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VERBATIM REPORT OF A MEETING BETWEEN THE CONCILIATION COMMISSION
AND H.E. THE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF ISRAEL*

Held in Jerusalem, 17 August 1950, at 4:00 P.M.

Present:

Mr. Palmer (U.S.A.) - Chairman
Mr. de Boisanger (France)
Mr. Aras (Turkey)
Mr. de Azcarate - Principal Secretary
H.E. Mr. Moshe Sharett - Foreign Minister of Israel
Mr. R. Shiloah
Mr. Z. Liff
Dr. A. Biran
Mr. U. Heyd

Mr. Sharett: I have made a full report to the Cabinet of the proceedings of our last meeting. The Cabinet has given very careful consideration to the views and proposals put forward by Mr. Palmer on behalf of the Conciliation Commission. The Government was gratified to learn that the Jordan Kingdom was ready to put into operation a clause of the Armistice Agreement which provides for the establishment of a special committee to study certain questions. We have since received official notification of that fact from General Riley. I would like to point out that while in your communication to us the Jordan Government was reported to have referred in a rather vague manner to certain territorial adjustments which should form the subject of discussion by that sub-committee, General Riley in his letter to us mentions specifically Article 8 of the Armistice Agreement - the article enumerating certain questions having been left open - as forming the subject of discussion. We therefore base ourselves

* Text of Israeli interventions submitted by Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

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on the assumption that it will be the first business of this sub-committee to try and meet these particular points at issue which form the substance of Article 8. We have appointed our representatives and informed General Riley of the appointments made and we hope that the committee will be able to meet without further delay. We wish it every success. We are indeed very anxious to see the committee's success as the first instalment of a series of such discussions which may eventuate in complete understanding between the Jordan Kingdom and ourselves of all outstanding questions. That is what I have to say on the question of the reconstitution of the special committee with the Jordan Kingdom.

On the question of compensation for lands abandoned by Arabs in our country, the Government reaffirms its readiness to study this question and eventually pay compensation within the framework of an over-all peace settlement. I would like to explain that the Government of Israel, as indeed the people of Israel in its entirety, regard the epoch-making change which has occurred in the ethnic character of this country as something permanent and irrevocable. We do not believe that it can be undone. Ours is not the only country in which in recent times such cataclysmic changes in the composition of the population have occurred. There are countries where these changes assumed far greater scope and have led to much more acute misery. At the same time we are keenly sensitive to human suffering and vitally anxious to see it removed from our immediate neighbourhood. If our original proposals had not fallen on deaf ears, that would have been the case long ago. It is now more than two years since we first made the offer of peace to our neighbours. That offer to enter into direct negotiations with a view to reaching a final and lasting settlement has since then been repeated many times. But the governments of the neighbouring States have persisted in rejecting the offer and they maintain this negative attitude to this day. We cannot help feeling that they must face the consequences of their refusal to negotiate. My Government strongly holds the view that it would not be expedient or useful to engage in processes which presuppose the existence of peace, at a time when peace is non-existent. Moreover, I have been expressly asked by my Government to convey to you that it cannot forever maintain a liability, the discharge of which is contingent upon the conclusion of peace, whilst that consummation is not only remote but altogether problematical. The present position is that the Arab States are not only engaged in a cold war against Israel, a war of propaganda, of continually fanning up the flames of

