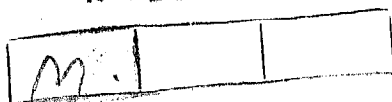


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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-FIRST MEETING

Held at Government House, Jerusalem,
on Monday, 7 August, at 10 a.m.

Present:

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

I. Accounts given by the members of the Commission of their conversations with Lebanese personalities

The CHAIRMAN stated that the Commission would first hear from the representatives of France and Turkey accounts of their conversation with various personalities in Lebanon.

The Commission would then have to establish the itinerary of its proposed visits to the various capitals of the Middle East. There seemed to be no reasons calling for a particular order in which the visits should be made, except for the date of the Commission's visit to Amman. As regards the latter, it would be advisable to wait for information regarding the work of the committee which had been created by the Government of Jordan to examine all questions concerning Palestinian Arabs. Such questions could usefully be discussed by the Commission when it met with the Jordanian authorities. On the other hand, the Commission was expecting a reply from the Egyptian Government to which it had proposed the 11th and 12th of August as dates for its visits to Alexandria.

The Chairman would also like to have some information regarding the next meeting of the Political Committee of the Arab League.

Mr. ARAS (Turkey) indicated that the Political Committee of the Arab League would meet on 15 August, very probably in Lebanon, which had agreed to receive the Committee at the request of the Prime Minister of Iraq who, for reasons of internal politics was liable to be recalled to Iraq on short notice. The date and place of the meeting would be finally set after the Governments of Egypt and Jordan had given their replies.

The CHAIRMAN said that he had just been advised of the arrival of Dr. Abraham Biran, Governor of that part of Jerusalem under Israeli control, who had asked to meet with the Commission.

In response to a question by Mr. de Boisanger (France), the PRINCIPAL SECRETARY pointed out that this was only a courtesy visit during which the question of the protection of members of the Commission might be taken up.

In reply to the Chairman, he declared that until that time the local authorities had been charged with these measures of security and with the estimation of their scope. He added that, according to Dr. Biran, present circumstances did not call for special measures of protection.

After an exchange of views on the subject, it was decided that the Commission would receive Dr. Biran.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m., to be resumed at 2 p.m.

The CHAIRMAN then invited Mr. Aras (Turkey) to inform the Commission of the results of his conversations in Beirut.

Mr. ARAS (Turkey) emphasised that the impressions he was about to summarize were the result of purely unofficial conversations which did not bind the Lebanese Government; in this connection he thought that it might be of interest, particularly in Eastern countries, to hold as many unofficial meetings as possible, since these meetings permitted a greater freedom of expression and thus constituted an excellent preparation for fruitful official conversations.

After his conversations in Beirut, the representative of Turkey felt that there was not much hope of solving the problem through negotiations between the Arab States and the Government of Israel. This did however not mean that there was no possibility of an understanding which might be successful on the

more neutral basis of a General Assembly resolution, the terms of which might be more readily accepted by the parties.

Dealing successively with the various points awaiting a settlement, Mr. Aras indicated that as regards the refugee problem he thought that -- pending information regarding the Egyptian point of view, which was not yet known -- it might be possible to bring the Arab States to accept the resettlement of refugees in countries other than Palestine, provided, of course, that the right of these refugees to return be fully preserved, as that right was formally recognised in the General Assembly's resolution of 11 December 1948.

Such resettlement, which would have to be offered as a provisional solution, raised an important financial question and, while support from the Government of Israel would have a salutary moral effect, there was no doubt that financial backing by the United States would be needed to permit the effective implementation of such a solution. For its part, the Lebanese Government would envisage helping refugees of Lebanese origin.

With regard to the question of frontiers, Mr. Aras pointed out that, as far as Jerusalem was concerned, the problem was in the hands of the Trusteeship Council and the General Assembly. Concerning the rest of the territory, the Lebanese Government had no territorial claims; but it seemed that Egypt and Syria would welcome certain border adjustments which would, in addition, facilitate the resettlement of a number of refugees.

With regard to the problem of compensation, the representative of Turkey pointed out that it was above all a financial problem although the number of refugees owing property of considerable value was not, in fact, very great. He did not think that there were any insurmountable obstacles to the solution of the question and thought that a formula should be sought -- such as a complementary resolution by the General Assembly -- which would be acceptable to both parties.

