

UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND SEVENTIETH MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Saturday, 15 July 1950, at 10.00 a.m.

Present:

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

1. Meeting with Mr. KEEN, Executive Director of the United Nations Works and Relief Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

Mr. KEEN outlined the concrete results of the Agency's activities during the past few months. He mentioned that the Agency had obtained from the Governments concerned an agreement of principle to help the Agency toward the fulfilment of its task. For the first time, the Egyptian Government had declared itself ready to accept 15,000 refugees.

As regards the Israeli Government, it had made it known that it was considering the resettlement of 28,000 refugees, and that a detailed plan for resettlement work would shortly be communicated to the Agency. The latter would be ready to consider favorably a study undertaken jointly by the United Nations and the Government of Israel, of a project for the utilization of the waters of the Jordan Valley.

Mr. Keen indicated that the Advisory Committee intended to prepare a report on these matters. The Director of the Agency, Mr. Kennedy and the Advisory Committee considered that the time seemed appropriate for broaching the question of a provisional resettlement of the refugees with the Arab Governments.

Upon the CHAIRMAN's remark that certain agreements concluded between the Agency and the Governments of Syria and Lebanon would doubtless supply work for a large number of refugees, Mr. KEEN stated that, as regards Lebanon, the prospects of work for the refugees seemed quite stable but that in Syria refugees would probably find only temporary employment.

In response to a question by Mr. ERALP (Turkey), as to where in Israel the 28,000 refugees mentioned earlier were located, Mr. KEEN explained that this attempt at resettlement had been carried out mostly in the Haifa and Jerusalem areas.

In reply to the CHAIRMAN, Mr. KEEN further explained that the Agency had set the conditions under which the refugees resettled in Israel should work, and that the United Nations should control this work and make sure that the conditions agreed to were duly respected.

The CHAIRMAN thought that the success of such an attempt would have the desirable effect of exercising a favorable influence on other refugees and thus facilitating the solution of certain aspects of the problem.

Mr. KEEN stressed the fact that the Advisory Committee had considered that the time had come to adopt a realistic attitude and undertake concrete measures.

Mr. PALMER (U.S.A.) said that on their arrival in Beirut, he and Mr. de Boisanger would get in touch with the Agency in order to have a preliminary exchange of views. He deemed it indispensable to coordinate the efforts of bodies working towards a common end, since it would be most unfortunate if such bodies were unable to harmonize their actions.

The CHAIRMAN also considered that a meeting of the members of the Commission and of the Agency in Beirut would constitute an establishment of contact which would be very useful for the work of the two organs. At the time of the drafting of the report, new exchanges of views would be necessary and it might be possible to envisage a meeting of both organisations, outside the Arab States.

In conclusion, Mr. KEEN said that the Agency intended to continue its work in a realistic fashion and that he ^{too} thought that close co-operation was more necessary than ever between the various organs working at the same task.

2. Compensation: Reply from the Government of Israel dated 9 July 1950, (document IS/55), to a letter from the Commission on this subject.

The CHAIRMAN said that in connection with the Israeli letter which stated views which the Commission could not share, the question arose as to whether the Commission should simply take note of the reply of the Government of Israel and use it in the final report to the Secretary General, or whether it should reply to it.

Mr. PALMER (U.S.A.) did not deem it necessary for the time being to reply to the letter, which simply confirmed the position of the Government of Israel. He did not think it would be timely to open a discussion, at the end of which the positions would not have changed. The Commission should simply inform the General Assembly of the attitude of the parties.

Mr. ERALP (Turkey) agreed with Mr. Palmer that, for the time being at least, no positive results could be expected from a new discussion.

The CHAIRMAN shared the views of the two foregoing speakers. The Commission was, in fact, in complete disagreement with the Government of Israel on two points, i.e. that the question of compensation could not be dealt with except within the framework of peace negotiations, and that it was further to be linked with that of war damages. The Commission could not accept a viewpoint which

was completely in contradiction with the terms of the General Assembly's resolution, which provided that Arabs who had been residing in Palestine should receive compensation for the land they had abandoned in Israeli territory.

It might be useful to inform the Israeli Government that the Commission was keeping strictly to the terms of the General Assembly's resolution. The Chairman remarked that if the Commission did not reply to the letter from the Government of Israel, there was a danger that such silence might be interpreted by that Government as an acceptance of its thesis.

Mr. PALMER (U.S.A.) was of the opinion that it would be advisable to specify, in a letter addressed to the Government of Israel, that the Commission, faithful to the terms of the resolution could not accept the point of view set forth in the communication of 9 July 1950. This letter could be mentioned in the report to the Secretary-General, which would not prevent the Commission from discussing the question later on in conversations with the Government of Israel.

The CHAIRMAN thought that the Legal Adviser could study the theory of the Government of Israel in order to know whether it was legally defensible. It appeared indeed that on this subject of compensation there was some confusion, on the part of the Government of Israel, between the Arab Governments on the one hand and the Arab refugees on the other.

The PRINCIPAL SECRETARY indicated that, since he was to meet Mr. Kahany the same day, he might explain to the latter that the Commission had studied the letter from the Government of Israel, dated 9 July 1950, and had found itself in formal disagreement with the theory put forward in that communication.

3. Request by the Government of Syria with regard to the communication of the Summary Records of certain meetings of the Commission.

The PRINCIPAL SECRETARY recalled that this request raised a question of procedure which had called for consultation with the Government of Israel. The latter had just sent a negative reply.

It would therefore be necessary to give a reply in this sense to the Government of Syria, indicating the reasons for which it was not possible to act favourably upon its request.

4. Termination of the Commission's work in Geneva.

The CHAIRMAN, supported by the members of the Commission, asked the Principal Secretary to convey to Mr. Moderow, Director of the European Office of the United Nations, the thanks of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine for the readiness with which he supplied the Commission with all working facilities during its stay in Geneva.

The Chairman declared formally that the work of the Commission in Geneva was ended.

The meeting rose at 10.45 a.m.