

UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

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ORIGINAL : ENGLISH

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE TWO HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FIFTH MEETING

held in the Hôtel du Rhône, Geneva,  
on Friday, 3 August 1951, at 6 p.m.

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Present:

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|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Mr. Palmer      | (United States) | - Chairman            |
| Mr. Marchal     | (France)        |                       |
| Mr. Aras        | (Turkey)        |                       |
| Mr. de Azcarate |                 | - Principal Secretary |

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Proposed meetings between the Commission and the governments concerned

The CHAIRMAN stated that he had informed the representative of Turkey, who had just arrived in Geneva, that the other members of the Commission had been holding informal discussions during the past few days concerning the proposal put forward by the United States delegation, on the basis of a State Department letter which Mr. Aras had had an opportunity of reading, for the future work of the Commission.

The Commission now had before it a draft letter of invitation to be sent to the governments concerned, in the event of the proposal being adopted by the Commission.

The Chairman suggested that, as the other two members of the Commission had already been informed by Mr. Barco<sup>x</sup> of the background to the present United States proposals, Mr. Barco should repeat his account of the discussions which he had attended in Washington, for the benefit of the representative of Turkey.

Mr. BARCO (Alternate United States representative) said that during the past month the situation in the Middle East, with particular reference to the work of the Conciliation Commission, had been the subject of very serious consideration in the State Department in Washington. He personally had been gratified to see from those discussions that there was a desire to make a serious and very determined effort to solve some of the problems confronting the Commission.

After reviewing the work done by the Commission during the last two years, the State Department had concluded that it was desirable from every point of view that a new and more decisive effort should be made towards a settlement of the problems facing the Commission, particularly as the problems of the Middle East were so important to the whole world. The State Department believed that the

Conciliation Commission was the best instrument through which that effort could be made.

The State Department realized that the Commission's task was a very difficult one and that every problem might not be solved immediately, but nevertheless felt that the Commission had a very real obligation to make further efforts. It was also realized that the fact that the Commission had not been successful in its efforts up to date was not due to any particular fault of its own. It was felt that a new procedure was necessary: a procedure as formal and decisive as possible, which would have the maximum impact on public opinion. The State Department had therefore come to the conclusion that the more informal conciliatory efforts which had been made up to now by the Commission should be replaced by a formal and solemn effort at mediation by the Commission with the Arab States on the one hand and Israel on the other, to be carried out in a neutral place at a conference to be called by the Commission. The

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<sup>x</sup> Alternate United States representative.

United States Government would have preferred an attempt to be made to organize direct discussions between the parties, but realized that - in view of the failure of such attempts last year, and bearing in mind the General Assembly's resolution giving the parties the choice between direct contact and contact through the intermediary of the Commission - such a procedure was not practicable at the present time. It was hoped that through the mediation of the Commission, solutions might be found for certain specific problems.

Whilst Israel would probably not welcome the more active rôle which it was proposed the Commission should take, the Arab States would probably be readier to accept such a rôle, as they had in the past requested that the Commission should undertake mediation.

The State Department, realizing that the major share of the effort to persuade the governments concerned to accept the Commission's invitation to the proposed conference rested with the three governments represented on the Commission, was prepared, in concert with the Governments of France and Turkey, to bring the greatest possible pressure to bear on the parties to accept the invitation.

The death of King Abdullah had taken place during the development of the proposal in Washington, and consideration had been given as to whether the time was appropriate for such an initiative on the part of the Commission. It had been decided that the time was, in fact, appropriate, as there was a feeling of expectation in the area, and that such an effort at the present time would respond to that feeling and might have a stabilizing effect generally.

Mr. Barco said that his Government felt that if it were decided to hold the proposed meetings, they should take place outside the Middle East area. It was prepared to co-operate with the French and Turkish Governments in making the necessary arrangements with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

In conclusion, Mr. Barco, wished to emphasize that it was felt that the proposed conference should take place as soon as possible and that it should be limited in duration, in order to prevent the prolongation of unfruitful discussions. The parties should be given to understand in the course of the diplomatic representations to be

made after the dispatch of the invitation that the period for the discussions would be limited and, in particular, that the Commission might wish to report the results of the discussions to the next session of the General Assembly. For those reasons the Commission's consideration of the proposal had been somewhat hurried. It was felt, however, that time was of the essence and that the meetings with the parties should begin within a month.

Mr. ARAS (Turkey) thanked Mr. Barco for his very full and clear explanation. He wished to state that he entirely agreed with the idea behind the State Department's proposal. He knew that his Government felt that the Commission should make a new effort before the General Assembly session, in order to justify the rôle which it had accepted under the resolutions of the General Assembly and to accomplish its task in a conscientious manner, and also in an attempt to bring more stability to the general situation in the Middle East, which was causing the Turkish Government some concern.

