

UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

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Letter dated 7 November 1951 addressed to
the Chairman of the Conciliation Commission
by the Representative of Israel

Mr. President,

I have been instructed by my Government to submit to you the following statement on the basic issue which is facing the present conference.

"The full observance of the Armistice regime must be the starting point of any progress towards peace. In violation of the Armistice Agreements and of Security Council resolutions, the Arab Governments, acting on their own unilateral interpretation of their obligations, have persisted in economic and political aggression by imposing a sea-blockade and economic boycott against Israel, by interfering with vital Israel development projects, and by obstructing Israel's participation in the regional organisations of the United Nations. In fact they claim the freedom to apply any and every measure of active hostility against Israel short of actual resort to arms. These claims and practices have been the subject of constant protests by the Government of Israel and were emphatically rejected by the Acting Mediator who had negotiated the Armistice Agreements on behalf of the United Nations.

"The issue was finally decided by the Security Council in its consideration of the Israel complaint against Egypt. In its resolution of 1 September 1951 the Security Council rejected the assertion by the Arab States of belligerent rights, found the continuance of hostile acts to be inadmissible and decided they must cease.

"The Conciliation Commission for Palestine has taken an attitude which we find difficult to reconcile with this most authoritative decision. The initial proposal of the Commission for a non-aggression declaration, which was accepted by the Government of Israel and rejected by the Arab Governments, was in full conformity with the provisions of the General Armistice Agreements, the Security Council's resolutions and the principles of the Charter. In the face of Arab recalcitrance the Commission appears to have abandoned its stand and accepted the Arab position as adequate. The Government of Israel regards this as a retrograde step which far from assisting in the restoration of peace, would contribute to the perpetuation of the conflict.

"The Arab Governments have repeatedly proclaimed their refusal to enter into peace negotiations. There is no indication that they regard even their participation in the present conference as a step towards peace. Their reaffirmation of the mere obligation not to resort to force of arms is meaningless. In the face of the Three Power declaration, and in the present state of world tension, they could not possibly do less. The acceptance by an organ of the United Nations of this restricted conception of the Armistice Agreements and its acquiescence in what is now tantamount to a defiance of the Security Council adjudication is a course fraught with peril. Before entering into negotiations on the merits of any proposal, the Arab Governments will have received encouragement to persist in their intransigent position, to obstruct any real progress towards a final settlement and to exploit tactical advantages for a more effective prosecution of hostilities.

"The Government of Israel is fully prepared to advance from the Armistice Agreements towards a definitive peace settlement, as provided for in the Agreements themselves and in successive Security Council resolutions. But such advance must be from the Armistice Agreements as authoritatively interpreted by

the Security Council, not from their truncated and distorted version which one Party to the Agreement arbitrarily chooses to adopt.

"The Government of Israel trusts that the Conciliation Commission will meet this issue in a fair and constructive manner and will continue to render its assistance to the Commission for the achievement of this object."

With reference to the explanations which Your Excellency was good enough to give my delegation on 26th October, we shall be ready in the course of the next few days to offer our comments on the various matters raised.

Please accept, Mr. President, the renewed assurances of my highest consideration.

(signed) Maurice Fischer