

The Significance of the San Remo Resolution

At a time when the very legitimacy of the State of Israel is questioned by some, it is well to observe and commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the San Remo Resolution. This key historical event paved the way under international law for the reconstitution of a national home for the Jewish people in their ancient land. Moreover, this enjoyed the full blessing and cooperation of the international community, including Arab nations.

Following World War I, and as a direct outcome of the Paris Peace Conference, the Supreme Council of the Principal Allied Powers (France, Great Britain, Italy and Japan, with the United States as an observer) gathered at San Remo, Italy, in April 1920 to re-assign sovereignty over the territories of the Ottoman Empire. Their aspiration was decidedly *not* colonial; rather they sought the gradual establishment of new sovereign states in the Middle East, based on legitimate territorial claims submitted by the Arab delegation and the Zionist Organisation.

These mutually supported Arab and Zionist claims resulted in the establishment by the San Remo Resolution of Syria and Lebanon under French mandate, and Mesopotamia (Iraq) and Palestine (the territory encompassing both modern-day Israel and Jordan) under British mandate. In turn, these April 1920 resolutions were incorporated into international law by the Treaty of Sèvres of August 1920, and reflected in the Mandate for Palestine (by then stripped of the territory of modern-day Jordan), which the Council of the League of Nations unanimously approved in July 1922 before coming into force in September 1923 per the Treaty of Lausanne.

Effectively, then, the San Remo Resolution of 25th April 1920 and the British Mandate that ensued, gave international legal effect to the statement of intent which the British Government had made in November 1917 with the Balfour Declaration. This is because Britain now had jurisdiction over the geographical area of Palestine. On 14th May 1948 Britain's stewardship of the Mandate for Palestine expired and on that same day Israel declared its independence.

The San Remo Resolution is fundamental to an understanding of the reconstitution of a national home for the Jewish people in their ancient land. It reflects the acknowledgement by the international community of the more than 3000 year-long historical connection between the Jewish people and the land of Israel.

While uncontested as both fact and history, the San Remo Resolution has often been forgotten in the debate about Israel's legitimacy under international law. For this reason it is right for the world to remember the San Remo Resolution by commemorating its 100th Anniversary on 25th April 2020.