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hatred, of occasionally issuing threats about the renewal of hostilities, but they are fairly effectively maintaining a commercial blockade against Israel. This state of things of necessity adds rather considerably to the heavy financial burdens which the Government of Israel now has to carry. To continue to carry that burden and at the same time to continue to accept the eventual liability for payment of compensation is more than in fairness can be expected of the Government of Israel. Therefore, we think that it may be conducive to the cause of peace if Arab Governments were informed that their persistent refusal to conclude peace with Israel may well lead to the withdrawal by Israel of its liability to pay compensation. I would like to make it clear that we do not withdraw our offer to pay here and now. We still acknowledge our liability at this stage but I must stress, and I do it in all honesty, that it cannot be acknowledged indefinitely. The changes that are occurring and that may still occur in the general position are unpredictable and incalculable and no liability under such circumstances can be regarded as absolute and unalterable. But again I say that at the present stage and within the context of general peace negotiations we are ready to enter into a discussion of the compensation problem and into the question of the payment of compensation as a contribution to the cost of resettlement. Any discussion based merely on the supposition that peace and resettlement will eventually prevail will serve no useful purpose. On the contrary, it would do harm, as it would retard rather than hasten the advent of peace and resettlement. Broadly, this representation of the views of the Government of Israel does not represent a change in our attitude. My statement is an attempt to explain the way we feel about our position and the problem which confronts us. If the Arab Governments, or any Arab Government is ready to sit down and discuss the problem with us, we are ready, but it is important that there should be no obscuring of the issue. Here is the Government of Israel which says we are ready for peace, ready to negotiate it. We are not proposing to exclude any question from the purview of negotiations. On the other hand, here are the Arab Governments who say they are not ready to recognise Israel's existence or to negotiate peace. This is the clear-cut proposition. We regard peace as being indivisible. We do not think in fairness that they can have it both ways. We do not think that by taking any question out of its context and singling it out in isolation from the rest, the cause of peace will be advanced. Rather we fear the contrary. They may gain the impression, which may lead to pernicious effects, that they are standing to profit by holding out rather than

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by coming forward. Here is a new opening with the Jordan Kingdom. We have our natural doubts, our feelings of scepticism, born of past experience, but we are fully ready to suppress it and give this new turn the best possible chance. If any other Arab Government is ready to meet us and discuss the problem of peace without any preliminary condition in a free give and take, they will find us completely ready to reach an amicable solution. This applies to all Governments around us with whom we are not yet at peace but only at an armistice.

Mr. Palmer: Mr. Minister, we thank you for your clear statement regarding the views of your Government. We appreciate the careful consideration which has been given to our statement. That in itself, that careful consideration, would encourage us to continue to try to find some way to solve a problem which appears to be almost insoluble. We are glad to know that although you regard with scepticism the possibility of effective results, satisfactory results from the meeting of the special committee, that you are prepared to proceed with the meetings between your representatives and the representatives of Jordan. We do not like to admit that we share your scepticism, but we can hardly say that we can assure you of the success which we all desire. Nevertheless we hope that out of these committee meetings something may come which as you have suggested may be the beginning of a wider and perhaps before too long a final settlement. We shall follow with great interest the reports of the committee as they come to us. We feel that our continued presence in the area could not contribute in any way to the success of the meetings, but we would like to feel that from a distance both parties may understand that we are following their deliberations, that we are always ready, if we can be of assistance, to come forward in a way which will be helpful.

With regard to the matter of compensation, we appreciate the very clear statement regarding the views of the Israel Government. We feel that in relation to the question of compensation we have a special obligation under the terms of the Resolution and have felt it more particularly as we have been here in the area and come to realise more poignantly the plight of the refugees and feel that compensation might in some way assist in the settlement of that tragic situation. We would like you to know that we are keen to continue our own studies of the question of compensation, in light of what you have told us. It will be helpful to us to give very special consideration to problems of the particular aspects of the situation as you have presented them. We do not feel that the question of compensation is one which the Palestine Conciliation

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Commission can abandon without further effort to bring about a solution. In order to bring about that solution we are glad to have the views of the parties concerned and you may be sure that in the further studies which we are earnestly desirous of carrying out, what you have told us today will carry weight and we cannot help but recognise that in the final analysis the viewpoint of the Israel Government on compensation is of vital importance. If in the course of our studies either as a Commission or as a sub-committee which might be set up to give more undivided attention to this matter, we should have need for further talks with you or an exchange of views, we hope that we may count on your co-operation in the future as we have been able to count on it in the past.

Mr. Sharett: I just want to say, Mr. Palmer, that the Commission will always find us responsive to any questions or suggestions that may occur to you to put to us and we shall always be interested in cooperating and try to the best of our ability to cooperate as far as such cooperation can be considered in keeping with our fundamental attitude.

Dr. Aras: I fully share the views which have just been expressed by our Chairman. There is certainly one point on which everybody concerned is in agreement and that is that we want peace; in any case peace and conciliation are the very reasons for our existence. It is of course possible to hold various views on the ways in which we could reach these aims. Sometimes there are too many ways open to peace, and in that case the only solution is to choose the ways which are shortest and easiest.

