.

⁴⁴ Ibid., pp. 348 - 349.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 358.

On 27 November 1947, President Truman received a letter from Dr. Weizmann. The letter stated: "It is freely rumored in Washington that our people have exerted undue and excessive pressure on certain delegations and have thus 'over-played' their hand. I cannot speak for unauthorized persons, but I am in a position to assure you, my dear Mr. President, that there is no substance in this charge as far as our representatives are concerned. They have had a very limited number of contacts with all delegations and have endeavoured to lay the situation squarely before them. At no time have they gone beyond the limits of legitimate and moderate persuasion. With some delegations such as those of Greece and Liberia, we have had no more than one conversation throughout the present Assembly."⁴⁶ Truman revealingly comments in his memoirs on Weizmann's letter. "Unfortunately", writes Truman, "Dr. Weizmann was correct only to the extent that his immediate associates were concerned. The facts were that not only were these pressure movements around the United Nations unlike anything that had been seen there before but that the White House, too, was subjected to a constant barrage. I do not think I ever had so much pressure and propaganda aimed at the White House as I had in this instance. The persistence of a few of the extreme

⁴⁶ Truman, op.cit., v. II, p. 158.

Zionist leaders - actuated by political motives and engaging in political threats - disturbed and annoyed me." Truman then adds, perhaps in a spirit of self-defense: "Some [Zionists] were even suggesting that we pressure sovereign nations into favorable votes in the General Assembly ... We had aided Greece. We had, in fact, fathered the independence of the Philippines. But that did not make satellites of these nations or compel them to vote with us on the partitioning of Palestine or any other matter."⁴⁷ The accuracy of Mr. Truman's comment, as far as the partition vote is concerned, can be fairly assessed only in the light of all the facts recorded in this Chapter.

However, the general image one gets of the whole story of American policy during the debate on partition is one of complexity, diversity of motives, lack of harmony and, to repeat, the overlapping between the official American line (or lines) and the activities of non-official or semi-official Zionist and pro-Zionist American individuals. After all, the office of the elected President cannot be immune to the influence and pressures of a public opinion aroused to a high degree of sensitivity by an issue of far-reaching sentimental implications, and by the coordinated efforts of well-organized interest-groups. The State Department is

⁴⁷ Ibid.

theoretically (and perhaps practically) less susceptible than the President, but the facts recorded in the last several pages indicate that this relative immunity is only relative. In this context, one can better appreciate David Horowitz's assertion that American policy in the struggle-on-partition stage was decided by that "potent factor, which excelled all others operating on our [Zionist] behalf," and which was "the strong action and pressure exerted by American Jewry."⁴⁸ The London Times, in a comment by its New York correspondent, wrote after the adoption of the partition resolution that the U.N. delegates generally thought that "regardless of its merits or demerits and the joint support given by the Soviet Union and the United States, the partition scheme would have been carried in no other city than New York."⁴⁹

The factors which gave this effectiveness to Zionist influence on American policy on Palestine are too complex and varied. Not least important of these factors, however, is the electoral power, or impression of electoral power, which the Zionist movement in the United States had possessed for years. It is not within the scope of this specific chapter to elaborate on this point, nor is such a detailed elaboration, in fact, within the

⁴⁸ Horowitz, op.cit., p. 254.

⁴⁹ 1 December 1947, p. 4.

scope of the whole present study.⁵⁰ But it is interesting to note that Sir Mohammad Zafrullah Khan refers to this factor, then goes on: "As a matter of fact, one of the Jewish delegates representing the Jewish Agency told me with reference to the complaint of the Arab delegates that the Jews were putting pressure: Why should we not put pressure on the Government when we have got votes !" Zafrullah Khan then comments: "Though there was a formal denial on behalf of the United States Government, they did not deny it in private conversations. However, that was the main reason for the attitude of the United States."⁵¹

President Truman himself was reportedly explicit enough in admitting the force of this electoral factor. The American ex-envoy to Saudi Arabia reports in a book he wrote a revealing episode in this regard. The permanent American envoys to Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Lebanon, Syria and mandated Palestine, who specially went in a group to the President to report to him about the deteriorating prestige of the United States in the Middle East and the problem of Palestine, received from Truman the following answer: "I am sorry, gentlemen, but I have to answer to

⁵⁰ Reference, however, is made in Chapters I and VII of the present study. For a detailed study of the Jewish vote in the United States, see: Fucks, Lawrence H., The Political Behavior of American Jews (Glencoe, 1956).

⁵¹ Zafrullah Khan, op.cit., p. 18.

hundreds of thousands who are anxious for the success of Zionism; I do not have hundreds of thousands of Arabs among my constituents."⁵²

Zionist pressure on the President was not relieved by the adoption of the partition resolution. Truman admits: "The Jewish pressure on the White House did not diminish in the days following the partition vote in the U.N. Individuals and groups asked me, usually in rather quarrelsome and emotional ways, to stop the Arabs, to keep the British from supporting the Arabs, to furnish American soldiers, to do this, that, and the other. I think I can say that I kept my faith in the rightness of my policy in spite of some of the Jews."⁵³

⁵² Eddy, op.cit., pp. 36 - 37.

⁵³ Truman, op.cit., v. II, p. 160.

CHAPTER V

THE PERIOD OF HESITATION

I

The decided attitude of the American Government during the debate and vote on partition, no longer remained steadfast when the plan of partition reached the stage of implementation. The concrete responsibilities involved in implementation, and the actual confrontation with the realities of the situation in Palestine, imposed a mood of reconsideration on the American Government which manifested itself in the successive "reversals" that characterized American policy in that period. The story of American policy in the U.N. between December 1947 and middle of May 1948, eloquently illustrates this fact.

In accordance with the recommendation of the General Assembly in its partition resolution, the Security Council met on December 9, 1947. It took note of the letter of the Secretary General transmitting to the Council the text of the November Resolution, but it decided to postpone discussion of the matter until after it receives the first progress report of the Palestine (implementation) Commission set up in the November Resolution.

The Palestine Commission, in its turn, held its first meeting on January 9, 1948. Britain and the Jewish Agency designated representatives; the Arab Higher Committee did not. As the Commission carried on with its work,

the Zionist authorities seem to have felt that their initial disappointment with its composition was not unjustified. Whether the Commission was indeed devoid of the keen enthusiasm required for effective implementation, is another matter; the point is that the Zionist representatives had wanted a much more pro-Zionist commission, and kept judging the conduct of the Commission by that standard. As Horowitz himself reports, the Zionists had striven during the partition session of the General Assembly to have Guatemala, Uruguay, Poland and Norway on the Commission, and they were much disappointed (by the United States, primarily) for the eventual commission. Guatemala and Uruguay, represented by Dr. Garcia-Granados and Professor Fabregat respectively, were, of course, the most pro-Zionist among all U.N. members. Poland was, as the record of the second and third sessions indicates, the major pro-Zionist spokesman of the Communist block. The choice of Norway, finally, could have been related to the fact that the U.N. Secretary General, Mr. Trygve Lie, was of Norwegian nationality; there is no conclusive evidence however, to that effect.

Horowitz, in fact, calls the eventual composition of the Commission "the retort of the anti-Zionist forces intent upon wittling down the November resolution and defeating it on the enforcement level."¹ The general tone

¹ Horowitz, op.cit., p. 314.

of Horowitz's account even puts the blame for that on the United States. Garcia-Granados goes further than that. He bluntly terms the exclusion of his country and Uruguay from the Commission an American "intrigue". The explanation for this, as Garcia-Granados puts it, is that "the American delegation ... believed that the Commission would be hampered in its work if [it included] two Latin Americans as strongly pro-partitionists [as the representatives of Guatemala and Uruguay]." ²

Unconvincing as may be the contention that the United States had, as early as November, planned to "defeat" the scheme of partition "on the enforcement level," it was on this enforcement level, indeed, that later American reconsideration took place. By the end of February 1948, the situation in Palestine had become fairly crystallized, and the result of the activities of the Palestine Commission in the field of implementation had become observable enough to make the American Government take a studied attitude on the question of implementation. This attitude was officially announced by Mr. Austin in the Security Council, on 24 February.

The Security Council had met on 10 February, but decided to postpone consideration of the first progress report of the Palestine Commission until a later date when

² Garcia-Granados, op.cit., pp. 258 - 260.

another special report of the Commission was to be ready, too. On 24 February, the Security Council considered jointly the first monthly progress report of the Palestine Commission and its first special report. The two reports reviewed the deteriorating situation in Palestine, described the difficulties and requirements involved in the implementation of partition, and made specific recommendations to the Council.

The political situation in Palestine had drastically worsened since December 1947. As the gradual withdrawal of the Mandatory power from Palestine was creating a dangerous administrative vacuum, the outbursts of violent clashes between the Arab and Zionist Communities were increasing in pace and momentum. The first progress report of the Commission concerned itself with the obstacles hindering thorough cooperation between the British Government and the Commission.³ The other report focused on the problem of security in Palestine and outlined the requirements for implementation. It concluded: "It is the considered view of the Commission that the security forces of the

³ Zionist and pro-Zionist sources take great pains to emphasize the "obstructionist" attitude of the British Government towards the efforts of the Palestine Commission at implementation; some even claim that the British Government was deliberately trying to destroy the partition plan. (See, for instance: Weizmann, op.cit., pp. 469 - 471; Sacher, Harry, Israel: The Establishment of a State (London, 1952), pp. 100 - 106; Garcia-Granados, op.cit., pp. 270 - 271; Lie, op.cit., pp. 163 - 165.)

Mandatory Power, which at the present time prevent the situation from deteriorating completely into open warfare on an organized basis, must be replaced by an adequate non-Palestinian force which will assist law-abiding elements in both the Arab and Jewish Communities, organized under the general direction of the Commission, in maintaining order and security in Palestine, and thereby enabling the Commission to carry out the recommendations of the General Assembly. Otherwise, the period immediately following the termination of the Mandate will be a period of uncontrolled, widespread strife and bloodshed in Palestine, including the City of Jerusalem. This would be a catastrophic conclusion to an era "of international concern for the territory." The report of the Commission then unequivocally stated: "The sole motivation of the Commission is to obtain from the Security Council the effective assistance without which, it is firmly convinced, it cannot discharge the great responsibilities entrusted to it by the General Assembly." ⁴

When the Czechoslovakian Chairman of the Commission, Mr. Lisicky, introduced the two reports to the Security Council, the main theme for his emphasis was the

⁴ United Nations Palestine Commission, First Special Report to the Security Council: The Problem of Security in Palestine, 16 February 1948, Document A/AC. 21/9, pp. 18 - 19.

indispensable need for a U.N. military force to be used for pacification in Palestine and for the implementation of partition. Mr. Lisicky concluded his statement by saying: "The 'five lonely pilgrims' (the members of the Commission) cannot be permitted to remain lonely if their pilgrimage is to have any effect."⁵

But the United States had by then decided what attitude to take on the pilgrimage. The American representative in the Security Council, Mr. Austin, spoke immediately after the Chairman of the Commission. He gave an elaborate legal analysis of the powers and competence of the Security Council under the Charter, and then said that "if the Security Council should decide that it is necessary to use armed force to maintain international peace in connection with Palestine, the United States would be ready to consult under the Charter with a view to such action as may be necessary to maintain international peace." Mr. Austin, however, made a very basic reservation. He said: "The Security Council is authorized to take forceful measures with respect to Palestine to remove a threat to international peace", but "the Charter of the United Nations does not empower the Security Council to enforce a political settlement whether it is pursuant to a recommendation of the General Assembly or of the Security Council

⁵ United Nations, Security Council Official Records, Third year, 5 February - 2 March 1948, p. 264.

itself." In other words, "the Security Council's action... is directed to keeping the peace and not to enforcing partition." Mr. Austin's main concrete proposal was "to establish a committee of the Security Council comprising the five permanent Members, to look at once into the question of the possible threats to international peace arising in connection with the Palestine situation and to consult with the Palestine Commission, the Mandatory Power and representatives of the principal communities of Palestine concerning the implementation of the General Assembly resolution."⁶

It is this early manifestation of retreat on the enforcement level by the United States from the policy of partition that Dr. Weizmann is referring to as he writes: "When the Security Council began to discuss the problem at the end of February, the United States leadership was weak. Of the powers which had supported the November decision, only the Soviet Union still insisted on the assertion of the United Nations authority."⁷ In fact, Soviet criticism of the American position and pressure for stronger measures, came in the following month.

During February, Mr. Creech Jones, who was leading the British delegation to the U.N., repeated his Government's

⁶ Ibid., pp. 264 - 269.

⁷ Weizmann, op.cit., p. 472.

stand of unwillingness to participate in the enforcement of partition. He said that his Government was "too deeply involved in the past history of Palestine to be called upon to shoulder any further commitments."⁸ The Syrian delegate, Mr. El-Khoury, questioned in detail the legal and moral validity of the partition resolution and, asserting that "the recommendations of the General Assembly are legitimately subject to reconsideration by the Security Council," urged the Security Council to undertake that reconsideration.⁹ On the same day - 24 February - the Colombian delegate introduced a draft resolution providing for consultation among the permanent members with a view to undertaking joint action to preserve peace and prevent aggression, and providing for the setting up of a committee, to be composed of two permanent members and three non-permanent, to try to bring about an agreement between Arabs and Zionists and study the possibilities of reconsidering partition.¹⁰

The next day, the representative of the United States expressed his opposition to the Colombian draft resolution and introduced a resolution based on his own earlier statement. The American resolution provided for the acceptance by the Security Council, "subject to the

⁸ United Nations, Security Council, Official Records, Third Year, 5 February - 2 March 1948, p. 273.

⁹ Ibid., pp. 274 - 292.

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 292 - 293.

authority of the Security Council, under the Charter", of the requests addressed by the General Assembly in the November Resolution. (The November Resolution requested the Security Council to determine whether the situation in Palestine constitutes a threat to the peace, and define, under Article 39, any attempt to alter by force the settlement envisaged as a threat to the peace, breach of the peace or act of aggression.)¹¹ The American draft resolution also provided for the establishment of a committee comprising the five permanent members to report and recommend to the Security Council with regard to the situation in Palestine, and to consult with the Palestine Commission, the Mandatory Power and the parties concerned regarding the implementation of partition.¹² It was, incidentally, at this meeting that the Arabs first informed the Council, through the Egyptian delegate, that "if this trend [towards implementation] continues, a point will be reached at which the surrounding Arab countries will have no choice but to rush to the rescue of the Arabs of Palestine."¹³

Between 25 February and 5 March, debate in the Security Council focused on the idea of consultation among the permanent members with a view to implementation, which

¹¹ See paragraph 7 of Resolution (181 (II) A).

¹² United Nations, Security Council, Official Records, Third Year, 5 February - 2 March 1948, pp. 294 - 295.

¹³ Ibid., p. 301.

had been proposed by the United States. The Belgian representative proposed (27 February) an amendment that was rejected by the American representative (2 March) on the grounds that it would weaken the American resolution. In the course of re-explaining his resolution, the American delegate advanced a politically significant legal interpretation of the provisions of the Charter in connection with the question of implementation. He claimed that "under Article 39 the Security Council is under a mandate to determine the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression. It may regard attempts to alter by force the settlement envisaged by this partition resolution as constituting such a threat. The obligation must be carried out by the process of determination, and not solely at the request of the General Assembly." The purpose of the American resolution, he said, was to look into the matter to determine whether such a situation as provided for in the Charter exists, and to find out what proper action to take.¹⁴

It was clear in Mr. Austin's statement that the American Government was trying to avoid getting involved in the forcible implementation of partition. In fact, Mr. Austin said explicitly in the same statement that "armed force cannot be used for implementation of the plan, because

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 398 - 401.

the Charter limits the use of United Nations force expressly to threats to and breaches of the peace and aggressions affecting international peace. Therefore, we must interpret the General Assembly resolution as meaning that the United Nations measures to implement this resolution are peaceful measures."¹⁵

Mr. Austin's statement, making this legal interpretation of the Charter, raised the question of the powers and competence of the Security Council. Mr. Trygve Lie, the U.N. Secretary General, was ready with an interpretation of his own which differed from that of the American spokesman. In his book, which was published later, Trygve Lie criticizes the position taken by the United States on legal as well as on practical grounds. He recounts the efforts he made at that time to counter-argue the position taken by the United States and to influence other members of the Security Council in favor of strong measures of implementation. He also recounts how he instructed the Secretariat to distribute to members of the Security Council a paper advancing the view that the implementation of partition was within the competence of the Security Council, and how Dr. Arce of Argentina, who, Trygve Lie claims, "espoused the Arab viewpoint", strongly attacked the paper and regarded the move an unjustifiable intervention by the Secretariat.¹⁶

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 399.

¹⁶ Lie, op.cit., pp. 167 - 168.

Whether this act by the Secretary General was politically-motivated or done merely in persuance of what the Secretary General considered his proper field of activity, is, naturally, very difficult to tell. One cannot, however, detach this episode from the general context of Mr. Trygve Lie's declared sympathy with Zionism.¹⁷ It is also relevant to note the statement made by the representative of the Jewish Agency, David Horowitz, in his book, about that period: "We had close and cordial relations with the U.N. Secretariat, and Shertok had many meetings with Trygve Lie, who did much to promote the execution of the [partition] resolution."¹⁸ Dr. Weizmann also pays similar tribute to Trygve Lie, describing him (perhaps in an understatement) as a person "who, within the powers granted him by the Charter, zealously asserted the Assembly's authority."¹⁹

Be the case what it may, the statement of the British representative, which was made on the same day as that of the American representative - 2 March - avoided discussion of the legal problem raised by the American delegate. Mr. Greech Jones said that his Government would not take part in any committee of permanent members for

¹⁷ See above, pp. 71-73.

¹⁸ Horowitz, op.cit., p. 330.

¹⁹ Weizmann, op.cit., pp. 475 - 476.

the purpose envisaged by the American resolution.²⁰

At this juncture the Soviet representative intervened for the first time in the debate. Mr. Gromyko expressed the view that there was no justifiable basis for consultation among the big five in a closed committee. "None of the great Powers should hide behind a committee," he said. He preferred direct consultation among those powers, and therefore proposed the deletion of that part of the American draft resolution which dealt with the formation of a committee. He, however, accepted paragraph 1 of the U.S. draft resolution, which expressed the Security Council's acceptance of the requests addressed to it by the General Assembly in the partition resolution.²¹

A modified version of the American resolution was ultimately adopted by the Security Council on 5 March. The resolution provided for consultation among the permanent members for the purpose of reporting and recommending to the Security Council about the guidance the Council might give to the Palestine Commission in the implementation of partition. The consultations and reporting were to take place within ten days.

