

GENERAL
ASSEMBLYASSEMBLEE
GENERALEA/AC.21/SR.4
13 January 1948

ENGLISH ONLY

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE FOURTH MEETING
OF THE UNITED NATIONS PALESTINE COMMISSION

Lake Success, New York

Tuesday, 13 January 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)CONTINUATION OF CONSIDERATION OF THE ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION (Document
A/AC.21/W.3).

The CHAIRMAN informed the Commission that because of deteriorating road conditions it would be necessary to adjourn at 4.00 p.m. The second item on the agenda (consideration of Rules of Procedure) would be deferred until the next meeting. He requested the Secretary to resume the reading of document A/AC.21/W.3.

Mr. MORGAN (Panama) asked, with regard to paragraph 7, what credentials the Commission might require of Arab responsible authorities it might consult.

The CHAIRMAN pointed out in this connection that the Arab Higher Committee itself was not an elected body, but enjoyed a wide authority. In the case of UNSCOP, Arab local authorities had obeyed the instructions of the Arab Higher Committee and had not co-operated. It had been suggested that such obedience was dictated by fear, but that remained to be seen.

Mr. MEDINA (Bolivia), commenting on paragraph 8, considered that the problem of security would require some study before the Commission went to Palestine. It was a matter in which members of the Commission had a vital personal interest. If they did not find out how matters stood, before they got there, it might then be too late.

The CHAIRMAN considered that paragraph 9 emphasized the importance of
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co-ordinating the activities of the British Government and of the Commission. With regard to paragraph 10, he thought that the Commission would be entitled to a further explanation of the attitude of the United Kingdom Government from Sir Alexander Cadogan.

Mr. FEDERSPIEL (Denmark) considered that these speeches should not be taken by the Commission as the final position of the United Kingdom Government. It should negotiate on this subject with Sir Alexander Cadogan.

The CHAIRMAN thought that the Commission might need to question Sir Alexander Cadogan in regard to paragraph 12(B), seeing that this was a matter on which a high degree of co-operation by the United Kingdom Government would be essential.

Mr. FEDERSPIEL (Denmark) considered that the Commission would require direct contact with officials of the Palestine Administration to find which of them might be prepared to remain and on what terms.

The SECRETARY explained that he had discussed the matter with Mr. Fletcher-Cooke and Mr. Trafford-Smith the day before, and had asked them about the possibility that the United Kingdom Government might be prepared to second any of their officials serving in Palestine in connection with the Commission's work. While they could give no final answer, their impression was that their Government would not be prepared to do so. Officials wishing to continue working in Palestine would probably be required to resign from the British service. All officials now employed in the Palestine Administration would be offered employment elsewhere.

Mr. MORGAN (Panama) considered that the work of the Commission would be ineffective if the Mandatory Power did not carry out its bounden duty to co-operate.

The CHAIRMAN pointed out that the assumption by the Commission of the responsibility for the administration of Palestine, discussed in paragraph 13, would be for a short period only. The Commission would not have the necessary means to undertake the task of full administration. The Commission's role was merely to receive the responsibility and transmit it to the Provisional Councils as soon as possible.

Mr. MORGAN (Panama) agreed.

Mr. FEDERSPIEL (Denmark) considered the situation revealed by paragraph 14 extraordinary.

The CHAIRMAN mentioned that the British views had not been finalized at the time of the statement in question, and must be elucidated in the course of the negotiations with Sir Alexander Cadogan.

Mr. MORGAN (Panama) thought it was essential that the Provisional Councils should assume full responsibility even in areas still occupied

/by British

by British troops.

The CHAIRMAN stated in regard to paragraph 15 that there must be negotiations with the United Kingdom Government on their withdrawal from Jerusalem. The personal security of the Commission was bound up with that question. He thought the question mentioned in paragraph 16 was one for decision by the Provisional Councils. The role of the Commission was merely to direct.

Mr. SOBOLEV (Assistant Secretary-General) thought that there was a slight contradiction between the last statement of the Chairman and the Assembly Resolution, which laid down that the Commission should undertake the administration of the country. It might be able to transfer this responsibility to the Provisional Councils, but if one of these could not be formed, the Commission would retain responsibility in that case.

The CHAIRMAN pointed out that if both Provisional Councils had not been formed by 1 April 1948, the matter would be referred to the Security Council. It was true that the Commission might be required to continue to undertake this responsibility, but in that case it would be doing so under the Security Council.

DISCUSSION ON FUTURE PROCEEDINGS

The CHAIRMAN thought that there were two courses which the Commission might follow in its discussions with Sir Alexander Cadogan. It might prepare in advance a list of questions for him to answer, or it might request him to make a general statement. He preferred the second course, as it might make it unnecessary to ask certain questions.

Mr. FEDERSPIEL (Denmark) thought that the Commission should prepare a list of points on which it would like Sir Alexander Cadogan to comment. It would then ask him to make a general statement, and would afterward ask questions.

The SECRETARY stated that he had discussed the matter with Sir Alexander Cadogan, who had expected to be asked to make a general statement, and would then answer questions. From his subsequent discussions with Mr. Fletcher-Cooke and Mr. Trafford-Smith it appeared that Sir Alexander would wish to make two statements, one of a general character, and another dealing with specific British interests in Palestine.

Mr. MORGAN (Panama) thought the Commission should present a list of points on which it was interested. Subsequently it should permit Sir Alexander Cadogan to bring forward any other points he might wish to introduce. Finally he should be asked the degree of co-operation which his Government would offer the Commission.

/Mr. MEDINA

Mr. MEDINA (Bolivia) thought it would be preferable to hear a statement first.

The CHAIRMAN saw tactical advantages in this course. In that case the Secretariat would prepare a list of questions but it would not be studied by the Commission until it had heard Sir Alexander Cadogan's statement.

Mr. MORGAN (Panama) enquired whether representatives might individually prepare questions.

The CHAIRMAN said that every member had the right to ask any question he chose, but that it would be best merely to hear a statement at the first meeting. It was so agreed.

The CHAIRMAN explained, in answer to a further question by the representative of the Philippines, that the lists of questions to be prepared by the Secretariat would be based both on Sir Alexander Cadogan's statements and on the working paper which had just been read. It was decided to hear Sir Alexander Cadogan the following day at 3.00 p.m.

The CHAIRMAN further stated that he had had an informal talk with Mr. Shertok, who had expressed willingness to make a general statement on the present situation in Palestine. It was decided to hear Mr. Shertok in the afternoon of 15 January.

The meeting rose at 4.15 p.m.