As our Chairman stated at our previous meeting, the Commission considers that the refugee problem is very urgent and we have felt the urgency of it all the more when we visited the other capitals in this area. This problem constitutes a stumbling block on the way to peace. If it were possible to remove this stumbling block perhaps we would be on the road to peace. On this problem there are various views held by various governments and people. Some persons feel that the refugee problem is of importance only in Palestine, others feel that it is not such an important problem. In any case, whatever views are necessary to take this stumbling block out of the way, if the United Nations could do something to remove it, to help the Middle East in general, it would be of great value to us all. The Commission must continue to work in the direction of peace and I would like to say that as far as I am concerned, if in order to succeed more certainly, it were necessary or helpful for me to be replaced by someone else, I would not hesitate to relinquish my post on the Commission.

Mr. Palmer:

Mr. Palmer: I think this last remark of Dr. Aras' would be echoed by Mr. Boisanger and myself without hesitation. We want to remain on the Commission as long as we can be helpful and if we cannot be helpful we would like to be replaced. We do not wish to feel that we are contributing to the difficulties and it is possible that a time may come when the entire Commission might be replaced. But for the time being we will continue to work earnestly and sincerely for peace.

Mr. Boisanger: I do not have very much to add to what the Chairman has said. When we were in Alexandria I raised a question with the Foreign Minister and told him of course that we would perfectly understand if he did not reply, but we know that every Government and the Conciliation Commission has its own responsibilities, and sometimes it might be interesting to know how each party envisages the responsibilities of the other. You have very clearly stated the views of your Government and we understand perfectly well what those views are, but I would like to ask, how do you see the Conciliation Commission's own task and how do you think we should work from now on? We could of course insist that the Arab Governments should deal with all problems in one general discussion. We have asked them that for a long time, in Beirut as well as in Lausanne. But the problem of the refugees is the only one they want to deal with.

Now as regards the refugee problem the Commission sees a certain change in the attitude of the Arab Governments. They no longer say that all refugees must go back home to the country and the lands which they left behind. The view now is that refugees should be settled on territories of Arab countries and this corresponds to our own views and to the views of the Government of Israel as you have expressed them to us. Therefore, when the Arab Governments tell us that they envisage resettlement of refugees with help of the Commission and more particularly, this help should come in the form of compensation, we wonder what we should reply. We can very well tell them that they must discuss all their problems at once, but we cannot help making them feel that the change in their attitude is an improvement. We are therefore now in an embarrassing position vis-a-vis the Arab States, and find ourselves in a difficult position.

Mr. Aras: I should like in my own personal name to complete what has been said by Mr. Boisanger and Mr. Palmer. I think that practically speaking there are two ways open now to a solution. One of them is the special committee with the possibilities it can present when Israel and Jordan discuss certain problems. We do not know what results will be achieved, but it does constitute an open

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way and we can only hope for the best. The second way is that certain Arab States say that they want to solve the refugee problem first because by solving it most of the rest of the problem will be solved. This is not the point of view of all the Governments, but of some, and very probably Jordan is one of them. Now of these two ways which should be chosen? I would like to say that in my opinion it might be worthwhile to try to utilise both ways. Of course certain governments will tell us that they are in no hurry, in which case we shall have to wait and they might consider that waiting will be profitable. The Commission cannot understand the situation in that way. We cannot wait for the situation to deteriorate further.

Mr. Sharett: I would now like to answer Mr. Aras on both of his statements. Certain things which you said at an earlier stage touched cords in my heart and I would like to express my feelings on them. I want to say, and I am sure that I am expressing the feelings of my colleagues here, to some of whom it was given to have longer and closer contact with the Commission, I am very deeply impressed by the high-minded zeal displayed by members of this Commission, by their devotion to this task in a true international spirit which may well serve as an example for all international bodies and for national governments, and I certainly include my own government, with whom they came into contact. I hope and pray that this spirit of zeal will never forsake the Commission as long as they continue to work and until peace is achieved. Now the idea of trying to remove stumbling blocks from one's path, so eloquently and convincingly expressed by His Excellency Dr. Aras, is one with which I in my humble and limited way am fully familiar. I have spent most of my adult life in a continuous series of attempts to remove stumbling blocks from certain paths which we have trodden. I intended when I listened to Dr. Aras to put a certain question to him. I have found that question to coincide inversely with the question put to me subsequently by Mr. Boisanger and I am wondering whether I can still put that question to him and hope that in it an indication may be found not of my answer but of the line along which I may try to formulate the answer. I must make it perfectly clear that at this stage of the conversation I do not speak formally in the name of my government. This particular aspect of the problem has not been put to my Government because it was not fully brought out at our former meeting.

