

## A NEW U. S. POLICY ON PALESTINE IS OFFERED THE U. N.



Abandonment of partition is urged by Warren R. Austin, U. S. delegate, at the Security Council Friday Pic. Inc.

into Jewish and Arab states by next Oct. 1. It brought the British decision to advance the date of surrendering her twenty-five-year Palestine mandate to May 15—now eight weeks away.

The second statement meant that partition was dead, for the present at least, as a U. N. solution for Palestine. It brought an announcement yesterday by David Ben Gurion, chairman of the Jewish Agency Executive, that "a Jewish State exists and shall continue to exist because we will defend it."

### Guerrilla Fighting

Since the Nov. 29 recommendation, a grim guerrilla war has been fought in Palestine; so far 1,700 Jews, Arabs and Britons have been killed. The Middle East Arabs threatened to launch a full-scale war this spring to block partition.

A United Nations Palestine Commission—established by the General Assembly to carry out partition—has run into pyramiding difficulties. On Feb. 16 the commission told the Security Council that it could not carry out the U. N. plan unless it received "military forces in adequate strength."

All through this period there had been second thoughts among some of the great powers—and particularly in the United States—on the partition issue. Cabinet members in the Truman Administration issued warnings—in public and in the privacy of the White House—that it would be dangerous to carry out the decision in the face of Arab opposition. In these warnings two words were repeated with drumming insistency. They were *oil* and *Russia*. The argument was that the Arabs would cut off our oil and that Russia would gain a foothold in the strategic Middle East.

### Political Warning

On the other hand, there was contradictory counsel. The President was warned that he could not back away from the partition decision without alienating voters and thereby losing next November's election. These counselors argued that the Arabs were bluffing; that, no matter what the United States did, the Arab leaders' fear of Russia was so great that they would not turn to Moscow.

The Palestine Commission's Feb. 16 report forced the United States to give an answer to the vital question: Would the United States support enforcement of the partition recommendation?

On Feb. 24, Mr. Austin gave the answer before the Security Council. He said in effect: Under the United Nations Charter the Security Council does not have authority to enforce a political settlement; the Council does have authority to use armed force if it finds that "a danger to the peace exists."

Ten days later—on March 5—the Security Council asked the Big Five powers—the United States, Russia, Britain, France and China—to meet informally and to report back within ten days with "recommendations which the Council might give to the Palestine Commission with a view of implementing the resolution of the General Assembly."

Four of the big powers—Britain disassociated herself from the group—met seven times between March 5 and last Friday. There were wrangles and hard feelings. Over Russian objections the United States tried to reopen consultations between the Jews and Arabs to seek a new solution. Andrei A. Gromyko, the Russian delegate, charged that the United States

## Partition Out

### U. S. Switches Stand

On last Oct. 11, Herschel V. Johnson, American delegate to the United Nations, told the General Assembly: "The United States delegation supports the basic principles of \* \* \* partition [of Palestine]."

Last Friday Warren R. Austin, American delegate to the United Nations Security Council, told the Council: "We believe that the Security Council should \* \* \* suspend \* \* \* efforts to implement the proposed partition plan."

The five months between these two statements have been months of first hope, then bitterness and, finally, despair over the future of Palestine.

The first statement led to the recommendation of the General Assembly on last Nov. 29 to divide Palestine

was trying to scuttle partition. Mr. Austin issued a sharply worded denial. The ten-day period expired and the group asked for an extension.

Last Friday at 10:45 A. M. the Security Council convened to hear the Big Four report. Mr. Austin was the first of the Big Four to speak. He began by recommending that the Security Council "is determined not to permit the existence of a threat to the peace in Palestine." Then he suddenly asked for an intermission to permit the big powers to make another effort to agree on a recommendation. The session recessed at 1:15 P. M.

### Meeting With Mr. Lie

Forty-five minutes later the delegates for the Big Five—Britain joined the consultations as a participant for the first time—met in the office of Trygve Lie, Secretary General of the United Nations. Mr. Austin did most of the talking. He recommended that the Big Four call on the Security Council to:

(1) Suspend the plan to partition Palestine into Arab and Jewish States by Oct. 1.

(2) Take all necessary steps—including employment of armed forces if necessary—to stamp out the fighting in the Holy Land.

(3) Call for an immediate special session of the General Assembly.

(4) Recommend that the General Assembly set up a "temporary" U. N. trusteeship for the Holy Land, presumably by May 15, to maintain the peace and give Jews and Arabs "further opportunity" to agree.

Mr. Lie questioned Mr. Austin closely. He pointed out that a U. N. Special Commission that had originally recommended the partition solution, had considered and abandoned a trusteeship proposal. The reason was, the Commission had reported, that it would take more troops to impose a trusteeship than to impose partition "because there would be both Jewish and Arab armies to fight." He asked Mr. Austin if the U. S. would be prepared to send troops to administer a trusteeship. Mr. Austin replied:

"The United States, of course, is ready to back United Nations decisions."

After the private conference, an official American spokesman called U. N. correspondents to a conference in the press lounge. There he explained the American statement. He insisted that the American statement did not necessarily mean the end of partition. Nevertheless virtually every correspondent there wired his office a flash reading "U. S. abandons partition" or some similar phrase.

The news spread a deep gloom through the lounges at Lake Success—except among the Arab delegates and their supporters. A member of the secretariat called it a "horrible business."

### Russian Statement

It was in this atmosphere that the Security Council, reconvened soon after 3 o'clock to resume the Palestine discussion. What happened was anticlimactic. Mr. Austin presented his recommendations in formal language. Mr. Gromyko termed the new American proposal a "contradiction." He said he would have to hear from Moscow.

The U. S. clearly hopes for Russian support for its recommendation in the Council. However, if Russia should exercise her Big Power veto, the U. S. could go ahead anyway. The procedure is this: The U. S. would request the Secretary General to poll the fifty-seven member nations. If a majority of them—twenty-nine—approved of a special session, one would be called.

The job of that session—if the U. S. has its way—would be to rescind the Nov. 29 decision and to approve an agreement establishing Palestine as a "trust territory." Depending on the nature of the agreement, Palestine could be administered by a single U. N. member nation as "trustee," or by the United Nations collectively. Two types of trusteeships could be set up. The administration of one type, a "non-strategic" trusteeship, comes under the general supervision of the U. N. Trusteeship Council. The administration of the other type, a "strategic trusteeship," comes under supervision of the Security Council.

There were reports that the United States would like to have Great Britain continue administering Palestine as the U. N. "trustee."

### British Action

On Friday in London the House of Commons approved a bill formally authorizing termination of the mandate on May 15. But hints persisted that Britain might be persuaded to stay on as a trustee for the United Nations. It was suggested that Washington had discussed this possibility with London before Mr. Austin made his statement to the Security Council.

Whatever the decision of the Security Council—or of the fifty-seven nation General Assembly—the Jews of Palestine have their own plan for the future. The plan is this:

The Jewish Agency will set up the Jewish state without U. N. aid as soon as possible. Dr. Abba Hillel Silver of the Agency told the Security Council that "any proposals calling for further sacrifices will have to be imposed upon the Jewish community of Palestine by force."

At week's end the outlook for Palestine was tragic—more tragic, perhaps, than at any time since the Holy Land became an international problem twenty-five years ago.