

12.08 hrs.

COMMITTEE ON PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

TWENTY-THIRD REPORT

Sardar A. S. Saigal (Janjgir): I beg to present the Twenty-third Report of the Committee on Private Members' Bills and Resolutions.

12.08 hrs.

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Shri N. R. Munisamy (Vellore): Under rule 197 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business of the Lok Sabha, I beg to call the attention of the Prime Minister to the following matter of urgent public importance and to request that he may make a statement thereon:

"The situation in the Middle East arising out of the presence of foreign troops in the Lebanon and Jordan."

The Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs (Shri Jawaharlal Nehru): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I am glad of this opportunity to make a statement in regard to the situation in West Asia. A very large number of questions and notices have been addressed to me in regard to this situation, and instead of trying to answer each question separately, it would be perhaps a little better if I dealt with it by a statement.

'The facts are generally known; nevertheless, I would like to give a factual account of what has happened in the past few months. The House may remember that on the 18th February last, replying to the debate on the President's Address in the course of the budget session, I indicated some of the developments

which had taken place in West Asia. Since then grave and even ominous events have occurred in that part of the world. For some time, there had been rumblings in Lebanon. The Opposition there did not agree with the policy being pursued by the Government of the day under President Chamoun. The question arose—President Chamoun's continuance or not in the Presidency. His term normally expires on the 24th September. But he let it be known that he desired to stand again, although that involved a change in the Constitution. That is, he wanted the Constitution to be changed, so that he might stand again for the Presidency. This was not at all agreeable to the opposition there. They started a big agitation against it. Thereafter, a very prominent editor of a newspaper at Beirut, which favoured the opposition was killed and I think this was the spark that lit the fire of violence on a relatively big scale leading to this conflict between the Government and the opposition there.

This continued for some time. Behind it was really a basic difference in policy between that of President Chamoun and the opposition. But the actual matter at issue became one of President Chamoun continuing in office or not as President.

Then, on the 22nd May, 1958, the Government of Lebanon complained to the Security Council.

"in respect of a situation arising from the intervention of the United Arab Republic in the internal affairs of Lebanon, the continuance of which is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security."

The complaint mentioned, among other things, the infiltration of armed bands from Syria into Lebanon and the supply of arms from Syria. As a result of this complaint, the Security

[Shri Jawaharlal Nehru]

Council on the 11th June, 1958, adopted unanimously a Swedish resolution deciding to.

"dispatch urgently an observation group to proceed to Lebanon so as to ensure that there is no illegal infiltration of personnel or supply of arms or other material across the Lebanese borders".

"This resolution also authorised the Secretary General to take necessary steps for organising the Group. Pursuant to this, the group was finally constituted in Beirut by the 19th June and was composed of Mr. Galo Plaza of Ecuador as Chairman, Major General Odd Bull of Norway as Executive Member and Shri Rajeshwar Dayal of India as member. The Group established with the help of a number of military officers several observation stations and sub-stations. The Group submitted its first report on the 3rd July. It was clear from this report that whatever might have happened in the past, the Group had found no evidence of any significant infiltration into the Lebanon from the Syrian side during its stay there.

The Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. Hammarskjöld, who had been to the Lebanon shortly before stated on 3rd July that to his knowledge, there was no foundation for the statement made that there had been massive infiltration into the Lebanon.

The presence of the U. N. Observer Group had a salutary effect on the situation in Lebanon and in the second week of July, there were indications that some kind of settlement between the Government of Lebanon and the opposition there might be reached. Then something happened. That was the *coup d'état* in Iraq on the 14th July which resulted in a new Government coming into power in Baghdad. Because of this *coup d'état*, as is known, the King, the Crown Prince and the Prime Minister Nuri

es-Said were killed. There were also deplorable acts of violence by the crowd. But by and large, the new Government of Iraq avoided excesses and was soon in full control of the whole of Iraq and maintained law and order. It was evident that this new Government was popular.

Immediately after this *coup d'état* at Baghdad, events moved swiftly. On the 15th July, i.e. the next day, 2,000 United States marines landed in Lebanon in order, it was stated, to protect American lives and to encourage defence of Lebanese sovereignty and integrity. It was said that the forces had been landed in response to an urgent plea received from President Chamoun of Lebanon. Mr. Selwyn Lloyd, the British Foreign Secretary, stated that his Government fully supported the U. S. action in landing troops in Lebanon.

A meeting of the Security Council was immediately called to discuss the situation resulting from these developments. Since then, of course, many more troops had been sent. It might be noted that these troops were sent to the Lebanon really when the situation inside Lebanon was settling down. It was obvious that it was sent not because of the situation in Lebanon, but because of the *coup d'état* in Iraq and the possible consequences from it that were feared.

