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UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

GENERAL COMMITTEE

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18 May 1949
ORIGINAL : ENGLISH

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE THIRD MEETING

held in Lausanne, on 18 May 1949, at 11:30 a.m.

Present : Mr. de la Touz du Pin (France) - Chairman
 Mr. Yenisey (Turkey)
 Mr. Wilkins (United States of America)
 Mr. Azcarate - Principal Secretary
 Mr. Milner - Political Adviser

The CHAIRMAN remarked that the Commission had determined the Committees agenda for the meeting to be held in the afternoon with the Arab delegations and asked Mr. Wilkins to submit the questions decided upon.

Mr. YENISEY expressed the opinion that the Arab delegations should be informed that the Israelis were prepared to stop their attacks on the Arabs in the press if the latter would do the same. The Arab delegations should also be informed that the Israelis considered the establishment of an independent Arab State in Palestine impossible. The Committee might enquire of the Arabs whether they thought such a State could be established. If not, and if they showed themselves to be in agreement with the Israelis, the Committee would then be able to establish a common ground between the parties.

Mr. WILKINS did not see on what basis the Arab delegations could be asked by the General Committee to decide on the political structure of the Arab part of Palestine; he considered that such a question would be beyond the terms of reference of the Conciliation Commission.

Mr. YENISEY thought that such a question could be considered as part of the Commission's task of conciliation; if the Israelis declared that changed conditions had made the establishment of an Arab State impossible and if the Arabs agreed, an area of agreement would have been reached.

In the opinion of the CHAIRMAN, it was the Committee's task to present a faithful exposé of the Israeli thesis to the Arab delegations and to do the same with the Arab thesis, without putting questions to one side or the other. The Arab representatives who would appear before the Committee might not wish to assume responsibility for replying to such questions, especially since they would not be the Heads of their respective delegations. Any attempt at a final solution would be premature, since the Committee itself was unprepared to consider the matter and the Arabs might not be ready to enter into such discussions. The Committee could seek a conciliatory formula at a later stage.

Mr. YENISEY drew attention to repeated statements on the part of the Arab delegations that the situation had changed since 1947 and that the Partition Plan could no longer be approached in the same way. It had emerged, in fact, that the Arab States favored a partition of the Arab part of Palestine; the Israelis appeared to want the same thing. It should therefore be possible to find an acceptable solution, based on such a plan. Mr. Yenisey said he had prepared his draft protocol with that idea in mind, giving an advantage to both parties : to the Arabs, it gave the advantage of setting, as the line of departure for the Israelis, the boundaries of the Jewish State of the Partition Plan; to the Israelis, it afforded the advantage of modifying their frontiers in accordance with the de facto situation.

In reply to a question by Mr Wilkins as to whether it was proposed to submit this document at once to the Arab delegations Mr. Yenisey replied in the negative, agreeing that such a procedure would be premature.

Mr. WILKINS said that his understanding of the Commission's discussion that morning was that the Committee would not present the document to the Arabs as it stood, but would present the " views " of the Israeli delegation, making it clear that it disassociated itself from such views. The Committee could then, at a later stage, discuss the possible effects of adopting a position of its own on the governmental structure of the Arab part of Palestine.

The CHAIRMAN expressed his agreement with Mr. Yenisey's position; the Committee should discuss his draft but not present it immediately to the Arab delegations. The views of the Arab delegations should be ascertained as those of the Israeli

delegation were being ascertained. In its meeting with the Arab delegations in the afternoon, the Committee should limit itself to transmitting the views of the Israelis.

Mr. YENISEY observed that the Arab delegations would in all probability restate their position on the refugee question. A deadlock would be reached as soon as the Committee had informed them of the Israeli refusal to accept repatriation of any refugees before a settlement of other questions had been reached. Mr. Yenisey agreed that it would be premature to present his draft to the Arabs that afternoon, but thought that after a hearing of their views the draft could be given to them unofficially the next day or the day after.

Mr. WILKINS agreed with this suggestion but thought that the deadlock between the two parties might be more apparent than real. He stressed the importance of transmitting the views of each side to the other since to date they seemed to be under the impression that they were negotiating with the United Nations rather than with each other.

The CHAIRMAN suggested and the General Committee agreed to transmit to each side the views of the other and if a deadlock ensued, then to submit the protocol drafted by Mr. Yenisey, possibly as an official document of the Committee as a whole. It was further agreed that when both parties had manifested their intransigence, the Committee's suggestions embodied in the protocol might become more easily acceptable to them. The Chairman concluded by remarking that he would strongly stress to the Arab delegations that the purpose of the Lausanne talks was for the parties to negotiate with each other and not with the United Nations.