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Such were the impressions gathered/by the representative of Turkey. He hoped to complete and confirm them by conversations with various personalities in Egypt and Israel.

The CHAIRMAN, referring to conversations which he himself had had with the President of the Lebanese Republic and the Secretary General of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, stated that the refugee question constituted a very serious problem for Lebanon, where there were at the time 150,000 refugees. The Government of Lebanon seemed ready to accept the resettlement of a certain number of refugees of Lebanese origin, insofar as that resettlement did not impair the country's equilibrium, either from the economic point of view or from that of its population and religious groups. The Lebanese Government also seemed ready to agree that refugees be allowed to work, provided, of course, -- to avoid the creation of an unemployment problem in the country -- that such action would not prejudice the question of resettlement.

During these conversations, the problem of frontiers had also been raised and, as indicated by the representative of Turkey, the Lebanese Government had no claims in that field; it seemed, however, that as far as Egypt was concerned, certain border adjustments might contribute to a solution of the refugee problem.

Mr. ARAS (Turkey) emphasised the necessity for a speedy solution of the refugee problem and stressed the fact that the provisional nature of the envisaged resettlement would secure for the Commission the cooperation of the Governments concerned and constitute a first step in the direction of resettlement.

The representative of Turkey had strongly urged these Governments not to persist in an attitude which might be politically sound but which, from a humanitarian point of view, was disputable since it jeopardized the solution of a problem which involved the lives of thousands of human beings.

Mr. de BOISANGER (France) stated that his conversation with the Lebanese Minister for Foreign Affairs and with Fouad Bey Ammoun, Secretary General of the Lebanese Ministry for Foreign Affairs, had led him to the same conclusions as those expressed by the other members of the Commission. It was obvious that the Lebanese Government was hoping for the departure of the refugees from its territory; it was therefore possible to hope

for support of the Commission's attempt to persuade the Arab States to accept the principle of a provisional resettlement of the refugees. In this connection, he had considered it necessary to stress the fact that the resettlement of refugees had important financial aspects, which would certainly be more difficult of solution if the envisaged resettlement were a provisional one.

With regard to compensation, as provided for in the resolution of 11 December 1948, he thought that if the Arab States intimated to the refugees that compensation would be paid to them if they abandoned their right to go back to their homes, a number of them would choose this solution which, though provisional, might eventually become permanent.

The representative of France pointed out that the Foreign Minister had not appeared very keen on seeing the Palestine problem brought before the next session of the General Assembly; if, however, it were to be brought up, he wished it to be done at the Commission's request. That question was to be examined by the Political Committee of the Arab League and it was one of the reasons why it would be desirable for the Commission to get in touch with the Egyptian Government before the meeting of the Political Committee.

The CHAIRMAN thought that, before going further into its work, and establishing a program of visits, the Commission should wait for the Egyptian Government's reply to the Commission's proposed date of a visit to Alexandria. In the meantime, the representative of Turkey might continue his unofficial conversations and the members of the Commission might consider what questions it would be advisable to take up during the visits to the various Governments, as well as the Commission's proposed attitude.

2. The Commission's Programme of Work

The PRINCIPAL SECRETARY wished to recall certain questions which the Commission had decided to examine, at its last meeting in Geneva.

He recalled that at its meeting of 10 July the Commission had envisaged, in connection with its proposed report to the General Assembly or to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, to divide this document into three parts: the first would be devoted to a record of the Commission's work

since its creation; the second would state the situation at the present time; the third would contain any suggestions which the Commission might find it necessary to formulate, either with a view to altering the General Assembly's resolution of 11 December 1948 or with a view to drafting a new resolution which the Assembly might wish to adopt.

The Principal Secretary indicated that the Secretariat had undertaken the drafting of the first part of the document and gave a few indications as to the method of work which had been adopted. He added that a draft text, which might be used as a working basis, would be submitted to the Commission very shortly.

