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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE TWO HUNDRED AND THIRTY-FIRST MEETING
held at the Hôtel de Crillon, Paris
on Saturday, 8 September 1951, at 3 p.m.

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PRESENT

Chairman	:	Mr. PALMER	United States of America
<u>Members</u>	:	Mr. MARCHAL	France
		Mr. ARAS	Turkey
<u>Alternates</u>	:	Mr. BARCO	United States of America
		Mr. de NICOLAY	France
<u>Secretariat</u>	:	Mr. de AZCARATE	Principal Secretary

ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE

The CHAIRMAN stated that there were three separate aspects of the question: the practical arrangements, the drafting of the opening statement and the drafting of the proposals to be put before the conference. Concerning the first, he announced that he had recently had a conversation with Mostafa Bey, the Egyptian representative, and that a personal interview with the latter was arranged for the evening of Monday, 10 September 1951. In view of the Commission's decision not to fix the date before having contacted the representatives of the parties, the best would be to arrange to see them in the order in which they answered the invitation.

Concerning the opening statement, the Chairman stated that he had prepared a new draft introduction and was most ready to consider any suggestions which the members of the Commission might wish to make.

Mr. MARCHAL (France) pointed out that the draft in question was intended to serve as introduction to a statement containing the Commission's proposals to be placed before the conference. It seemed difficult therefore to take any decision on the introduction without having first studied the substance of the proposals. He would like, however, to make a few general comments. He recognised that one of the purposes of the conference was to provide the opportunity for studying all the problems forming part of the Palestine question. He was convinced of the need to solve those problems, but it would perhaps be dangerous not to be prepared to settle them except as a whole. He wondered whether the interpretation of the General Assembly resolutions given in the statement did not suggest that the Commission was not prepared to settle the various aspects of the problem separately. He thought that no possibility of a solution, even a partial one, should be neglected. If the Commission really decided only to agree to a comprehensive solution of the question, it would no longer be acting as mediator but as arbitrator. He thought that its function ought not to go as far as that.

Mr. ARAS (Turkey) had examined the Chairman's draft in the light of the communication from the United States Secretary of State which contains a proposed programme of work for the Commission. He was in agreement with the draft as a whole, but in order to forestall certain comments which might be made by the parties, he suggested that paragraph 2 of the new draft be amended to read as follows: "solemnly undertake to settle their differences by peaceful means with a view to promoting the return of permanent peace in Palestine".

Further, he thought it desirable to consider the question as a whole. It should be made clear that the Commission did not thereby intend to exclude all possibility of partial settlement. However, such a formula would only be acceptable in so far as any concessions made by the parties were mutual or equivalent. That was an essential condition.

The CHAIRMAN noted that the members of the Commission were agreed as to the general tenor of the draft statement. In answer to certain comments, he wished to make clear that it had never been his intention to suggest that the Commission should abstain from studying any possibilities for partial settlement which might arise. The comments of the representatives of France and Turkey were useful and he thought it would be well to proceed to examine the United States draft proposals as a whole.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN, speaking as United States representative, pointed out that the draft comprehensive proposal prepared by his delegation was explicit. The preliminary provisions contained in the preamble had been drafted with special care. The attitude which the parties would adopt towards each other was an aspect of the matter to which their attention should be drawn from the outset. Therefore the first step must be to examine the preamble; if a declaration of non-aggression could be obtained from them the conference would certainly open in a favourable atmosphere.

The various paragraphs of the proposals concerned in some cases all the parties, in others, some of them and it was to be

hoped therefore that it would be possible to promote agreement between them by compromise or mutual concessions. The questions raised in paragraph 5 would require specially careful consideration which could only take place under the auspices of the United Nations - for instance, the Truce Supervision Organization. In any case, some progress would have been obtained if the parties agreed to examine those questions.

Mr. ARAS (Turkey) considered the United States draft comprehensive proposal very satisfactory for it represented an augura of success and that was the most that could be achieved for the time being. He fully approved the spirit of paragraph 5.

He thought it would be preferable to amend the preamble to read as follows: "... solemnly repeat their undertaking to settle their difficulties by peaceful means in order to promote the return of permanent peace in Palestine".

Mr. MARCHAL (France) thought that by presenting specific proposals at the outset of the conference, the Commission would be acting as arbitrator rather than mediator. He thought it would be wise to do no more than submit the questions at issue to the parties, invite them to state their points of view and facilitate the search for a solution. Only if it were impossible to bring the parties into agreement should the Commission put forward specific proposals.

Concerning the preamble, he approved the Turkish representative's suggestion; before making any decision, however, he thought it would be wise to refer to the express terms of the undertakings entered into by the parties, on the one hand under the Armistice agreements and on the other as United Nations States Members.

