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UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE
Letter dated 18 October 1951 addressed by the Chairman of the Conciliation Commission to the Delegate of Israel

Sir,

I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your [letter of 14 October 1951](#) containing the reply of the delegation of Israel to the [Commission's letter of 6 October 1951](#).

It is stated in [your letter](#) that "the formulation submitted to the Commission by the Arab States therefore represents an attempt to make the Commission accept, as a basis for the work of this conference, an interpretation of the 1949 Armistice Agreements which the Security Council has just rejected on the grounds that it undermines the foundations of the security system based on those Agreements". It is also stated that "the acceptance by the Conciliation Commission of this refusal — (i.e. 'the refusal of the Arab States to subscribe to the undertaking requested by the Conciliation Commission') — and of the proposed Arab text would have the effect of meeting the wishes of the Arab States: that a United Nations body has sanctioned an interpretation of the 1949 Armistice Agreements which has just been rejected by the Security Council, and that a situation further removed from peace than that resulting from the observance of the letter and the spirit of the Agreements themselves has thus been legitimized".

The Commission has carefully studied the observations contained in [your letter](#). The Commission's intention had been to obtain from both parties, at the outset of the present discussions, an expression of their pacific intentions and of their desire to promote the settlement of outstanding differences, with a view to creating a favourable atmosphere for the continuation of these discussions. The Conciliation Commission stated, in the [letter](#) which it addressed to the parties on 6 October 1951, that it considered "that the parties, by offering their formulations, have contributed to the creation of a favourable atmosphere for the present discussions, and for the promotion of the return of permanent peace in Palestine".

The Commission has considered the formulation put forward by the delegations of Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria in the strictly limited sense defined in the previous paragraph.

In the Commission's opinion, therefore, the text of that letter, and the decision of the Commission to proceed with consideration of its proposals, in no way justify the fears expressed by the delegation of Israel in [its letter of 14 October](#). In order to avoid any possible misunderstanding, the Commission hereby declares that it is unable to accept any interpretation of its position which would imply an evaluation of the scope of either the Armistice Agreements, the resolutions of the Security Council or the provisions of the United Nations Charter. The Conciliation Commission would like it to be clearly understood that neither the form nor the substance of the declaration of either party can alter the obligations assumed by the parties in accordance either with the provisions of the Armistice Agreements or with the terms of the United Nations Charter. It is equally apparent that such declarations cannot alter the import of the resolutions of the Security Council.

The Commission is convinced that the above explanations, by dispelling the apprehensions expressed in [your letter of 14 October](#), will enable the delegation of Israel to declare its readiness to proceed with the detailed discussion of the Commission's proposals. To that end, the Commission would be glad to meet with the delegation of Israel on Tuesday, 23 October, at 11 a.m., for the purpose of submitting the detailed explanations with which the Commission intends to initiate the discussion of its proposals with the parties.

Please accept, Sir, the renewed assurances of my high consideration.

(signed) Ely E. Palmer,
Chairman.