

UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

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19.			Letter dated 20 June 1949, addressed by Dr. Walter Eytan, Head of the Delegation of Israel, To the Principal Secretary of the Conciliation Commission.
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Dear Dr. Azcàrate,

I have been instructed by my Government to ask the Conciliation Commission for information about the powers with which the delegations of the Arab States have come to Lausanne.

At my meeting with the Conciliation Commission on June 11th, I reminded the Commission that the Israeli delegation had come to Lausanne with full authority to conclude a peace settlement, and that it had been a source of disappointment to find that the Arab delegations' powers were limited to discussion of the refugee question alone. I stated that this limited authority conferred upon the Arab delegations by their Governments was, in the opinion of my delegation, one of the principal factors retarding the progress of the Lausanne talks, particularly since the experience of the past seven weeks had shown that discussion of the refugee question without reference to other related problems was impossible. My delegation therefore suggested, without prejudice to the Arab case, that an effort should be made to persuade the Governments of the Arab States to grant wider authority to their delegations here, with a view to making possible the discussion of a full and final peace settlement between Israel and the Arab States ( c2. SR/LM/20 of 11 June 1949, page5).

The Chairman of the Commission, in commenting on this suggestion, stated that " he did not have the impression that the Arab delegations had been granted only limited authority by their Governments" (ibid. page 8). The Representative of

France is recorded, similarly, as stating that "he felt that the powers of the Arab delegations were sufficiently broad and that they had been given full freedom of action, at least in the case of the representatives of Lebanon and the Hashemite Jordan Kingdom" (ibid. page 9).

As there is clearly doubt concerning the precise authority vested in the delegations of the Arab States at Lausanne, and apparently reason to believe that the powers of the Lebanese and Jordanian delegations differ from those of the Egyptian and Syrian, my Government would appreciate formal notification from the Commission regarding the exact position. I am instructed to repeat that the Delegation of Israel is empowered to negotiate a full and final peace settlement between Israel and each of the four Arab States represented at Lausanne ( in the case of Syria, after conclusion of an armistice ), and to enquire whether or not the Arab delegations are similarly empowered. If they are not, I should be much obliged if the Commission would make available to me a precise definition of the powers conferred upon these delegations.

Yours sincerely,

S/      Walter Eytan  
Head of Israeli Delegation.