As the permanent members began their consultations in accordance with the Security Council resolution, the

²⁰ United Nations, Security Council, Official Records, Third Year, 5 February - 2 March 1948, pp. 402 - 405.

²¹ Ibid., pp. 405 - 407.

real center of gravity of events was again becoming the back-stage interplay of forces in the American Government. The White House, whose Zionist friends were alarmed at the signs of an American reversal of policy in the Security Council, was again subjected to an intensive Zionist pressure. President Truman in his memoirs frankly describes that pressure and his own irritation at it. So much was the President annoyed that, he reports, "as the pressure mounted, I found it necessary to give instructions that I did not want to be approached by any more spokesmen for the extreme Zionist cause." Dr. Weizmann himself, not particularly noted as an "extreme" Zionist leader, was placed by the President in that category: "I was even so disturbed that I put off seeing Dr. Chaim Weizmann, who had returned to the United States and had asked for an interview with me."²²

Dr. Weizmann, however, ultimately managed to get that interview; and the story of that mysterious encounter, which took place on 18 March, is extremely enlightening for any assessment of the events that followed it. The story goes as follows: Dr Weizmann, "because of his grave disquiet over the reports that the American Government had reversed its policy",²³ went to the United States and asked for an interview with the President. President Truman,

²² Truman, op.cit., v. II, p. 160.

²³ Welles, op.cit., p. 71.

irritated by Zionist pressure, denied him that meeting. Weizmann went to Edward Jacobson—a Jew who had been Truman's old store-partner — and asked him to try to convince Truman to offer him that interview. With some effort, Jacobson was ultimately able to convince the President, and Dr. Weizmann secretly met President Truman. "The visit was ... entirely off the record."²⁴

What took place in that meeting has not been authoritatively revealed yet. President Truman himself does not report about that; his only comment in his memoirs is that "when [Dr. Weizmann] left my office I felt that he had reached a full understanding of my policy and that I knew what it was he wanted."²⁵

Sumner Welles, commenting on that meeting, writes: "In the course of that interview President Truman assured Doctor Weizmann that the position of the United States had not changed in the slightest degree, and that the Government was also giving 'very careful thought' to the desirability of lifting the arms embargo."²⁶ (The embargo on arms to Palestine had been imposed by the American Government shortly after the adoption of the partition resolution).

²⁴ The story of the meeting is recorded in Truman, op.cit., v. II, pp. 160 - 161.

²⁵ Ibid., v. II, p. 161.

²⁶ Welles, op.cit., p. 71.

Dr. Weizmann's own comment on the interview invokes the widely-reported disparity between the President and his State Department. Weizmann writes: "The President was sympathetic personally, and still indicated a firm resolve to press forward with partition. I doubt, however, whether he was himself aware of the extent to which his own policy and purpose had been blocked by subordinates in the State Department."²⁷ It is obvious that the comment outwardly indicates no glorious success won by Dr. Weizmann to his cause in that meeting. Dr. Weizmann, however, may have had his own reasons not to reveal any such success if there really had^{been} any. Truman's and Sumner Welles' above-quoted confident assertions about the agreement that occurred between Truman and Weizmann in that meeting, cannot be carelessly dismissed.

There is another key personality who also has something to say about the problem. David Horowitz, who was an intimate observer (and actor) during that period, traces back the sudden American recognition of Israel to that meeting. Writing about the period under review, Horowitz asserts that Dr. Weizmann, "in talks with President Truman was able to prepare the ground for the change in the American attitude that came about with the proclamation of the State of Israel." No meetings are known to have

²⁷ Weizmann, op.cit., p. 472.

²⁸ Horowitz, op.cit., p. 330.

occured between Truman and Weizmann during that period other than that of 18 March. Was, then, this - a pledge by the President of immediate American recognition of Israel as soon as it was proclaimed - the real gain Weizmann was able to elicit from his meeting with the President ? Perhaps it was. But it is to be kept in mind that even if this was the case, the President, for tactical or other reasons, did not immediately bring about in his Government's policy any essential change or signs of change. In fact, the American delegation to the U.N. persued, with no little efficiency, the policy of retreat from partition, which had begun late in February, and went foreward with the new American plans that came to be rightly termed the American "reversal". There are, furthermore, as will become better observed later, no signs that the delegation to the U.N., and for that matter the whole State Department, were in any way aware of the President's plan's for a "counter-reversal".

The events at the U.N. which took place on the day following the Truman-Weizmann meeting - 19 March - showed some dramatic aspects of the new American policy of departure from partition. The departure was, in fact, so drastic as to earn the United States Zionist and Soviet criticism on that same day.

On that day, the report of the permanent members about their consultations was submitted to the Security

Council by the American delegate. The report recorded some facts about the situation in Palestine, notable among which is that "the partition plan cannot be implemented by peaceful means under present conditions"; that "a considerable number of incursions of illegal arms and armed elements into Palestine have occurred by land and sea"; and that "large scale fighting between the two communities can be expected." The report recommended: "(a) That the Security Council should make it clear to the parties and Governments concerned that the Security Council is determined not to permit the existence of a threat to international peace in Palestine, and (b) that the Security Council should take further action by all means available to it to bring about the immediate cessation of violence and the restoration of peace and order in Palestine."²⁹

The Soviet representative stated his Government's reservations and comments on the report. He expressed partial acceptance of the report, urging the Security Council to "give these statements more concrete form, and develop them as a basis for practical decisions." Mr. Gromyko also criticized the attitude of the American Government throughout the big-five consultations, considering it responsible for the allegedly false claim, stated in the report, that armed infiltration into Palestine was taking

²⁹ United Nations, Security Council, Official Records, Third Year, 3 - 31 March 1948, pp. 142 - 143.

place "by land and by sea." Mr. Gromyko asserted that that phrase was deliberately calculated "to complicate the situation still further" by trying to confuse the Council about the real source of danger to the implementation of partition. (Infiltration "by sea" implicitly charges the Zionists with an equal share of responsibility as the Arabs for the situation in Palestine). Mr. Gromyko's statement clearly implied that all this was a manifestation of a deliberate American withdrawal from the responsibility of implementation imposed by the November Resolution. In fact, the Soviet delegate expressly spoke of the attempts made by the American representative throughout the big-five consultations to bring about a reconsideration of the Resolution. Concluding his statement, the Soviet delegate asserted that "the persistent demand to renew the consultations from the very beginning - and with the aim, moreover, of modifying the already adopted decision on Palestine - cannot be justified."³⁰

In the afternoon of that same day - 19 March - the representative of the United States made a very significant statement which climaxed the American "reversal" policy. He argued that "the United Nations does not automatically fall heir to the responsibilities either of the League of Nations or of the Mandatory Power in respect of the Palestine Mandate." He also said that "a unilateral decision by the United

³⁰ Ibid., pp. 143 - 148.

Kingdom to terminate the Palestine Mandate cannot automatically commit the United Nations to responsibility for governing that country." The American delegate, therefore, concluded that "a temporary trusteeship for Palestine should be established under the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations to maintain the peace and to afford the Jews and Arabs of Palestine, who must live together, further opportunity to reach an agreement regarding the future government of that country. Such a United Nations trusteeship would, of course, be without prejudice to the character of the eventual political settlement, which we hope can be achieved without long delay." Mr. Austin then proposed the immediate convocation of a special session of the General Assembly, and that the Security Council should instruct the Palestine Commission to suspend its effort of implementation.³¹

The immediate reaction of the representative of the Jewish Agency, who spoke right after the American delegate, was to describe the American statement as "a shocking reversal" in the American position and "a fateful capitulation ... to threats and intimidation." He strongly criticized the American stand, and concluded by saying: "The decision of the General Assembly remains valid for the Jewish people. We have accepted it and we are prepared

³¹ Ibid., pp. 157 - 168.

to abide by it. If the United Nations Palestine Commission is unable to carry out the mandates which were assigned to it by the General Assembly, the Jewish people of Palestine will move forward in the spirit of the resolution and do everything which is dictated by considerations of national survival and considerations of justice and historic rights."³²

The Soviet representative also found in the American statement his opportunity for criticizing American policy. He claimed that he had felt the attitude taken by the American delegate since the early stage of the consultations among the permanent members. The Soviet representative added: "I do not know what happened before, but it is the logical sequence of the position which the United States representative took at the first meeting of the permanent members of the Security Council." He also said that he did not agree that partition could not be implemented peacefully.³³

Commenting on this development, and relating it to the attitude of the United States during the consultations among the permanent members, the Zionist-sympathizer U.N. Secretary General, Trygve Lie, writes: "From the start, the consultations were a frustrating affair. Only the

³² Ibid., pp. 168 - 170.

³³ Ibid., pp. 171 - 172.

Soviet Union seemed to be seriously intent about implementing partition; the United States clearly was not. Rumors were flying that the United States was seeking to moderate the Arab stand even at the price of abandoning partition; and, in such an atmosphere, firm action by the Council or its permanent Members was out of the question. As it turned out the United States would in effect repudiate partition on the very day, March 19, when the committee of permanent Members reported on its recommendations for 'implementing' partition."³⁴

Dismissing the successive assertions made by the American representative that the new trusteeship proposal was not inconsistent with the partition resolution, Sumner Welles writes: "Whatever form the protestations of the American Government might still take there could now be no further doubt that the United States had completely reversed its policy, and had definitely abandoned the plan for the partition with economic union of Palestine."³⁵

Shortly after the American statement in the Security Council embodying the reversal, Dr. Weizmann, who was then in New York, was visited by the major American delegates to the U.N., Austin, Jessup and Ross who tried to convince him to support the trusteeship proposal. But

³⁴ Lie, op.cit., p. 169.

³⁵ Welles, op.cit., p. 71.

Weizmann was adamant in his rejection.³⁶

Although, on 24 March, the representative of the Jewish Agency announced the determination of the Zionists to oppose both trusteeship and any delay in the establishment of the Jewish State, the United States went on with its trusteeship policy. The United States representative submitted, on 30 March, a draft resolution providing for the convocation of a special session of the General Assembly. He also submitted another draft resolution which ordered an immediate truce in Palestine and provided for the proper arrangements related thereto.³⁷ Again, the United States was vehemently criticized by the Soviet representative for its abandonment of partition.³⁸

The following day, 1 April, the Security Council adopted both American resolutions, and it entrusted the President of the Security Council with the task of discussing the details of the truce with the Arab and Zionist representatives. From that date on, the Security Council engaged itself primarily in the problem of security in Palestine, and in working out the appropriate machinery for controlling violence therein, leaving it to the General Assembly, which opened on 16 April, to find out a workable solution for the general problem of Palestine.

³⁶ Weizmann, op.cit., p. 474.

³⁷ United Nations, Security Council, Official Records, Third Year, 3 - 31 March 1948, pp. 246 - 248.

³⁸ Ibid., pp. 248 - 253.

CHAPTER VI

THE PERIOD OF HESITATION

II

For a public opinion as strongly sympathetic to Zionism as the American public opinion, the American trusteeship reversal, so thoroughly condemned by the Zionist movement, could hardly pass without facing active resistance. President Truman's statement of 25 March in justification of the new American attitude, which invoked the security and self-interest of the United States as well as the claim that "trusteeship is not proposed as a substitute for the partition plan",¹ could not stop the wave of bitter criticism which appeared in leading American papers and influential circles. A large sector of the American public, inadequately prepared for the new adjustment in American policy, and effectively mobilized by well-trained Zionist organizations, was in no position to appreciate the pressing considerations of national policy which had led such a pro-Zionist President as Truman to undertake that adjustment. The editorials and comments of, for example, the New York Herald Tribune and the traditionally moderate New York Times, unmistakably reflected, throughout March and April, this bitter

¹ United States Department of State Bulletin, v. 18, April - June 1948, p. 451.

reaction against the new American policy. The statements of Congressmen and Congressional debates, throughout that period, emphasized the same theme of protestation and indignation. Lillienthal quotes a part of a statement by a Democratic Congressman, Arthur Klein, of Brooklyn, which describes the move as "the most terrible sell out of the common people since Munich." (Lillienthal also reports a statement by Dr. Neumann, President of the Zionist Organization of America, in which Dr. Neumann threatened that "any U.N. abandonment of partition would only revive Jewish claims to all of Palestine.")²

Lillienthal mentions other prominent Americans among those who threw all their weight against the new change, such as Mrs. Roosevelt and Sumner Welles. Weizmann, too, regards Welles as "foremost" among the defenders of the Zionist cause and critics of the trusteeship policy.³ Welles, in fact, devotes a considerable part of his book on Palestine - "We Need Not Fail" - to criticizing the grounds of the American reversal and the inconsistency involved therein.⁴ He also tries to enumerate the factors which prompted the President to acquiesce in the new policy.

² Lillienthal, op.cit., pp. 77 - 80.

³ Weizmann, op.cit., p. 476.

⁴ Welles, op.cit., pp. 83 - 89, 98 - 103.

Trygve Lie also suggests some explanations for the change in American policy away from partition. He writes with, apparently, deliberate reservation: "The American turnabout on partition has never been explained. Perhaps Washington, in voting for partition, expected milder opposition from the Arabs and more substantial cooperation from the British; perhaps, as has been charged, some quarters feared the effect of Washington's support of partition upon the oil concessions American interests held in Arab territories; or perhaps there was a belief that forcing partition through would arouse a bitter resentment that would turn the Arab States toward Moscow and thus promote Soviet interests in the Middle East."⁵ There seems to be involved a combination of all these elements.⁶

Many sources explain the successive changes in American policy on Palestine in terms of the sharp difference of opinion that prevailed between the White House, on the one hand, and the State Department and other experts, on the other.⁷ The change in favor of trusteeship at the expense of partition would, accordingly, represent a temporary victory for the experts. The well-known Zionist

⁵ Lie, op.cit., p. 170.

⁶ See above, Chapter I; also below, Chapter VII, particularly pp. 141 - 148.

⁷ For a general background on the problem see above, Chapter I. A more detailed discussion of the questions appears in Chapter VII.

publicist, Harry Sacher, accepts this explanation, and, presenting it in terms of his own position, writes: "The State Department was notoriously not in harmony with the President, and there was point in Mr. Gromyko's bitter retort that the American Government was putting oil and strategic interests before U.N. interests."⁸ Sacher, emphasizing a point which recurs in Zionist political writings, claims that the reversal was "plotted" by the State Department and the British Foreign Office. He adds that "when on 28th April President Truman appointed Mr. Hilldring special assistant to Mr. Marshall in charge of Palestine affairs, it was recognized that the President had taken hold again, and that the maneuver of the State Department in conjunction with the Foreign Office to destroy partition had failed."⁹ The outspokenly pro-Zionist ex-Ambassador to Israel, James G. McDonald, goes further than that; he claims that President Truman did not authorize the whole move. McDonald alleges that Clark Clifford, Truman's advisor, told him that when Ambassador Austin declared his Government's trusteeship plan, "he had acted on the Department's instructions and without the President's knowledge or consent."¹⁰

⁸ Sacher, op.cit., p. 106.

⁹ Ibid., p. 107.

¹⁰ McDonald, op.cit., pp. 10 - 11.

Truman, in his memoirs, does not endorse this last claim; he tries to defend the move as perfectly consistent with the earlier line of policy the United States had followed. "This was not a rejection of partition," he writes, "but rather an effort to postpone its effective date until proper conditions for the establishment of self-government in the two parts might be established." Therefore, Truman continues, "the State Department's trusteeship proposal was not contrary to my policy." Moreover, "there were ... some tactical advantages to a shift of the debate from the Security Council with its veto to the Trusteeship Council, where decisions were made by majority vote. In addition, it was only a matter of weeks before the British would leave Palestine and thus change the entire situation. There was always a chance that the United Nations might find a solution to forestall the inevitable outbreak of violence, so it seemed worth while to allow that proposal to be discussed in the meanwhile."¹¹

In fact, Truman suggests that the ostensible reversal in American policy was neither unexpected by Weizmann nor disapproved by him. Commenting on his meeting with Weizmann on 18 March, Truman writes: "I knew what it was he [Weizmann] wanted." He adds: "That this was so was shown the following day." But the following day was

¹¹ Truman, op.cit., v. II, p. 163.

the day of the "reversal". Truman later writes: "Some Zionist spokesmen branded this [the trusteeship proposal] as a reversal of American policy. Dr. Weizmann, however, was one of the few prominent Zionists who did not choose this opportunity to castigate American policy. He knew, I am sure, what the direction of American policy really was." When a prominent Zionist, Judge Rosenman, called on the President few days later, Truman "asked him to see Dr. Weizmann and tell him that there was not and would not be any change in the long policy he and I had talked about."¹² One is again led to believe that the trusteeship move was a tactical concession by the President to his State Department, calculated to be offset later by the President's sudden recognition of the Jewish State in mid-May.

But why should the President concede to his State Department, even though temporarily? The President's position on Palestine was vulnerable, from a policy-maker's point of view, in a very important respect. As much as he was influenced by the pro-Zionist sympathy of the American public, President Truman was also committed before the American public to a position of military non-involvement. After the adoption of partition, when the problem of implementation came to the forefront, President Truman was

¹² Ibid., pp. 161 - 162.

forced to remind his Cabinet of the fact that "he had repeatedly made the statement that American armed forces could not be used toward this end." This left the Cabinet in a dilemma: how could the United States, as Truman's Secretary of Defense put it, "avoid meeting that issue if participation by our forces is asked by the United Nations."¹³

This factor reinforced the position of the "experts", who had opposed the policy of partition right from the beginning. On 29 January 1948, Secretary of Defense Forrestal and some of his assistants met with a group of high officials of the State Department, among them Loy Henderson and Dean Rusk. Henderson argued that the General Assembly had only made a recommendation, and that its implementation was conditional upon its proving "just and workable." From that meeting emerged the theory, later strongly advocated by Forrestal, that the "unworkability" of partition justifies its "re-examination."¹⁴

But there was an additional factor, more ironical even than the President's paradoxical commitments to the American public. There was, reportedly, a physical impossibility involved in the implementation of partition as far as American participation was concerned. The deployable

¹³ Millis, ed., op.cit., p. 346.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 362.

