PALESTINE TRUCE LEAVES MAIN ISSUES UNSOLVED
By THOMAS J. HAMILTONSpecial to THE NEW YORK TIMES.
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Conflicting Interests of Israel, Arabs And British Remain to Be Adjusted

By THOMAS J. HAMILTON
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LAKE SUCCESS, N. Y., June 12 —The complexities of the Palestine question are far from being dispelled by the cease-fire and truce that went into effect Friday morning. This is scheduled to last just twenty-eight days, and the problem remains: What will come after that?

The fact that the Security Council's request was accepted, although grudgingly, by both sides was possibly "a great day for the United Nations," as Trygve Lie, the Secretary General, put it. But it would be unrealistic not to look into the motives back of this decision.

How the cease-fire and truce affects Israel and the Arabs will depend in large part upon the way the United Nations mediator, Count Folke Bernadotte, puts it into effect. It can hardly be denied that the final terms submitted by the mediator gave the Arabs a break on the crucial question of the admission of Jews of military age—more, that is, than the Security Council resolution intended.

Another Munich Feared

Some of the more violent Zionists here already refer to Count Bernadotte as the Lord Runciman to Israel and say that just as Neville Chamberlain's emissary softened up Czechoslovakia in 1938, another Munich is being prepared for the summer of 1948. Why, then, did Israel accept the cease-fire?

The first and most obvious reason is that the state of Israel has done a much better job of defending itself than was expected. The Israelis have held out against Arab attacks much more successfully than anyone here anticipated, and this gave them the confidence they needed to try the turn of fortune's wheel, which the cease-fire represents.

If Israel can put the blame on the Arabs for the expected resumption of fighting, much will have been gained for her cause. Israel can then hope that the United States will raise its arms embargo, and that Great Britain will give only limited supplies to the Arabs.

Israel had to accept the cease-fire because it needs the support of world public opinion, and particularly in the United States.

Arab Reasons

Why did the Arabs accept? Pressure of public opinion is one reason, although this had less effect on them. Another was persuasion from the British, who finally realized that it was essential to avoid an open break with the United States on this issue.

Another, it would seem — although Arab representatives here will not openly admit it—is the strength of Israeli resistance. Put another way, the Arabs have not made as much of a fight of it as they predicted.

One basic reason for the Arab acceptance is the disunity among the Arab States. The Arab Legion, for example, intervened effectively to capture the walled Old City of Jerusalem, but little has been heard of it since. The four weeks will give the Arab rulers time to study the situation, and, in particular, to decide whether King Abdullah of Trans-Jordan should occupy all of Palestine or content himself with the area assigned to the Arab state under the General Assembly's partition resolution.

Type of Settlement

But whatever the Arab rulers decide on this point it seems certain that some kind of Zionist state is in Palestine to stay. It may lose some of the territory assigned to it by the General Assembly; but it holds the ports, and can scarcely be defeated unless a nation with a strong navy imposes a blockade. So the problem is to decide what kind of settlement can be reached.

Off and on over the past fourteen months, ever since the British placed the Palestine question before the United Nations, moderate Arabs here have talked about a federal solution. They are veering back to such a proposal now, and one gets the impression that they would even agree to a limited amount of immigration in the Israeli area.

Everything, of course, would depend upon the exact provisions of a federal plan. Both the Arabs and the Israelis will set their policy in accordance with developments, and it is impossible to say at this stage just what the Arabs will accept four weeks from now.

Conditions for Settlement

Among other things, such a settlement must save face for them; it appears, on the basis of the situation today, that they would agree to the continued existence of the State of Israel on two conditions:

(1) Its territory must be reduced. (Palestine is the size of Vermont and the area assigned to Israel is about the size of Connecticut.)

(2) The Israeli State must acknowledge the supremacy of an Arab Palestinian state, even if this is to be only perfunctory.

Such a prediction necessarily has to ignore many subtle rivalries among the Arab States, and particularly the bad feeling between King Abdullah of Trans-Jordan and King Farouk of Egypt.

It is still more difficult to prognosticate regarding the intentions of the third key nation, Great Britain. Here, too, there are divided voices. The official British version is that Great Britain, having tried for thirty unrewarded years to reach a settlement in Palestine, now only wants to get out and stay out.

For the record, however, it should be stated that Zionists and Arabs here agree on one thing: the British want the southern third of Palestine, the Negeb, as bases for the defense of the Suez Canal and to maintain connections with Trans-Jordan. There are reasons for believing that British strategists consider the Near East the most likely arena for a war between the Soviet Union and the Western powers — if that should ever develop.

Hence, it is said, Britain desires to retain control of the Negeb, and also Haifa, which, in addition to being one of the few good harbors of the Mediterranean, is the terminus of the pipeline conveying the oil of Iraq to the Royal Navy. Such control would have to be exerted through King Abdullah.

From a broader aspect, the British obviously want to obtain the support of the Arab States in the event of a possible war with the Soviet Union. This is subject, of course, to other factors; and Foreign Secretary Bevin's previous intransigence toward Israel appears to have been modified by the British Cabinet.

Reversals of U. S. Policy

As far as United States policy is concerned, its series of reversals constitute a baffling story for both Zionists and Arabs. Our military chieftains and the State Department agree in general with the British thesis.

The Soviet Union is, of course, the great enigma. Ever since last autumn, when the Soviet Union pledged its support to partition, its official position has been entirely correct. It voted for partition, it insisted that partition should be carried out. It would have nothing to do with the substitutes proposed by the United States. At the same time, it never indicated any special interest in Palestine.

Soviet Observers

This week, however, Andrei A. Gromyko demanded the right to send military observers to Palestine along with the United States, Belgium and France. This demand, obviously, foreshadows similar efforts to participate in whatever measures are taken subsequently.

Few delegates here give the Russians credit for disinterestedness in the Palestine question, and it would appear that they wish to fish in troubled waters. The difficulty, of course, is that if the Zionists have nowhere else to turn, they may follow the example of the Spanish Republicans and ask help from the Russians. Which is one more reason that a lasting solution is urgently needed.

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