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### UNITED NATIONS PALESTINE COMMISSION

#### SUMMARY RECORD OF THE FIFTY-SEVENTH MEETING

Lake Success, New York  
Wednesday, 24 March 1948, at 3.00 p.m.

Present:

Chairman:	Mr. LISICKY	(Czechoslovakia)
Members:	Mr. Medina	(Bolivia)
	Mr. Federspiel	(Denmark)
	Mr. Morgan	(Panama)
	Mr. Francisco	(Philippines)
Secretariat:	Mr. Sobolev	(Assistant Secretary-General)
	Mr. Bunche	(Secretary)
	Mr. Vigier	(Senior Political Adviser)

#### CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT REPLIES TO UNITED KINGDOM DELEGATION

A draft reply to Mr. Fletcher-Cooke's letter of 18 March 1948 concerning the proposed activities of the International Red Cross Committee in Palestine and the maintenance of Health services there after 15 May was considered ([Informal Paper UK/72](#)). It was decided to add in the reply that the Treasury surplus funds in question, for the financing of the operation after 15 May of certain hospitals, should be earmarked now. Also, it would be asked whether the Palestine Administration had given any consideration to the possible enlistment of the assistance in Palestine of the League of Red Cross Societies. Otherwise, the draft reply was approved with minor drafting changes.

In connection with the mention of the Treasury surplus, the question was raised as to whether the expenses incurred with respect to the illegal immigrants detained in Cyprus would be chargeable against the general Palestinian budget. It was recalled that earlier the opinion of Mr. Stavropoulos (Senior Legal Adviser) had been that the expenses in question would be so chargeable. It was agreed, however, that further study of the matter was necessary. The question remained, it was pointed out, as to when and how the Palestinian budget was charged, and whether such action was taken in consultation with the Commission.

Next consideration was given to the draft reply to Mr. Fletcher-Cooke's letter of 22 March concerning negotiations with the Iraq Petroleum Company on the pipeline concession. It was decided that the reply should contain an additional paragraph in which it was stated that the Commission wished to preserve the principle that the Mandatory Power should not by-pass the Commission with respect to any measure involving the liquidation or disposal of Palestinian assets. Otherwise, the draft reply was approved unchanged.

Lastly, the draft reply to Mr. Fletcher-Cooke's letter of 13 March relating to the food supply of Palestine was examined and approved with certain drafting changes.

#### CONSIDERATION OF THE PROPOSED VISIT TO LONDON BY THE COMMISSION

Mr. SOBOLEV (Assistant Secretary-General) was asked to give his opinion regarding the Commission's proposed trip to London. He observed that while there were many practical questions which could best be acted upon in London, the main questions, those, indeed upon which the whole of the [partition plan](#) depended, would be decided at Lake Success. In his opinion, therefore, it was important for the Commission, or at least the majority of its Members, to remain at Lake Success in order to be in a position to react immediately to any decision made by the Security Council.

He thought that it might be suitable to delegate one Member of the Commission to go to London with full authority to negotiate and to take the necessary decisions on the spot.

The question was raised as to the nature of the matters which should be taken up in London. It was pointed out that they concerned the situation in Palestine after 15 May and would arise, in any case, that is, whether the [partition plan](#) was put into effect or not. While the Commission might or might not be responsible for dealing with these matters as they might develop, it could not risk leaving them unprovided for until the last minute before 15 May.

As to the expediency of sending either one or two members to London while the rest remained at Lake Success, it was thought that in view of the small size of the Commission's membership that course would only hamper the Commission in taking decisions both at Lake Success and at London.

In that connection, it was pointed out that inasmuch as the more important questions would have to be decided at Lake Success, the whole of the Commission should remain in the latter place.

On the other hand it was argued that the Commission could make decisions just as easily in London as at New York. It was, however, most important that the Commission should remain together.

The CHAIRMAN observed that the work of the Commission did not hinge upon the day by day developments of the Palestinian question before the Security Council. The Commission had asked for the Security Council's guidance, and did not have to be present to assist the Council in giving that guidance. It was pointed out, however, that in the event that the Council's instructions were considered by the Commission to diverge from the provisions of the General Assembly resolution on partition, the Commission would have to ask for legal advice.

However, the Commission could return to Lake Success very quickly by air if its presence there became necessary.

