

UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

RESTRICTED

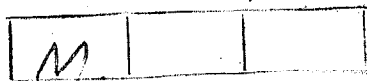
SR/139

28 March 1950

ENGLISH

Original: FRENCH

19 MAR 1950



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-NINTH MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 28 March 1950, at 10 a.m.

Present:

Mr. de BOISANGER (France)

Chairman

Mr. BARCO (United States of America)*

Mr. YALCIN (Turkey)

Mr. de AZCARATE

Principal Secretary

* Alternate

Consideration of draft replies to the letters from the Israeli Representative and the Egyptian Representative dated 23 March 1950

The CHAIRMAN invited the Commission to consider two draft letters, one to the Israeli delegation and the other to the Egyptian delegation, which the Secretariat had prepared in reply to communications sent by those two delegations to the Commission on 23 March.

Should the Commission approve the two drafts in which the Commission renewed its proposal to set up a Mixed Committee on the question of the refugees of the Gaza area, the letters would be transmitted forthwith to the addresses. At the same time, the Secretariat would send the Egyptian delegation a copy of the correspondence exchanged between the Commission and the Israeli delegation.

Mr. BARCO (United States of America) suggested that the wording of the last paragraph of the draft letter to the Israeli delegation might be toned down somewhat. Although he personally approved of the draft letter to the Egyptian

representative and would approve of the letter to the Israeli delegation, as amended, he wished to reserve the right to submit both to the approval of Mr. Palmer.

It was agreed not to send the two letters in question until Mr. Palmer had been consulted.

Views of the Government of the United States of America on the new procedure which it is the intention of the Commission to propose to the parties concerned.

Mr. BARCO (United States of America) informed the Commission that he had just received a reply from his Government, to which the draft note to the delegations on the proposed new procedure to be adopted by the Commission had been submitted for approval. Generally speaking, the reply favoured the approach envisaged by the Commission and approved the proposed procedure as a contribution to the renewal of the Commission's efforts at conciliation.

At the same time, in view of the importance of keeping relations between the Commission and the parties on a sound footing and of avoiding the danger of making the Commission's subsequent task more difficult, the United States delegation was of the opinion that the form of the approach should be carefully considered. The Commission should not be exposed to the risk of receiving a downright refusal from certain delegations through the publication of a press release which might have the opposite effect to that intended. The information thus published might be used in quarters which were hostile to the aims of the Commission as an argument in favour of its public repudiation. On the other hand, if the approach were made informally and without publicity the quarters approving it might exert a favourable influence over the authorities with whom the decision rested. In other words, if the approach were informal its positive aspects could be brought out more clearly in subsequent consultations, whereas publicity at the outset might strengthen possible arguments in favour of its rejection.

That being so, the delegations should be informed that the approach made to them was not to be regarded as a rigid or categorical proposal which had to be

approved or rejected in toto.

He suggested that when the note was handed to the Israeli and Arab delegations they should be informed that the Commission hoped they would give it careful consideration and not feel obliged to give a hasty reply. They should also be informed that the Chairman of the Commission and the Principal Secretary would shortly be proceeding to the Middle East and would be available for consultations at Jerusalem, and finally that the Commission hoped that they could communicate their views to the Commission before giving any information to the Press.

In those circumstances he considered that a meeting should be arranged between the Commission and the parties concerned before the departure of the Chairman and Mr. Yalcin for the Middle East. During that meeting the Chairman could hand the Commission's note to the delegations and make an explanatory statement.

The CHAIRMAN, replying to Mr. YALCIN (Turkey), stated that he did not propose to visit all the Arab Governments during his journey to the Middle East. He intended to go to Jerusalem but had not drawn up a hard and fast programme of his movements. From Jerusalem, he would keep the Commission informed of developments and it would always be possible to hold a meeting at Geneva by inviting the alternate representatives to attend.

As he was aware that some of the delegations of the parties concerned were anxious to return home to consult their Governments, he thought the Commission should inform them that, although it would still be at Geneva, it did not propose to hold any meetings for a certain time and that the Commission could, if it so desired, arrange a meeting on 17 April with the Director of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency and the members of the Advisory Commission.

Mr. BARCO (United States of America) noted with satisfaction the Chairman's plans with regard to his visit. As to the question whether the delegations should remain at Geneva, he knew that some of them wished to go home and thought it advisable to give them an opportunity to do so so that they might consult their Governments.

To make it quite clear that Geneva was still the headquarters of the Commission, it would also be wise to announce that the General Committee would continue to function in that city.

The CHAIRMAN said that, if the members of the Commission saw no objection, the Arab delegations could be invited to attend a meeting the following afternoon. The Commission would then receive the Israeli delegation on the same footing immediately after the first meeting. At those meetings, he would not go further than to impress upon the parties concerned the importance of the communication addressed to them and the desirability of their making a considered reply to it.

He wished to emphasize the fact that in view of the confidential nature of the letters which it had been decided to transmit to the Egyptian delegation and the Israeli delegation, it would be better not to refer to them in the presence of the other Arab delegations.

Following a discussion in which the Principal Secretary and Mr. Yalcin drew attention to the fact that the letters in question relating to the establishment of a Mixed Committee composed of an Egyptian and an Israeli representative to deal with the question of the Gaza refugees, had some points in common with the general procedure which the Commission intended to propose to all the delegations, Mr. ERALP (Turkey) suggested that the following sentence be added to the last paragraph of the two letters already approved by the Commission:

"The Commission requests you to examine this communication in conjunction with the more general proposal submitted today to the Arab delegations and to the Israeli delegation."

That additional sentence would enable the Commission to draw attention to the connection between the two questions without risk of weakening the force of its main proposal.

It was so agreed.

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.