



UNITED NATIONS PALESTINE COMMISSION
SUMMARY RECORD OF THE TWENTY-FIRST MEETING OF

Held at Lake Success, New York, on Tuesday, 27 January 1948,
at 11.00 a.m.

Present:

Chairman:	Mr. LISICKY	(Czechoslovakia)
Members:	Mr. Federspiel	(Denmark)
	Mr. Medina	(Bolivia)
	Mr. Morgan	(Panama)
	Mr. Roxas (Observer for Mr. Francisco)	(Philippines)
Secretariat:	Mr. Sobolev	(Assistant Secretary-General)
	Mr. Bunche	(Secretary)

CONSIDERATION OF MEMORANDUM ON ESTABLISHMENT OF ARMED MILITIA FOR THE JEWISH STATE SUBMITTED BY THE JEWISH AGENCY FOR PALESTINE

The CHAIRMAN asked the members of the Commission for their comments on the memorandum.

He pointed out that the preliminary question to be decided was whether it would be possible to deal with Mr. Shertok's letter before the Provisional Councils of Government were established.

It was suggested that the Commission would have a clearer picture of the situation and would be in a better position to decide what course to take after getting the opinion of the United Kingdom Government.

The question was raised whether the Jewish Agency for Palestine could be entrusted with the formation of a militia.

Three possibilities were suggested:

1. The General Assembly [resolution](#) left it to the Provisional Councils of Government to establish militia; according to that nothing could be done until the Provisional Councils had been established.
2. The Commission might consult the Mandatory Power on the situation in connection with the withdrawal of British forces, and discuss whether the Mandatory Power would be in a position to assume responsibility for preventing massacres during the intermediate period. Sir Alexander Cadogan had said that the Mandatory Power was prepared within reasonable limits to supply arms to both sides for defence.
3. In view of the present situation in Palestine, the Commission might consider calling the attention of the Security Council to the possibility of amending the [resolution](#) in order to permit the establishment of armed forces drawn from the populations of the two areas.

Mr. SOBOLEV (Assistant Secretary-General) drew the Commission's attention to two facts:

1. The General Assembly [resolution](#) clearly envisaged a gradual transfer of power from the Mandatory Power to the Provisional Councils of Government. If this were to be interpreted to mean that the Provisional Councils would assume responsibility for their respective territories not all at once but step by step, the formal establishment of a militia would follow the organization of the Provisional Councils of Government.
2. Another situation was created by the proposal of the Mandatory Power to transfer its authority over the whole of Palestine to the Provisional Councils in one step. That would mean that the organization of militia must be undertaken before the Provisional Councils were set up, because when the Commission took over the responsibility it must have at its disposal an armed, organized, trained militia which would be ready to operate immediately. The question was raised whether it would be possible to establish an internal force without the help of an international armed force. It was remarked that according to statements by the United Kingdom Government, the Arabs would start aggressive action immediately the Jewish Provincial Council of Government was set up.

Mr. SOBOLEV (Assistant Secretary-General) proposed that the question of an international force should be considered separately from that of an armed militia. The General Assembly [resolution](#) provided for the recruitment of armed militia.

It was pointed out that according to the plan, the militia would be under the command of the Commission until the two States were set up. The Commission would not be able to exercise that command until 15 May; therefore, if a militia was to be established before that date, it would have to be with the co-operation of the United Kingdom Government. The Commission should take up with the Mandatory Power the question of setting up a security force within the Jewish and Arab communities. Mr. Shertok's request could not be acceded to under the plan as it stood.

The view was expressed that the Commission's first step should be to set up the Provisional Council of Government for the Jewish State at once, while keeping the Arab Higher Committee fully informed. A military force could not exist independently without being under the orders of some political body or group.

Mr. SOBOLEV (Assistant Secretary-General) observed that a security force which would be the responsibility of the Jewish community and outside the jurisdiction of the Commission would be completely contrary to the plan.

It was pointed out that a special constabulary was already in existence and could be developed. The Commission was responsible for controlling the situation in Palestine during the important transition period after the termination of the Mandate.

It was observed that certain actions of the Mandatory Power made it impossible for the Commission to carry out its task.

The Commission agreed to invite Mr. Shertok to attend the next meeting and to hear his views, which it would subsequently discuss. Mr. Shertok would then be asked to come to another meeting, at which the Commission could put to him any questions it desired.

CONTINUATION OF CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT OF [FIRST MONTHLY REPORT](#) TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL

It was agreed that Section 11 should be redrafted in one paragraph and considerably abridged.

It was agreed that paragraphs a and d of Section 12 should be merged into one paragraph, and that the word "similar" in paragraph a should be deleted.

A short discussion took place with regard to Section 13. The opinion was expressed that it was unnecessary to enter into so much detail.

Mr. SOBOLEV (Assistant Secretary-General) pointed out that the [report](#) was likely to be discussed by the Security Council, and that in that case it would be preferable to keep as closely as possible to the wording used by the Mandatory Power.

In paragraph a "thirty" was changed to "a number of".

In paragraph a (i), the words "the withdrawal of the Arab Legion, the Transjordan Frontier Force" were deleted.

Consideration of the third paragraph on page 20 ("In addition to the above.....power of the United Nations.") was deferred, as it might be replaced by a further statement by the United Kingdom Government.

Paragraph C on page 21 was redrafted to read as follows:

"c. In connection with question (ii) on immigration, the Commission observes that the Provision of the Assembly's [resolution](#) regarding the evacuation by 1 February 1948 of an area for purposes of Jewish immigration (paragraph 21 Section A, Part I) is addressed directly to the Mandatory Power. The Commission is aware that this date is the first date mentioned in the Assembly's [resolution](#), and that, aside from the substance of the provision; some special significance may be attached to it for this reason alone. On this account the Commission has put considerable emphasis on this matter in its discussions with the Mandatory Power. The Mandatory Power has assured the Commission that its best endeavours, in view of the security situation in Palestine, have not made possible its compliance with this particular provision of the [resolution](#)."

In Section 14, paragraph a, the second sentence was amended to read: "It has taken steps toward the establishment of the Preparatory Economic Commission..."

Paragraph b was adopted without amendment.

Paragraph c was amended to read:

"With regard to these and other important economic questions, the Commission is progressing towards a more complete definition on the basis of which extensive negotiations will be opened with the Mandatory Power. The most urgent of these problems concern the negotiation of contracts to ensure adequate food supplies after the termination of the Mandate, the problem of communications services in the period after the termination of the Mandate, currency problems and the maintenance of continuity of fiscal arrangements."

The last sentence of Section 15 was amended to read:

"This Matter has not been dealt with in this [first monthly report](#), but will be the subject of a special report to the Security Council.

RELATIONS WITH THE PRESS

Mr. BARNES, (Public-Relations Adviser) made a statement on the subject of the publication in the newspapers of comments which showed that a member of the Press had had access to the draft report. He promised to give the Commission fuller information after seeing the journalist in question.

The Commission rose at 1.20 p.m.