

UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE.

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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTEENTH MEETING

held in New York on Tuesday,
15 November 1949, at 3:30 p.m.

Present : Mr. Yalcin (Turkey) - Chairman
Mr. de Boisanger (France)
Mr. Palmer (U.S.A.)
Dr. Azcarate - Principal Secretary
Later : Mr. Martin Hill - Representing the
Secretary-General

Statement made by Arab representatives to State Department

Mr. de BOISANGER asked for confirmation from the United States member of the Commission of the press report that certain Arab representatives had commented the previous day in Washington, to Mr. Webb of the State Department, upon the unfavorable attitude maintained by the Government of Israel toward the work of the Conciliation Commission. If the report was true, he considered it essential that the Commission should take steps to clarify the situation, in order to avoid being placed in an unfortunate position. He suggested the release of a statement to the press, referring to the Commission's reply to the Israeli note of 27 October, and stating that the Commission was in the process of negotiation with the two parties, that it intended to commence mediation and hoped to achieve a settlement.

Mr. PALMER affirmed that among other points which the Arab representatives, at their own request, had discussed with Mr. Webb, it had been stated that the Arab Governments wished to continue their collaboration with the Commission, but that the Israeli representative was not manifesting a cooperative attitude. Mr. Palmer asked what the French representative envisaged as a concrete basis for the suggested press release.

Mr. de BOISANGER pointed out that substantial extracts from the Israeli note of 27 October had appeared in the press, and that it was well known that the Commission intended to

reply to that note. The press release he proposed could be based upon that reply, and should state that the Commission hoped to receive the same cooperation as heretofore from both parties. Such a statement might help to prevent the beginning of a general debate in the press regarding the work of the Commission and the attitude of the parties.

Mr. PALMER agreed with Mr. de Boisanger's view, and pointed out that even though the Israeli delegation had expressed dissatisfaction, it could still be stated that the Commission assumed it was possible to continue its work with both parties in an attempt to achieve a solution.

The Commission adopted the following text for release to the press:

"The Conciliation Commission this morning transmitted to Mr. Eban, permanent representative of Israel to the United Nations, its reply to his letter of 27 October 1949.

"The purpose of the Commission's letter was to clarify a certain number of questions raised by the letter of the Israeli representative. It also indicated that the Commission proposed to pursue its task in collaboration with both sides and to invite their attention to concrete problems on which agreement will be sought."

Mr. Martin Hill then took his place at the conference table.

Mr. Hill reported that Mr. Myer, principal consultant on refugee investigations with the Economic Survey Mission, would not be able to come to Lake Success for another three weeks. His assistant, Mr. Lee, would arrive at the end of the week, but would probably not bring any additional information of importance. He therefore hoped that the Commission would not insist upon receiving supplementary information and explanations before submitting the report. He agreed that clarification was necessary on certain points, but in view of the heavy schedule of work before the General Assembly and the fact that the question should be taken up within the next ten days, the Secretary-General hoped that the Commission would submit the report at once, with such comments as it was in a position to make, in order that the Member delegations might have sufficient time to receive instructions from their Governments. It was expected that Mr. Clapp or a member of his staff would

arrive in Lake Success within ten days to defend the report and furnish the necessary supplementary information to the General Assembly.

Mr. PALMER agreed that it was highly desirable not to delay transmission of the report. Since in the circumstances it would be difficult for the Commission to make any detailed comments which would be helpful, he thought the observations to be included in the covering letter should be of a very general nature; it would not be possible to cover the four points raised by Mr. Hill in the meeting preceding day (SR/111).

Mr. de BOISANGER maintained his view that the Commission's covering letter should contain some mention of the question of diminution of rations. It was necessary to pass upon the merits of the Clapp proposal; the Commission could merely take note of the arrangements made by the Secretary-General with the relief agencies and call the attention of the General Assembly to a delicate problem which existed.

Mr. PALMER was not sure that any mention should be made of the question in view of the meagre information available. He pointed out that the matter was one of considerable importance, since it involved the appropriation of new funds which would have to be contributed by the Member States. Moreover, he thought the Commission might place itself in a difficult position in calling attention to the fact that the Secretary-General had made such commitments to the agencies.

Mr. HILL suggested that the Commission might simply refer to the contents of document A/1060, the Secretary-General's report of 4 November on assistance to Palestine refugees, in which the request to the agencies and the commitments made were set forth.

In reply to a question from Mr. PALMER concerning the funds for the winter's relief work, Mr. Hill said that with the addition of a few small contributions it was hoped that sufficient funds would be available to carry on the work through December. Beginning in January, an advance would be necessary from the Working Capital Fund. The Secretary-General had not made a definite contract with the agencies, but had promised to request such an advance from the General Assembly.

Mr. PALMER reiterated his view that the Commission could not make recommendations implying financial commitments for Member Governments, nor could it intervene in the matter of commitments entered into by the Secretary-General. He felt, however, that by careful drafting of its covering letter the Commission could discharge its essential obligation, that of keeping the suffering of the refugees to a minimum.

Mr. de BOISANGER pointed out that the Economic Survey Mission was a creation of the Conciliation Commission, which was the agent of transmission for its reports. The Commission could therefore reserve the right to make its more detailed comments on the report at a later moment.

It was agreed that the Secretariat would draft the covering letter for transmission with the report the following day.

Mr. Hill then withdrew from the meeting.

Letter from the Egyptian delegation regarding distribution of the Clapp report

The PRINCIPAL SECRETARY explained that the letter in question was based upon a misunderstanding as no distribution whatever of this document had been made, and suggested that he should clarify the matter personally with the Egyptian delegation.

The Commission approved the Principal Secretary's suggestion.

Declaration by the Arab delegations regarding protection of the Holy Places

Mr. BENOIST expressed the satisfaction of the Committee on Jerusalem with the declaration submitted by the Arab delegations. He suggested that when the Commission submitted the declaration to the Secretary-General, it should point out that the text followed that originally drafted by the Commission, with the omission of the references to the Commissioner and the International Tribunal.

The meeting rose at 5:45 p.m.