

UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE
MEMORANDUM*

1. During the past weeks, the members of the Commission have had informal conversations with the Arab delegations and the delegation of Israel regarding the best procedure to be followed for ensuring concrete and positive results from their joint efforts. The Commission wishes to submit the following observations and suggestions for the consideration of the interested delegations and their Governments:
2. In New York, the Commission was requested by the Arab delegations to extend the procedure of conciliation to that of mediation; the practical implications of such a measure would be that the Commission, instead of restricting itself to trying to conciliate the points of view of each party, would present proposals to them designed to serve as the basis for discussion and study with a view to reaching agreement on the various questions outstanding between them.

On the other hand, the Commission notes that the delegation of Israel, in its [statement to the Commission on 30 January](#), has again indicated that it considers the opening of direct negotiations between the Arab States and the State of Israel as the only way in which the Commission can contribute to the fulfilment of its task.

3. The Commission does not consider as incompatible these two points of view regarding procedure which have thus been set forth by the Arab States and Israel respectively. The Commission believes that they should be regarded as complementary. It would, indeed, be difficult to visualize how the Commission could undertake a procedure of mediation, in the course of which it would be expected to submit proposals to the parties, without the assurance that these proposals could be examined and discussed at meetings between the representatives of the Commission itself and of all the parties having an interest in the subject under discussion. In the opinion of the Commission, the request of the Arab States that it embark upon a procedure of mediation and the request of the State of Israel that direct negotiations be undertaken are bound up with one another, The Commission is prepared to accept both of these requests and hopes to establish thereby the basis of a new method of operation.

4. In this connection, the Commission would like to present to the parties certain clarifications:

5. The Commission would naturally reserve the right of determining which questions would form the subject of its proposals. The Commission alone is in a position to judge as to the advisability of submitting at any given moment proposals on a certain point. This will not prevent the parties from informing the Commission of questions on which, in their opinion, the Commission could usefully take the initiative. On the contrary, the parties would thus make a most positive contribution to the proper functioning of the new method of operation. The Commission sincerely hopes that they will make use of this procedure as fully and as frequently as possible. It is obvious that the Commission would act upon any request coming jointly from one or more Arab delegations and from the delegation of Israel.

6. As regards the actual procedure, the Commission considers it preferable not to adopt rigid rules. For the moment, it envisages the formation of joint committees under the chairmanship of a representative of the Commission and comprised of representatives of the countries concerned in the particular subject under discussion. In particular cases, of course; this general formula could be modified by mutual agreement between the parties and the Commission. In principle each Committee would have precise and concrete terms of reference, consisting either of the discussion and study of questions which the Commission, in agreement with the parties, had submitted to it for preliminary examination, or of the study and discussion of a proposal drawn up by the Commission on its own initiative or at the request of one or more delegations.

7. The Commission hopes that this new method of operation will meet with the agreement, in principle; of the parties. It realizes that certain details of application and, particularly, of the organization, functioning and procedure of the Joint Committees will need to be discussed further and agreed upon with the parties. The Commission hopes that the spirit of collaboration shown up to now by the delegations and the Governments which they represent will facilitate such discussion and permit early agreement on this subject.

Geneva, 29 March 1950.

Endnote

* Handed to the delegation of Israel in Geneva, 29 March 1950 (see [SR/140](#)). This document has also been issued as [AR/26](#).