American troops, available during the discussion on forcible implementation, were incomparably smaller than the force required. On 4 March 1948, Forrestal pointed out to an influential Democratic leader, Senator Walter F. George, that the deployable Army troops left totalled less than 30,000 in addition to 23,000 Marines, whereas the British had 90,000 troops in Palestine just to police the area.¹⁵ General Gruenther had estimated, in February, the troops required for implementation at 80,000-160,000 troops.¹⁶

The problem persisted even after the declaration of the shift in favor of trusteeship. Forrestal reports that even after the shift, the Administration, of which Mr. Forrestal was a prominent member, had no clear idea of how to implement its new proposal. On 29 March, Under-Secretary of State Lovett called Forrestal to ask him about American readiness for participation in the implementation of trusteeship. Forrestal reports his answer: "I said that at that moment we did not have such forces available and that I did not see how we could escape making an effort to contribute." When Forrestal talked the matter over with the President, the latter "said he did not want to make any firm commitment to send troops

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 386.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 376.

into Palestine." The President, however, authorized the American delegate at the U.N., "in case he was cornered", to say "that we would participate in the implementation of the trusteeship mandate ... up to the limits of our ability." Lovett was also asked to write down the precise wording of what the delegate was going to say, and have it checked at the White House.¹⁷

It is, moreover, a revealing fact that, throughout March and April, the State Department kept stressing to the Cabinet, in vain, the Department's need for concrete information about the forces the United States was capable of deploying to "police" a Palestine trusteeship. The Joint Chiefs of Staff invariably answered that no adequate troops were available.¹⁸ Against such a background was the State Department (and its delegation to U.N.) laboring throughout the "period of hesitation."

When the second special session of the General Assembly was opened on 16 April, the United States delegation had, thus, a rather tortuous and inadequate formula to offer. The practical defect from which the partition plan had suffered - i.e. the lack of concrete provisions for implementation - was not overcome in the new trusteeship proposal. But, on the other hand, there was now, with

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 405 - 406.

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 410 - 411.

the convocation of a special session of the Assembly, a wider scope for working out a practical solution for the Palestine problem outside the framework of the partition plan.

On 19 April, the General Assembly approved the Agenda and referred the Palestine question to the First Committee. Dr. Arce of Argentina and Dr. Tsiang of China were elected Presidents of the General Assembly and the First Committee respectively. This latter fact by itself indicated, notably for the Zionists, that the United States was not planning to press forward strongly with the Zionist demands. Neither Argentina nor China had voted in favor of partition, and the fact that the United States did not block the election of their representatives for the two major posts in the Assembly indicated, from the point of view of Sumner Welles, that the United States was "lukewarm" in influencing the deliberations of the Assembly.¹⁹ Perhaps this was not indeed a sign that the United States was reluctant to influence the deliberations, but it perhaps was a sign that she was abandoning her partition attitude.

Mr. Austin's opening statement, on 20 April, was another landmark in the American "reversal". Mr. Austin made a long speech in which he proposed "the establishment of a temporary trusteeship which would provide a government

¹⁹ Welles, op.cit., pp. 104 - 105.

and essential public services in Palestine pending further negotiations." He presented a working paper of a general character²⁰ as a basis for a more detailed agreement to be worked out by the Fourth (Trusteeship) Committee. He, however, stated that "the agreement should be subject to prompt termination whenever general agreement was reached upon a permanent solution of the Palestine problem." Such a "permanent solution", it is significant to note, Mr. Austin defined in terms of the partition plan "or ... any other solution which might be agreed upon by the Jews and Arabs of that country." Mr. Austin added that his Government "was willing to undertake its share of responsibility for the provision of police forces which would be required during a truce and a temporary trusteeship." He, however, pointed out that his Government was not prepared to act alone in the matter and its participation was conditional upon a readiness of other Governments to provide similar assistance."²¹

It is interesting to note what the pro-partitionist Mr. Trygve Lie says about this American expression of willingness to participate in enforcing trusteeship. By April

²⁰ Document A/C. 1/277.

²¹ Official Records of the Second Special Session of the General Assembly, v. II, Main Committees, Summary Records, 16 April - 14 May 1948, pp. 4 - 10.

Zionist forces in Palestine had already occupied a considerable part of both territories assigned by the November Resolution to the Arab and Jewish States. So Mr. Trygve Lie writes: "In view of the de facto partition of Palestine which already was dissolving British authority, this amounted to proposing that the United Nations take enforcement action against partition."²²

Mr. Austin's statement invited violent criticism from the representative of the Soviet Union. Mr. Gromyko, speaking in the same meeting of the First Committee, attacked the American plan and general attitude. He accused the United States of trying to destroy the partition resolution in conjunction with the British Government. He also criticized the fact that "whereas the United States had originally used all its influence to encourage the adoption of the partition plan, it had immediately afterwards changed its policy on the question." Mr. Gromyko claimed that the change in the American attitude "had been dictated by the oil interests and military interests of that country." He also attacked the attitude of the United Kingdom with regard to implementation and charged it with complicity with the Arabs. The Soviet representative finally stated that his Government's position was still in favor of the implementation of partition.²³

²² Lie, op.cit., p. 172.

²³ Official Records of the Second Special Session of the General Assembly, v. II, Main Committees, Summary Records, 16 April - 14 May 1948, pp. 17 - 20.

Later in the debate, the Arab spokesmen repeated their arguments against partition and called for its abandonment by the Assembly. The spokesman of the Jewish Agency criticized the way in which the Security Council had handled the question of implementation, and expressed the Zionist movement's rejection of the American trusteeship plan. He threatened that any form of trusteeship would have to be imposed by force, and announced that the Jewish State was going to be established on 15 May.

On 26 April, the general debate was interrupted and a vote was taken on a specific draft resolution dealing with the protection of the City of Jerusalem. The problem of maintaining order in Jerusalem had been raised earlier by the Swedish representative as an urgent problem, without prejudice to the larger Palestine issue. A draft resolution, backed by the United States, proposed entrusting the Trusteeship Council with the task of studying the problem and reporting to the General Assembly. When Australia, primarily supported by the Communist countries, proposed the formation of a sub-committee of the First Committee instead, the proposal was defeated and the First Committee voted in favor of ^{the} American-backed resolution. On the same day the General Assembly endorsed the resolution of the Political Committee.

As the First Committee resumed its debate on the general question of Palestine, the Trusteeship Council was

carrying out the new task assigned to it by the Assembly. By that time the Trusteeship Council had already become familiar with the Palestine question and the specific conditions of Jerusalem, the November Resolution having assigned to it the responsibility of working out a detailed statute for the City of Jerusalem within five months.²⁴

The Council had, in fact, agreed on a modified version of a report drawn up by a special sub-committee which included the United States and the United Kingdom (but not the Soviet Union). The Trusteeship Council was thus awaiting further instructions from the General Assembly, when it received the new responsibility of studying and recommending about the protection of the City of Jerusalem.

The Trusteeship Council carried out its task efficiently, and was able, in a short time, to bring about a cease-fire in Jerusalem and some sort of agreement on a number of principles among the Arabs, the Zionists and the Mandatory Power. It reported to the General Assembly on 6 May.

In the meantime, the First Committee continued its debate on the general question of Palestine and the trusteeship proposal. The representatives of Guatemala (Garcia-Granados) and Uruguay (Fabregat) played their traditional

²⁴ See Resolution (181 (II) A).

role as advocates of the Jewish Agency's case.²⁵ They criticized the new attitude of the United States Government.²⁶ So, too, did the representatives of the Communist block, whose criticism was more vehement. They pointed out the contradiction between the earlier American claim that partition could not be implemented by force and the United States later readiness to implement trusteeship by force.²⁷ The representative of New Zealand, Sir Carl Berendson, also strongly defended partition, and earned a compliment for that from Dr. Weizmann.²⁸

Two Arab spokesmen, the Lebanese on 23 April and the Arab Higher Committee's on 26 April, expressed a conditional readiness to consider the trusteeship proposal on the ground that it was only a temporary measure aiming ultimately at a solution acceptable to the Arabs.²⁹ As a reply to these statements and the statements of other representatives, the American delegate re-defined his

²⁵ Weizmann describes the two Latin American delegates as "the ever gallant defenders of the Jewish cause." He reports that during that session of the General Assembly he "was in close contact" with both of them. (op.cit., p. 475.)

²⁶ Official Records of the Second Special Session of the General Assembly, v. II, Main Committees, Summary Records, 16 April - 14 May 1948, pp. 82 - 86, 87 - 92.

²⁷ See, for instance, the statement of the Polish representative: Ibid., pp. 101 - 107.

²⁸ Weizmann, op.cit., p. 475.

²⁹ Official Records of the Second Special Session of the General Assembly, v. II, Main Committees, Summary Records, 16 April - 14 May 1948, pp. 69, 97.

proposal as "a military and political stand-still to save human life and to make possible further negotiations regarding a final political settlement."³⁰ In the meantime, Britain, as Weizmann puts it, was "showing no enthusiasm for the ... proposal of trusteeship."³¹

On 27 April, the First Committee decided to begin the examination of the American working paper on trusteeship in the First Committee instead of the Fourth (Trusteeship) Committee, as had been proposed. After a long discussion, an amended Guatemalan-Cuban-American resolution was adopted, which provided for the establishment of a sub-committee - Sub-Committee 9. The task of the sub-committee was to consider all issues and data related to the problem of establishing a provisional regime for Palestine, the American trusteeship paper being one of its bases. Both the United States and the Soviet Union were to be members of Sub-Committee 9.

As Sub-Committee 9 of the First Committee was going on with its work, the General Assembly considered, on 6 May, the report of the Trusteeship Council on the protection of the City of Jerusalem. The United States had played a leading role, in the Trusteeship Council, both in the formulation and ultimate adoption of the report, which was now in the form of a resolution. After

³⁰ Ibid., p. 116.

³¹ Weizmann, op.cit., p. 474.

slight modification, the resolution was adopted by the First Committee.

The United States then introduced another draft resolution providing for the establishment of another sub-committee - Sub-Committee 10 - to examine further the protection and temporary administration of the City of Jerusalem. With slight amendment, the resolution was adopted on 11 May.

Meanwhile, Sub-Committee 9 (on the general question of Palestine) was actively engaged in its task. It finally adopted an amended United States resolution, rejecting several amendments by the Polish delegate. The resolution, as adopted,³² "strongly supported" the efforts of the Security Council aiming at a truce in Palestine. It also "empowered" a U.N. Mediator, to be chosen by the permanent members, to "promote a peaceful adjustment of the situation in Palestine" as well as to undertake other responsibilities therein. The resolution also provided for the suspension, "as of 1 June 1948", of the efforts of the Palestine (implementation) Commission. It differed from the original American proposal in some minor respects. For example, instead of defining the major responsibility of the proposed Mediator as the promotion of "agreement on the future government of Palestine," which was the definition made in

³² Document A/C.1/299.

the American draft, the adopted resolution defined his function as the promotion of "a peaceful adjustment of the situation in Palestine." Instead of providing for the discharge of the Palestine Commission, the resolution provided for its suspension.

The Polish amendments which were rejected by the Sub-Committee provided primarily for the setting up of a mediation commission instead of an individual mediator, and for the deletion of that part of the American draft which deals with the discharge of the Palestine Commission. The Polish amendments also provided that the resolution does not prejudice "the rights and legal position of the parties concerned," and were stronger in the implicit warning to the Arab Governments, in the preamble.³³

This report of Sub-Committee 9 reached the political Committee on May 13. The American representative supported with enthusiasm the resolution which the report incorporated. He pointed out that no progress had been made in the peaceful implementation of partition or in the provision of U.N. forces. The American representative expressed the willingness of his Government to contribute to the forces required for the enforcement of trusteeship, but he reminded the Committee that no other Government had

³³ More about the discussions in Sub-Committee 9 can be found in the Yearbook of the United Nations, 1947 - 48 (New York, September 1949), pp. 275 - 276.

expressed similar readiness. He finally urged the Committee to endorse the proposal of Sub-Committee 9, asserting that the proposal was based on the conviction that "peace depended, not upon force, but upon the process of reconciliation."³⁴

The main opposition came from the Communist block. Although other representatives also criticized the proposal (the representative of New Zealand called it "pitifully inadequate" and a "departure from the principles agreed upon at the previous session of the Assembly"³⁵), the most concentrated attack came from Czechoslovakia, Poland and the Ukrainian S.S.R. The representative of Czechoslovakia, on 14 May, protested against the manner in which the work had been conducted, and questioned the basic American assumption.³⁶ The Polish representative vigorously criticized the resolution of Sub-Committee 9 and claimed that it was the product of an American maneuver to prevent the implementation of partition. He reintroduced almost all the amendments he had proposed in Sub-Committee 9.³⁷ The representative of the Ukrainian S.S.R. expressed similar views.³⁸

³⁴ Official Records of the Second Special Session of the General Assembly, v. II, Main Committees, Summary Records, 16 April - 14 May 1948, pp. 242 - 247.

³⁵ Ibid., pp. 250 - 251.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 251.

³⁷ Ibid., pp. 251 - 256.

³⁸ Ibid., pp. 257 - 259.

But, again, the First Committee proved to be on the American side. The Polish amendments were all rejected, and the resolution proposed by Sub-Committee 9 ultimately endorsed with few amendments. The Palestine Commission was "relieved" rather than "suspended", and the Mediator was instructed to receive direction not only from the Security Council but also from the General Assembly.

On the same day, the First Committee considered also the report of Sub-Committee 10 on the protection and temporary administration of Jerusalem.³⁹ The United States was, once more, the main advocate of the plan proposed in the report, about which many representatives expressed reservations. The Communist representatives opposed the plan on the basis of the November Resolution. The Arabs also opposed the plan as inconsistent with their general position on Palestine. The plan was eventually transmitted by the First Committee without a vote to the General Assembly, in accordance with an American proposal. The First Committee adjourned on the same day, 14 May.

On that day also, the General Assembly met to consider the two reports of Sub-Committee 9 and Sub-Committee 10, which were passed to it by the First Committee. The report of Sub-Committee 10 on the temporary administration of Jerusalem was discussed first. Opposed by the Arab

³⁹ For the plan of "Temporary Administration of Jerusalem" (report of Sub-Committee 10), see: Yearbook of the United Nations, op.cit., pp. 269 - 270.

States and the Communist countries, though on antithetical grounds, with many countries abstaining, the American-backed resolution this time could not achieve the required two-third majority, and was thus rejected.

The General Assembly then turned its attention to the other resolution - the one originally drawn up in Sub-Committee 9 and which deals with the general problem of Palestine. It was late in the afternoon, and the time-table of the "declaration of independence" of the Jewish State, as had been fixed by the Zionist authorities, was 6 O'clock p.m. Shortly after 6, the representative of Colombia, prompted by rumors that were spread in the Assembly, asked the American delegate whether it was true that the United States had recognized the new State of Israel. The American representative, Mr. Sayre, replied that he had no official information on the subject.⁴⁰

Other representatives debated the proposal which was before the Assembly. The spokesmen of the Soviet Union and other Communist countries opposed the resolution and criticized the contradictions in American policy.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Official Records of the Second Special Session of the General Assembly, v. I, Plenary Meetings of the General Assembly, Summary Records, 16 April - 14 May 1948, pp. 36 - 37.

⁴¹ For instance, statement of the Soviet delegate: Ibid., pp. 37 - 39; statement of the Polish delegate: Ibid., pp. 39 - 40.

Shortly afterwards, Dr. Jessup, the major American representative at that meeting entered the hall and read to the other members of the Assembly a brief statement issued by the White House. It read: "This Government has been informed that a Jewish State has been proclaimed in Palestine, and recognition has been requested by the Provisional Government thereof. The United States recognizes the Provisional Government as the de facto authority of the new State of Israel." Mr. Jessup then read another statement issued by the White House, which stated: "The desire of the United States to obtain a truce in Palestine will in no way be lessened by the proclamation of a Jewish State. We hope that the new Jewish State will join with the Security Council Truce Commission in redoubled efforts to bring an end to the fighting, which has been, throughout the United Nations' consideration of Palestine, a principal objective of this Government." Mr. Jessup also declared that his Government would continue to support the resolution which was being discussed in the Assembly.⁴²

The sudden recognition of Israel by the White House came as a surprise to the American representatives, and, as Trygve Lie puts it, their "mortification ... was understandably acute."⁴³ Garcia-Granados describes the condition

⁴² Ibid., pp. 42 - 43.

⁴³ Lie, op.cit., p. 173.

in which the American delegates were, a few minutes before Mr. Jessup came in with the statement. "The American delegates", Garcia-Granados writes, "sat in their seats, as surprised as any of us. They knew nothing; no official word had come to them. The noise and commotion in the corridors grew louder, but in the huge chamber we continued to debate the merits of the Mediator proposal."⁴⁴ The United States recognition of Israel took place exactly eleven minutes after Israel had been proclaimed a state.⁴⁵

The Arab representatives, surprised and indignant, bitterly criticized the ironical contradictions in the position of the United States, and when the Mediator resolution was put to the vote abstained from voting. The Communist block also voted against the resolution. But the resolution was carried by the required majority.

The second special session of the General Assembly was adjourned on that evening.

⁴⁴ Garcia-Granados, op.cit., pp. 287 - 288. The same story is recounted by Weizmann, op.cit., p. 478.

⁴⁵ Truman, op.cit., v. II, p. 164.

CHAPTER VII

BEHIND THE AMERICAN SCENES

The scene of the bewildered American representatives at the General Assembly, receiving the news of their Government's sudden recognition of Israel, was a dramatic manifestation of the political dualism which had bedevilled for years the American Government's approach to the Palestine question. The period of hesitation and reversals, culminating in that final reversal in favor of recognition, clearly reflected the conflicts and contradictions which took place behind the scenes in governmental circles and branches. It was practically no secret, to the informed circles of the public opinion, that it was the White House which, against the opposition of the State and War Departments and some Middle Eastern experts, pushed forward in favor of a pro-Zionist policy and was primarily responsible for it. The story of the American de facto recognition of Israel, one aspect of which has been covered by the last part of the preceding Chapter, is revealing in that respect.

James G. McDonald, the first American Ambassador to Israel, wrote some time after the recognition: "The President, against his experts' advice ... recognized the State of Israel immediately after its proclamation."¹

¹ McDonald, op.cit., p. 6.

