

UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

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ORIGINAL: FRENCHSUMMARY RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTIETH MEETINGHeld at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Monday, 8 May 1950 at 11 a.m.Present:

Mr. PALMER (United States of America) Chairman

Mr. de BOISANGER (France)

Mr. ERALP* (Turkey)

Mr. de AZCARATE

Principal Secretary

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Alternate

Reply from Israel to the Conciliation Commission's memorandum dated29 March 1950

The CHAIRMAN, announcing that the Commission had just received the Israel Government's reply to its memorandum of 29 March 1950, stressed the advisability of examining that document in the light of the reply from the Arab States and of the Commission's proposals prior to the preparation of the note to be transmitted by the Commission to the Arab Governments and the Israeli Government concerning the negotiations in which the latter had agreed to take part. He requested the members of the Commission to state what they considered to be the most suitable procedure for dealing with the Israeli reply and preparing the note to be drafted in connection therewith.

Mr. de BOISANGER (France) said that, having read the Israeli Government's reply, he thought it advisable that the members of the Commission should be given time for reflection before any further action was taken. The letter sent to the Conciliation Commission by the Israeli Minister for Foreign Affairs was of undoubted importance, not only as revealing the Israeli Government's attitude to the Commission's proposals, but particularly because it constituted a new departure - and that should, he thought, be stressed in the note to be drafted by the Commission - since, while maintaining its familiar position of supporting a general settlement of outstanding questions with the Arab States, the Israeli Government stated its readiness to co-operate, unconditionally, with the Commission in seeking a solution to the questions standing in the way of a peace settlement.

He thought that the Commission should prepare a note, suitably worded for transmission to both parties, which might, for example, express its satisfaction at the Israeli Government's readiness to co-operate with the Commission in seeking a peaceful settlement of outstanding problems. Some of the latter were especially urgent problems which should be settled with the least possible delay. In that connection, the Commission might point out that it regarded some problems as more urgent than others and therefore reserved the right to arrange to give those prior consideration. The reply should also state that the Conciliation Commission deemed it essential that the representatives sent by the Governments concerned should be competent persons provided with the necessary powers. He thought the Secretariat might prepare a draft reply along the lines suggested by the Chairman and himself in order to provide the Commission with a basis for discussion and for the preparation of a satisfactory final text.

Mr. ERALP (Turkey) said he wished to draw attention to the Israeli Government's views regarding the mediatory function of the Conciliation Commission, as recently outlined by the Israeli Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Turkish Minister at Tel Aviv. The Israeli Government did not consider that this function should involve the Commission in laying down hard-and-fast proposals at the outset of negotiations. It would be wiser, in that

Government's view, to allow negotiations to open and to pursue their normal course. That would not prevent the Commission from mediating, when necessary; but it would have to act circumspectly and without haste.

The CHAIRMAN stated that the Israeli Government and the Arab Governments, thinking probably of the Mediator for Palestine, who had tabled proposals, misinterpreted the mediatory function, as understood by the Commission itself. It would therefore be advisable to state that, in offering its services to both parties, the Commission intended in the first place to hear the views of each - which would enable it to form an accurate idea of their attitudes - and thereafter to endeavour to find a solution acceptable to the Governments concerned, and not, as the Arab States seemed to think, to make precise proposals which both parties would be called upon to accept or reject. In his view the mediatory function mainly consisted of creating the atmosphere of harmony and understanding in which both parties could express their views at leisure, study the questions dividing them objectively, and join together in search of a satisfactory solution, which, he might add, the mediator was not debarred from suggesting when a favourable opportunity arose.

Mr. de BOISANGER (France) observed that the mediatory function, as described to the Turkish Minister by the Israeli Minister for Foreign Affairs, was completely in line with the Commission's own interpretation. He entirely shared the Chairman's view on that matter and thought that the members of the Commission were truly representing the views of their Governments in stating that the Commission should mediate in that way, at least at the present stage.

The CHAIRMAN thought that a vital point in connection with the Israeli Government's reply to the Commission was that it represented an acceptance on principle of the proposals set forth in the memorandum of 29 March 1950. Furthermore, the Commission was aware that the Arab States were ready to negotiate although they had stated, through the Egyptian Minister for Foreign Affairs, that there was still considerable divergence between the views of the two parties. It was therefore the duty of the Commission to endeavour to narrow the gap between those views.

He thought it advisable to draft a note along the lines suggested by Mr. de Boisanger, with a view to informing the two parties that the Commission considered that their attitudes fully justified it in persevering in the work which it had undertaken.

The PRINCIPAL SECRETARY asked whether the Commission wished the Secretariat to prepare a draft note along the lines suggested by the Chairman and Mr. de Boisanger, or whether it preferred to continue to discuss the contents of such a note at a private meeting before the Secretariat prepared a draft.

Mr. de BOISANGER (France) said that it would be preferable if the Commission had a draft text at its disposal as a basis of discussion. That would save time and the Secretariat might therefore prepare a draft note forthwith for study by the Commission on the following day. In that connection, it would perhaps be advisable for the Commission to suggest in its note that it did not consider the views of the two parties to be so divergent as might appear. It could also be stated that the Commission intended to set up joint committees. The reply to the Israeli Minister for Foreign Affairs should state that the Commission regarded the sending of plenipotentiaries by the two parties to take part in the proposed negotiations as evidence of their sincere desire for the success of the latter.

The CHAIRMAN also thought that the Commission should suggest that it was convinced of the complete possibility of successfully reconciling the different points of view. In his view, the best procedure was that suggested by the French representative, namely, the preparation by the Secretariat of a draft reply which would be circulated to members of the Commission so that the latter might study it at leisure and, if necessary, compare notes at an informal meeting before undertaking a more thorough study within the Commission.

Mr. de BOISANGER (France) pointed out that if the draft reply could be ready on the following day the members of the Commission might meet informally for an exchange of views at the end of the morning.

Another important question was that of the press release to be issued for the purpose of informing the public that the Conciliation Commission had received what it regarded as a satisfactory reply from the Israeli Government.

After some discussion it was agreed to request the Principal Secretary to get in touch with the journalists accredited to the United Nations with a view to informing them that the Commission had received a reply from the Israeli Government and that the latter accepted, unconditionally, the proposals set forth in the memorandum of 29 March 1950 and stated its readiness to send plenipotentiaries to take part in the proposed negotiations.

Periodical Progress Report

The PRINCIPAL SECRETARY asked whether the Commission wished the report to the Secretary-General to include the Conciliation Commission's note which had just been discussed.

Mr. ERALP (Turkey) thought it would be preferable to postpone the completion of that report until the Commission had prepared the note which it intended to transmit to the Governments concerned in connection with their replies. The inclusion of that note in the report would make the latter a more coherent whole.

After some discussion during which the CHAIRMAN pointed out that, in his view, the note which the Commission intended to transmit to the governments concerned might be more fittingly included in the following report, and Mr. de BOISANGER moved the inclusion in the report to the Secretary-General of a statement to the effect that the Commission was examining the replies to its memorandum of 29 March 1950, it was decided to refer consideration of the question to the General Committee when the final text of the report was drafted.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.