Mr. ARAS (Turkey) considered that the Commission had acted very wisely in deciding to draft a report which, in his opinion, should be submitted to the President of the Assembly. Should the Commission achieve positive results, it would be possible to envisage sending to the General Assembly a draft resolution, the terms of which would have been accepted by both parties. In any case, the method of work explained by the Principal Secretary, who had had considerable experience in the international field, seemed excellent to Mr. Aras.

The CHAIRMAN was convinced that the historical section of the report would be most interesting. It would be extremely useful for the members of the Commission who did not take part in the initial stages of the Commission's work. With regard to the possibility of drafting a resolution for the General Assembly's consideration, he thought it was too early to take a decision on the subject. He further thought, as did Mr. de Boisanger, that it would be advisable to write the second part of the report in Geneva, whilst the third could most usefully be drafted when the Commission met in New York.

The Chairman indicated that the Commission had envisaged going to Ankara before leaving the Middle East. In so doing, it would have visited the capital of each of the countries represented on the Commission and would also pay tribute to the interest shown by the Turkish Government in the Commission's work in appointing as its representative a distinguished personality, whose experience would certainly be most helpful to the

Commission.

Mr. de BOISANGER (France) wished to point out that during its last meeting in Geneva the Commission had adopted the principle of drafting a report but had taken no formal decision on the subject.

The historical account of the Commission's work would certainly be of great interest and could be usefully used in a report, whether to the General Assembly or to the Secretary-General.

The decision to seize the General Assembly with a recommendation could be taken in due course. For the time being, it would seem useful for the Commission to decide upon the attitude it would adopt, should the Arab States show a desire to seize the Assembly of the Palestine problem. Mr. de Boisanger felt that in such a case the Commission should make no decision and await further developments. Further, as had been remarked by the Principal Secretary, there were already two items concerning Palestine on the agenda of the General Assembly, i.e. the report of the Trusteeship Council and the report of the Director of UNRWA. Besides that, there was nothing to prevent one of the member countries of the United Nations from requesting that the Palestine problem be put on the agenda during the Assembly's session.

The PRINCIPAL SECRETARY recalled, in connection with the question of blocked accounts, that following the refusal of the Bank of International Settlements to act as Trustee for the deposit of Palestine pounds, the Commission had decided to divide the problem and to look for a Trustee for each of the countries concerned.

He indicated that Mr. Palmer (USA) had broached the question in the course of conversations he had recently held in London with officials of the Foreign Office; following these conversations, the Commission's Economic Adviser had studied the question from its technical angle, with competent persons in London. The Commission would shortly receive a report on these conversations.

Finally, as regards compensation, the Principal Secretary explained that on instructions from the Commission he had seen Mr. Kahany in Geneva and had explained to him that the Commission held a quite different view from that expressed by the Government of Israel in its letter of 14 July 1950

(document IS/55); and that the Commission intended to discuss the matter during its stay in the Middle East.

The Principal Secretary further indicated that the legal study of the Israeli Government's thesis, undertaken by the Legal Adviser on the Commission's request, had been completed and would shortly be circulated.

3. Relations with the Press

The Principal Secretary informed the Commission of the departure of Mr. Fisher, Press Officer in Jerusalem, who to the deep satisfaction of everybody and thanks to his brilliant personal qualities, had been able, during his long stay in Jerusalem, to win the confidence not only of journalists but of political personalities in all the Arab States as well as in the State of Israel. His departure meant a considerable loss for the Commission and its Secretariat. He was convinced that Mr. Rajasooria, who was taking Mr. Fisher's place, would be able to maintain these frank and cordial relations. The Commission might wish to give certain indications for the guidance of its new Press Officer.

The CHAIRMAN took pleasure in paying tribute to Mr. Fisher for the competent manner in which he had fulfilled his duties, and stated that he also was convinced that the new Press Officer would be equal to his task.

He recalled the decision taken in Geneva, that the press would be kept informed of the Commission's activities through communiques, agreed upon by the Commission. He supposed that the Commission would continue to use this method and that its members would refuse to make any individual statements.

Mr. ARAS (Turkey) and Mr. de BOISANGER (France) fully supported the Chairman's statement.

After an exchange of views, it was decided that the Press Officer could keep the press informed of the Commission's movements and that the results of the latter's activities would be released in communiques approved by the Commission.

The meeting rose at 3.40 p.m.