Concerning paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the proposals, he thought a less specific wording would be preferable, so that the parties would not have the impression of being obliged to assume an undertaking immediately. Instead of "The governments mutually cancel", a less direct formula such as "Mutual cancellation..." might be used.

He thought that solutions for some of the problems mentioned in paragraph 5 might be found in a short time and it would be helpful if they could be the subject of preliminary consideration by the conference so that the parties would have the opportunity of expressing their opinions. Obviously it was desirable that the representatives of Israel and the Arab States should meet round a conference table, but it was questionable whether to make specific mention of arrangements for that purpose, as was done in paragraph 5.

Mr. BARCO (United States) explained that the purpose of the the draft presented to the Commission by the United States was to provide for a new procedure, different from that followed at Geneva and Lausanne which had achieved no practical results. The United States delegation had thought it preferable to avoid submitting a specific agenda, in order to avoid lengthy discussion on priority of items; that was why it had confined itself to suggesting a general plan. Further, he thought it might be wise to make clear in the opening statement that the Commission remained ready to study certain aspects of the question separately.

He willingly accepted Mr. Aras' suggestion as to the preamble and paragraph 5 of the proposal. The problems mentioned therein could not be solved in a short time and the Commission was not yet in a position to propose solutions for them. Settlement of the differences which they raised would be greatly facilitated by the meeting of representatives of the parties. It was with that in mind that paragraph 5 provided for meetings under United Nations auspices; moreover, it would be difficult for the parties to object to that procedure as it was expressly provided for in the Armistice Agreements. Lastly he thought that proposal could be submitted for the approval of the General Assembly, which would, if necessary, designate the organ to be responsible for calling the proposed conference.

Mr. ARAS (Turkey) also thought that it would be helpful to make clear in the opening statement that the Commission was ready to discuss any specific problem, whilst bearing in mind the question as a whole.

Mr. MARCHAL (France) recognised that the Commission must try to provide for a procedure which would be fruitful. However, as its present efforts represented a final attempt, it would be wise not to take excessive risks, but to ask the parties once more to state their opinions on the various problems raised. Only then should the Commission put forward its own proposals. In reply to the United States representative, he added that the proposals, even if amended as he had suggested, were more than a mere agenda, as they pointed towards ways of settlement and already suggested a tentative solution.

Mr. BARCO (United States) did not entirely share the French representative's opinion. If the parties were again invited to express their opinions, they would adopt the same hardened attitude as before; on the other hand, if the Commission's specific proposals were placed before them they might be led to modify their attitude.

Mr. ARAS (Turkey) thought that a compromise could easily be reached between the points of view of the French and United States representatives. The parties could be given the chance to express their views, the Commission submitting its proposals to them after that. That procedure could hardly take the parties by surprise as it was indicated in the invitation that the Commission might have proposals to put before them.

Mr. MARCHAL (France) drew attention to Mr. Aras's interesting observation concerning the letter of invitation, but stated that in his view, the Commission ought to formulate proposals only in the course of discussion and not as an introduction.

The CHAIRMAN invited the members to study the proposals in a spirit of compromise, taking into account the comments made during the discussion. In his view it was a question of form and he wished to point out that the proposals were only an indication of the Commission's views, for it would be regrettable if the parties were to assume that the Commission had nothing further to say.

REPORT OF THE REFUGEE OFFICE

The CHAIRMAN recalled that Mr. Andersen, Head of the Refugee Office, would be present at the next meeting of the Commission. He therefore proposed that the Commission should reply to Mr. Andersen in the following sense: The observations he had made in presenting the report of the Refugee Office would be most useful to the members of the Commission when studying the report more thoroughly. In the meantime the Commission thought it would be helpful to ask the Refugee Office to embark upon the studies mentioned in the plan for the future activities of the Office which would be read to Mr. Andersen. The Commission did not expect the Office to formulate conclusions and recommendations; it merely asked it to make a documentary historical study of the various questions mentioned in the plan of activities.

It was so decided.

REQUEST MADE BY THE ISRAEL DELEGATION ON 7 SEPTEMBER 1951

The PRINCIPAL SECRETARY recalled that the Israel representative had asked for the text of the Egyptian Government's reply to the Commission's invitation. In an interview with the Israel representative, Mr. Fisher, Political Officer of the Commission, had answered that the Secretariat was not authorized to communicate the text and that if the request was official it would be submitted to the Commission.

Mr. ARAS (Turkey) pointed out that the Israel representative's request could not be granted if the Egyptian Government's reply had not appeared in the press.

Mr. MARCHAL (France) fully agreed.

The CHAIRMAN thought that in the circumstances the Commission should answer that it would be inappropriate to communicate the Egyptian reply unless it had already been published.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.