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What occurred to me was to ask Dr. Aras and the Commission simply this: Are the Arab Governments ready to resettle the Arab refugees in their respective territories? When I say 'respective' that refers to the Arab Governments, not to the refugees. It does not mean that each contingent of refugees must be resettled in the country in which they now find themselves. So, is there readiness on the Arab Governments' part to tackle this problem in this manner, to seek a solution through resettlement? If the answer is in the affirmative, it constitutes a change and merits the serious attention of the Government of Israel. I say this in my personal capacity. Now since I started thinking about this question as a result of what Dr. Aras had said, I have gathered from Mr. Boisanger that a change in this direction has indeed occurred, and that there has been some evolution in the thinking of the Arab Governments. This is an extremely important issue. I say again that this was now fully brought out in our last meeting. I do not have the slightest doubt that the Commission will fully realise the importance of this issue and my responsibility in informing my Government that some Arab Governments envisage resettling refugees in their territories rather than repatriating them to Israel. For once there will be some common ground at least on one problem between the Government of Israel and the Arab Governments. This is the question which I would like to put. The implication is clear and is an indication of the answer I might try to formulate as to what direction the efforts of the Commission should take.

Mr. Shiloah: With Mr. Sharett's permission I would like to make two remarks and might add that if Mr. Sharett said he is not talking formally, I of course am not in a position to commit the Government. But as an indication of our thinking on the subject in the past and at the present, I would like to point out that already in Lausanne at a certain stage we were willing to place the problem of the refugees at the head of the agenda in the general context of peace negotiations and when we agreed to do that it was quite clear to us that the moment we discuss refugees we discuss compensation; there cannot be any other interpretation. But that was all dependent at the time on the understanding that the intention is to achieve a complete settlement. I don't think there is any retreat on our part from this general trend of mind. I would also like to mention something which is known to members of this Commission even though they were not directly involved in it. In our contacts at a certain stage with the

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Government of Jordan, when we had the impression that something practical is about to be achieved, we discussed compensation in a very concrete way. We are not hiding under a shield of an over-all settlement, but our attitude is that it is worthwhile discussing compensation if it leads to results in the direction of peace.

Mr. Palmer: I believe that Dr. Aras would like in a moment to respond to your question, Mr. Minister, and perhaps Mr. Boisanger also has something more to say. But I would like to say, speaking for the Commission, that if this particular aspect of the situation was not raised at your previous meeting with us, it was due to the fact that we had not yet completed our visits to Arab capitals at that time. Since then we have visited two more Arab capitals and we have received in these two capitals in particular an indication or manifestation or at least felt that there was a very definite interest in resettlement, in the recognition of the importance of resettlement. In the case of the Lebanon, resettlement does not mean staying in their country, but they support the idea that it is in their interest to resettle the refugees. In the case of Syria there was a very definite manifestation of their willingness to resettle a considerable number in Syria and a recognition of the fact that this would not only relieve the situation, but in the final analysis the Syrian Government would benefit by resettlement. Prior to that we had been in other two capitals, of Egypt and Jordan. Jordan had always been ready to accept refugees, the question was merely how many could be absorbed in the country with its present economic capacity, and some might have to go somewhere else. One of the reasons why it is so difficult for us to deal with the question of resettlement on the basis of saying how many they should be ready to take is that this is not in our particular field. That is for the Relief and Works Agency to work out in its wider field of action. They are already studying this and have reached certain conclusions from the pictures they have seen. They are in a better position to say to what extent these countries are capable and prepared to take refugees for resettlement, but there is very definitely a feeling in our minds that the question of resettlement of refugees in certain Arab States is recognised now by the Arab States concerned as a possibility and the question now is just how is that possibility to be presented to the refugees themselves. This is a difficult problem, the refugees who may still feel an urge to return to their homes must be /given some