A day later, i.e. on the 16th July, the United Nations Observer Corps in Lebanon submitted an interim report in which the Group said that it was "able to report to the Security Council that it has as of 15th July access to all parts of the frontier". That is to say, previously it was stated that the Observation Group's report was not very helpful, because the entire frontier was not under observation. What is the good of their saying that through

half the frontier nothing had happened? Something might have happened through the other half. From the 14th, they were in touch with the whole frontier and therefore, they were in a fairly satisfactory position to observe any movement across the frontier.

On the 17th July, British paratroops landed at Amman from bases in Cyprus and Mr. Macmillan told the British House of Commons that these troops had been sent in response to a request from King Hussein. On the same day, Jordan complained to the Security Council about the interference in its domestic affairs by the United Arab Republic.

I might mention that during these days, I received a large number of messages from various Heads of States and others, from Mr. Macmillan, Mr. Diefenbaker of Canada, . . . President Eisenhower, President Nasser, Mr. Bandaranaike, Prime Minister U. Nu, Prime Minister of Indonesia and others. These messages as well as the information supplied by our Missions abroad kept us fully and continually informed of the serious situation and also indicated the line of thinking of various Governments. It was evident that the situation was a very grave one and might lead to military operations on a large scale and indeed to a major war. During these days, occasionally one had the feeling that we were on the brink of a war.

On the 19th July, I received a message from Mr. Khrushchev suggesting that there should be an immediate meeting of the Heads of Governments of the United States of America, United Kingdom, U. S. S. R., France and India, to which the Secretary General of the United Nations should also be invited and that this meeting should endeavour to find some solution. I accepted this proposal and said in reply that I would be prepared to attend such a meeting if our presence was required by all concerned and if we felt convinced that we could

make any useful contribution. Some of the replies that Mr. Khrushchev received from other Heads of Governments were not wholly favourable to his proposal. But, nevertheless, it appeared that a so-called summit meeting was likely to take place at an early date.

Meanwhile, the Security Council was engaged in discussing a Japanese resolution which requested the Secretary General

"to make arrangements forthwith for such measures, in addition to those envisaged in the resolution of the 11th June, 1958, as he may consider necessary in the light of the present circumstances with a view to enabling the United Nations to fulfil the general purposes established in that resolution and which will, in accordance with the Charter, serve to ensure the territorial and political independence of Lebanon so as to make possible the withdrawal of the United States forces from the Lebanon."

There were some aspects of this Resolution which we did not like although the explanation made by the Japanese representative in the Security Council cleared up some of our doubts. But in any event the Resolution was finally not passed by the Security Council which adjourned until the outcome of the proposal made by Mr. Khrushchev was known.

The correspondence of Mr. Khrushchev with the Heads of Governments of the USA, UK and France has already been published. The idea of summit conference gradually faded out and it became apparent by the 5th August that there was no possibility of such a high level conference in the near future. Accordingly, the Powers concerned agreed to meet immediately in the Security Council for recommending the convening of a special emergency session of the General Assembly. This session met 24 hours later on the 8th August and

[Shri Jawaharlal Nehru] decided to adjourn until the 13th August, i.e. yesterday. India was represented there by our Permanent Representative, Shri Arthur Lall.

Now, the proceedings of this special session are going on and reports have come of the speech delivered by President Eisenhower in which he made certain proposals. Reports have come also of some proposals that are being put forward by the Soviet Government and other powers there. It is rather difficult for me at this stage to comment on this partly because we have not got full information as to what is happening there and we should like to have that information and time to consider these various proposals before we send our instructions to our representative or comment on them otherwise.

I might mention, however, that on the 8th August the United Nations Secretary-General made a statement before the General Assembly in which he suggested that the United Nations might continue to play some part in these areas and might so adopt its role both in Jordan and in Lebanon as to help in the search for a satisfactory solution. Here also, what the Secretary-General has said has to be carefully considered before we can express any firm opinion and although we have seen something about what he has said, we have not yet had the full report about it.

Here, I would like to say that our country, as the House knows very well, does not approve of military alliances and carries out a policy of non-alignment. We would welcome every country to do that, but it is quite another thing to tell a country that you must have an enforced neutrality. Anything enforced is not good. Even a good thing becomes bad if it is enforced in that particular way. Therefore any approach of compulsion that way and some kind of supervision is likely not to be accepted by the people of that area.

Now, on the 23rd July, the Government of India recognised the new Government of Iraq. Before that and since, chiefly after, a very large number of countries have recognised this new Government of Iraq, including all the great Powers. Nearly all have recognised.

