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UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

GENERAL COMMITTEE

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE FIFTY-FOURTH MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,  
on Friday, 17 February 1950, at 11.30 a.m.

Present:

Mr. BARCO (United States of America)

Chairman

Mr. TOUSSAINT (France)

Mr. ERALP (Turkey)

Mr. de AZCARATE

Principal Secretary

DRAFT REPORT TO THE COMMISSION ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A JOINT COMMITTEE  
TO STUDY THE QUESTION OF THE GAZA REFUGEES

The CHAIRMAN invited the General Committee to examine a draft report drawn up by the Secretariat (reproduced as an annex to this Summary Record).

Mr. ERALP (Turkey) considered that sub-paragraph 3 (b) as drafted, gave the false impression that the Commission would have the right to determine the agenda of the Joint Committee and to add items to it, even if one or other of the members of the Joint Committee had objections to those additions.

He thought it should be stated in sub-paragraphs 3 (a) (i) and (ii) that it would be desirable for the questions concerned to be settled as early as possible.

Finally, sub-paragraph 3 (a) should make it clear that the problems entrusted to the Joint Committee were those of the "refugees of the Gaza area",

The CHAIRMAN, replying to the first observation of the Turkish representative, admitted that the text would have to be revised, but felt that it was clear that its authors had had no intention of giving the Commission a directing role going beyond its functions as a conciliatory body. With regard to the second remark, the sub-paragraphs in question kept fairly close to the actual terms of the Egyptian proposal. He did not however see any objection to including some such phrase as, "as early as possible".

It would be advisable for the title of the Report and the name of the Joint Committee itself to be formulated in somewhat vague terms.

Mr. ERALP (Turkey) declared that difficulty would arise if the title did not specify more clearly the questions entrusted to the Joint Committee, and proposed the use of the phrase "the immediate problems of the refugees of the Gaza area". In that way, it would be possible to argue, in the face of possible requests for broader representation on the Joint Committee, that the immediate problems of the refugees of the Gaza area concerned only Egypt and the State of Israel.

Mr. TOUSSAINT (France) would rather avoid anything which might confine the field of activity of the Committee within too narrow limits. It would, moreover, be possible to let it be known to those delegations not taking part that, for the time being, only immediate questions would be dealt with.

The CHAIRMAN considered that the name suggested by the Secretariat represented a good compromise.

The PRINCIPAL SECRETARY was in favour of a form of wording sufficiently broad and flexible to allow for possible future developments. He nevertheless found the proposed title somewhat clumsy.

After discussion, the General Committee decided to retain the proposed title.

Mr. ERALP (Turkey) requested that his observations should nevertheless appear in the Summary Record of the meeting.

The CHAIRMAN assured him that they would also be communicated to the Commission.

The PRINCIPAL SECRETARY, during an exchange of views on the question of the relationship of the Joint Committee to the Commission and to the General Committee itself, pointed out that the proposed Joint Committee would not be a technical one like the Committee of Experts on blocked Arab accounts. Since the Chairman of the Joint Committee would be the Commission's representative on it, it would be perfectly natural and normal for him to report back to the Commission on the work of the Committee.

Various textual emendations arising from the above observations having been made to the Secretariat draft,

the General Committee approved the report thus amended, and decided to submit it to the Commission at its next meeting.

The meeting rose at 2.30 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

GENERAL COMMITTEE

Report to the Conciliation Commission on the question of the establishment of a Joint Committee on the Egyptian proposals concerning the Gaza refugees and on other related questions.

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Pursuant to the Commission's request of 16 February 1950, the General Committee, at its meeting of 17 February 1950, adopted the following recommendations to be submitted to the Conciliation Commission for its approval:

1. That a Joint Committee on problems relating to the Gaza area be composed of one Israeli representative, one Egyptian representative and a representative of the Commission. (The composition of the Committee may be re-examined in the event of its terms of reference being extended.)
2. That the chairmanship of the Joint Committee be assumed by the representative of the Commission who would be appointed by it.
3. That the terms of reference of the Joint Committee be the following:
  - (a) The Joint Committee on problems relating to the Gaza area shall consider and submit to the Commission through the General Committee its recommendations on the three following proposals submitted to the Conciliation Commission by the Egyptian delegation on 24 October 1949:

- (i) That inhabitants of areas falling within the no man's land in the north of the Gaza region be allowed to return to their lands to cultivate them.
  - (ii) That refugees at present in the Gaza area under Egyptian control and possessing land in the hinterland of this zone be allowed to cultivate these lands.
  - (iii) That refugees at present in the Gaza zone originating from the Beersheba area be allowed, provisionally and pending a final settlement, to establish themselves in that area.
- (b) Both the Chairman and the members of the Joint Committee will be entitled to request that any related question whose examination becomes necessary in the course of the work be placed on the agenda of the Joint Committee. In case of disagreement in the Joint Committee on this question, the matter will be submitted to the Conciliation Commission.
- (c) The Joint Committee may seek, through the Conciliation Commission, the views of the interested authorities and organizations.
4. That the delegations concerned be informed by the Commission at the earliest opportunity of its intention to establish the above Joint Committee.