given some hope for something else and the question is how that hope may be given. That is what makes it difficult to answer. The attitude of the Governments is one of definite recognition and of preparedness to accept refugees for resettlement under certain conditions. The question of where is something for them to determine. One aspect of the problem which is difficult is that we have no contact with Iraq, which has been mentioned on various occasions as a suitable country where refugees might be resettled. There is land there to be settled and not a sufficient population to do it. The Relief and Works Agency is in touch with the Government of Iraq and they have certain ideas of the preparedness of Iraq to accept refugees and under what conditions.

Mr. Aras: I fully agree with what our Chairman has just said. Aside from the official part of our visits to all the capitals, there is always some personal and useful contact with the Governments, and what with the Eastern spirit of friendliness, at the end of meetings when we turn to dessert and fruit and drinks, one speaks more openly. At official meetings they stick to the 1948 Resolution, but at the time of dessert we hear different things. Some Arab representatives tell us that if Government of Israel were to ask questions of refugees whether they would wish to come back to their homes, a very small number would choose to come home. If the question of refugees were set as it was in 1948 the refugees would have the choice either to come back to their homes or to receive payment of compensation; compensation we know is not the whole solution but only a part, but given this choice the great majority would choose to stay where they are.

There are three facts to take into consideration. First is resettlement of refugees in Jordan, which is a new fact. Secondly, there is the habit of unofficial conversations in which we learn things although we do not use them officially, they stay in our minutes and can be useful to us. Thirdly, we hear through the newspapers that the Arab League has put the refugee problem on the agenda of the General Assembly, but not the whole problem of Palestine, and when we speak here either as a Commission or personally and privately, we notice that we are far from the time when we spoke in terms of prior conditions, etc. I believe that we should speak freely and frankly because our only aim is peace, as I said before.

Mr. Boisanger: I fully agree with what has been said but I would like to add one word which would bring us back to the question of compensation. There is a

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definite change in the attitude of the Arab Governments. Some of them go far in private conversations. They now accept the fact that refugees should have the choice between going back to their homes or receiving compensation and, if given that choice, according to some Arab Governments, most refugees would prefer to receive compensation and would be ready to stay in Arab States and some Arab States would be ready to receive them. If we compare this attitude with what was the view months ago, we cannot help considering that this constitutes progress which we can consider as a hope for the final solution. The question is now, how can we promote this evolution which we consider favourable?

Mr. Sharett: I would like first to make a few technical observations. First, we are extremely indebted to you for the informative part of your remarks and for your kindness in supplementing what you said at our previous meeting by telling us what the Commission gleaned from its contacts in Damascus and Beirut. This interests us greatly. I would like to observe that we do not quite get the point of the attitude of Egypt on this particular issue. We do not know whether you are in a position to enlighten us - if not, then please drop it, but if you could enlighten us it would be extremely valuable. With regard to Iraq, we realise that the Commission is not in contact with the Government of Iraq at all, but we know that the Relief and Works Agency has visited Baghdad and may have been able to glean something there. The present Prime Minister of Iraq was for a time a strong champion of settlement in Iraq, long before the war between us. He always advanced the view that Iraq is a vast country, under-populated, and could be developed only with a great increase in its population; that if Egypt should agree to send over a part of her surplus population, they could settle in Iraq. I am wondering whether he would not now be ready to take advantage of this fact that there are now so many thousands of candidates for resettlement in Iraq.

My last technical observation is on the point of competence. I understood you to have said that you do not regard a detailed elaboration of plans of resettlement as coming fully within your terms of reference, but that the Relief and Works Agency would handle that. Of course our interpretation is by no means authoritative but we have thought all along that it was not within the province of the Relief and Works Agency to work out permanent settlement plans, but rather only temporary employment schemes.