The situation in the Lebanon has undergone some changes but continues to be rather obscure. A new President—General Shehab—has been elected. The old President, however, continues and has announced his intention to complete his term which ends on the 24th September although his Government is reported to have offered its resignation. This has created certain difficulty because the Opposition is not prepared to function normally under the present President—President Chamoun. Further, the Opposition is opposed to President Chamoun sending his own representative to the United Nations' special emergency session of the General Assembly because they say that he will not represent, according to them, the views of the people of Lebanon and would only represent President Chamoun. So, all these difficulties have arisen there. In fact, so far as I know nobody has yet gone to the General Assembly session from Lebanon. On the Government side they have not yet sent somebody because they have not made up their mind and on the Opposition side they wanted to send somebody but he did not get the visa.

Now, the American authorities have announced that they would withdraw their troops from the Lebanon as soon as the Government of Lebanon asks them to do so. Only yesterday it has been announced that they have withdrawn a small part of their troops from there, but the major part still remains. In Jordan it is not clear in what circumstances the British Government would withdraw their troops though they have announced their

intention of doing so some time in the future.

Our general views in regard to this position in Western Asia have been frequently stated and are certainly well-known to this House. Our approach is not inimical to any country there. It is friendly to all countries, but inevitably our sympathies are with the Arab countries there and with Arab nationalism which represents today the urge of the people there. Also, according to our general policy and as well as our particular views on this situation in Western Asia we do not accept that foreign troops should be used in any territory in this area in the circumstances prevailing there. We are convinced that there can be no settlement and no return to normality till foreign troops are removed. We have therefore, and so far as we can, pressed and continue to press for the withdrawal of these troops at the earliest possible opportunity. We have also made it clear that in our view the United Nations should not send any kind of Police or armed forces in Lebanon or in Jordan because that has been suggested sometimes. If it is suggested that the United Nations Observer Group should continue for some time or should even increase its personnel we would be prepared to consider such a proposal favourably, but any such proposal can only have a chance of success if it is accepted by the Arab countries concerned.

Sometimes it is stated that these countries apparently should be treated like tender infants and should be under the guardianship of bigger countries. Well, whether they are tender or they are infants I do not know, but it is quite clear that they do not like this offer of guardianship and patronage. In fact, such suggestions are resented by them.

Now, as I said, the position has been discussed in the General Assembly and I do not know what the outcome

may be, but it must be remembered that there is a certain relaxation of tension because it is always better when people are talking than when they are not talking and are preparing for war. There has been that relaxation, but the whole position is full of danger and will continue to be dangerous and explosive so long as foreign forces remain there.

We can consider these events in Western Asia in isolation but that will not help us to understand them well. One has to take to some extent a historic view of developments. For hundreds of years these countries in Western Asia were under Turkish domination. They came out of it at the end of First World War in 1918.

The Western powers decided what they liked without really caring very much about the wishes of the people. Probably there was no organised way for the people to express their views and so things were made worse. New nations were created—where they were viable they were very much better—and the contacts of the Western Powers were with the rulers of their own creation or, chiefly, with the landed gentry of those areas. There were few contacts with the people. The whole period between the two World Wars was one when Arab nationalism was trying to push out this foreign domination and gradually making some way in that direction. Then came the war and the post-war period, when much has happened, as the House knows, in various countries of the Middle East.

Now the major fact is the growth of Arab nationalism in a very powerful, resurgent way. Egypt took the lead in this matter and under the wise leadership of President Nasser has played a very important part, and Nasser, in fact, became the most prominent symbol of the Arab nationalism. And this fact, which is

[Shri Jawaharlal Nehru]

patent, was neither liked nor appreciated by many powers and an attempt was made to split up the Arab countries, to split, in fact, Arab Nationalism. And the House may remember various talks about building up the Northern Tier Defence and about the Baghdad Pact. Whatever the motives of the Baghdad Pact may be—the motives were supposed to be to protect these countries from any attack or invasion from the Soviet Union and to give these countries some kind of security and peace—as a matter of fact, the result was far from security. All the troubles of these countries increased. The Arab countries were divided. At any rate, the Governments were divided—some in the Baghdad Pact and some outside it. And while the Governments were divided and they carried on a cold war against each other, the people almost in every Arab country were powerfully affected by this tie of Arab nationalism. Thus, in the countries associated with the Baghdad Pact there was a divergence, a hiatus between the Government of the country and the people, the people looking more and more towards Arab nationalism and the Government looking in another direction and rather ranged against this spirit of Arab nationalism. How big this hiatus was can be seen from the coup d'état in Baghdad which surprised everyone. I believe it surprised even the people in Iraq and Egypt, and the surprise is not essentially that it took place but the speed with which it took place and the complete success which attended it. It shows how utterly divorced from public opinion the Government of Iraq was. When some change was made the relief was tremendous all over Iraq and people flocked to the side of the new Government. So this attempt at not recognising the spirit of Arab nationalism, trying to come in the way and obstructing it, that really achieved the opposite

effect; it encouraged nationalism as this kind of thing will do.

