

The sub-committee proceeded step by step to work out a plan for the future of Libya, voting on principles rather than on the specific texts of the many resolutions before it. First it voted unanimously in favour of granting independence to Libya, and next it approved a United States proposal that "Libya shall be granted independence within as short a period as practicable and in any case not later than 1 January, 1952." Most of the succeeding discussion centred round the manner in which the United Nations would be associated in the two-year interval prior to independence. The United Kingdom welcomed the association of the United Nations, but preferred that the agent of the United Nations should be a single Commissioner rather than a Council of political representatives of Governments; this latter proposal it disliked both because of the potentially mischievous nature of a political group and because the United Kingdom had pledged that Italy would not be again given any authority in Cyrenaica. Most of the Moslem States preferred the idea of a Council because such a body might keep closer watch on the administering authority, because it was less likely to permit delay in the attainment of independence and because it might include inhabitants of the territories and the representatives of one or more Moslem States. In the voting neither a Commissioner alone nor a Council alone could secure a majority and discussion came to centre on a proposal that there should be both Commissioner and Council. The representatives of the United Kingdom urged that any Council should be expert rather than political in nature, and he warned that "proliferation in administration is a disease." In the event it was decided that the Council should be political in nature, consisting of nominees of six States, representatives of the three constituent territories, and (this over the opposition of the Arab States) one representative of the minorities. In deference to the United Kingdom the Council was given the function of advising the Commissioner, not the administering Powers (that is, the United Kingdom and France, which, it was agreed, should continue to exercise their administrative functions in the two-year period preparatory to independence), and the Commissioner was given the right to call on different members of the Council for advice on different topics, thus emphasizing the advisory nature of the Council and ensuring that Italy need not have influence in questions concerning Cyrenaica. Thirteen voted in favour of this section on the Commissioner and Council, the three of the Soviet group voted against, and 5 (including the United Kingdom) abstained.

Though the entire resolution was opposed only by the Soviet group, several of its provisions were seriously questioned. Most important of these were, first, the provision that "Libya . . . shall be established as a single, independent and sovereign State" (a principle which had been accepted unanimously in the sub-committee), and secondly the provision for an Advisory Council. As to the first, Sir Carl Berendsen