

UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINECOMMITTEE ON JERUSALEM

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9 April 1949SUMMARY RECORD OF A MEETING BETWEEN THE COMMITTEE
ON JERUSALEM AND THE SUPREME MOSLEM COUNCIL
(NINETEENTH MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE)

held at Jericho on 9 April 1949

Present:	Mr. Benoist	(France)	-	Chairman
	Mr. Eralp	(Turkey)		
	Mr. Halderman	(U.S.A.)		
	Dr. Serup		-	Secretariat
	Sheikh Husam ed-Din Jarallah		-	President of the Supreme Moslem Council
	Amin Bey Abdul Hadi		-	Members of the Supreme Moslem Council.
	Hassan Bey Abul Wata Dajani			

The CHAIRMAN introduced the members to the Supreme Moslem Council and stated that the task of the Committee on Jerusalem was limited to the elaboration of an international statute for Jerusalem as provided for in the resolution of the General Assembly of 11 December 1948.

The PRESIDENT OF THE SUPREME MOSLEM COUNCIL replied that the resolution dealt with three problems, namely the questions of boundaries, of the internationalisation of Jerusalem and of the return of refugees. He inquired whether the Committee proposed to discuss all three problems.

The CHAIRMAN indicated that the Committee only had authority to discuss the internationalisation of Jerusalem but that if the members of the Supreme Moslem Council wished to speak on other subjects, the Committee would be glad to hear them.

The PRESIDENT agreed to speak primarily of Jerusalem. Jerusalem had been under Moslem authority for 14 centuries. The Moslems had proved good guardians of the Holy Places and had preserved the Status Quo. The keys of the Holy

/Sepulchre

Sepulchre were still in the hands of a Moslem custodian. He asked why a state of affairs which had proved successful should be changed in favour of internationalisation, which might not be a success. In the past there had been many conflicts among the various Christian confessions about their respective rights and privileges at the Churches of the Holy Sepulchre and the Nativity, as well as at other Holy Places, and the Moslems had always settled these quarrels. He inquired what would be the guarantees as to security and order in Jerusalem under an international regime.

The CHAIRMAN replied that the Christians and the clergy in particular had been satisfied by the way in which the Moslems had exercised their authority, but, unfortunately, one had to take into account the present de facto situation. The Jewish population of Jerusalem numbered already 85,000 and would soon reach 100,000. The traditional equilibrium between the various communities of Jerusalem had been thus disrupted and the United Nations had recommended internationalisation for fear of a renewal of religious conflicts. As to the question of guarantees, the Committee would of course elaborate the statute and then submit it to the United Nations. The Arab authorities would then be in a position to get an answer to their question.

The PRESIDENT stated that these guarantees would undoubtedly be given by the United Nations and that the Supreme Moslem Council had no faith in them. So far all measures taken by the United Nations in Palestine had favoured the Jews. Not a single resolution which was to the advantage of the Arabs had been carried through. The United Nations had proved inefficient or a tool in the hands of the Jews. The Jews had shown their power in the United States and in other Christian countries. United Nations guarantees under present circumstances could not satisfy the Supreme Moslem Council.

The Arabs had been obedient to the United Nations in the past and had shown confidence in this Organization. This had led them only to a catastrophe. The Arabs had not been defeated by Jewish military power but by the action of the United Nations and of certain nations in particular - the United States and the Soviet Union. The Arabs sincerely desired peace, but only a peace with justice, /and it

and it was essential, therefore, that they should know the exact guarantees that would be available to protect their rights and interests.

Mr. ERALP agreed that the Moslem regime in Jerusalem had proved satisfactory for 14 centuries but pointed out that the Committee had an imperative mandate to internationalise the City and would have to carry it out. The United Nations was making efforts to find an equitable solution.

The CHAIRMAN observed that if an international regime were established, the General Assembly would be responsible for its proper functioning. He pointed out that the Arab States, together with the Latin American Powers, would dispose of approximately half the total votes in the General Assembly.

The PRESIDENT reemphasized that the best solution for Jerusalem would be to leave it under Arab authority and that the problem of the 85,000 Jews could be solved in an Arab Jerusalem. The Arabs were not prepared to consider only one part of the General Assembly's resolution but wished to consider it in its entirety. If the United Nations succeeded in solving the refugee problem and in establishing equitable boundaries, the Arabs would consider it able to internationalise Jerusalem.

Mr. HALDERMAN mentioned that the General Assembly wanted to solve the dispute in the interests of both sides. The Assembly was able to understand the motives of the two parties better than the parties themselves. Leading statesmen in the Assembly had arrived at certain conclusions which deserved careful consideration as these statesmen were impartial. In conclusion, he wished as an American to dissipate a misapprehension in certain quarters that the United States had supplied arms in violation of the truce. The United States had, on the contrary, abided by the truce and no complaints had been made by any States or by the observers in this region.

The CHAIRMAN stated in conclusion that it was his understanding that the Moslems would accept the internationalisation of Jerusalem if the resolution of 11 December 1948 were implemented in its entirety.
