

RESTRICTED
SR/228
30 August 1951
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE TWO HUNDRED AND TWENTY-EIGHTH MEETING

held at the Hotel de Crillon, Paris, on Thursday,
30 August 1951, at 4 p.m.

Present:

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

Preparatory work for the conference

The CHAIRMAN said that since the Commission's last meeting he had given a great deal of thought to the letter from the Secretary of State and to the decision and action taken by the Commission after consideration of the suggestions offered in that letter. He had tried to think out certain basic principles and to formulate, in the light of those principles, a proposal for the Commission's consideration concerning the appropriate initial steps and the general course of procedure. He was in communication with his Government as to the substance of such a proposal and hoped to submit it to the Commission early the following week.

He believed, and had so indicated to his Government, that it would be of the utmost importance to give the conference direction and purpose by the opening statement which he, as Chairman, was to make to the representatives of the parties. That statement should lay the foundation for proposals to be submitted by the Commission and should therefore be carefully worded and have the Commission's full approval.

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It had seemed to him that, in the preparation of such a statement, it should be kept in mind that the proposals which the Commission might put before the parties should form a comprehensive pattern. To put forward an agenda of isolated items might easily defeat the objective of the conference at the very beginning. It would probably result in an argument on the priority to be given the various items and might thus soon lead to a frustrating procedural deadlock, as in Lausanne and Geneva.

The opening statement by the Chairman should make it clear beyond doubt that the Commission in its mediatory rôle viewed the Palestine problem as a coherent unit. The members of the Commission could not but realize that the familiar method of concentrating on isolated problems out of context, of discussing one or another paragraph of a General Assembly resolution without regard to the resolution as a whole or to the Palestine question in its entirety, would lead nowhere. They could not fail to appreciate that the refugee question must be settled, and at the same time to recognize that such settlement would involve considerable commitments by Israel, but they could not ignore the fact that Israel could not be expected to make such commitments unless at the same time she received reasonable assurances from her neighbours as to her national and economic security.

Any solution of the refugee problem proposed by the Commission would necessarily envisage the return of some refugees to Israel and the reintegration of others in Arab countries. Reintegration would necessitate the creation of additional land for the settlers by means of irrigation and other development projects. Such projects would involve agreements between Israel and her Arab neighbours regarding water resources, and those agreements would in turn involve revision of existing Armistice Agreements or their extension in scope, and possibly also certain economic arrangements between those Arab States and Israel.

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It was with those thoughts in mind that the Chairman felt that the need for approaching a settlement of the Palestine question on an integrated basis could not be too strongly emphasized in his opening statement to the parties. Such emphasis would obviate futile arguments with the parties on the "agenda" of the conference. They would be told at the very outset that the "agenda" of the conference was one comprehensive pattern of proposals submitted by the Commission in its mediatory capacity. It would be understood, of course, that any specific point within that pattern would be open for discussion but that the overall pattern would remain as a single all-inclusive item for guidance in any such discussion.

In order to convey that idea effectively, the comprehensive proposal to be submitted by the Commission should be of a simple pattern. In preparing the draft of such a proposal, consideration should necessarily be given to the fact that within the time limit set for the conference it would obviously be impossible to discuss inch-by-inch territorial adjustments, or cent-by-cent financial arrangements, and there would neither be time nor would it be appropriate to include in the discussions details of irrigation or other development projects. It would, however, be unfortunate if the Commission were induced by the pressure of time to promote or to accept solutions too vague to be of any value.

The Chairman believed that the Commission and the parties would be able to avoid the pitfalls of over-technicality and over-vagueness by realizing at the outset that the conference could not produce detailed and technical solutions to isolated problems. They should, however, keep in mind and constantly hope for the possibility of achieving two all-important results: firstly, agreement on the specific subjects on which solutions were to be sought, and secondly, agreement on possible ways and means of seeking such solutions.

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In conclusion, the Chairman stated that as soon as he had received a reply from his Government he would present for the consideration of the Commission a draft statement, conforming to the views he had just expressed, which would be read at the first meeting with the parties.

