

UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

RESTRICTED  
SR/226  
9 August 1951  
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE TWO HUNDRED AND TWENTY-SIXTH MEETING

held in Paris on Thursday, 9 August 1951,  
at 9.30 a.m.

---

Present:

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

(Mr. de Boisanger, former French representative, also attended the meeting.)

---

Letter of invitation to be sent by the Commission to the Governments of Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, and to the Government of Israel.

The CHAIRMAN recalled that the draft text of the letter of invitation to be sent by the Commission to the Governments of the Arab States and the Government of Israel, inviting them to send representatives to a conference to be held in Paris, had been agreed upon at the last meeting of the Commission in Geneva, on 3 August, subject to the approval of the three Governments represented on the Commission. The primary object of the present meeting was, therefore, to ascertain whether there were any reservations to be formulated to the letter of invitation.

The Chairman said that the first agreed draft of the letter of invitation had been sent to his Government for approval and that a reply had been received suggesting one or two minor changes, which had been incorporated in the present text.

Mr. ARAS (Turkey) stated that he had received word from his Government to the effect that they were in complete agreement with the proposed action by the Commission and with the text of the letter of invitation. He had therefore no reservations to make. He wished, however, to make certain observations on behalf of his Government.

He wished first to say that the proposal of the State Department had the complete approval of his Government. It was felt that the Commission should make a further effort before submitting its report to the General Assembly. His Government also welcomed the proposal from the point of view of its possible effect on the general situation in the Middle East. It was true that the Armistice Agreements had not been designed to last indefinitely, and certain individual problems had arisen, such as the Lake Huleh incident, which required settling.

Mr. Aras added, however, that his Government feared that the proposed discussions might not lead to positive results, as the rigid attitudes previously adopted by the parties did not appear to have undergone much change. Other factors which it was felt might work against the success of the Commission's initiative were, on the one hand, the present state of Anglo-Egyptian relations and, on the other, the question of the Suez Canal which was at present before the Security Council.

Despite those fears, the Turkish Government felt that the effort was necessary at the present time and approved the text of the draft letter of invitation. One point would, however, have to be borne in mind. During past discussions of the Palestine question in the United Nations, it had been necessary to adopt a compromise solution, which was not altogether satisfactory, in order to avoid lengthy and acrimonious discussions between the delegates of the Arab States and of Israel respectively. The Commission would have to bear in mind that in that compromise

solution the priority of the refugee question had been further emphasized.

The Turkish Government welcomed the suggestion that the conference should be held in Paris, particularly in view of the fact that the General Assembly was to be held in that city.

As regards the State Department's view that the Commission should send out the invitations without having any prior contacts with the Governments concerned, the Turkish Government was not entirely convinced that such a procedure was the best one; it was, however, willing to leave that point to the discretion of the Commission.

The CHAIRMAN was gratified to note the agreement of the Turkish Government. Although that Government entertained certain doubts as to the success of the proposed discussions, they nevertheless appeared to feel strongly that there was a need for the Commission to take some such action at the present time.

With regard to the question of preparing the ground for the invitation, the Chairman said that the members of the Commission had discussed his delegation's view that such contacts had best be made through diplomatic channels, and he felt there was agreement that it would be extremely difficult for the members of the Commission, as a body or individually, to discuss the invitation with the Governments concerned without becoming involved in a discussion of the agenda. This they were naturally most anxious to avoid. His Government was therefore prepared to give its fullest diplomatic support to the invitation as soon as it had been sent out, and hoped that the other two Governments represented on the Commission would do the same.

Mr. MARCHAL (France) had no reservations to make on the text of the letter of invitation. He wished to state that his Government fully approved the initiative which had been taken by the State Department and felt the necessity for a more vigorous exercise by the Commission of its rôle of mediation than had been the case in the past. The French Government also agreed that the invitation should be supported by diplomatic representations by the countries represented on the Commission and also, it hoped, by the British

Government.