/Now to come

Now to come to the main subject of this phase of our discussion. What we have heard here about the evolution in the attitude of the Arab States on the question of resettlement interests us greatly and we regard it as a hopeful opening. This process may yet be in its initial stages, something still in its inception. What they tell you about the choice of most Arab refugees not to go back does not sound conclusive to us. To be perfectly frank, we would much prefer to rely on a definite decision of the governments rather than on the freely expressed will of the people concerned. It all depends what purpose we want to achieve. We are all in complete agreement that we want to achieve peace and permanent stability and not the creation of further planes of friction and conflict. That being so we must make up our minds what we are heading for. Are we heading for permanent absorption or for repatriation which would reopen wounds barely healed. If it is the former, then there should be a definite scheme worked out and agreed between governments. It would then be brought to the people who would be told: Here is your chance to make a new start in life.

Here sits a statesman who in his time was instrumental in solving a problem of inter-state relations by an exchange of populations, between Greece and Turkey. This was the first great experiment in the wholesale transfer of populations in modern times, and it was eminently successful. But what was the method? It was not to ask each man, whether he be a Turk or a Greek, what his preference was - to stay where he was or be moved. The method chosen was direct negotiations between the two Governments concerned with the help of an international organisation, the League of Nations. Once the two governments agreed on the point at issue, the people had to move. They were left no choice. I think that is the only way in which the problem can be settled if our purpose is to settle it and not merely to devise a formula. It is a question of an inter-State agreement and then of an announcement to the people - here is your chance to make a new start in life, something definite, practical, and leaving no loopholes. We think that should be the approach to the problem. As to what should be done by the Commission - whatever can be done to focus and crystallise this frame of mind in the Arab States will certainly be conducive to the attainment of a final settlement and I think whatever effort the Commission still feels can be made in this direction would be extremely worthwhile.

May I take advantage of this free and liberal spirit in which we are now conducting this meeting to say something which formally I would not have presumed
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to say, and that is to make a suggestion as to the report which the Commission will submit to the U.N. If the Commission feels that the expressions of this trend of thought which it has heard are authoritative, I think a mere reference to this change will probably have the effect of re-focusing the thoughts of Arab people and dislodging them from the dogmatic attitude which they have adopted until now and which leads nowhere. By simply putting this squarely before the international public, the fact that there is this change, that in itself may serve as an encouragement to Arab Governments to go on thinking in this direction. I would also suggest further contacts with the Arab Governments in the same direction, getting them to agree that this is the solution and that this then calls for negotiations with us either direct or through the intermediary of the Commission. We prefer direct talks but we have never said we would not be willing to negotiate through the Commission. This is not meant as a slur upon the Commission, but we have always preferred direct negotiations as a short-cut to final settlement.

I want to add something with special reference to Iraq. When we speak of resettlement we use terminology which suggests that the bulk of the population to be resettled constitutes an agricultural element. But there is also a large number of urban people - tradesmen, artisans, shopkeepers. I would like to point out in this connexion that there is at present a Jewish exodus from Iraq, in thousands. The number of people now awaiting transportation to Israel with all papers ready and citizenship rescinded is over 20,000. The total number of people who have signified their decision to leave Iraq is nearing 100,000. They are all urban people. Now I don't suggest that there should be a very elaborate exchange apparatus set up to ensure that each Arab grocer or carpenter coming in steps into the shoes of a Jewish grocer or carpenter going out, but I envisage the problem in its global scope. It is certain that a void is now being created in the economic life of Iraq by this exodus. The Iraqi Jews represent a certain volume of manpower. They all made their living there, they didn't live on charity. They traded, worked, manufactured goods, etc. That void may now well be filled by Palestinian refugee Arabs. I would like to leave that thought with you for what it may be worth.

On the procedural side, seeing that the Conciliation Commission is not officially in contact with the Iraqi Government whereas the Relief and Works

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Agency is, maybe some method of co-ordination could be devised between the Relief and Works Agency and yourself, since both are arms of the United Nations, both stem from the same root of authority and initiative, so maybe the Commission can use the instrumentality of the Relief and Works Agency in order to foster contacts on all these issues of resettlement and link it up with the exodus of the Jews. The question of compensation in connexion with the property of the Jews of Iraq might also be taken into consideration, but I would not like now to enlarge upon this issue though I feel very strongly that this may turn out to be a profitable approach.