James Forrestal, the American Secretary of Defense during that period, reported in his diaries that he had been informed of the White House's recognition of Israel 15 minutes after the announcement of the decision. Under Secretary Lovett, who was the one who informed Forrestal, told him also that he (Lovett) and Secretary of State Marshall had been informed of the decision only a little while before, in a meeting attended by them, the President and some White House assistants.²

For whatever his testimony is worth, the Jewish writer Alfred Lilienthal reports the story of recognition as follows. On 14 May, President Truman "was closeted" with his close associates and met few people - all the day maintaining "rigid silence". Around eleven - thirty that morning, Eliahu Epstein (Later Elath), representative of the Jewish Agency in the United States, was called to the White House and informed of the desire of the President to accord de facto recognition to Israel immediately after its "declaration of independence". Secretary of State Marshall was not informed of the President's decision until between three and four that afternoon, to avoid any objections or leakages. Marshall was then instructed not to inform anyone, even the American delegate at the United Nations. At 6:11 p.m. American recognition of Israel was

² Millis, ed., op.cit., p. 440.

announced.³

There is not much to be questioned in Mr. Lilienthal's story, as it generally corresponds to Forrestal's version and to some observable facts. Again, the names of Carl Clifford and David Niles, Truman's assistants to whose influence Lilienthal attributes much of Truman's pro-Zionist policy, appear in the story of recognition. Forrestal reports that the two were present at that meeting in which Marshal and Lovett were informed of the President's decision to recognize Israel.⁴ Earlier, on 21 January 1948, Lovett had told Forrestal that the State Department was "seriously embarrassed and handicapped by the activities of Niles at the White House in going directly to the President on matters involving Palestine."⁵ Clark Clifford, as will appear a little later, was James McDonald's major channel to the President, in all matters which the American Ambassador to Israel wanted to keep the State Department out of.

Truman himself, in his memoirs, uses the recognition episode to criticize the State Department and other experts who objected to his policy. "I was told", he writes, "that to some of the career men of the State Department this announcement came as a surprise. It should

³ Lilienthal, op.cit., p. 84.

⁴ Millis, ed., op.cit., p. 440.

⁵ Ibid., p. 361.

not have been if these men had faithfully supported my policy." He then finds the occasion suitable for some digression: "The difficulty with many career officials in the government is that they regard themselves as the men who really make policy and run the government. They look upon the elected officials as just temporary occupants ... I wanted to make it plain that the President of the United States, and not the second or third echelon in the State Department, is responsible for making foreign policy, and, furthermore, that no one in any department can sabotage the President's policy."⁶

"Sabotage" is a significant expression in this context. It clearly reflects much bitterness on the part of Truman and underlines the dangerous state of intra-governmental conflict under which the Palestine policy was being formulated. But this situation, though in a less acute way, had been prevailing between the White House and the State Department since the earliest days of the Truman administration. It gradually gained momentum, as times went on, to become so alarmingly manifest in the period of hesitation and in the recognition affair.

Bartley Crum writes about his appointment, back in November 1946, to the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry on Palestine⁷: "The State Department ...preferred

⁶ Truman, op.cit., v. II, p. 165.

⁷ For the formation and activities of the Committee, see above, pp. 15 - 19.

not to have me on the committee. From other sources in government I learned that the President himself had sent in my name, but that it was rejected three times."⁸ If this allegation is true - and logically it could very well be - it must be understood in the context of the State Department's traditionally cautious attitude towards Zionism, and Truman's enthusiasm (highminded or otherwise) for Zionism. Sumner Welles, himself staunchly pro-Zionist, described Crum as "outstanding among the American members of the Committee for his passionate faith in the justice of the Zionist cause."⁹ The appointment of such a committed person to a supposedly impartial committee is more to be expected from President Truman than from his State Department.

Crum, perhaps deliberately exaggerating the identity of views and coordination of efforts between the State Department and Foreign Office on the question of Palestine,¹⁰ writes: "It was clear from secret documents shown to the Committee that the attitude of our State Department, and that of the British Foreign Office and the

⁸ Crum, op.cit., p. 4.

⁹ Welles, op.cit., p. 34.

¹⁰ It is noticeable that since the early days of President Truman's administration, Zionist political literature has consistently attempted to create an image of close coordination between the State Department and the British Foreign and Colonial Offices, where the initiative is allegedly kept in the hands of the two British "imperialist" organs.

British Colonial Office, were not consistent either with the statements made by Franklin Roosevelt before the 1944 elections, or with the platform of the Republican and Democratic parties when they called for a Jewish state, or with the declarations and policy statements of the British Labor Party before the 1945 elections. In short, the foreign offices of Britain and America appeared to follow a policy certainly at variance with the publicly proclaimed policies of our two governments."¹¹

Crum tells two other stories which, if questionable in their details as factual incidents, no doubt genuinely reflect the basic trend behind them. He alleges that before the departure of the Anglo-American Committee, Loy Henderson, Chief of the Near East Division of the State Department, said to him: "There is one fact facing both the United States and Great Britain, Mr. Crum. That is the Soviet Union. It would be wise to bear that in mind when you consider the Palestine problem."¹² Again, another State Department official, Evan Wilson, Crum reports, told the latter: "If the committee reaches a decision which could be interpreted as too favorable to the Jews, an aroused Arab world might turn to the Soviet Union for support. That is a matter the committee must consider seriously."¹³

¹¹ Crum, op.cit., p. 32.

¹² Ibid., p. 8.

¹³ Ibid., p. 31.

Truman, in his memoirs, confirms the general burden of Crum's thesis with regard to the State Department's attitude. "The Department of State's specialists on the Near East", Truman writes, "were, almost without exception, unfriendly to the idea of a Jewish state. Their thinking went along this line : Great Britain has maintained her position in the area by cultivating the Arabs; now that she seems no longer able to hold this position, the United States must take over, and it must be done by exactly the same formula; if the Arabs are antagonized, they will go over into the Soviet camp." Truman then comments: "I was never convinced by the arguments of the diplomats."¹⁴

Former Under Secretary of State, Sumner Welles, emphasizes the role played by "a number of officials in the Department of State" in favor of a cautious policy in Palestine. "In the opinion of these officials", he says, "it is essential, in view of the aggressive intent of the Soviet Union, that no step be taken by the United States that would alienate the Arab peoples from this country. They consequently maintained that the United States should adopt as its own the policy of the British Government. They urge that no solution of the Palestine problem be imposed, and that no plan of settlement be

¹⁴ Truman, op.cit., v. II, p. 162.

sponsored by the United States unless it has been previously accepted by both Jews and Arabs."¹⁵

Truman makes another reference to the State Department in which he mentions the argument based on Middle Eastern oil, and he bitterly accuses some State Department officials of "anti-Semitism". He says: "There were some men in the State Department who held the view that the Balfour Declaration could not be carried out without offense to the Arabs. Like most of the British diplomats, some of our diplomats also thought that the Arabs, on account of their numbers and because of the fact that they controlled such immense oil resources, should be appeased. I am sorry to say that there were some among them who also inclined to be anti-Semitic".¹⁶

But the State Department was not totally isolated in its struggle for more caution and responsible handling of the Palestine problem. The Department of Defense and the military experts ultimately took the same attitude. Truman writes: "In the Palestine situation the military kept talking about two things: our ability to send troops to Palestine if trouble should break out there and, secondly the oil resources of the Middle East. Secretary of Defense Forrestal spoke to me repeatedly about the danger that hostile Arabs might deny us access to the petroleum

¹⁵ Welles, op.cit., pp. 75 - 76.

¹⁶ Truman, op.cit., v. II, p. 164.

treasures of their countries. The Joint Chiefs of Staff, on several occasions, submitted memoranda to show that we could not afford to send more than a token force to the area."¹⁷

Soon after the publication of the Anglo-American Committee's report, Truman asked for the opinion of the military. "The Joint Chiefs of Staff urged that no U.S. armed forces be involved in carrying out the committee's findings. They recommended that in implementing the report the guiding principle should be that no action should be taken that would cause repercussions in Palestine which would be beyond the capabilities of British troops to control." They also "believed that the political shock attending the reappearance of U.S. armed forces in the Middle East would unnecessarily risk serious disturbances throughout the area far out of proportion to any local Palestine difficulties." Truman adds: "The Joint Chiefs of Staff were also of the opinion that carrying out the findings of the report by force would prejudice British and U.S. interests in much of the Middle East. And if this were to happen, they suggested that the U.S.S.R. might replace the United States and Britain in influence and power through the Middle East. To this they added that control of oil in the Middle East was a very serious

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 162.

consideration, and they concluded, therefore, that no actions should be taken that commit U.S. armed forces or turn the peoples of the Middle East away from the Western powers, since we have a vital security interest there."¹⁸

Sumner Welles attributes this attitude of "the highest officials in the Department of Defense" primarily to oil considerations. "Long before the conclusion of the war", he writes, "the initiative had been taken by the Navy Department, strongly backed by Harold Ickes while he was Secretary of the Interior, in proposing the construction of pipelines to carry the oil produced in the Arabian fields to Mediterranean ports. To the strategy-planners these pipelines seemed to be American life lines. Any policy that might induce Arab Governments to refuse their co-operation to the United States or to hinder American access to this oil seemed to them criminally stupid."¹⁹ Welles closely links this attitude of the defense people with the representations of the American oil companies of the Middle East. In a passage implicitly suggesting that the attitude of the Defense Department was either largely influenced by the representations of the oil companies, or at least strongly reinforced thereby, Welles mentions that the oil companies pushed forward with the view that "if the United States continued to press for partition, the oil

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 149.

¹⁹ Welles, op.cit., pp. 74 - 75.

of the Near East would be unavailable for our national defense and equally unavailable to the countries of Western Europe that must have access to this source of supply if the European Recovery Program was to succeed."²⁰

Chief among the defense spokesmen against a definitely pro-Zionist policy was no doubt James Forrestal, the Defense Secretary himself. Truman has already been quoted on this fact,²¹ and Forrestal himself makes many references in his diaries to his efforts to influence the American Government in that direction, and to try to offset the strong Zionist pressure which was "forcing the hands" of the President. Forrestal's stand was based on the same familiar grounds of the American State and Defense Departments' experts. He also believed that the success of the Marshall plan was conditional upon a steady flow of Middle Eastern oil. So too was, in his opinion, the American capacity to fight a war, or maintain in peacetime, a stable economic growth.²² His awareness of the crucial relevance of the oil consideration is indicated in several places in Forrestal's diaries.²³

²⁰ Ibid., p. 82.

²¹ See above, pp. 144 - 145.

²² Millis, ed., op.cit., p. 358.

²³ See, for instance, pp. 81 - 82, 323 - 324, 356 - 357, 358, 376 - 377.

This attitude of Forrestal earned him sharp and concentrated criticism from Zionist and pro-Zionist circles, in which the central accusation was that Forrestal was "the stooge of the oil companies." The Zionist campaign on Forrestal must have been remarkably ruthless, for a prominent pro-Zionist spokesman, James McDonald, volunteered to condemn the attacks and defended the integrity of the man. "Forrestal . . .," McDonald wrote, "certainly did not deserve the persistent and venomous attacks upon him which helped break his mind and body [reference is to Forrestal's eventual collapse]; on the contrary, these attacks stand out as among the ugliest examples of the willingness of politicians and publicists to use the vilest means - in the name of partition - to destroy self-sacrificing and devoted public servants."²⁴

It is to be noted in this connection that in Zionist political literature this theme of the oil companies' "pressure" in favor of a "pro-Arab" policy, is recurrent again and again.²⁵ But Truman himself makes no reference whatsoever to any such pressure. This is remarkable because Truman in his memoirs is outspoken enough to refer to the differences of the White House with the military and State

²⁴ McDonald, op.cit., p. 13.

²⁵ See, for instance: Horowitz, op.cit., p. 252; Saché, op.cit., pp. 64, 106; Weizmann, op.cit., p. 432; Welles, op.cit., p. 82.

Department's experts, and to refer even to the Zionist pressure that was put upon him. About the early period of 1947 Truman writes: "The Jewish extremists in Palestine were continuing their terrorist activities. And top Jewish leaders in the United States were putting all sorts of pressure on me to commit American power and forces on behalf of the Jewish aspirations in Palestine."²⁶

This brings into the picture that extremely essential and complementary aspect of it - the factors and forces behind Truman's pro-Zionism. There are certainly "objective" as well as "subjective" causes for Truman's attitude. The subjective are, naturally, more elusive and less liable to accurate examination than the objective factors. They perhaps relate to the "liberal" outlook of Truman, and to the prevailing association - justified or otherwise - between American "liberalism" and pro-Zionist sympathies. They may have also something to do with the influence of religious biblical associations. But the more concrete factors in Truman's pro-Zionism are perhaps less difficult to detect. The facts that follow may shed some light on that aspect of the problem.

In October 1946, and in the midst of what Forrestal describes as "vigorous and active Zionist propoganda,"²⁷ President Truman made a statement to the effect that

²⁶ Truman, op.cit., v. II, p. 153.

²⁷ Millis, ed., op.cit., pp. 188 - 189.

100,000 Jews should be immediately admitted into Palestine.²⁸ This statement, though only a repetition of earlier statements by the President, became a landmark in the story of modern American-Palestine relations, partly because of its immediate consequences and partly because of its significant character. The immediate consequences have already been referred to in the background chapter:²⁹ Anglo-American tension was increased and the Arabs were infuriated.

But the statement was also revealing in its domestic implications. Sumner Welles - himself a supporter of Truman's pro-Zionist policy - wrote that that statement "and similar appeals which the President later directed to the British Government, had been primarily for political reasons."³⁰ The story he recounts about the statement is that "President Truman was informed by his political advisers that Governor Dewey of New York [the Republican leader] was about to offer publicly some plan ... for the European Jews . The President at once issued a statement to the press that he was urging the British Government to permit onehundred thousand destitute Jewish refugees to be transported from Europe to Palestine."³¹

²⁸ See above, p. 22.

²⁹ See above, pp. 22 - 23.

³⁰ Welles, op.cit., p. 33.

³¹ Ibid., pp. 32 - 33.

This story evidently introduces the electoral element in Truman's pro-Zionist statements and acts. Welles becomes more explicit when he asserts that "politics played a considerable part in determining the action of the White House ... In several of the larger cities the political influence of this body of American citizens [the Zionist Jews] was considerable and their allegiance was a matter of more than passing concern to a President whose desire for reelection was well known. Neither the objections of the armed services nor those coming from the Department of State were for the moment able to prevail."³²

Along the same lines goes the story of Truman's October statement as recounted by Kermit Roosevelt. Mead and Lehman "good Democrats", as Roosevelt describes them - were running for Governor and Senator, respectively, in New York State. Their position was weak, and they asked the White House to issue a statement favoring Zionism because Dewey, Mead's Republican opponent, was about to issue one himself. Truman referred the drafting of the statement to the State Department, but was not satisfied with the draft. The two candidates pressed again, threatening that they would issue the statement and ask the President publicly to support it. "Working under great pressure - domestic political pressure logically unrelated

³² Ibid., p. 80.

to Palestine - the October 4 statement was produced."³³ (Truman, incidently, acknowledges the fact that ^{that} interpretation was made of his behavior, but he naturally, denies its truth.)³⁴ Kermit Roosevelt adds to his story that after Truman's October statement, "White House officials warned that State Department personnel must not criticize their government's position. Later, Secretary Byrnes was questioned on what he proposed to do about Palestine. He replied that he had nothing to do with it, he just carried messages."³⁵

Closely connected with the electioneering factor is that similarly domestic consideration of party funds and Zionist contributions thereto. Lord Attley has already been quoted on that,³⁶ but Forrestal also has something to say. In September 1947, Forrestal reports, an influential Democratic leader suggested that the President should make a statement of policy on Palestine, "particularly with reference to the entrance of a hundred and fifty thousand Jews into Palestine." Such a statement, the Democratic leader said, "would have a very great influence and great effect on the raising of funds for the Democratic National Committee. He added that "very large sums" had been

³³ Roosevelt, op.cit., p. 12.

³⁴ Truman, op.cit., v. II, pp. 153 - 154.

³⁵ Roosevelt, op.cit., p. 13.

³⁶ See above, p. 18.

obtained a year before "from Jewish contributions and that they would be influenced in either giving or withholding by what the President did on Palestine." Forrestal reports that he opposed the suggestion.³⁷

It is revealing in this connection to follow the efforts James Forrestal exerted in order to take the issue of Palestine out of local American politics. In these efforts he encountered tremendous difficulties (and ultimate failure) which testify to the complex position Truman was in, and the strong pressures and forces to which he was subjected in his Palestine policy. Forrestal's first attempt was, it seems, made in November 1946. He approached the President with the suggestion that the latter should work out an understanding with Congress to keep the Palestine policy "non-partisan."³⁸ Truman did not respond favorably.

Forrestal reports no further attempts in that direction until 29 September 1947. On that day, Forrestal brought up again the idea of raising the Palestine question above partisan politics (prompted, as it seems, by his indignation at what he must have regarded unstatesmanlike use of the Palestine issue by the contending political candidates in the impending elections). Truman's response

³⁷ Millis, ed., op.cit., p. 37.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 218.

was, again, unfavorable.³⁹ Forrestal was not discouraged, and spoke on the subject again on 7 November in a Cabinet meeting. Speaking after Secretary of State Marshall had read to the Cabinet a report on the international situation, Forrestal strongly expressed his view that "no question was more charged with danger to our security than ... [the Palestine question]",⁴⁰ implying that it should receive more responsible handling.

In the meantime the President was being pressed by his partisans for more public utterance in favor of Zionism. On 6 October 1947, Postmaster General Hannegan told the President that "many people who had contributed to the Democratic campaign fund in 1944 were pressing hard for assurances from the administration of definite support for the Jewish position in Palestine." The pressure was, it seems, not only in favor of partition but of more extreme Zionist demands; for the President answered this time that if his government went "beyond the report of the United Nations Commission [UNSCOP]", there was a danger of "wrecking all prospects for settlement."⁴¹

As the battle of partition was being fought in the United Nations, Forrestal was resuming his efforts to take the Palestine issue out of the electoral campaigns.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 322.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 341.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 323.

He met, on 6 November, Democratic National Chairman, J.H. McGrath for that purpose, and told him forcefully that "no group in this country should be permitted to influence our policy to the point where it could endanger our national security." But McGrath, the politician, "replied by saying that there were two or three pivotal states which could not be carried without the support of people who were deeply interested in the Palestine question." To this Forrestal answered: "I would rather lose those states in a national election than run the risks which ... might develop in our handling of the Palestine question."⁴²

Forrestal renewed his effort on 26 November. He again met Senator McGrath to show him a secret report prepared by the C.I.A. on the serious situation in Palestine. McGrath was apparently impressed, but the general elections were impending, and the attitude of the Democratic Party towards it was, as Zafrullah Khan describes it, "very nervous".⁴³ McGrath had, therefore, to remind Forrestal that "Jewish sources were responsible for a substantial part of the contributions to the Democratic National Committee" in its electoral campaign. He also added that the Zionist American leaders thought that the United States was not exerting enough effort in the United Nations to secure votes for partition. Forrestal answered him that the

⁴² Ibid., p. 344.

