

UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FOURTH MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on
Tuesday, 7 February 1950 at 10.30 a.m.

Present:

- Mr. PALMER (United States of America) Chairman
- Mr. de BOISANGER (France)
- Mr. ERALP* (Turkey)
- Mr. de AZCARATE Principal Secretary

Alternate

Next official meeting with the Arab delegations - General discussion on the procedure to be adopted.

The CHAIRMAN announced that the delegations of the various parties would all like to have the dates fixed for the meetings of the Commission which they would attend. While the meetings should certainly not be put off too long, the Commission would have to decide on the questions to be dealt with.

Mr. de BOISANGER (France) agreed that the Commission should rule out purely formal meetings and summon delegations only when it had fully prepared the questions it wished to take up with them. Seeing that the Arab delegations were unwilling to take part in a plenary conference at which the delegation of the State of Israel would likewise be present, he proposed that the formula already adopted for technical questions be widened by establishing a series of mixed committees to study the question of frontiers, refugees, economic questions etc.

The Arab delegations would, he thought, agree to that procedure provided it were made clear that the ensuing discussions would be based on the General Assembly Resolutions of 1947 and 1948. On the other hand, the Israeli delegation would find it somewhat difficult to accept that stipulation.

Nevertheless, the Commission should submit its own decisions to the parties; and there was reason to believe that it would not meet with a refusal on the part of those concerned.

Mr. ELALP (Turkey) pointed out that the Israeli representative had informed the Commission that his Government would not oppose any agenda of whatever nature. The formula to be communicated to the parties might therefore intimate, as suggested by the French representative, that the work of the mixed committees would be based on the existing General Assembly resolutions on the subject or that the proposals already accepted by the parties - this being an allusion to the Protocol of 12 May - would be taken as a basis.

Mr. de BOISANGER (France), in reply, suggested that the Arab delegations would prefer the first formula.

They would have no objection in principle, he felt, to a meeting with the Israeli representatives; and he trusted that this purely personal impression would be confirmed by the other members of the Commission in their discussions with those delegations.

Should the Commission, after satisfying itself that the parties had no insuperable objection to it, decide to adopt his proposed formula, it would have to be submitted to the parties as a decision of the Commission and then published.

The PRINCIPAL SECRETARY fully agreed that direct negotiations were desirable and that the establishment of small committees, whether technical or otherwise, and permanent or ad hoc, allowing for the maximum flexibility, would lead in a perfectly natural manner to direct negotiations. A certain atmosphere would be created; the delegations would get into the habit of meeting each other, and the fact of sitting together would lead imperceptibly to a normal situation. Little by little it would become possible to induce the two parties to sit together with the full Commission when committee reports came up for examination.

Mr. BARCO (Deputy) (United States) saw nothing in M. de Boisanger's proposed formula to which exception could be taken; the United States Government had expressed its readiness to support any formula which met with the approval of all those concerned, and he suggested that it would facilitate such agreement if in talking to the Arab delegations the aspects of mediation could be emphasized while in talking to the Israeli delegation the Commission's desire to promote the opening of direct negotiations could be stressed. It was most important, however, to avoid provoking a refusal which would hamper subsequent negotiations between the parties, particularly as regards relations between Israel and Jordan. It might be advisable to decide in advance on the questions to be dealt with by the prospective committees; and he submitted that it would be better to refer to the Assembly resolutions than to cite the Protocol.

Mr. de BOISANGER (France) thought the delegates should be sounded as to their intentions without having a text submitted to them. It would be sufficient

to inform them that the Commission was considering the establishment of a certain number of committees for which it would provide the Chairmen and whose work would naturally be based on the General Assembly resolutions.

As far as relations between Israel and Jordan were concerned, the proposed formula was not likely, he thought, to hamper the progress of their bilateral negotiations. It might be useful, too, to ask the Israeli representative whether his Government wished all the questions to be discussed in the presence of all the Arab States. If direct negotiations were established, the delegations would naturally split up.

