

UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

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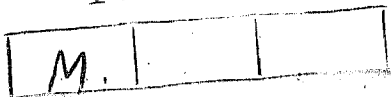
SR/125

9 February 1950

ENGLISH

Original: FRENCH

19 DEC 1950



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FIFTH MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 9 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

Continuation of the general discussion on the procedure to be adopted

Mr. ERALP (Turkey) informed the Commission that Mr. Yalcin saw no objection to the conclusions reached by the Commission at its previous meeting.

The CHAIRMAN stated that the Arab delegations were rather disappointed at the fact that they had not been consulted by the Commission for some time and would have liked the opportunity of making a reply to the statement made by the Chairman at the first meeting.

He also announced that that evening he would be meeting Mr. Mikaoui who was favourably disposed towards the tentative approaches of the Commission and who, through his good relations with his other Arab colleagues, would be in a position to give them an informal account of the substance of the conversation.

The previous day, he had met Mr. Eban whom Mr. de Boisanger was also due to see that afternoon. Mr. Eban had given him information concerning the direct negotiations taking place between Israel and Jordan and expressed the hope that,

in about a fortnight or even before, the results of those negotiations would be known. Conversations chiefly centred on the question of Jerusalem. The Israeli representative and Mr. Rafael had expressed their willingness to discuss all points with the Arab delegations on condition that the latter were disposed to approach the questions dealt with in a frame of mind which would permit some headway to be made. With a view to making to the Arab delegations the goodwill gesture awaited by them, Mr. Rafael was also willing to disclose the fortunate turn taken by the question of frozen Arab assets. His attitude was indicative of an earnest desire to collaborate with the Commission. He (the Chairman) had not discussed with them the question of the form which the Commission's work should take as that was a matter he wished to leave to Mr. de Boisanger.

Mr. de BOISANGER (France) stated that he would make a frank statement to Mr. Eban and Mr. Rafael on the need for accepting a method of work on the lines envisaged by the Commission.

The PRINCIPAL SECRETARY told the Commission that information from various sources confirmed the fact that the state of mind of the Arab delegations was characterized by a certain impatience with regard to the Commission which they reproached with inaction.

Though he did not regard the idea of a joint meeting as a feasible one, he thought it possible to envisage private meetings between the Commission and each of the delegations. Such meetings would correct the impression of unduly personal contact given by the present conversations between members of the Commission and members of delegations and would at the same time show that the Commission was not remaining inactive.

Mr. ERALP (Turkey) agreed with the Principal Secretary and said that Mr. Mikaoui had intimated that he found himself placed in a difficult position, even with regard to his own Government, and that he was embarrassed by statements made on the radio giving the impression that the Commission was inactive. Mr. Mikaoui wished to see the Commission resume official meetings and was certain

that such meetings would supply delegations with something to report to their governments and thereby give them an opportunity of asking for instructions.

The PRINCIPAL SECRETARY, associating himself with a statement by Mr. de Boisanger, considered that, before it could hold an official meeting, the Commission would have to take a decision on the form its work should take. The Arab delegations could not be expected to play an active part.

When putting forward the suggestion of private meetings, he had wished to imply conversations of the same nature as private interviews, dealing with the same subjects, but with the participation of the Commission as a whole. The interviews taking place at present were not likely to supply the Arab delegations with any material for a report. That explained the tendency towards impatience which was making itself felt.

The CHAIRMAN stated that he would ask Mr. Mikaoui whether he wished to have the opportunity of replying to the statement from the chair and also to the memorandum of the Israeli representative, which had been communicated to the Arab delegations.

It would be necessary to speed up the private interviews, if an official meeting were to take place before the departure of the Commission for Paris.

Mr. de BOISANGER suggested that it would be desirable to inform the Arab delegations that the Commission had been occupied by conversations with the Israeli delegation and had thereby obtained a conciliatory gesture in connection with the question of frozen Arab assets. He wondered whether the recent developments in that matter might form the subject of a press release.

Report by the Principal Secretary on Outstanding Questions

(a) Frozen Arab Assets

The PRINCIPAL SECRETARY said that Mr. Rafael had officially informed him that his Government accepted the formula proposed by the Commission for the unfreezing of Arab assets according to which the amount of £ PAL.100 per account would be released from blocked Arab accounts.

Dr. Servoise had transmitted the information in question to Mr. Labbane, the Arab representative on the Mixed Committee, who, like Mr. Rafael, had expressed willingness to take part in the meeting of the Mixed Committee for the purpose of drawing up the terms of the report to the General Committee.

As the parties concerned wished to avoid discussion within the Mixed Committee, it had been suggested that the Secretariat draw up a draft on the basis of the report by Dr. Servoise and make sure in advance of the approval of both parties so that the meeting of the Mixed Committee need merely put its seal to a text already approved by both sides. The General Committee would then take cognizance of the report and would invite the Chairman of the Mixed Committee to undertake negotiations with the institutions concerned with a view to the implementation of the procedure agreed.

With regard to the publicity to be given to the question, he considered it preferable to give no information to the Press until the General Committee met. The issue at the present juncture of a press release announcing the favourable decision taken by the State of Israel might provoke unfavourable reactions among the Arab delegations. There was reason to suppose that the meeting of the General Committee could take place at the beginning of the following week.

Mr. de BOISANGER (France), replying to Mr. Eralp (Turkey), stated that he did not think the Commission should await the meeting of the General Committee before continuing its general work.

The CHAIRMAN agreed with that view. He thought that the Commission should meet again the following day to draw up its programme of meetings for the following week.

Mr. de BOISANGER (France) proposed that the semi-official meetings to which the Commission would invite the Arab delegations in turn, should take place on Monday 13 February and that a meeting to be attended by all the Arab delegations should be held on Wednesday 15 or Thursday 16 February.

(b) Reunion of Separated Families

The PRINCIPAL SECRETARY reported receiving a communication from Mr. Fisher informing him that an agreement recently concluded between Egypt and Israel within the Mixed Armistice Commission provided for the return to their families of a certain number of Arab refugees at present in territory occupied by Egypt.

The communication showed that the principle of reuniting separated families had been given further application.

(c) Communication of the Protocol of 12 May 1949 to Members of the Trusteeship Council

The PRINCIPAL SECRETARY informed the Commission that, at the meeting of the Trusteeship Council the previous day, the President had announced that the Protocol of 12 May would be communicated to Council members. The Secretariat of the Commission, when asked by the Secretariat of the Trusteeship Council to communicate the text of the Protocol, pointed out that it was reproduced as an annex to the Third Progress Report of the Conciliation Commission to the Secretary-General, a document already in the hands of members of the Trusteeship Council.

The PRINCIPAL SECRETARY drew the attention of the Commission to the difficulties which might arise from the special circumstances under which the document had been signed.

After discussion, it was agreed that the Commission should hold aloof from any discussion which might arise in the Trusteeship Council with regard to the Protocol of 12 May and that Mr. de Boisanger should explain to the President of the Trusteeship Council privately the circumstances under which that Instrument had been signed.

The meeting rose at noon.