⁴³ Zafrullah Khan, op.cit., pp. 17 - 18.

United States "had gone a very long way indeed in supporting partition and that proselytizing for votes and support would add to the already serious alienation of Arabian good will." When McGrath brought up the Zionist demand that the United States should implement the forthcoming partition resolution "through force if necessary," Forrestal ended up by urging him to "give a lot of thought" to the problem because, Forrestal thought, "it involved not merely the Arabs of the Middle East, but also might involve the whole Moslem world with its four hundred million of people - Egypt, North Africa, India and Afghanistan."⁴⁴

On 3 December, Forrestal met ex-Secretary of State James Byrnes. The latter was critical of Truman's policy on Palestine, and attributed it to the influence of David Niles and Sam Rosenman who, he said, "had told the President that presidential candidate Dewey was about to come out with a statement favoring the Zionist position on Palestine", and who "had insisted that unless the President anticipated this movement New York State would be lost to the Democrats sic ". When Forrestal brought up with Byrnes the possibility of having an agreement between the two parties on "depoliticizing" the Palestine policy, Byrnes showed skepticism because of Republican leader Taft's close association with the major American Zionist leader Rabbi Silver.

⁴⁴ Millis, ed., op.cit., pp. 344 - 345.

Forrestal could only react by saying that "it was a most disastrous and regrettable fact that the foreign policy of the United States was determined by the contributions a particular block of special interests might make to the party funds."⁴⁵

Yet Forrestal was not discouraged. A week later he went on his personal initiative to meet Republican leader Vandenberg, to discuss with him the idea of taking the Palestine issue out of the campaign. Vandenberg pointed out that the Democrats had already exploited the issue, and that the Republicans "felt they were entitled" to behave likewise. He quoted Republican leader Stassen on the subject: "If the Republicans were to cooperate on foreign policy they would have to be in on the take off as well as in the crash landing."⁴⁶ And Dewey himself was hardly more receptive when Forrestal brought up the matter with him three days later; Dewey did not hide his skepticism, on the grounds of past experience, about inter-partisan "gentleman's agreements."⁴⁷

Forrestal reports enormous Zionist pressure late in January 1948, in favor of effective American supply of arms to Palestine Zionists and unilateral (American) implementation of partition. This Zionist pressure vitiated

⁴⁵ Ibid., pp. 346 - 347.

⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 347 - 348.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 348.

Forrestal's efforts, made in conjunction with the State Department this time, to work out a bipartisan foreign policy, particularly with respect to Palestine. It was at this stage that the idea of the suspension of the partition resolution emerged, and that Forrestal was informed of it by State Department officials.⁴⁸

But Forrestal was now being gradually besieged and put on the defensive. In February, Franklin D. Roosevelt Jr. visited him to urge more pro-Zionism, based, again, primarily on electoral considerations. Forrestal was provoked into a blunt but eloquent answer; he reports in his memoirs: "I said I was forced to repeat to him what I had said to Senator McGrath in response to the latter's observation that our failure to go along with the Zionists might lose the states of New York, Pennsylvania and California - that I thought it was about time that somebody should pay some consideration to whether we might not lose the United States."⁴⁹ In the same month, Forrestal received an "advice" from Bernard Baruch against too much "involvement" in the Palestine issue.⁵⁰ The influential Baruch had

⁴⁸ Ibid., pp. 359 - 361.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 363.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 364. Since then, it seems that Forrestal grew increasingly aware of the unsurmountable difficulty of the course on which he had embarked; reference to Palestine fades away in his diaries. His eventual break-down and suicide can hardly be considered apart from the story of his fight on the Palestine front.

given up his traditionally cautious attitude towards Zionism since the day he threw his weight behind the partition resolution.⁵¹

The period of American hesitation - from December 1947 to mid-May 1948 - no doubt reflected, in some respects, this struggle that was taking place behind the scenes of the American Government. The two major reversals of that period - the trusteeship reversal and the recognition reversal - were landmarks in this struggle. The trusteeship reversal (in which Forrester must have had some important role) was a temporary victory to the "experts" and a setback to Zionist influence in the Government. Although he publicly approved the trusteeship policy, there is no doubt that President Truman did that reluctantly and probably with the intention of bringing about, when it is opportune, another reversal. Reference has already been made to the possibility that Truman and Weizmann may have come to an agreement, during their March meeting, that immediate recognition be accorded to Israel by the White House as soon as Israel is declared a state.⁵² The sudden and utterly unexpected recognition of Israel, while the American delegates were working out the details of trusteeship, only reinforces this assumption.

⁵¹ See above, pp. 78, 83.

⁵² See above, pp. 103 - 107.

The attitude of the American Government during the regular Arab-Israeli war indicated as the following Chapter will try to say, a drastic shift from the trusteeship spirit and a firm support of the new state of Israel. This could be ascribed to, and thus be a sign of, the fact that the President regained the initiative in the Palestine policy in that period, backed by the military successes of the Israeli forces in Palestine. 1948 was also a year of Presidential elections, and President Truman could no longer afford to leave the Palestine policy to the architects of the trusteeship plan in the State Department. Significantly the June Convention of the Democratic Party had a platform which stated on Palestine: "We approve the claims of the State of Israel to the boundaries set forth in the United Nations resolution of November 21 and consider that modifications thereof should be made only if fully acceptable to the State of Israel."⁵³ This platform was announced in the midst of the United Nations Mediator's efforts to adjust the situation in Palestine, in accordance with the General Assembly's resolution which had implicitly suspended the partition resolution and expressly relieved the Palestine Commission from the duties of implementation.⁵⁴

In any case, the President now recovered his full control over the Palestine policy, and carried out, in the

⁵³ Truman, op.cit., v. II, p. 166.

⁵⁴ See above, pp 130-131, 136

face of existent but ineffective State Department objections, a post-recognition policy that was consistent with the attitude initiated, or reviewed, by the act of recognition. A clear illustration of this fact was the appointment of the American representative to Israel, in June 1948. The top State Department men were certainly dissatisfied with the President's choice of James G. McDonald to be that representative, as the latter himself reports, but the President's will prevailed. When the State Department submitted to the President its list of nominees for the post, "all of the Department names were rejected, chiefly on the ground that the President ought to have 'his own man' in Tel Aviv."⁵⁵ Not even Secretary Marshall was consulted: "The quickness of the President in making up his mind and announcing his decision precluded prior consultation with General George C. Marshall, then Secretary of State, who was at the time resting in a Washington hospital." Therefore, McDonald reports, "a few weeks later during my briefing period, General Marshall frankly explained to me his strong views on the method of my appointment."⁵⁶

Forrestal tells another story about the appointment, which only confirms the general burden of what has been said. He reports Under-Secretary Lovett's dissatisfaction with the

⁵⁵ McDonald, op.cit., p. 6.

⁵⁶ Ibid., pp. 6 - 7.

President's choice, particularly as the appointment was accompanied by an express demand by the President, transmitted through Clark Clifford,⁵⁷ that he "did not want any discussion of the matter." The State Department was also ordered to announce the appointment the following day.⁵⁸

Perhaps the key to this maneuver by the President lies in the fact that the familiar "embarrassing difference of opinion" between the State Department and the President made the latter "insist on a Representative in Israel whose record gave assurance of full sympathy with the President's policies."⁵⁹ There was no doubt about McDonald's sympathies; since the early days of 1947, as he himself proudly asserts, until he was called upon by the President in June 1948, he had spent all his time "lecturing throughout the United States, in Britain and South Africa on behalf of Jewish aspirations in Palestine."⁶⁰ Truman, significantly, asked his appointee to send, in addition to his regular reports to the State Department,

⁵⁷ Clifford became McDonald's regular channel to President Truman throughout McDonald's mission in Israel. Another reference to Clifford will appear in connection with McDonald's activities during the third session of the General Assembly. (See below, pp. 207 - 208.)

⁵⁸ Millis, ed., op.cit., pp. 440 - 441.

⁵⁹ McDonald, op.cit., p. 8.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 10.

personal reports to his President recommending policy.⁶¹ McDonald did that later during his mission.

Yet there were more differences between Truman and his State Department, which McDonald recounts in his book. Henderson and Satterthwaite - high ranking officials of the State Department - were definitely non-conformists as far as the President's policy on Palestine was concerned, because both were, as McDonald puts it, "pro-Arab."⁶² Lovett was opposed to the President's determination to give an early de jure recognition to Israel. "The President", writes McDonald, "wanted to give de jure recognition as soon as possible and was anxious that the Israel Government should facilitate the granting of such recognition by appropriate changes.

"Lovett's point of view - and, I assume, that of the State Department - was rooted apparently in doubt as to the stability and perhaps the representativeness of the Israel Provisional Government."⁶³

Blaming the State Department for "the fact that [after the period of briefing and instruction] I had learned little of my Government's policy, actual or prospective", McDonald goes on to say: "The Department itself was not quite sure what our policy toward Israel was; certainly it

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 15.

⁶² Ibid., p. 11.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 16.

was not sure what our policy was to be." McDonald, however, does not mention President Truman's contribution to this embarrassing situation. He finally says that he left Washington with so scanty an understanding of my Government's policy - both in broad outline and in detail - toward the Government to which I was accredited."⁶⁴

But these latter claims by McDonald seem more like criticism of the State Department than description of real fact; McDonald had certainly no "scanty" understanding of what he had to do. Apparently backed by the President's instructions, he stopped in London, on his way to Israel, to try to induce Bevin and other British officials into recognizing Israel, and to tell them that "the best way to get Arab acceptance was to present them with a fait accompli."⁶⁵ Then stopping again in Rome, McDonald tried to elicit a "pro-Israel announcement" from the Italian Foreign Minister, and to influence favorably the Pope,⁶⁶ not

⁶⁴ Ibid., pp. 16 - 17.

⁶⁵ Ibid., pp. 24 - 25.

⁶⁶ McDonald's particular interest in meeting the Pope and trying to win his sympathy for Israel is reminiscent of Theodor Herzl's meeting with the Pope in the early days of the Zionist movement, and of the later meeting with the Pope in which Nahum Sokolov, of the Zionist movement, and Sir Mark Sykes, of the British Foreign Office, sought the Vatican's good will during the negotiations on the Balfour Declaration. The soundness of the Zionists' appreciation of the Vatican's international influence was later proven by the Vatican's decisive role in the adoption, by the General Assembly, of the internationalization resolution concerning Jerusalem. (See below, pp. 216 - 218.)

hesitating to convey to the latter the assurances Weizmann had made personally to him (McDonald) with regard to the Holy Places, when the American representative visited him earlier in Switzerland.⁶⁷

It is in this context of increasing control and stronger initiative by the President in the Palestine policy, which characterized the immediate post-recognition period, that one can probably be better prepared to assess American policy during the regular Arab-Israeli war and somewhat after.

⁶⁷ McDonald, op.cit., p. 32.

CHAPTER VIII

THE UNITED STATES

AND

THE ARAB - ISRAELI WAR

When the regular Arab armies crossed the borders of Palestine on 15 May 1948, the Zionist forces had already established themselves militarily in the area earmarked by the November Resolution to the Jewish State as well as in a substantial part of the territory assigned to the Arab State.¹ By the beginning of April, Zionist military operations had, in the words of Premier Ben-Gurion, "swung decisively from defence to attack."² This strategy, at that particular period, must have been inspired, at least in part, by the conviction that had taken root in the mind of the Zionist leadership that the support of international allies was much less effective in deciding the course of events than the policy of forcing facts upon the local situation by direct action. Dr. Weizmann had again asserted that "our only chance now, as in the past, was to create facts, to confront the world with these facts, and to build

¹ Of this known historical fact, Ben-Gurion makes a brief but informative account in his introduction to Yosef Utizki's From Riots to War, which appears also in Ben-Gurion's Rebirth and Destiny of Israel, pp. 288 - 293, particularly pp. 291 - 292.

² Ibid., p. 296.

on their foundation."³ Ben-Gurion had told his countrymen early in January, as the prospects of an American reversal had been rumored, that "force of arms, not formal resolutions, will determine the issue."⁴

Nor was the Zionist leadership overpessimistic in this theory it held. The American retreat of March-April was apparently, regardless of the possible terms of understanding between Weizmann and Truman in their meeting of 18 March, a real shock to the majority of the Zionists. It only served to underline the questionable reliability of international (in this case, American) support as a consistent factor operating in favor of the Zionist enterprise.

But the post-recognition attitude of the American Government - i.e. its attitude during the regular Arab-Israeli war - no doubt reflected more consistency and reliability, from the Zionist point of view. Perhaps this was because during that period the President regained his full control over his Government's Palestine policy, with the State Department faced by the fait accompli of the recognition.⁵ In any case, American policy in regard to the Palestine war manifested a marked departure from any attitude of rapprochement with the Arabs as may have been indicated by the trusteeship policy, and a fairly

³ Weizmann, op.cit., p. 476.

⁴ Ben-Gurion, op.cit., p. 232.

⁵ See above, pp. 158 - 160.

consistent support of Zionist claims inside the United Nations. Moreover, the overtures of an Anglo-American honeymoon, which could have been initiated by the trusteeship attitude of the American Government, gave way now to the renewal of a sharp difference between the two Governments, at least for a while. This renewal of conflict was certainly a major factor in the time wasted by the Security Council before action was taken late in May. Meanwhile, the attitude of the Soviet Government in the U.N. remained staunchly pro-Zionist and more expressly anti-Arab than that of the American Government, perhaps to the embarrassment of President Truman.

On 17 May, the American representative in the Security Council submitted a draft resolution calling upon the Arabs and the Jews to cease-fire within 36 hours after the adoption of the resolution. The draft resolution defined the situation in Palestine as a threat to the peace and a breach of the peace, and invoked Article 39 of the Charter in connection with the cease-fire order. It entrusted the Truce Commission, which was created by the Security Council on 23 April, with the task of supervising the cease-fire.⁶ The long discussion which followed, and which focused on some less consequential aspects of Mr. Austin's statement, provoked the criticism of Mr.

⁶ United Nations, Security Council, Official Records, Third Year, No 67, 17 May 1948, p. 2.

Gromyko and his demand that the substance of the American resolution be the subject of concern.⁷

Two days after the submission of the American proposal, the British delegate expressed his Government's opposition to the invocation of Article 39 of the Charter, which was embodied in the American draft resolution. Sir Alexander Cadogan said: "Juridically, My Government is doubtful whether there is a threat to international peace, or a breach of international peace, and it would fear that a search for the aggressor would land us in interminable and probably unprofitable wrangles." He also reminded the Security Council that the invocation of Article 39 would baunch the Council on the problem of enforcement by military power which, experience had illustrated, was an over-ambitious course in view of the facts prevailing in the Council. Sir Alexander suggested the persuit of a truce in Palestine with roughly the same provisions as those embodied in the American proposal, but on the basis of Chapter VI of the Charter which deals with Pacific Settlement of Disputes rather than Chapter VII which prescribes Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Acts of Agression.⁸

Mr. Austin immediately objected to the British amendment as an unjustifiable weakening of the draft

⁷ Ibid., N° 68, 18 May 1948, pp. 39 - 42.

⁸ Ibid., N° 69, 19 May 1948, pp. 2 - 6.

resolution and a move of appeasement.⁹ The representative of the Ukrainian S.S.R. also criticized the British amendment on principally the same American grounds. He, moreover, strongly attacked the British Government and charged her with complicity with the Arabs, particularly Jordan.¹⁰ He was supported the following day by the Soviet delegate who repeated the charges of his Ukrainian colleague and reiterated his earlier position that the November Resolution was a just resolution which ought to be implemented. Mr. Gromyko supported the American view that the situation in Palestine invoked the obligations of the Security Council under Article 39 and constituted a threat to the peace and a breach of the peace, in which the Arab States were the aggressors. He criticized the British amendment and the General attitude of the United Kingdom, and described the British statement as "sheer casuistry." He also charged the British Government with "direct participation" in the military actions taking place in Palestine, through the Arab Legion of Trans-jordan. Mr. Gromyko then described the Truce Commission (from which the Soviet Union had been excluded) as "powerless", but he gave his support to the American draft resolution.¹¹

⁹ Ibid., pp. 6 - 10.

¹⁰ Ibid., N° 70, 20 May 1948, pp. 4 - 8.

¹¹ Ibid., N° 71, 21 May 1948, pp. 5 - 11.

The Security Council engaged in a long discussion on the legal status of Palestine and the juridical assessment of the military operations that were taking place there. On 22 May, the Council finally started to vote on the British amendments and the American draft resolution. During the vote, the American delegate made a statement in which he openly described the Arab States as "aggressors" and accused them of "international violation of law."¹²

The Arab delegates reacted strongly against the American charges. The result of the vote, however, endorsed some parts of the American resolution, some parts of the British amendment, and other amendments. The adopted resolution called upon "all governments and authorities, without prejudice to the rights, claims or position of the parties concerned, to abstain from any hostile military action in Palestine, and to that end to issue a cease-fire order to their military and paramilitary forces", to become effective within thirty six hours. The resolution directed the Truce Commission to help effect and supervise the cease-fire, and called upon all parties concerned to cooperate with the U.N. Mediator whose task had been defined in the General Assembly resolution of 14 May 1948. The adopted resolution, however, did not include that paragraph proposed in the American draft, which provided that action of the Council

¹² Ibid., No 72, 22 May 1948, pp. 41 - 45.

was based on Article 39 of the Charter. Therefore, although the American delegate voted for the resolution as a whole, he made the reservation that he regarded the resolution only a provisional measure and still thought that Article 39 should be invoked.¹³

The debates at the Security Council, and the general attitudes of the British and American Governments with regard to the events in Palestine, unmistakably reflected an open disagreement, at that stage, between the two Western Governments. In the words of the British historian, George Kirk, "the events in Palestine ... subjected Anglo-American relations to the worst strain that they had known for many years."¹⁴ Again, the statements of American officials on Palestine sounded nearer to those of the Soviet rather than the British spokesman. Perhaps the major agreement between the three Powers during the second half of May was their joint appointment, on 20 May, of Count Folke Bernadotte of Sweden as the U.N. Mediator in Palestine, in accordance with the General Assembly's resolution of 14 May. But the events which followed the appointment indicated a reappearance of differences; and it was in view of this fact that the good offices of a sympathizing third party, between the two Western Powers, seemed needed, from the point of view of this third party. The third party was Trygve Lie,

¹³ Ibid., p. 65.

