Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Resolution 963 (1991)[1]

Europe's role in a future "new world order" after the Gulf war

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Assembly recalls its Recommendation 1150 on the situation of the Iraqi Kurdish population and other persecuted minorities, adopted on 24 April 1991, its Resolution 954 on the Gulf conflict, adopted on 29 January 1991, and the declaration issued by the Standing Committee on 11 March 1991, in which it :

1.1. congratulated the allied forces responsible for liberating Kuwait ;

1.2. welcomed Iraq's acceptance of all relevant resolutions adopted by the Security Council of the United Nations which should now supervise the cease-fire and use its enhanced authority to address the other serious problems of the region ;

1.3. reaffirmed the Council of Europe's determination to promote reconciliation between all parties in conflict and to contribute to the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the region, including the organisation of an international peace conference under United Nations auspices.

2. It stresses the need to ensure full implementation by Iraq of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 687 on the cease-fire in the Gulf war and the condemnation of the repression in Iraq, adopted on 3 April 1991, and considers that sanctions must not be lifted until the current brutal repression within Iraq, and especially of the Kurdish population, has ceased.

3. The Assembly expresses its deep concern that the cessation of international hostilities has still done nothing to reduce the suffering of the Iraqi people, now exposed to the horror of civil war after ten years of forced involvement in wars of expansion instigated by a sanguinary dictator, and, in the light of the tragic experience of the Iraqi refugees, calls for the development of an international capacity to provide both the urgent political response and the substantial level of aid which may be required.

4. It considers that the brutal repression of civilian populations, rightly condemned by the Committee of Ministers and the President of the Assembly in press releases issued in Strasbourg on 9 April 1991, should prompt fresh thought on possible formulas, with appropriate international guarantees, for regional autonomy, since the current tragedy provides further proof that the Kurdish problem has a political as well as a humanitarian dimension.

5. It warmly welcomes the proposals before the United Nations Security Council, supported by European Community leaders in Luxembourg on 8 April 1991, for the creation in northern Iraq of a safe haven for Kurds under United Nations supervision.

6. The Assembly is equally concerned at the situation of the Iraqi Shi'ite population and other minorities, who have sought refuge in the border regions of Iran and Saudi Arabia and in the southern areas of Iraq still controlled by the allied forces.

7. In the aftermath of the war, the situation of the Palestinians and other foreign nationals in Kuwait suspected of having collaborated with the occupiers remains a matter of grave concern. Presumed collaborators should be entitled to a fair and public trial.

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1. Assembly debate on 25 April 1991 (6th and 7th Sittings) (see Doc. 6418, report of the Political Affairs Committee, Rapporteur : Mr Soares Costa ; and Doc. 6414, opinion of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Demography, Rapporteur : Mr Cucó). Text adopted by the Assembly on 25 April 1991 (7th Sitting).

8. The governments of developing countries, whose migrant workers have been repatriated from Iraq and Kuwait, are in urgent need of aid to overcome the difficulties in resettling the repatriated.

9. The Assembly recalls the solid benefits, including greater European unity and the removal of artificial barriers, which resulted from the CSCE process, which gradually promoted confidence among participating states of our continent, notwithstanding different beliefs and traditions. It therefore expects that the Committee of Ministers, meeting in Strasbourg on 25 April 1991, will give careful consideration to the proposal to envisage a conference on security and co-operation in the Mediterranean and Middle East region (CSCM), already supported by the adoption of Recommendation 1139 in Strasbourg on 29 January 1991.

10. The Assembly considers that it is urgent to reactivate a Euro-Arab dialogue stimulating co-operation on an equal footing, and aiming at sustainable economic development and the solution of social and demographic tensions in the Maghreb and Middle East region, fairer distribution of wealth based on solidarity, and the just sharing of responsibilities.

11. It therefore calls upon member governments and member, observer and special guest parliaments to seize the opportunity to support action in today's favourable conditions of an emerging new world and regional order, especially where three long-running and potentially destabilising conflicts, in addition to the Kurdish problem, are concerned :

11.1. the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the Palestinian problem, on the basis, in particular, of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) ;

11.2. the fragmentation, foreign occupation and hostage-taking in Lebanon on the basis, in particular, of United Nations Security Council Resolution 425 (1978) and the inter-community Taef agreement of October 1989 ;

11.3. the Cyprus problem on the basis, in particular, of United Nations Security Council Resolution 649 (1990) and of the good offices mission of the United Nations Secretary General. In this connection the Assembly also calls for an early report by the Cyprus Contact Group set up by the Bureau.

12. It further calls on the same governments and parliaments to ensure at national level, and in all appropriate forums to which they belong, especially the United Nations :

12.1. an effective arms control regime including a total, internationally-supervised ban on the trade in advanced weapons technology and all weapons of mass destruction, whether biological, chemical, nuclear or other ;

12.2. intensified co-operative action for the benefit of the world's least-developed countries, stressing the essential link between democracy and development, which, taken together, are the best guarantees of peace and stability ;

12.3. full respect for the 3rd Geneva Convention of 1949 on the Treatment of Prisoners of War and 4th Geneva Convention of 1949 on the Protection of Civilians in Time of War ;

12.4. increased assistance to the development programmes of Third World countries affected by the massive return of their nationals as a consequence of the events in the Gulf.