

British Surrender

EXTENSION OF REMARKS

OF

HON. HARRY S. TRUMAN

OF MISSOURI

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Thursday, May 25 (legislative day of Friday, May 19), 1939

ARTICLE BY BARNET NOVER

Mr. TRUMAN. Mr. President, the British Government has used its diplomatic umbrella again, this time on Palestine. It has made a scrap of paper out of Lord Balfour's promise to the Jews. It has just added another to the long list of surrenders to the axis powers.

I ask unanimous consent to have inserted in the RECORD, as a part of my remarks, an article on the subject by that able and distinguished writer on foreign affairs, Barnet Nover, which appeared in the Washington Post of May 18, 1939.

There being no objection, the article was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Washington Post of May 18, 1939]

BRITISH SURRENDER

(By Barnet Nover)

A MUNICH FOR THE HOLY LAND

The Chamberlain government's capacity for "appeasement" was apparently not exhausted by the surrender of the Sudetenland to Hitler or by the capitulation to Mussolini on the Spanish question. Palestine is the latest part of the world to feel the impact of the Munich mentality.

Judged in its most charitable light, with due allowance being made for the difficulties of the British position in the world today, the latest white paper on Palestine must be regarded as a repudiation of obligations voluntarily undertaken and no less binding because there are real difficulties in the way of fulfillment.

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The white paper announces the British Government's intention of establishing an independent state in Palestine.

The plan is obviously designed to meet the clamorous demands of the Arab states—Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Transjordan—which have made the cause of Palestine Arab nationalism their own. It is also designed to insure the support or at least the neutrality of those states and others in the Moslem world in the event that Great Britain is forced into war.

The new state, when and if formed, will, it is assumed, be bound by the closest military and diplomatic ties to London. Its external freedom of action will presumably be as great, but no greater, than that of Iraq. And if Palestine were Iraq or Egypt—which won its actual independence of British control some while ago—something could be said for the British plan concerning the Holy Land.

Palestine, however, is not Iraq or Egypt. A majority of its inhabitants are Arabs. But the principal minority consists of Jews, who are there, in the words of Great Britain herself, "by right and not of sufferance," who came there because under the Balfour declaration and under the League mandate the British Government solemnly pledged itself to the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine. Into the building up of that national home has gone a tremendous amount of energy, idealism, and the expenditure of vast sums of money.

The white paper provides for Palestinian independence in 10 years. A great deal can happen in that time, including the shelving of this plan, as previous plans for the solution of the Palestinian problem—for instance, the partition scheme of 1937—have been shelved.

But the latest British program also provides for the limitation of Jewish immigration into Palestine to 75,000 during the next 5 years, after which, presumably, all Jewish immigration would cease. That provision, being of immediate applicability, will no doubt be carried out. The plan would also grant power to the British high commissioner "to prohibit and regulate transfers of land," a provision which, it is understood, would apply chiefly to Jewish acquisitions of land.

Theoretically, under the new Palestinian dispensation, the Jewish national home would continue to exist, with the Jews enjoying all the rights and privileges of full-fledged citizens of the new state. But since the white paper stipulates that the Jewish population in the Holy Land shall not exceed a third of the whole, it is open to question whether these rights and privileges would mean anything.

They might if Great Britain agreed to protect the Jewish minority and if she lived up to this pledge. In that case, however, Great Britain would continue to bear the very burdens she is now so anxious to drop from her shoulders. In other words, having by

the Balfour declaration and her assumption of the mandate encouraged the Zionist experiment to go forward, Great Britain now washes her hands of declaration and mandate and forces the experiment to fend for itself in what is certain to be an extremely hostile environment.

Certainly the fact will not be forgotten that it was not long after Iraq, with Britain's consent and approval, achieved her independence that the Assyrian minority in that Arab land was massacred by the tens of thousands. The same horrid sequel to independence may not occur in Palestine. But there is no guaranty that it will not.

The fact is that Great Britain's administration of the Palestinian mandate has, from the first, been hamstrung by bureaucratic insolence and stupidity, by muddling and double-dealing, by weakness and timidity. The story is one of opportunities forever wasted. And bad as the situation already was by 1937, it was made worse by the announcement of the partition plan which showed very clearly that Great Britain could be intimidated into the surrender of a difficult position. This surrender is now complete.

In the meantime the restriction of Jewish immigration to an average of 15,000 for the next 5 years cuts off one of the few places on earth to which refugees could go. Indeed, despite immigration restrictions that have prevailed in the past, and despite the turmoil and confusion through which the Holy Land has been passing, Palestine has managed to absorb a goodly number of the victims from the Nazi terror in central Europe.

For Palestine, Guiana, and Tanganyika and the other areas Mr. Chamberlain would open to harassed Jews are no substitute. Where bread is called for, Mr. Chamberlain offers a stone.