¹⁴ Kirk, op.cit., p. 273.

the U.N. Secretary General.

It will be recalled that Trygve Lie had thrown his weight behind the partition resolution and had later openly opposed the American reversal away from it.¹⁵ He had, in fact, gone as far as suggesting to Mr. Austin that the two should resign their posts in protest, and had made the news of his possible resignation effectively known.¹⁶ The latest pro-Zionist reversal in American policy, which followed the sudden recognition of Israel, was Trygve Lie's chance to revive his efforts in defence of the plan envisaged in the November Resolution, which he cherished. The Anglo-American difference now appeared to him as the major danger, and to the elimination of this difference he devoted his efforts. While hostilities were going on in Palestine and the Security Council debating, Trygve Lie's envoy to the State Department was reporting to him that "it might well be that because of this divergence in view between the American and British Governments, effective action in the Security Council would not be forthcoming"¹⁷ Mr. Cordier was Mr. Trygve Lie's second envoy to the State Department, while Commander, Jackson, Trygve Lie's other assistant, was performing his mediation duties in London. The Foreign

¹⁵ See above, pp. 71-74, 101-102; also: Lie, op. cit., pp. 164, 168.

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 170-171.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 177.

Office people were skeptically "seeking to find some extraneous reason for [Trygve Lie's] intervention," as Mr. Bevin was vehemently criticizing before Commander Jackson American policy on Palestine and telling him that "if Washington and New York could control the Jews, he thought the Arabs could be restrained."¹⁸

But in Washington another agreement was being discussed between the White House and the Zionist leadership. President Truman received Dr. Weizmann on 25 May, and it was reported that the Zionist leader (now President) had asked for a loan of \$ 90 - 100 million, partly for the purchase of heavy arms.¹⁹ The attitude of the American representative at the Security Council, and the fact that that year was a year of Presidential elections in the United States, gave currency to that report.

On the following day, the Provisional Government of Israel announced its acceptance of the cease-fire ordered by the Security Council. The States of the Arab League answered that they could not accept an unconditional cease-fire which does not simultaneously provide adequate guarantees against the continuous flow of Jewish immigrant-fighters and arms into Palestine, and against surprise attacks by the Zionist forces.²⁰ The Ukrainian delegate to

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 183 - 185.

¹⁹ The Times, 26 May 1948, p. 4 and 28 May, p. 4.

²⁰ United Nations, Security Council, Official Records, Third Year, No 74, 26 May 1948, pp. 46 - 49.

the Security Council retorted by a violent criticism of both the Arabs and the British Government. He urged "more energetic and more effective steps" by the Council against both.²¹ The American delegate reminded the Council that he had asked for more effective measures under the threat of sanctions (Article 39), and he urged the members to submit resolutions along the lines of the previous American proposal.²² The Soviet representative submitted a draft resolution invoking Article 39 and ordering "the Governements of the States involved in the present conflict in Palestine" to stop military operations within 36 hours.²³

The British representative, in reply to a question addressed to him at an earlier meeting, now expressed his Government's readiness to participate in any U.N. embargo "which effectively would prevent supply of arms to Arabs and Jews alike in Palestine", by "suspending the deliveries which [the British Government] is at present making to Egypt, Iraq and Transjordan in completion of existing contracts." The British delegate also said that his Government would "review" her "financial obligations" to Transjordan "in the light of decisions taken by the United Nations." He, however, still believed that the Council should not altogether ignore the Arab argument against an

²¹ Ibid., N° 75, 27 May 1948, pp. 7 - 9.

²² Ibid., pp. 14 - 16.

²³ Ibid., pp. 17 - 18.

exclusively military cease-fire which does not provide adequate guarantees as those associated with the Security Council resolution of 17 April.²⁴ Sir Alexander Cadogan then submitted a draft resolution providing for a cease-fire in Palestine for four weeks, during which no fighting personnel, arms or men of military age should be introduced into Palestine. The resolution instructed the U.N. Mediator and the Truce Commission to supervise the cease fire, and threatened with sanctions any violator.²⁵

But, surprisingly or not, the statement and draft resolution of the British delegate failed to win the endorsement of the Zionist representatives. Mr. Eban, still representing "the Jewish Agency", vehemently criticized the British draft resolution, particularly in its restrictions on immigration implied in the provisions against the introduction into Palestine of men of military age. He attacked the general attitude of Britain and concluded by saying: "It is not that the resolution suffers from certain incidental defects of equity. It is that its most essential and fundamental provisions reflect an unjust bias."²⁶ The Ukranian representative also sharply criticized the British Government and her draft resolution, and supported the

²⁴ See U.N. Document S/723.

²⁵ United Nations, Security Council, Official Records, Third Year, No 75, 27 May 1948, pp. 24 - 30.

²⁶ Ibid., No 76, 28 May 1948, pp. 2 - 13.

Soviet draft resolution.²⁷ But the Soviet resolution received also the endorsement of a less orthodox sympathizer than the Ukrainian delegate - Mr. Austin of the United States himself. Ambassador Austin strongly criticized the attitude of the Arab States, accused them of "violation of the Charter" and tried to establish their guilt in the Palestine war.²⁸ It was perhaps this American support that encouraged the Soviet representative to submit, on 29 May, an additional paragraph to his draft resolution expressly condemning the Arab States. In his speech, he again attacked the Arab Governments and associated them with British policy which he described as "hypocritical" and "cynical."²⁹

It was on that day - 29 May - that the two draft resolutions, the Soviet and the British, were put to the vote. Notwithstanding the fact that the Soviet draft resolution received the support of three big Powers - the Soviet Union, the United States and France - it was rejected by the Security Council. The British resolution was then put to the vote, somewhat modified by amendments, and then adopted. The American representative contributed to the modification of the resolution, and was able to incorporate some parts of his own rejected resolution in the adopted

²⁷ Ibid., pp. 13 - 17.

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 19 - 22.

²⁹ Ibid., N° 77, 29 May 1948, pp. 1 - 13.

resolution. The final text adopted called upon "all governments and authorities concerned" to order a cessation of all acts of armed force for a period of four weeks, and to refrain during that period from introducing arms and fighting personnel into Palestine and the Arab States. The resolution instructed the U.N. Mediator and the Truce Commission to supervise the cease-fire, and threatened with sanctions under Chapter VII of the Charter any violator of the resolution. The provisions of the resolution were not to prejudice "the rights, claims and position of either Arabs or Jews."³⁰

Before the end of the deadline fixed by the Security Council for receiving the answers of the Arabs and the Zionists, the Council received qualified acceptances by both parties of the cease-fire order. In a few days, the British representative, "under American influence",³¹ announced his Government's decision to withhold transfer of war materials to the Arab States.³² The American (and French) representatives, in the meanwhile, engaged in convincing the Zionist delegates to accept the Mediator's interpretation of the Security Council resolution, particularly in regard to the phrases "fighting personnel" and "men of military age" which

³⁰ U.N. Document S/801.

³¹ Hurewitz, op.cit., p. 322.

³² United Nations, Security Council, Official Records, Third Year, No 78, 2 June 1948, pp. 21 - 22.

were the major points of controversy between the Arabs and Israelis.³³ Finally, the truce, the provisions of which were interpreted and negotiated by Count Bernadotte, came into effect on 10 June.

With the Security Council temporarily relieved by the truce in Palestine from the urgent pressure for action, the Soviet Union now seized the opportunity to try to secure for itself more say in the developments in Palestine. On 7 June, the Soviet representative raised the question of the truce observers provided for in the resolution of 29 May, and said that his Government was prepared and wanted to send Soviet observers to Palestine. (The American-proposed Security Council resolution which had set up the Truce Commission comprising "representatives of those members of the Security Council which have career consular officers in Jerusalem",³⁴ had ipso facto disqualified the Soviet Union, and therefore earned for the Truce Commission the constant criticism of the Soviet Union and its allies.) The American delegate, faithful to his Government's policy of consistently excluding the Soviet Union from participation in the events in Palestine, ignored the Soviet delegate's claim by answering that the Mediator had approached the American Government on the question of

³³ See: Ibid., N° 79, 3 June 1948; also Bernadotte, Folke, To Jerusalem (London, 1951), pp. 51, 77 - 78.

³⁴ See U.N. Document S/727.

observers and had been promised to receive the observers he needed. The two other members of the Commission, France and Belgium, gave similar answers to the Soviet remarks. The Soviet delegate objected that the question of the nationality of the observers and how they should be made available was the concern of the Security Council and not the Mediator.³⁵ But the American delegate remained adamant³⁶ and opposed the proposal formally submitted by the Soviet representative on 15 June providing that all members of the Security Council, except Syria, should be allowed to participate in the observers' group. The resolution was consequently rejected, thus provoking the Soviet delegate into a bitter outburst against United States policy on Palestine since 29 November 1947.³⁷

Later events, however, were to prove that the United States was not as cooperative with the Mediator in the field of observers as it wanted the Soviet Union to think it was. The effective supervision of the Truce required the presence on the field of many observers who were to be furnished by the three States members of the Truce Commission - the United States, France and Belgium. But the reluctance and undue delay of the United States Government in extending its pledged assistance to the Mediator constituted a major obstacle in the way of Count

³⁵ Yearbook of the United Nations, op.cit., p. 431.

³⁶ United Nations, Security Council, Official Records, Third Year, N° 82, 10 June 1948, p. 42.

³⁷ Ibid., N° 84, 15 June 1948, pp. 11 - 13.

Bernadotte's efforts, and produced much bitterness in him. He dwells at some length in his memoirs on this point, and throws some revealing light on its significance. "I had abundant experience in this connection", Count Bernadotte writes, "of the bureaucracy that characterizes the official circles in particular in the United States." Although it was the United States which had declared in Lake Success that it would do everything in her power to help the Mediator, yet "after the truce had been in force for 14 days, only 30 American officers had been placed at my disposal as against a promised 125. Compared with Belgian and French authorities, the Americans were distinguished by their slowness in providing the needed personnel." By the end of July Bernadotte was so irritated by the American uncooperative attitude that he told the American Consul-General in Jerusalem to inform his Government that he (Bernadotte) was "seriously" considering resigning his post as Mediator.³⁸

In explaining this phenomenon, Bernadotte writes, on the basis of a report from "a very reliable source", that the Americans "were afraid that if anything were to happen to American soldiers, that would cause a storm of resentment in the U.S.A., which in its turn might influence the Presidential elections in November." This factor seems

³⁸ Bernadotte, op.cit., p. 191.

to have been so powerful that when, in the middle of August, Bernadotte sent his major assistant Ralph Bunche to Washington and New York primarily "to bring pressure to bear in person" on the American authorities, Bunche's reports about the response "were distinctly depressing." So too was Commander Jackson's report in his short visit to the Mediator's headquarters in Rhodes; he "had a tale to tell of the difficulties encountered by the secretariat [of the U.N.] in its negotiations in Washington." Bernadotte had, consequently, to resort to Secretary of State Marshall personally.³⁹ But until October of that year, Bernadotte's successive requests for the promised assistance were, from the American Government's point of view, embarrassingly unanswerable. Late in October, Forrestal recorded in his diaries: "This [Bernadotte's] unexpected request" - "unexpected" is an interesting word when it is used after about five months of consistent representations - "was an example of how the Palestine situation had drifted without any clear consequent formulation of United States policy by the N.S.C. [the National Security Council]."⁴⁰

In any case, whether owing to the inadequacies of the truce-supervision machinery or any other factors, the two truces successively brought about by the Security Council were not as effective as the resolutions creating

³⁹ Ibid., pp. 192 - 195.

⁴⁰ Millis, ed., op.cit., pp. 507 - 508.

them envisaged. During these periods of ostensible military lull, the pendulum swung decisively in favor Israel through the secret purchases of heavy arms and ammunition by the Israeli authorities and their clandestine introduction into Palestine. Although some of these heavy arms were smuggled from England and the United States (e.g. Flying Fortresses and Beaufort fighter-bombers), the major source was Czechoslovakia. The Czech arms were, paradoxically enough, paid for in American Dollars, and, according to a report published later in the Zionist Review, the Israeli Communist leader Shmuel Mikunis played an authorized role in the deal.⁴¹ The Arabs, as the memoirs of Bernadotte indicate, were not unaware of the Israeli arms-negotiations with the Soviet block (King Farouk spoke to the Mediator about the subject early in June), and a report by the Mediator officially informed the Security Council of the arms-smuggling that the Israelis were undertaking, but the international situation apparently made no effective measure by the Mediator possible.⁴² Consequently, the truce became, as the Zionist writer Hal Lehrman admitted, a "strictly one-way affair ... against the Arabs. Everybody knew how weapons had flowed to Israel from Czechoslovakia. United

⁴¹ See, for instance: Kimche, Jon, Seven Fallen Pillars; the Middle East, 1915 - 1950 (London, 1950), pp. 249 - 251; also: Sacher, op.cit., p. 272. For the report of the Zionist Review see: Kirk, op.cit., p. 277.

⁴² See: Bernadotte, op.cit., pp. 70, 123 - 124, 188; also: United Nations, Security Council, Official Records, Third Year, Supplement for July 1948, pp. 13 - 17.

Nations observers had stood by in comic helplessness while Haifa stevedores unloaded guns for Israel."⁴³ This was, in fact, literally true, as the official report of the Mediator and his personal memoirs assert,⁴⁴ But, naturally, neither the United States nor the Soviet Union was very anxious to intervene effectively.

Meanwhile, Bernadotte was engaged throughout June in consultations with the Arabs and the Israelis with regard to the future situation in Palestine. The claims and positions of the two parties were clearly irreconcilable, and the Mediator had really hard time trying to find some common grounds for discussion. The Arabs would not accept the existence in Palestine of an independent Jewish state, and the Israelis would not concede even to appreciable territorial modifications. Bernadotte regarded his mandate as not bound by the November Resolution, and proceeded on this ground;⁴⁵ the Israelis opposed that and the Arabs thought it was of academic importance in view of Bernadotte's tentative suggestions which in no substantive way differed from the partition resolution. As a result of these consultations, however, Bernadotte came out with a loose plan for the future of Palestine, which he described as "suggestions as a possible basis for discussion." The plan

⁴³ Quoted by Kirk (op.cit., p. 288) from Lehrman's book, Israel, the Beginning and Tomorrow.

⁴⁴ See above, footnote N° 42.

⁴⁵ See, for instance, p. 33 of Bernadotte, op.cit.

envisaged an economic union and coordination of policy between a Jewish state and an Arab state extending over mandatory Palestine and Transjordan. The two states would regulate their common interests through a central council which has a right to refer to the United Nations any disagreements, such as on the question of immigration, to be settled by a binding decision. The plan also provided for the right of repatriation of the expelled Palestine Arabs, and their recovery of property, and it suggested some territorial changes in the partition resolution of November 1947. The Negeb - southern Palestine - was to be included in the Arab state in exchange for western Galilee which would be ceded to the Jewish state. Jerusalem was to be included in Arab territory, with municipal autonomy for the Jewish community there, and a free airport at Lydda as well as a free port at Haifa would be established.⁴⁶

Both the Arabs and the Israelis rejected the Mediator's proposal on the basis of their respective positions: the Arabs would not recognize Israel's sovereignty, and the Israelis would not modify their boundaries or accept any restrictions on immigration. The Mediator had to fly personally to New York to argue his case, on 13 July, while hostilities in Palestine were resumed after the termination of the four-week truce.

⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 126 - 131; also: U.N. Document S/863.

A few days before the Mediator flew to New York he had sent to the Security Council a request that the Council officially support his efforts for the prolongation of the truce which was due to expire on 9 July. The Security Council, consequently, met on 7 July to consider the situation, and adopted a British-proposed resolution calling for the prolongation of the truce for a period to be decided by the Mediator. The Soviet Union and the Ukrainian S.S.R. opposed the resolution on the grounds that the Mediator's proposals for the future of Palestine, which, according to the two countries, were incompatible with the November Resolution, made the Mediator unworthy of the Council's continued confidence.⁴⁷ This was one of the earlier signs of the Soviet block's later opposition to Bernadotte and his plan for Palestine.⁴⁸

The resolution of 7 July for the prolongation of the truce was accepted by the Provisional Government of Israel but was not accepted by the Arab States "in view of the experience of the past four weeks."⁴⁹ When this was discussed in the Security Council on 8 July, the American and the Syrian delegates exchanged strong critical statements. Dr. Jessup of the U.S. repeated the accusations

⁴⁷ See the Soviet delegate's statement in: United Nations, Security Council, Official Records, Third Year, N° 93, 7 July 1948, pp. 17 - 22.

⁴⁸ See below, Chapter IX.

⁴⁹ See U.N. Document S/873 (the Mediator's report).

against Arab "aggression" and "violation of the Charter", and recalled the Council's resolution of 29 May which provided for sanctions against the aggressor.⁵⁰ Faris El-Khoury retorted by vigorously criticizing the American attitude on Palestine as well as that of the Soviet Union. He explained Arab reluctance to accept a prolongation of the truce on the basis of the fact that, in view of past experience, the Zionist position would only be reinforced during the truce by the flow of arms and fighting men primarily from the United States and the Communist block, in disregard to the express provisions of the resolution of 29 May.⁵¹

Hostilities were resumed in Palestine on 9 July, and Count Bernadotte flew to New York few days later to report personally to the Security Council, and to explain his proposals for the future situation in Palestine. Bernadotte gave his oral statement before the Council on 13 July, and he recommended: an immediate cease-fire order; the demilitarization of Jerusalem; a threat by the Council that non-compliance would bring about sanctions; effective mediation during the truce and during the possible armistice that could follow; and the ensurance of the right of the Arabs who fled from Jewish-occupied areas to return to their

⁵⁰ United Nations, Security Council, Official Records, Third Year, N° 94, 8 July 1948, pp. 6 - 9.