Mr. de BOISANGER (former representative of France), speaking personally, felt that the Governments concerned might be told that the Commission, in accordance with the resolutions of the United Nations, would give a place of priority in the proposed discussions to the question of refugees, and would also be ready to take up any other urgent matter which threatened to cause acute conflict between the parties.

Mr. ARAS (Turkey) repeated Mr. de Boisanger's suggestion and thought that the Governments concerned might be informed accordingly, either by the diplomatic representatives in the course of their demarches, or by the Commission itself.

Mr. BARCO (Alternate representative of the United States) wished to comment briefly on the foregoing remarks. He felt that the question of whether or not the Commission was to enter in advance into a discussion of the agenda was of the very greatest importance. His Government felt that the Commission should avoid discussing the question of the agenda in advance of the meetings, so as to be free to adjust it as necessary at the time of the conference.

The State Department feared that on the question of refugees there was not very much to be hoped for from the forthcoming meetings; it was felt that that question was only solvable by indirect means, which would gradually smooth the way for the settlement of the more important aspects of the problem, such as repatriation, compensation, etc.

His Government had greater hopes of progress being achieved in other directions, for instance towards the modification and enlargement of the Armistice Agreements. It was also thought that if some kind of a declaration of non-aggressive intent were to be signed at the beginning of the meetings, the ground would be prepared for discussion of the other questions.

Mr. Barco suggested that in the diplomatic approaches to be made by the governments represented on the Commission it would suffice for a very general statement to be made, to the effect that the Commission was acting under the terms of the General Assembly

resolutions, which had already enumerated the problems to be taken up, and that the whole object of the conference was to find ways and means of solving those problems, which had already been discussed in the General Assembly. Such a general statement would be quite adequate and would avoid discussion as to the order of priority of various items. While he understood the point of view of Mr. Aras and of Mr. de Boisanger, he could not but feel that the views of his Government on the matter were opposed to any prior reference to specific items to be discussed.

Mr. ARAS (Turkey) felt that such a general formula as Mr. Barco had suggested, referring to the General Assembly resolutions, might take the place of a direct reference to the refugee problem. He wondered, however, whether it might not be useful to mention in advance the need for revising the Armistice Agreements, and also the fact that the Commission would be prepared to discuss any local problems which threatened to become acute.

Mr. BARCO (Alternate representative of the United States) said it had been envisaged that the diplomatic representations would not refer to any specific item to be discussed but would be made in very general terms, to the effect that the Commission was now prepared to consider means of solving all the problems outstanding between the parties. Such an approach would leave the Commission free to adjust the agenda as it considered necessary.

The CHAIRMAN thought that the diplomatic representatives on the spot would have to feel their way. If they found that the invitation was felt to be too general, they might explain that it did not exclude any question from the agenda.

Mr. ARAS (Turkey) thought that when the Arab Governments asked what was going to be discussed at the proposed conference, they might be told that the agenda would consist of questions which had already been before the General Assembly, that the discussion would be unlimited and that any matters which the governments concerned wished to discuss could be added to the agenda, including any questions which were at present causing trouble in the Middle East.

Mr. MARCHAL (France) agreed that it would be preferable if, in the diplomatic representations which were to be made, it were stated that the items to be discussed would be limited only by the terms of reference given to the Commission by the General Assembly. In that way any questions which might have been raised by the Governments concerned would be answered in advance.

The CHAIRMAN asked whether there were any reservations to be made to the letter of invitation which had been approved ad referendum at the Commission's meeting in Geneva on 3 August.

There were no reservations.

It was therefore decided that the invitation would be dispatched by cable from Geneva on 10 August.

#### Issue of press communiqué

Mr. MARCHAL (France) suggested that a press communiqué should be released shortly after the dispatch of the invitations.

It was agreed that a press communiqué adhering strictly to the text of the letter of invitation, and adding that the Commission had adjourned its meetings until the end of August in Paris, should be issued on 11 August from Jerusalem, Geneva and New York simultaneously.

The CHAIRMAN adjourned the meetings of the Commission until 27 August 1951, when a meeting would be held in Paris.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.

-----