Mr. Palmer: I am reminded of a formula which has sometimes been used - the formula of thinking out aloud. Your reference to the surplus population in Egypt is more or less the key to our inability to give you a definite answer with reference to Egypt's stand on resettlement. However, we felt when we were there that they were interested in the possibility of resettlement, not in Egypt, in the same way that the Lebanese were not interested in resettlement in the Lebanon. This possibility was receiving some consideration on the part of the Relief and Works Agency in its talks with the Egyptian Government. We are therefore not in a position to give you an answer as to the extent and how far they are prepared to go in resettlement. When I speak about the Relief and Works Agency I do not mean to say that in the over-all picture the Commission did not have very definite responsibilities and the very fact that we recognise these responsibilities is evident from our conversation today about the possibility of resettlement. The Relief and Works Agency, while anxious to avoid the appearance of forcing resettlement on any country, is in a position, because of its experts, to form an opinion as to the possibility of resettlement in different countries and what they gather may be helpful to us.

Mr. Sharett: We are fully in agreement on this.

Mr. Palmer: As for our own relations with the Relief and Works Agency, we have been very careful not to appear to be directing them in any of their activities. They are independent of us and they are anxious to maintain that independence. We do not want them to feel that we are doing anything that will embarrass them in their projects that might lead to some permanent settlement and though they talk in terms of temporary settlement, more than likely this will lead to permanent settlement. I was speaking to Mr. Blanford after our meeting with you,

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we referred to the spoiling of grandchildren by their grandparents and he said to me: "Don't you spoil us." We do not wish to make their work difficult in any way, even though we have a keen and deep interest in their problems.

Mr. Sharett: Thank you very much for your statement which is most helpful to me. It puts the position very clearly. Nevertheless we feel and hope you will agree that there are ways of co-ordination, if not direct then perhaps through the Secretary-General, but it is extremely essential that these two bodies should help each other and should not be too pedantic on questions of competence, but take a broader view of their respective terms of reference.

Mr. Boisanger: One thing, as regards our relationship with the Agency. The Commission has at given times been in touch with the Iraqi Government, just as it was with Saudi Arabia and Yemen, but at the beginning of our conversations in Lausanne Iraq expressed the wish not to attend meetings and they were stopped. But this does not mean that we could not take up contact again if we wanted to.

Dr. Aras: I think that this informal conversation was extremely useful for all of us. I learned that some 100,000 persons from Iraq were more or less on their way here, which is a very useful thing to know in connexion with the problem of resettlement. I further understand that there is the tendency that should Arab Governments accept the principle of resettlement, it would be possible to discuss it with Israel. The example which was given of Greece and Turkey was excellent and could be considered a precedent, but in that particular case the two governments were also taking charge of the financial aspects. In our case the two parties are not sufficient, therefore it would be necessary to use a third party, which would be the U.N. I would like to point out further that here we insist with you on the necessity of discussing compensation, while when seeing other governments we tell them that there are refugees who suffer and further that Israel is a reality, that there exists a State of Israel and some way must be found for harmony and that no new sufferings should be inflicted. If we could have direct negotiations, this would be what we prefer, but I think that the very evolution of the situation shows that it is necessary from the material point of view to have the help of a third party.

Mr. Sharett: I fully share your views.

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I wish to add for your information that this exodus of Jews from Iraq is not the only feature of that situation. Another very important phenomenon is the wholesale transfer to Israel of the Jews of Yemen. Nearly 50,000 of them have left and been transported within a matter of less than two years. I do not suggest that Arab refugees from Palestine should necessarily be invited to settle in Yemen, though the Jewish exodus has created an economic and industrial void in Yemen, because most Jews were artisans. I myself have spoken to Yemenite Arabs while in Aden and they have all said that Yemen would be hard put to it to replace that volume of industrial skill which she was losing as a result of this exodus. There is also a continuous trickle of Jews leaving Cairo. This is the general picture, of which the exodus from Iraq is only one feature.

Mr. Palmer: May we take our leave now?

Mr. Sharett: I am wondering whether you would care to dine with me in Jerusalem tomorrow evening. My home is in Tel Aviv, and I would have loved to have you as my guests there, but as we are all now in Jerusalem, what about dining with me at the King David Hotel tomorrow evening at about 8.30 p.m.?

Mr. Palmer: We will be pleased to meet you at the King David Hotel tomorrow evening.