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UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

Note dated 26 June 1952 from the Acting Representative of the  
United States transmitting an Aide Memoire to the  
Conciliation Commission from the Ambassador  
of Israel to the United States

The Acting Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations presents his compliments to the Chairman of the Palestine Conciliation Commission and has the honour to transmit herewith an Aide Memoire to the Palestine Conciliation Commission from the Ambassador of Israel to the United States. The Aide Memoire is in reply to representations by the United States Representative on the Palestine Conciliation Commission, acting on its behalf, to the Ambassador of Israel on the subject of blocked accounts.

AIDE MEMOIRE

By the Ambassador of Israel

On 5 May 1952, Ambassador Ely Palmer, Representative of the United States in the United Nations Palestine Conciliation Commission, conveyed to the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations the desire of the Conciliation Commission to make progress towards the release of bank accounts in Israel owned by former Arab residents of Palestine, who had left the country during the hostilities in 1948. The Conciliation Commission had considered this matter at its recent meeting in New York and had empowered Ambassador Palmer to make an official approach on its behalf. The Commission considered that some 20,000 - 30,000 Arabs might eventually be affected by such releases, and that opinion towards Israel in the Arab states would be perceptibly affected by an act of good will in this matter.

2. The Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations expressed appreciation of the desire of the Palestine Conciliation Commission to improve the relations between Israel and the Arab states, and undertook to convey to his Government a full report of the observations presented by Ambassador Palmer. At the same time the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations pointed out that there were many Israel residents who had left Arab countries, especially Iraq, and whose bank accounts were still held by Arab governments and banks. It would be reasonable to expect that the interests of these refugees from Arab countries should be treated with no less concern than those of Arab refugees from Israel.

3. It will be recalled that on 15 February 1950, representatives of Israel and of Egypt (the latter representing all the Arab states) signed an agreement on this question in Geneva during the meetings of the Palestine Conciliation Commission. Subsequently, the Arab governments all declined to give effect to this agreement, which would have resulted in immediate benefits for many thousands of refugees and of other former Arab residents of Palestine.

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4. The Government of Israel has now given consideration to the request submitted on behalf of the Palestine Conciliation Commission. It wishes, wherever possible, to alleviate the position of Palestine refugees and assist their resettlement. Accordingly, the Government of Israel now expresses its willingness to discuss measures for the gradual release of accounts held by Arab refugees in Israel subject to the over-all foreign exchange position of the country. The Government of Israel suggests that this acceptance in principle of the request made by the Palestine Conciliation Commission be now followed by discussion of specific arrangements between the Palestine Conciliation Commission and the Permanent Delegation of Israel to the United Nations.

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