

Words Won't Finish the Job

HERSCHEL JOHNSON, American delegate to the UN Palestine committee, made two good speeches on Saturday supporting the plan for Jewish and Arab independence in the Holy Land. The only question is whether the speeches aren't too late, and whether the State Department will content itself with words.

It would be a tragic thing for Palestine, and a shame for the American people, if the State Department is now locking the barn door after the horses have been stolen.

The issue is very simple. A two-thirds majority is needed both in the special UN committee and the General Assembly as a whole. Great Britain's virtual defiance of a UN solution for Palestine—in face of an American-Soviet agreement—has encouraged the Arab states' opposition, and frightened some countries into abstentions. The more the abstentions, the fewer the negative votes which the Arab states need to block Assembly action.

Johnson spoke up, criticizing the British for their non-cooperation with the UN. But will the State Department make this issue a "must" for the Latin American states, which have responded to other "musts" like the Greek and the Korean commissions, and the Little Assembly?

When it comes to an anti-Soviet policy, the State Department knows how to muster votes. Will it do less when it comes to a matter on which the United States and the Soviet Union are in agreement? That's now the big question.

THE UN solution for Palestine is not an ideal one. There is going to be trouble when the British pull their troops out, and most of the trouble will be British-inspired. But it's the best possible plan—short of a bi-national state of Jews and Arabs which is nowhere on the horizon.

What the plan does is to establish a small-power UN commission, whose job it will be to establish provisional councils from democratic and public organizations in both the Arab and Jewish areas. These councils will raise armed militia for self-defense and patrolling the proposed borders. And before next October, constituent assemblies are to be elected for both the Jewish and Arab states. In the meantime, the British are to pull out by August 1. The two new states are to be independent, but a Joint Economic Board is to give them some hope of economic cooperation.

We favor this plan because it is based on the principle of self-determination for both Jews and Arabs. To the Jews it means an age-old dream, a state of their own; to the Palestinian Arabs, it means independence and the beginnings of democratic change, if the UN proposals are backed to the hilt. Above all, the plan means that Britain gets out, even if it leaves a deliberate wreckage behind it.

The way to minimize that wreckage and realize the best features of the plan is to give it resounding support at this Assembly session. We expect the State Department to do that not only by words—but by deeds.