One suggestion made was that the Commission should devote several days to the consideration of the matters which should be handled in London and then that either the entire Commission or two Members only should go to London for a short period. In that connection, it was pointed out that if only two members were to go it would be logical that the two members should be Mr. Federspiel (Denmark) and Mr. Medina (Bolivia), as they had been specially charged with those matters which would have to be taken up, namely, matters relating to the turning over of assets, to communications and public services and to the question of detainees.

Mr. SOBOLEV (Assistant Secretary-General) observed that the matters which had to be taken up in London were of a technical and not controversial nature, whereas those which had to be decided at Lake Success were of a controversial nature. Perhaps the Commission would find, after further consideration, that it was necessary to send only one Member to London and that it would not be difficult to give that Member the necessary instructions. Such a course would obviate the difficulty with respect to a voting quorum with which the Commission would be faced at Lake Success if two members went to London.

After further discussion, it was agreed that the decision regarding the Commission's proposed trip to London should be postponed until after the subsequent meeting of the Security Council.

#### COMMUNICATION FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM DELEGATION CONCERNING SERVICE OF BRITISH OFFICERS OF THE PALESTINE ADMINISTRATION AFTER 15 MAY ( [Informal Paper UK/75](#) )

A communication received from the United Kingdom Delegation concerning the service of British Officers of the Palestinian administration after 15 May ( [Informal Paper UK/75](#) ) was noted. It was agreed that no action respecting it was required.

#### COMMUNICATION FROM THE JEWISH AGENCY CONCERNING SECURITY FORCE FOR JERUSALEM AREA ( [Informal Paper JA/33](#) )

A communication received from the Jewish Agency concerning the use of Scandinavian forces for the maintenance of law and order in the Jerusalem area was considered ( [Informal Paper JA/33](#) ). A reply would be sent stating that the dispatch of Scandinavian troops to Palestine as proposed was, according to the information which the Commission had, completely impracticable; also, that the matter was, in any case, within the competence of the Security Council rather than of the Commission.

#### COMMUNICATION FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM DELEGATION CONCERNING MOVEMENTS OF ARAB LEGION ( [Informal Paper UK/83](#) )

A communication received from the United Kingdom Delegation concerning the recent transfer of units of the Arab Legion into the Hebron area from Trans-Jordan was noted ( [Informal Paper UK/83](#) ). It was agreed that the information contained therein would be made available to the press.

#### COMMUNICATION FROM THE JEWISH AGENCY CONCERNING AGENCY SUPPLIES FOR THE ARAB LEGION ( [Informal Paper JA/32](#) )

A communication received from the Jewish Agency concerning army supplies for the Arab Legion was considered ( [Informal Paper JA/32](#) ). It was agreed that information regarding the second paragraph of the communication would be requested of Mr. Fletcher-Cooke.

#### COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM DELEGATION CONCERNING PUBLIC INFORMATION SERVICES IN PALESTINE (Informal Papers [UK/81](#) and [UK/84](#) )

Two communications from the United Kingdom Delegation containing answers to questions of the Commission concerning public information services in Palestine (Informal Papers [UK/81](#) and [UK/84](#) ) were noted.

Mr. BARNES (Chief Public Relations Officer) informed the Commission that answers to still other questions relating to the same subject were being prepared by the United Kingdom Delegation and would be available shortly.

At the request of the CHAIRMAN, Mr. BARNES made a statement regarding the general position with respect to public information services and facilities in Palestine. He said that the Jewish Agency were taking steps to provide transmission facilities for point to point communication with the United States and with European countries, as well as for broadcasting. Also, the Jewish Agency was obtaining transmitters for local broadcasting and for point to point high-frequency telephone and teletype communication within Palestine. He said that a representative of an American radio corporation was now in Palestine working out details. The Mandatory Power would remove the Belt Jala transmitter but the two low-frequency transmitters at Ramalah would remain there. However, the use of the latter was questionable since they were located in Arab territory.

The Jewish Agency had given assurances that any facilities they installed would be at the disposal of the Commission.

#### COMMUNICATION FROM THE ADVANCE PARTY CONCERNING RAILWAYS IN PALESTINE ( [Informal Paper AP/15](#) )

A communication from the Advance Party concerning railways in Palestine ( [Informal Paper AP/15](#) ) was taken note of.

The CHAIRMAN observed that the question of railways was one of those which would have to be discussed with the Mandatory Power in London. The impression one had was that the general position regarding railway, telephonic and telegraphic facilities in the transition period between 15 May and 1 August would be very stringent.

*The meeting rose at 6.00 p.m.*