⁵¹ Ibid., pp. 9 - 14.

homes.⁵² The Israeli delegate criticized Bernadotte's statement and his later answers, notably his assertion that restrictions should be placed on immigration to Israel. The Israeli delegate also urged action by the Council against the Arabs on the basis of Chapter VII.⁵³ Dr. Jessup of the United States was prompt in his reaction. In "few minutes submitted a strong-worded resolution ordering a cease-fire within the framework of Chapter VII. The draft resolution placed the responsibility on the Arab States who had "rejected successive appeals" for the prolongation of the truce. It defined the situation in Palestine as a threat to the peace within the meaning of Article 39 of the Charter, and provided that failure to comply with the cease-fire order would subject the non-complying party to sanctions under Chapter VII. The truce was to be indefinite - "until a peaceful adjustment of the future situation of Palestine is reached" - and the Mediator was to supervise it while pursuing his efforts to demilitarize the City of Jerusalem and ensure free access to it.⁵⁴ (Jerusalem was then besieged by Arab forces).⁵⁵

⁵² Ibid., No 95, 13 July 1948, pp. 1 - 9.

⁵³ Ibid., pp. 23 - 37.

⁵⁴ Ibid., pp. 39 - 41.

⁵⁵ For the Arab siege of Jerusalem see, for instance: Glubb, Sir John Bagot, A Soldier With the Arabs (London, 1957), pp. 105 - 133; also: Kimche, Jon and David, Both Sides of the Hill: Britain and The Palestine War (London, 1960), pp. 184 - 188, 230 - 232.

The British reaction to the American draft resolution reflected, this time, a remarkable concurrence with the American attitude. Sir Alexander Cadogan wholly endorsed Dr. Jessup's proposal, with the exception of two minor points which he asked to be amended. He even expressly endorsed the opening paragraph of the American draft resolution which suggested an indictment of the Arab States, and against which the Syrian delegate had just vigorously protested in a long and extemporaneous speech.⁵⁶ The Soviet Union and the Ukrainian S.S.R. supported the substance of the American draft resolution but criticized those paragraphs which entrusted the Mediator with additional powers or tasks, and which suggested any departure from the details of the partition resolution. (The Soviet delegate criticized, for example, that paragraph which left to the Mediator the question of military observers, regarding that provision as tantamount to leaving the question to the United States.) The two delegates of the Soviet Union and of the Ukrainian S.S.R. expressly attacked Bernadotte, accusing him of complicity with the United States, Britain and France.⁵⁷ The campaign of the Soviet block against the Mediator was growing stronger and more concentrated.

⁵⁶ See El-Khoury's speech: United Nations, Security Council, Official Records, Third Year, No 95, 13 July 1948, pp. 41 - 54. Cadogan's speech, pp. 54 - 56.

⁵⁷ See the Russian and the Ukrainian delegates speeches respectively in: *Ibid.*, No 96, 14 July 1948, pp. 26 - 34 and No 97, 15 July 1948, pp. 25 - 30.

Several amendements to the American draft resolution were rejected, and the resolution was finally adopted, on 15 July, with two minor amendments. A paragraph was added to the resolution, at the proposal of the American delegate, urging the Arabs and the Israelis to continue conversation through the Mediator, "in a spirit of conciliation and mutual concession", to achieve a permanent settlement. The second indefinite truce in Palestine came into effect on 18 July.

With the second indefinite truce prevailing in Palestine, the center of gravity in the U.N. now shifted from the urgent problem of freezing the hostilities to the wider and more complex problem of working out the details of a permanent settlement. The "Bernadotte plan" ranked high in the list of possible solutions of the problem during the second half of the year 1948, and the third session of the General Assembly witnessed the ultimate outcome of Bernadotte's efforts in Palestine.

CHAPTER IX

THE LAST PHASE

During the second, indefinite truce in Palestine, international attention centered on the efforts made by the Mediator to bring about a final settlement of the Palestine problem. In fact, the major concrete proposal for the settlement of the problem, during that period, was Bernadotte's plan which was later developed and refined and formally submitted to the third session of the General Assembly late in 1948. But even before its publication on 20 September, the basic principles embodied in the Mediator's plan, particularly the territorial modifications suggested therein, captured the attention of all the parties that had any interest in the Palestine situation, and became the center of sharp controversy.

The American State Department showed, early in September, an inclination towards the Mediator's suggestions. On 6 September, the American Chief Representative to Israel delivered an aide memoire to the Provisional Government of Israel suggesting that a solution be worked out with the Government of Jordan, in which a portion of the Negeb desert is given to Jordan in exchange for a portion of Western Galilee, then occupied by the Israeli forces. The aide memoire also stated that the United States Government would "consider acceptable" any arrangement for the status

of the Holy Places that provides safety and free access, even if not along the lines of the November Resolution of the General Assembly and the April and May resolutions of the Trusteeship Council, on condition that the arrangement is satisfactory to Israel and the Arab States. (The later version of Bernadotte's suggestions recommended "special and separate treatment" to the City of Jerusalem).¹ The American aide memoire finally suggested that Israel should work out "some constructive measures for the alleviation of Arab refugees' distress."² This American move in favor of the Bernadotte plan was no doubt an early sign of some sort of rapprochement between the American State Department and the British Foreign Office in regard to Palestine, for, about two months later, the British Government publicly sponsored the attempt to transform Bernadotte's proposals to a General Assembly resolution.³ But the State Department, as the story of the development of American attitude towards the Bernadotte plan will again indicate, was not the sole agent in deciding American policy on Palestine.⁴

In any case, even less than two weeks before the opening of the third session of the General Assembly in September, the American Government was of the opinion that

¹ See the Mediator's report, U.N. Document A/648.

² McDonald, op.cit., pp. 48 - 49.

³ See below, p. 201.

⁴ See below, pp. 201 - 203, 206 - 207.

the Assembly should not discuss the Palestine problem. The basis of this position, as the American representative to Israel later wrote, was that the American and British Governments then believed that it would be better to "coast along" with the existing truce than to fail in peace efforts in the General Assembly.⁵ Bernadotte was of the contrary opinion; on the same day in which he received the news about the American attitude - 9 September - he sent a word with "a representative of the United States" to the latter's Government "that its view that the Palestine question ought not to be included on the Assembly agenda was most unfortunate and could only lead to chaos."⁶ The final outcome was that the United States reversed its position at the end, and the Palestine question was placed on the Agenda of the Assembly.

In the meantime, Israel had felt since the early days of Bernadotte's mediation activities the danger - from its point of view - of possible border modifications that might entail some territorial retreat on its part. Therefore, on 10 June, Ben-Gurion said in a broadcast announcing Israel's acceptance of the cease-fire order: "All that we have taken we should hold."⁷ On 13 August, Ben-Gurion, in reply to the contention that Israel should retreat to

⁵ McDonald, op.cit., pp. 60 - 61.

⁶ Bernadotte, op.cit., p. 233.

⁷ Ben-Gurion, op.cit., p. 247.

the boundaries set by the November Resolution, said in a speech: "The plan [partition] we steeled ourselves to accept in the last resort, for the sake of its international endorsement, is relevant no longer: after all that has happened in Israel and in the Middle East, and within the United Nations, it has lost all point whether touching Jerusalem and its approaches, or Gallilee, and much besides."⁸ In fact, the American representative to Israel, James G. McDonald, reports that in the latter part of 1948, Israel wanted not only a settlement "on the basis of the status quo", but it wanted also the United States to pressure both Bernadotte and the Arab States in that direction. The American Government, however, was, as McDonald puts it, "unwilling to recognize Israel's possession of any territories beyond the November 29 th partition line, unless Israel made territorial compensations elsewhere to the Arabs."⁹ But Israel was unyielding; Ben-Gurion told McDonald: "What Israel has won on the battlefield, it is determined not to yield at the council table."¹⁰

For some reason, Zionist opinion felt that Bernadotte's proposals deeply reflected British influence. McDonald, the enthusiastically pro-Israeli American

⁸ Ibid., p. 276.

⁹ McDonald, op.cit., p. 49.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 79.

representative,¹¹ claims that the Bernadotte plan was "essentially that of His Majesty's Government."¹² Particularly in its territorial provisions, notably "the severance from Israel of the Negev", the plan reflected according to McDonald, this British influence.¹³ The grounds for this assertion, which Zionist sources widely publicized, was that that proposal "assured Jordan control - that is, British control - of the Negev, the much wanted 'land bridge' from Egypt to Jordan."¹⁴ Bernadotte, on the other hand, did not deny that his plan was "particularly favourable" to Transjordan;¹⁵ he, however, gave his reasons for the proposed territorial modifications. "The incorporation", Bernadotte wrote in his memoirs, "of the Negev (a quite large but desert-like and not very attractive area) in the Arab countries would give them possession of a connected strip of territory. The Jewish threat against the frontiers of Transjordan and Egypt would also be reduced." As to why the Arab part of Palestine should be ceded to Transjordan, Bernadotte wrote: "King Abdullah's troops were the only ones on the Arab side that had had any military successes during the war. Abdullah was also bound to feel

¹¹ See above, pp. 160 - 162.

¹² McDonald, op.cit., p. 62.

¹³ Ibid., p. 20.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 78.

¹⁵ Bernadotte, op.cit., p. 138.

flattered at having the population of his realm increased by 200 per cent."¹⁶ In his official report, Bernadotte defined the grounds for the merger of Arab Palestine with Transjordan as "the historical connexion and common interests of Transjordan and Palestine."¹⁷

In any case, whether Bernadotte was influenced in his suggestions by the British Government or not, Israeli and Zionist opinion accused him of that, and because the State Department had also shown an inclination towards the Bernadotte plan, the United States was lumped with Britain as the co-sponsor of the plan. Some Zionist papers described Bernadotte as "a British and American Agent."¹⁸ Other Israeli papers, furiously indignant at the Mediator's proposals, went as far as charging him with Nazi sympathies and with a record of "dubious character" with Himmler during World War II.¹⁹ The whole of the Israeli press, as well as the Government's attitude, became hostile to the Mediator and his observers,²⁰ and on 6 September, the leader of the terrorist Stern Group bluntly wrote: "The task of the moment is to oust Bernadotte and his observers. Blessed be the hand that does it."²¹

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 119.

¹⁷ See Document A/648.

¹⁸ Bernadotte, op.cit., p. 230.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 158.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 222; also McDonald, op.cit., p. 47.

²¹ See report from the Acting Mediator, Ralph Bunche: U.N. Document S/1018.

Zionist hostility to Bernadotte finally culminated in his assassination on 17 September in the Jewish-controlled part of Jerusalem, presumably by some members of the Stern Group.²² The Israeli authorities showed no great enthusiasm for investigating the murder and arresting the murderers.²³ Forty-eight hours after the assassination, James McDonald sent a message directly to Truman urging him not to let "panicky advisers" persuade him to "penalize a whole people for the reckless action of a few" or to impose any sanctions on Israel. Truman did not fail his representative in Israel, and responded favorably to McDonald's recommendation.²⁴

The Bernadotte plan was published on 20 September - three days after the Mediator's murder - and it appeared on the Agenda of the third session of the General Assembly which was opened in Paris on 21 September. On that day - 21 September - Secretary of State Marshall, perhaps without express prior authorization by Truman,²⁵ strongly supported the Mediator's proposals "in their entirety as the best possible basis for bringing peace to a distracted land."²⁶ This was, for the Israelis, the climax of the

²² For details of the murder of the Mediator see Appendicis I and II in: Bernadotte, op.cit.

²³ See: Kirk, op.cit., pp. 285 - 286.

²⁴ McDonald, op.cit., pp. 74 - 75.

²⁵ See: Truman, op.cit., v. II, p. 166.

²⁶ See: Hurewitz, op.cit., p. 322; also: The Times, 22 September 1948, p. 4.

United States inclination toward the Bernadotte plan, and posed the danger of an impending decision by the General Assembly that might sever the Negeb from the area assigned to Israel by the November Resolution.

Ben-Gurion had said on 8 January 1948: "The Negev is a special problem - not of protecting a handful of settlements, but of securing an integral part of the State. Bluntly, conquest of the Negev." He had added: "The United Nations has given us it to colonize but force of arms, not formal resolutions, will determine the issue, and unless we muster armed strength there, we may soon lose it."²⁷ Ben-Gurion's insight seemed now as true as never before, and the need for armed action in the Negeb appeared very persistent to the Zionist leadership. Thus, on 14 October - one day before the First Committee of the General Assembly opened its consideration of the Mediator's report - the Israeli forces opened their major offensive in Southern Palestine which resulted finally in the occupation of the Negeb. Serious outbreak of fighting in the Negeb was reported by the Acting Mediator, Dr. Ralph Bunche, as well as Israel's non-compliance with the cease-fire appeal made by him.²⁸ The Security Council adopted on 19 October a resolution ordering a cease-fire and the "withdrawal of both parties [i.e. the Israeli and the Egyptian] from any

²⁷ Ben-Gurion, op.cit., pp. 231 - 232.

²⁸ See U.N. Document S/1042.

position not occupied at the time of the outbreak."²⁹

Until 28 October, when the Israeli delegate to the U.N. made a speech disputing the literal interpretation of the 19 October resolution and raising some technical points,³⁰ the Israeli forces had not withdrawn from the Negeb. A joint Anglo-Chinese draft resolution, affirming the earlier withdrawal order and calling for sanctions against the violator, was introduced, and was strongly criticized by the Israeli delegate.³¹ The draft resolution was later rephrased in a sub-committee, diluted by an American amendment,³² and finally adopted by the Council (without the support of the Soviet Union and the Ukrainian S.S.R.).³³ Hurewitz remarks in regard to the American position during that debate that "the American representative on the Security Council was prepared to back an Anglo-Chinese resolution calling for sanctions against Israel, only to reverse himself the next day on instructions from the White House."³⁴ It is to be remembered that the American Presidential elections were to take place also in November.

²⁹ See U.N. Document S/1044.

³⁰ United Nations, Security Council, Official Records, Third Year, N° 122, 28 October 1948, pp. 13 - 21.

³¹ Ibid., N° 123, 29 October 1948, pp. 13 - 21.

³² See Jessup's statement in: Ibid., N° 124, 4 Nov. 1948, pp. 2 - 6.

³³ See U.N. Document S/1070.

³⁴ Hurewitz, op.cit., pp. 323.

At the suggestion of Dr. Bunche, a joint Canadian-Belgian-French draft resolution was introduced in the Security Council on 15 November, calling for the establishment of an armistice in all parts of Palestine and calling upon the parties concerned to negotiate either directly or through the Acting Mediator. (The resolution avoided reference to the fact that the Israeli forces had not withdrawn, and merged the question of the withdrawal in the framework of a general armistice in Palestine). The American delegate supported the draft resolution as "a prelude to the actual establishment of peace in Palestine."³⁵ On the following day, the resolution was adopted.³⁶

In the meantime the General Assembly, at its third session, was also seized of the Palestine problem. The Assembly referred to its First Committee, for consideration and report, the late Mediator's report on the adjustment of the future situation of Palestine. The First Committee went into the substance of the discussion on 15 November, and it was on that day that the Foreign Minister of Israel, Moshe Shertok, expressed before the Committee his Government's rejection of Bernadotte's proposals, even as a basis for discussion.³⁷ (Shertok had told the press

³⁵ United Nations, Security Council, Official Records, Third Year, No 125, 15 November 1948, pp. 25 - 28.

³⁶ See U.N. Document S/1080.

³⁷ United Nations, Official Records of the Third Session of the General Assembly, Part I, First Committee, Summary Records, 21 Sept. - 8 Dec. 1948, pp. 640 - 647.

in Paris on 6 October of Israel's rejection of the Bernadotte plan.)³⁸ The Arab delegates also rejected before the Committee the Mediator's conclusions.

On 18 November, the British delegate submitted a draft resolution expressly endorsing the conclusions of the Mediator's report, and providing for the establishment of a three-state conciliation commission to assist the parties concerned arrive at a settlement based on these conclusions. Two days later, the American delegate presented before the Committee his Government's view. He supported "the general principles contained in the seven basic premises of the Mediator's report", but had something to say on the question of boundaries which differed from that of Marshall's 21 September statement.³⁹ Dr. Jessup now said that his Government "approved the claims of the State of Israel to the boundaries set forth in the 29 November resolution and considered that modifications thereof should be made only if fully acceptable to the State of Israel." Dr. Jessup added that "reductions in such territory should be agreed upon by Israel and if Israel desired additions, it would have to offer an appropriate exchange through negotiations."⁴⁰ Later, Jessup

³⁸ McDonald, op.cit., p. 89.

³⁹ See above, p. 197.

⁴⁰ United Nations, Official Records of the Third Session of the General Assembly, Part I, First Committee, Summary Records, 21 September - 8 December 1948, p. 682.

submitted a number of amendments, the major of which was the deletion of that paragraph of the British draft resolution endorsing the specific conclusions of the Mediator as the basis for the proposed settlement.

The American delegate's retreat from Marshall's statement of 21 September was not a surprise move. The retreat had already been made by President Truman in an electoral speech given in New York on October 28. In his memoirs, Truman tells his version of the story of the retreat - a story which is, in many ways, revealing. Truman claims that the news of Marshall's statement which endorsed the Bernadotte plan reached him on 28 September, while he was aboard his special train during the election campaign. (Truman does not explicitly state that he had not authorized Marshall's statement). Upon hearing the news, Truman continues, "I told my staff, therefore, that I would issue a statement reaffirming the Israel plank of the Democratic platform." (The Israel plank of the Democratic Party pledged not to approve any changes in November Resolution boundaries if not "fully acceptable" to Israel).⁴¹ But, when Marshall later met the President, the latter was dissuaded. Yet, Truman was again provoked to make the statement when his Presidential opponent, Governor Dewey, made a statement challenging him on Palestine. "In this

⁴¹ See above, p. 195.

statement he [Dewey] tried to imply that I had gone back on the Democratic platform, and in doing so he had, in effect, attacked my integrity. This attack I could not permit to go unchallenged." Truman then gave his speech of 28 October in Madison Square, New York, reaffirming the Democratic plank and, thus, retreating from the position declared by Marshall a month before.⁴² Jessup's statement in the First Committee was a reiteration of Truman's October statement.

The debate in the First Committee continued. The British delegate, in response, it seems, to the trend of the remarks and suggestions expressed by several European and American states, and, more important perhaps, in order to adjust his proposed resolution to the American position, submitted on 30 November a revised version of his draft resolution. The new draft dropped the paragraph endorsing the specific conclusions of the Mediator's report, and tried to meet some American objections.⁴³ The revised text produced the required effect, and the American delegate withdrew his amendments and gave his support to the revised text.⁴⁴ Many European and American delegates followed suit.

⁴² Truman, op.cit., v. II, pp. 166 - 168.

⁴³ See U.N. Document A/C.1/394/Rev. 2.

⁴⁴ United Nations, Official Records of the Third Session of the General Assembly, Part I, First Committee, Summary Records, 21 September - 8 December 1948, pp. 835 - 836.