Mr. ERALP (Turkey) requested the Commission not to take a decision on the basis of the work of the mixed committees without consulting Mr. Yalcin, the Turkish member of the Commission.

In preference to individual conversations between members of the Commission and each representative, he advocated strictly private meetings of the Commission with each of them in turn.

Mr. de BOISANGER (France) would prefer informal conversations conducted by the Chairman, the Turkish member of the Commission and himself, at least in the initial stage. The private meetings suggested by Mr. Eralp could be considered at a later stage.

The CHAIRMAN supported the idea of holding informal conversations before notifying the delegations of any decision of the Commission. It would be preferable, he thought, to make no mention of the Protocol of 12 May during those conversations.

At the second stage, the Commission would finally decide on the terms of the formula to be submitted to the delegations and would then meet and either convene all the delegations concerned together, or each of them in turn, in order to acquaint them with it.

He suggested that the order of conversations with each of the delegations should be fixed in advance, and that the more favourably disposed delegations should be consulted first

Mr. de BOISANGER (France) proposed taking them in alphabetical order; thus the first delegation with which the members of the Commission would hold conversations would be Egypt, while the last would be Syria.

Mr. BARCO (Deputy) (United States) pointed out that one of the advantages of individual meetings between the Commission and a single delegation would be to create a precedent, permitting future individual meetings to discuss the negotiations themselves.

It would be advisable, he added, to start by holding conversations with the Israeli delegation to avoid the possibility of a formula accepted by all the Arab States being rejected by the Israeli representative.

Mr. ERALP (Turkey) saw no advantage in grouping the Arab delegations together whether in official or unofficial meetings. Not all the questions concerned them en bloc, and the Commission had always asserted that it reserved the right to negotiate separately with each of them.

The CHAIRMAN thought the procedure outlined by the Commission was a cumbersome arrangement, with its two stages: individual conversations with each delegation, followed by notification to each of them of the Commission's decision. Instead of bringing them to a meeting, he felt that the Commission need only send them a written note.

Mr. de BOISANGER (France) thought that as the Commission had agreed on the first unofficial steps to be taken, it could postpone its decision on subsequent procedure until later.

Mr. BARCO (Deputy) (United States of America) suggested that the delegations concerned might be given a progress report on the question of the blocked Arab accounts, this information being likely to put them in a good humour.

Mr. de BOISANGER (France) submitted that it would make the Arab delegations more inclined to accept the formula of mixed committees if stress were laid on the fact that there was no question of direct negotiations, that the work would be conducted throughout through the intermediary of the Commission, which would provide the Chairmen for the committees, and that the meeting of all the

delegations would enable the work to be expedited. The work would proceed on a "joint" basis, which did not mean that there would be direct negotiations.

Mr. ERALP (Turkey) pointed out that the Arab and Israeli delegations were already meeting in the same building, within another organ of the United Nations, to discuss another aspect of the problem at issue and that it would be quite unreasonable for them to refuse to do so under the auspices of the Commission.

Informal conversation with Mr. Roch

Mr. de BOISANGER (France) saw no point in repeating, in the case of Mr. Roch, the procedure followed three weeks previously. During his conversations with him, he had informed him that the Commission was posted on the direct negotiations at present taking place between Jordan and Israel. He had also noted that the Jordan representative was keenly interested in the question of compensation for Arab property.

The Commission's forthcoming visit to Paris

Mr. de BOISANGER (France) announced that the French Minister for Foreign Affairs had invited the members of the Commission and their deputies to luncheon on Tuesday, 21 February. Plans had also been made for a working meeting at the Quai d'Orsay, the proposed date of which, subject to the consent of the members of the Commission, was Monday, 20 February, at 4 p.m.

The Commission accepted the invitation. The date and time of the working meeting were also approved.

The meeting rose at 12 noon.