Mr. MARCHAL (France) agreed that it might be extremely useful to open the conference with a statement along the lines proposed by the Chairman. Careful study would naturally have to be given to the drafting of such a statement, which would require the full approval of the three members of the Commission and their governments. There was, therefore, not much time to spare if that approval were to be obtained before the opening date of the conference.

There remained the question of the other preparatory work which the Commission would have to carry out before the beginning of the conference.

In that connection, the CHAIRMAN referred to the report to be submitted by the Head of the Office, which would naturally be of the greatest value to the Commission in working out its proposals. Other studies were at present being carried out by the secretariat.

The Chairman recalled that in the past the Commission had been greatly assisted by the committee of alternates of the three members, which had acted as a working committee in preparing, in collaboration with the secretariat, proposals for the consideration of the Commission itself. He felt that it would be very helpful to the Commission - and he was sure also to Dr. Aras personally - if Mr. Eralp could come to Paris to assist in the work, thus enabling the General Committee to meet if the necessity should arise.

Mr. ARAS (Turkey), referring to the Chairman's opening remarks, agreed that the statement to be made at the beginning of the conference should emphasize the fact that the Palestine question constituted a single problem, thus avoiding a discussion concerning the priority of different items of the

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agenda. In his opinion, however, the problem would have to be subdivided to some extent for the purpose of discussion, if the results were not to be too vague to have any value.

There were four essential points which, he felt, should be taken up separately with the delegations. He suggested that four sub-committees might be set up for the consideration of those items which, however, remained part of the general problem and which were also interdependent.

In the first place, as all the delegations and their governments realized, the Palestine problem would have to be solved by peaceful means only, whether a solution was reached through the intermediary of the Commission or otherwise. That realization might, he felt, lead to a declaration of non-aggression which would contribute to a lessening of the present tension in the Middle East. The declaration might be to the effect that the settlement of the Palestine problem would be sought by agreement, and by peaceful means only.

The second item which Dr. Aras thought might be discussed in a sub-committee was the refugee question. He was in complete agreement with the Chairman's suggestion as to what the Commission might say in that respect.

The question of the revision or extension of the Armistice Agreements was the third point. In this instance it might be thought preferable to set up a separate sub-committee to deal with each Armistice Agreement.

The last point which called for the establishment of a sub-committee was, Mr. Aras thought, the negotiation of a provisional economic modus vivendi between the Arab States and Israel. He noted that the Chairman had referred in his opening remarks to the possibility of discussing economic arrangements. Although the question was not mentioned in the General Assembly resolutions on Palestine, Mr. Aras agreed that it might be useful to consider it. The Commission would naturally not have time to deal with the problem in detail

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but might suggest to the parties a modus vivendi. As the question was such an important one for Israel, its inclusion in the discussions might help to balance certain concessions which it was hoped Israel might make concerning, for example, the refugee question.

Mr. Aras hoped that the Commission would be able to discuss the ideas he had just put forward at the same time as it studied the draft statement to be submitted by the Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN thanked Mr. Marchal and Mr. Aras for their comments. He thought that the suggestions made by the representative of Turkey could be discussed at the next meeting of the Commission, at which he hoped to present for consideration the draft opening statement, after approval by his government.

Report by the Head of the Refugee Office

In reply to a question by the Chairman, the PRINCIPAL SECRETARY stated that he understood from Mr. Andersen that the report of the Refugee Office would be finished in about ten days. As the facilities for translation were at the moment inadequate, he suggested that the report be submitted to the Commission before translation - that is, partly in English and partly in French. The work of translation would naturally proceed as quickly as possible. In order to assist the Commission in its preparations for the conference, he proposed asking the Head of the Office to send immediately the section of the report dealing with the evaluation of abandoned Arab property, and to come to Paris himself to submit the complete report as soon as possible, and in any case not later than 7 September.

This was agreed.

After a brief discussion, it was also agreed that in the event of the Commission requiring any further explanations concerning a particular section of the report, the author of that chapter should be called to Paris for that purpose.