The Soviet representative in the First Committee had opened on 22 November a campaign against the Mediator's report as contrary to the resolution of 29 November 1947,⁴⁵ and later submitted a draft resolution recommending the immediate removal of foreign troops and military personnel. The Israeli representative favored the line taken by the Soviet block and the draft resolution submitted by the Soviet Union,⁴⁶ and when the vote was taken on the Soviet proposal, on 4 December, the Guatemalan delegate, Dr. Garcia-Granados, was the only non-communist delegate who voted in its favor.⁴⁷ The Arab delegates, on the other hand, held firmly to their opposition to the principle of a Jewish state in Palestine. They questioned the legal competence of the General Assembly to partition Palestine and rejected the recommendations of the Mediator's report, but offered the establishment of a single state in Palestine on a federal or cantonal basis.⁴⁸ The First Committee finally adopted on 4 December the revised draft resolution submitted by the United Kingdom. The resolution was opposed by the Arab States, the Soviet block and roughly the old anti-partitionist group. Guatemala abstained.

⁴⁵ Ibid., pp. 694 - 697.

⁴⁶ See, for instance; Ibid., pp. 793 - 794.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 930.

⁴⁸ See the draft resolution offered by the Syrian delegate, U.N. Document A/C.1/402.

The narrow margin of votes, by which the revised British draft resolution was adopted in the First Committee (25 to 21 with 9 abstentions), prompted the supporters of the resolution to effect significant modifications in it, in order to ensure its adoption by the General Assembly. Because the First Committee's recommendation had been rejected by both the Arabs and Israel, on contradictory grounds, the modifications had to be two-sided. The First Committee's resolution which was put to the vote in the Assembly on 11 December, therefore differed from the original text in the following way: it dropped from the preamble that part referring to the Assembly resolutions of 29 November 1947 and 14 May 1948, and to the truce and armistice resolutions and the Mediator's report; it also dropped the paragraph instructing the proposed Conciliation Commission to promote good relations between the Arabs and "the State of Israel." Mr. John F. Dulles, the new chief American delegate, supported the draft resolution in its final form on the grounds that American policy endorsed the three basic propositions of which the resolution consisted: peaceful settlement, the protection of the Holy Places and the repatriation of the refugees.⁴⁹

The resolution was adopted by the required majority, with the Arab States and the Soviet block voting against it,

⁴⁹ United Nations, Official Records of the Third Session of the General Assembly, Part I, Plenary Meetings, Summary Records, 21 September - 12 December 1948, pp. 953-955.

and Guatemala (among several other states) abstaining. The Conciliation Commission provided for in the 11 December resolution was later composed, against the will of the Soviet Union,⁵⁰ from the representatives of the United States, France and Turkey. The third session of the Assembly came to an end on the following day.

It is perhaps interesting to note that this session of the General Assembly again revealed some aspects of the interplay of American domestic forces. In addition to the story of the two contradictory positions taken successively by Secretary Marshall and President Truman on the Bernadotte plan, there were other instances that also reflected the fact that the third session of the General Assembly was considering the Palestine problem in an atmosphere of American Presidential elections. One instance is that the senior American delegate to the Paris session of the Assembly, John F. Dulles, played an authorized double-role, in his former capacity and in his capacity as Governor Dewey's main candidate for the Secretaryship of State. The Republicans opposed the Bernadotte plan and the separation of the Negeb from the territory of the Jewish State, and Dulles joined his party in its opposition to the plan.⁵¹ Having been allowed, in an exceptional arrangement, to express publicly his own views on

⁵⁰ See: Ibid., p. 1004.

⁵¹ McDonald, op.cit., pp. 97 - 98.

any issue that had "domestic political significance", Dulles issued a statement that he - and, therefore, Dewey - were not bound by Marshall's 21 September statement approving the Bernadotte plan. Shortly after, Dewey expressed, on 22 October, his support to giving the Negeb to Israel. It was this statement that prompted Truman, a few days later, to declare, in an attempt to outwit the Republicans, that no modification of boundaries should be made unless acceptable to Israel.⁵²

President Truman seems to have been interested in directing personally the behavior of the American delegation to the Paris session of the Assembly in regard to Palestine. Truman's "own man in Tel Aviv", James McDonald,⁵³ flew to Paris, joined the American delegation and "was in occasional touch by cable or telephone with Clark Clifford at the White House." The latter's help, writes McDonald, "meant much, indeed, not only to me but to Israel."⁵⁴ McDonald then adds about that period: "As I look back and recall President Truman's steadfast support of my efforts, I hope that my visit to Paris helped to bring the State Department to see more clearly eye to eye with Mr. Truman."⁵⁵ No wonder the Israeli Government could retain its gains in the Negeb, won

⁵² Lillienthal, op.cit., p. 113. For an earlier reference to Truman's statement see above, pp. 202-203.

⁵³ See above, pp. 160 - 162.

⁵⁴ McDonald, op.cit., p. 101.

⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 102 - 103.

by the 14 October offensive, and escape sanctions and U.N. pressure for its ultimate non-compliance with the successive withdrawal orders of the Security Council; in the midst of these events Truman wrote to Weizmann (it was on the first anniversary of the Partition resolution): "As I read your letter, I was struck by the common experience you and I have recently shared. We had both been abandoned by the so-called realistic experts to our supposedly forlorn lost cause. Yet we both kept pressing for what we were sure was right - and we were both proven to be right ... I remember well our conversation about the Negeb, to which you referred in your letter. I agree fully with your estimate of the importance of the area to Israel, and I deplore any attempt to take it away from Israel ... I am confident that the General Assembly will support us in this basic position."⁵⁶

With this American diplomatic backing for its claims in the Negeb, Israel was now encouraged to pursue its policy of creating facts and then asking for international recognition. On 22 December, the Israeli forces launched a new, large-scale attack on the Egyptian front in the South. The Security Council was informed of that by both Egypt and the Acting Mediator. In the Security Council, the British delegate submitted a draft resolution calling for an immediate cease-fire and for withdrawal to

⁵⁶ Truman, op.cit., v. II, pp. 168 - 169.

the positions occupied before the 14 October campaign, which had not been achieved inspite of the two earlier resolutions of 4 and 16 November. The Israeli delegate naturally opposed the British draft resolution,⁵⁷ and the final vote showed that both the United States and the Soviet Union were also unfavorable to it. However, the resolution, with some amendments, was endorsed by the majority on 29 December.

Apparently confident that the 29 December resolution would be as unsupported by U.N. action as its predecessors, the Israeli Government continued its military penetration into the Egyptian-held territory and advanced inside Egyptian territory proper. At this point Britain intervened directly, and, through the American representative to Israel, informed the Israeli Government that it would invoke its obligations under the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936, if Israeli forces did not withdraw from Egyptian soil.⁵⁸ The American Government had already gone as far as it could in supporting Israeli positions, and the new explosive situation created in Palestine forced it to intervene in a restraining effort. It, therefore, sent a note to the Israeli Government expressing its support to the Security Council's resolution of 29 December ordering a cease-fire and a withdrawal of forces.⁵⁹ The intervention of the two Western Governments, as well as Israel's probable

⁵⁷ United Nations, Security Council, Official Records, Third Year, N° 136, 28 December 1948, pp. 14 - 22.

⁵⁸ McDonald, op.cit., pp. 107 - 108.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

achievement of the military goals of the campaign, finally led the Israeli Government to accept the cease-fire on 7 January. On that same day Ben-Gurion made a speech in which he said: "We can point to the attainment of our double objective in the fighting - the Negev wholly ours and peace sped."⁶⁰ But Israel could not forgive or leave unanswered the British ultimatum; Weizmann wrote to Truman protesting against the British move and urging American pressure on Britain to prevent further British "intrigue with the Arabs."⁶¹ Truman did not disappoint Weizmann; he soon met the British Ambassador to the United States and expressed to him his disapproval of Britain's move against Israel.⁶²

The pressure of military defeat and internal instability finally led the Egyptian Government to enter into armistice talks with the Israeli Government under the auspices of the Acting Mediator on 13 January 1949, although Israeli forces had not withdrawn to their pre-October positions. An armistice agreement was concluded on 24 February. Other Arab-Israeli armistice agreements followed: between Lebanon and Israel on 22 March, Jordan and Israel on 3 April, and Syria and Israel on 20 July.⁶³

⁶⁰ Ben-Gurion, op.cit., p. 287.

⁶¹ McDonald, op.cit., p. 112.

⁶² Ibid., pp. 115 - 116.

⁶³ See texts of the Armistice Agreements in: United Nations, Security Council, Official Records, Fourth Year, Special Supplements Nos. 1, 2, 3, and 4.

The period following the conclusion of the armistice agreements between Israel and the Arab States marked an increasing amicability of relations between Britain and Israel. During the negotiations - on 29 January - Britain extended its de facto recognition to Israel, and the Jewish immigrants of military age who had been detained in Cyprus during the Arab-Israeli war were now released. Two days later, the United States Government extended its de jure recognition to Israel and raised the status of its mission to an embassy, thereby making the American Ambassador replace the Soviet Minister as ranking diplomat. Shortly after, the American Government approved 100 million Dollars loan to Israel through the Export-Import Bank.

The United Nations Conciliation Commission, which had taken over from the Acting Mediator,⁶⁴ began, after some preliminary soundings, a series of meetings at Lausanne, late in April, with the representatives of Israel and the Arab States for the final settlement of the Palestine problem. As the meetings were going on, the United Nations was considering Israel's application for membership in the Organization. The Security Council had considered the question on 2 December, 1948, and although Israel's application had, then, been enthusiastically supported by the United

⁶⁴ See above, pp. 201, 205 - 206.

States⁶⁵ and the Soviet Union,⁶⁶ the application had not secured the required votes (Britain and France had abstained) and the question had been put off. On 3 and 4 March, the Security Council discussed the question again. Israel's application was again supported with enthusiasm by the United States⁶⁷ and the Soviet Union,⁶⁸ and the French representative was favorable this time.⁶⁹ When the vote was taken, only Egypt opposed and Britain abstained; the rest approved of Israel's admission into the U.N.⁷⁰ With this same major support in the Ad Hoc Committee of the General Assembly, Israel's application was finally approved on 11 May by 33 votes to 11, with 13 abstentions (among them Britain).

Meanwhile, the Lausanne efforts of the Conciliation Commission achieved some progress by making the Arabs and the Israelis sign on 12 May the Lausanne Protocol according to which both parties accepted the boundaries defined by the November partition resolution as the basis for the discussions with the Commission.⁷¹ But this progress proved

⁶⁵ United Nations, Security Council, Official Records, Third Year, N° 128, 2 December 1948, pp. 8 - 14.

⁶⁶ Ibid., pp. 21 - 23.

⁶⁷ United Nations, Security Council, Official Records, Fourth Year, N° 16, 3 March 1949, pp. 8 - 9 and 10 - 11.

⁶⁸ Ibid., pp. 11-12; also: Ibid., N° 17, 4 March 1949, pp. 9 - 13.

⁶⁹ Ibid., N° 16, 3 March 1949, pp. 7 - 8.

⁷⁰ Ibid., N° 17, 4 March 1949, p. 14.

⁷¹ See: Third Progress Report of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, 21 June 1949 (U.N. Document A/927), Annex A.

shortly after to be of little real value. Israel soon reversed its position of the 12 May Protocol by demanding that the international frontiers of Mandatory Palestine be considered the frontiers of Israel, with the temporary exception of the area under Jordanian military authority where Israel consented to recognize the Kingdom of Jordan "as the de facto military occupying Power" for the time being.⁷²

On the other basic problem of Arab refugees, to which the Arab delegations gave priority in the discussions, another stalemate emerged. The Arabs insisted on the repatriation of the Palestinian Arabs who had been forced to flee Palestine during the war, in accordance with the General Assembly's resolution of 11 December 1948.⁷³ The Israelis, on the other hand, stated that if they were allowed to incorporate the Gaza area in their territory, they would be prepared to accept its 270,000 Arabs as Israeli citizens provided international aid is given for their resettlement. If that offer was rejected by the Arabs, Israel would not commit itself on the number of refugees it would accept.⁷⁴

It became now evident even to the Government of the United States that the primary reason for the Lausanne stalemate was the intransigent attitude of the Israeli

⁷² Ibid., paras. 24 - 29.

⁷³ See above, p. 205.

⁷⁴ See: Third Progress Report, op.cit., pp. 4 - 9.

Government, encouraged by Israel's military successes in the field. The attempt of the Conciliation Commission was on the brink of failure, and the American Government's intervention with Israel had already been requested by the American Chairman of the Commission.⁷⁵ On 29 May, therefore, Israel received a strong note from the American Government expressing "deep disappointment" at Israel's uncompromising attitude at Lausanne in regard to refugees and boundaries; it interpreted Israel's attitude as dangerous to peace and inconsistent with the General Assembly's resolutions of November 1947 and December 1948. The note asked that tangible concessions on the question of refugees be made at once by Israel.⁷⁶

The Israeli Government, though disturbed by the American note, did not yield on any point and, perhaps relying on President Truman's support against the State Department, expressed this position in a long note to the American Government. It took the American Government a rather long time to counter-reply; the new American note indicated that "there was apparently indecision and much heart-searching in Washington." The President's intervention must have again reversed the State Department's position, for the new note "abandoned completely the stern tone of its predecessor," as Ambassador McDonald reports. The next few months witnessed a "steady retreat" from the policy

⁷⁵ McDonald, op.cit., p. 163.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 165.

of the May note, and Washington "declined the responsibility of suggesting specific solutions to either side." In fact, McDonald explicitly says that through "President Truman's influence", difference between McDonald and the State Department were, since then, reduced to a minimum.⁷⁷ Israel was obviously a winner in this new understanding.

When the prospects of the Lausanne talks looked dim again in August, the State Department, despite the Israeli public's deep indignation at the signs of American intervention,⁷⁸ tried to pressure the Israeli Government to retreat from its intransigence. This pressure took the form of a State Department veto against an impending Export-Import Bank loan to Israel. Ambassador McDoanld, who was then in the United States, talked to President Truman about the subject, and shortly after that meeting the allocation of the loan was announced. The President had again intervened against his State Department.⁷⁹

Partly because of this lack of strong international backing, the efforts of the Conciliation Commission failed to produce any observable progress in the direction of a general settlement. The major accomplishment of the Commission, however, was its proposal, based

⁷⁷ Ibid., pp. 166 - 168.

⁷⁸ For Israel's reaction to American diplomatic intervention, see: Peretz, Don, Israel and the Palestine Arabs (Washington, 1958), pp. 44 - 47.

⁷⁹ McDonald, op.cit., pp. 169 - 170.

on the report of its Economic Mission,⁸⁰ for the creation of a United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees, the task of which was to be the "rehabilitation" and "relief" of the Arab refugees.⁸¹ The fourth session of the General Assembly adopted this proposal on 8 December 1949. The major portion of UNRWA's budget, since that date, has been contributed by the United States.⁸²

The status of Jerusalem was the last major problem with which the United Nations had to grapple late in 1949 before the Palestine controversy was finally reduced to a more or less static stalemate. The fourth session of the General Assembly, convened in the later part of 1949, considered the problem of Jerusalem, and took, with painstaking efforts, a decision on the matter. The Conciliation Commission had in accordance with the General Assembly's resolution of December 1948, drafted a plan for a permanent United Nations regime over a demilitarized Jerusalem with same form of municipal autonomy for the Arab and Israeli sectors.⁸³ Israel

⁸⁰ That Mission came to be known as the Clapp Mission, after its American chairman, Gordon R. Clapp.

⁸¹ See: United Nations, Conciliation Commission for Palestine, Final Report of the Economic Survey Mission for the Middle East, 28 December 1949.

⁸² See Annual Reports of the Director of UNRWA, 1951 ff

⁸³ See: United Nations, General Assembly, Conciliation Commission for Palestine, Draft Instrument for Jerusalem (Document A/973).

categorically rejected the plan; the Arab States, with the exception of Jordan, accepted the principle of the internationalization of Jerusalem.

When the Conciliation Commission's plan came before the Ad Hoc Committee of the fourth session of the General Assembly, the American delegate, on 24 November, described it as "moderate, practical and common-sense course."⁸⁴ Britain also supported the plan, but the Israeli representative, Foreign Minister Sharett, strongly rejected it. The diversity and large number of proposals submitted led the Committee to appoint a sub-committee to study and try to reconcile these proposals. Although Israel was a member of the sub-committee, the draft resolution which came out of the sub-committee, on 2 December, went farther than the Conciliation Commission's plan recommending that Jerusalem "be placed under a permanent international regime."⁸⁵ Notwithstanding the opposition of the United States and Britain, the draft resolution was carried in the Ad Hoc Committee on 7 December and in the plenary meeting of the General Assembly two days later.⁸⁶ The majority which supported the internationalization plan consisted of the Soviet block, the Arab block

⁸⁴ See: Kirk, *op.cit.*, p. 306.

⁸⁵ See: Resolution 303 (IV).

⁸⁶ An informative summary of the debates in the Ad Hoc Committee, the sub-committee and the plenary meeting of the General Assembly, on the question of Jerusalem, appear in: Yearbook of the United Nations, 1948 - 49 (New York, November 1950), pp. 190 - 197.

and, most of all, the Catholic and half-Catholic states which were primarily influenced by the Vatican's support of internationalization.⁸⁷ (Israel had, in fact, conducted, though in vain, secret negotiations with the Vatican to forstall the internationalization resolution; its channel to the Pope had been, curiously enough, the American Ambassador, McDonald.)⁸⁸ The Israeli Government's response to the General Assembly's resolution was its proclamation of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, on 21 January 1950.

Israel was now a strongly-established widely-recognized state of the Middle East; but the situation on its borders remained extremely tense and inflammable. To contain the danger of another Arab-Israeli armed collision, and to coordinate their hitherto ununified policies in the Middle East, the three major Western powers, Britain, the United States and France, took a fresh diplomatic initiative in May 1950. The outcome of their London conference was the famous Tripartite Declaration of 25 May which expressed opposition to the development of an Arab-Israeli arms race and undertook to preserve the existing frontiers and armistice lines among the States of the area.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ See: McDonald, op.cit., p. 187.

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 188.

⁸⁹ See text of the Declaration in: The Times
26 May 1950, p. 6.

Logically (or otherwise ?) the Soviet Union was excluded from this tripartite agreement, which it later counteracted by its 1955 rapprochement with Egypt and the arms deals. The Tripartite Declaration concluded the major phase of the effective establishment of the State of Israel.

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