Mr. Aras had already reported the initiative proposed by Mr. de Boisanger, to his Government, which had discussed it with the Governments of the United States and of the United Kingdom. He felt that the two initiatives were complementary. The new factor - in his opinion an excellent one - in the proposal of the State Department was that the Commission should actively exercise its rôle of mediation. He thought that the chances of acceptance by the parties were increased by the fact that they would be invited to attend discussions with the Commission, and not with each other directly, so that the Commission might judge how it could best carry out its rôle of mediation.

The representative of Turkey understood the need for haste in arranging the proposed conference. It was necessary that the situation should be clarified - whether the talks proved successful or not - before the beginning of the General Assembly session. He hoped, therefore, that the results at which the Refugee Office had arrived on those subjects which would be discussed at the conference would shortly be available to the Commission in order to enable the latter to decide on the attitude which it would adopt in its  
with the parties.

Mr. Aras pointed out that the Commission would have to prepare a programme for the conference and to work out the proposals which it would put forward in the course of the discussions.

Regarding the proposal for a non-aggression pact, Mr. Aras thought that the idea appeared to presuppose normal relations between the parties. It was, however, a good one, insofar as it would tend to reinforce the existing de facto peace. At the present time, even if a final peace settlement did not prove to be possible, there were many problems which might be satisfactorily solved, thus helping to restore more stable conditions.

He wondered whether it might not be stated that the refugee question would be discussed at the proposed meetings, and also felt that the Commission, referring to its rôle of mediation, should say quite frankly that the Armistice Agreements were no longer adequate to cover present needs and that some arrangement should be made at least to ensure the continuance of the de facto peace.

Mr. Aras concluded by saying that he had unfortunately not had much time to study the proposal but had merely made some preliminary observations which had occurred to him. He was, however, entirely in favour of the proposal and would give his fullest collaboration in implementing it if, as he anticipated, his Government supported the idea.

The CHAIRMAN was gratified to note the sincere desire expressed by the representative of Turkey to collaborate in finding a way to accomplish the task facing the Commission, and felt that Mr. Aras's experience would be of great value to the other members of the Commission.

It was suggested that Paris would be a most suitable site for the proposed conference, for various reasons. All the governments concerned had diplomatic representatives there, which would facilitate their arrangements for representation at the conference, particularly in view of the fact that the General Assembly was to take place in Paris at the beginning of November. In that connection, Mr. MARCHAL (France) stated that he felt his Government would welcome the suggestion of holding the meetings in Paris.

After a general discussion, it was decided that, subject to the approval of the three governments represented on the Commission, the following invitation should be addressed to the Governments of Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, and to the Government of Israel :

"I have the honour to inform you that the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, meeting in special session in Geneva, has decided to invite the Governments of Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria and the Government of Israel to discuss with the Commission solutions to the problems outstanding between Israel and the Arab States.

"During the period following the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of its resolution of 14 December 1950, the Palestine Conciliation Commission has continued to seek solutions for problems arising out of the Palestine situation. Pursuant to the General Assembly's directive of 14 December 1950, the Commission has undertaken to carry out the obligation imposed upon it under paragraph 2 of that resolution by creating its Refugee Office for the purpose of making certain practical arrangements for the solution of the refugee problem. The Commission now believes its obligations under paragraph 1 of the 14 December resolution should be fulfilled and, accordingly, is ready to make a new effort to lend assistance to the parties in seeking solution of this and other questions outstanding between them. In the course of the proposed discussions, the Commission will be prepared to exercise its mediatory functions by suggesting specific solutions to specific problems for consideration by the parties.

"The Commission invites the Government of ..... to participate in these meetings and to designate its representatives. It is proposed that the conference be held in Paris beginning on 10 September 1951, and it is hoped that it will be possible for the Commission to report the results of the conference to the next regular session of the United Nations General Assembly, 6 November 1951."

The PRINCIPAL SECRETARY stated that he would immediately cable to United Nations Headquarters to inform the Secretary-General of the decision taken by the Commission and to request his approval of the proposal to hold the meetings in Paris.

It was agreed that a meeting would be held in Paris the following week and that the members of the Commission would make

every effort to obtain the agreement of their governments to the text of the letter of invitation before that meeting, so that the invitations could be dispatched at the earliest possible date.

All the members of the Commission recognized the need for speed in organizing the proposed conference.

It was also agreed that the Commission should devote the time between the dispatch of the invitations and the opening of the meetings to carrying out the necessary preparatory work. The question of where the Commission should meet for this purpose was left for later decision.

#### Communication from the Head of the Refugee Office

The CHAIRMAN placed before the Commission two communications which he had received from the Head of the Refugee Office, enclosing copies of a letter from the Office to the Governments of the Arab States and of a questionnaire for the Government of Israel.

He felt that for the present, while the Commission was considering the attitude which it would adopt during the forthcoming meetings and discussing the proposals which it might put forward, it would be preferable for the Office not to take any active steps in its dealings with the governments concerned. He showed the members of the Commission a letter which he proposed to send to that effect to the Head of the Office. This was approved.

The meeting rose at 7.45 p.m.

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