It was said that some kind of Arab Empire is being built up, which is dangerous. I do not know about the future, but I see no empire, much less an Arab Empire. But, certainly, all this has resulted in the Arab nations coming nearer to one another and will no doubt bring about a great deal of co-operation between them.

The theory, as I said, of vacuum was advanced, as if the removal of the influence of some great powers must necessarily be filled in by some other powers and, therefore, they should not go. It is an extraordinary appraisal of the situation which did not recognize the effect of this Arab nationalism which had become such a dominant force.

Now, much reference has been made to indirect aggression. Well, indirect aggression is inherently, essentially and inevitably a part of the cold war technique. In fact, there is no indirect aggression if we have no cold war. The world is full of indirect aggression, full of attempts, though not in a military way in other ways, at influencing other countries, trying and sometimes creating or upsetting situations in other countries. In the same way, ever since the Baghdad Pact came in there was this tussle between the countries, the Arab and other countries of the Baghdad Pact and the Arab countries outside the Baghdad Pact. There was no doubt this tussle and each side wanted to injure the interests of the other side. But this talk of indirect aggression really shows ignorance of the basic issues there. Therefore, it is confusing.

Now, during these days we have expressed our views with moderation and have endeavoured to avoid any action or utterance which might add to the tension. We have no desire in this matter, as in any other, to be involved in the cold war. Where our services are required we

shall always be prepared to offer them if we feel that they will do some good. We are convinced, however, that any effective solution must be based on the recognition of the dominant urge and force of this area, that is, Arab nationalism. Thus, any settlement must have the goodwill and co-operation of the Arab nations. The need for oil by the Western European countries is patent, and while it is vital for them there should be no difficulty in arriving at a friendly arrangement which ensures this supply of oil. The presence of foreign forces of any kind in these areas will be a constant irritant leading to trouble. If I may say so, peace in this area, as indeed anywhere else, will come if this area is removed from the orbit of the cold war and adopts the five principles of the Panchsheel. Everyone of these Arab countries has tremendous problems of development to face. If the threat of war is removed from them, they will apply themselves to these problems and become a source of strength to the forces of peace.

Now, there is one other aspect of this problem which cannot be ignored, and that is the continuing element of danger in the relations between the Arab countries and Israel. Ever since Israel came into existence, it has been a source of constant irritation to the Arab countries. The invasion by Israel of Egypt two years ago is fresh in our memory. Apart from this, there is the big problem of the refugees, the old Palestine refugees. The Arab countries have looked upon Israel as an outpost from which their freedom might at any time be threatened.

Israel on the other hand fears the Arab countries which surround it. There can be no real peace in this area till this difficult problem is settled in some satisfactory way. Naturally, any real settlement can only be with the goodwill of the countries of these areas and by removing fears. There can be no settlement by war which, if it occurs, may well become a major war.

I have referred to the dangers inherent in this situation as between the Arab countries and Israel, and the forces behind them sometimes also. I should like to make it quite clear that I do not suggest that any attempt should, or can be, made to deal with this problem now. I am certain that this question should not be raised at this stage; it will have to wait for some time. Only when the other problems of Western Asia have advanced towards a solution and present-day passions have cooled somewhat, can this difficult problem be tackled. It is not for me to suggest when this position may arise and how it should be tackled; that is for the countries concerned.

During the past few weeks I have received many suggestions from friendly Governments with whom we are intimately connected. In their anxiety to maintain peace and advance the cause of freedom of Asian and African countries they have made several proposals to us for limited conferences or joint statements and the like. While I share their anxiety and appreciate their proposals, it seemed to me that in a situation like the one we are passing through, any limited action of the kind suggested would not be helpful: it is the Powers principally involved in these disputes that have to be brought into the area of discussion. I am, however, grateful to all these Governments and countries which have made these friendly suggestions. It may be that in the future a situation might arise when some of the suggestions would be more feasible than they are at present.

I should like to say here that we have been very well served, during these past critical weeks, by our representatives abroad, more especially by our representatives in Beirut and Baghdad where all these difficult situations were developing.

Raja Mahendra Pratap (Mathura):
A World Federation alone can settle all these questions.