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UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE TWO HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-SEVENTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 22 April 1952, at 3 p.m.

CONTENTS:

Expression of appreciation to Mr. Azcarate and Mr. Andersen

Implementation of General Assembly resolution of 26 January 1952(512(VI))

Chairman:	Mr. de BOISANGER	France
Members:	Mr. PALMER	United States of America
	Mr. MENEMENCIOGLU	Turkey
Secretariat:		
	Mr. CORDIER	Executive Assistant to the Secretary-General
	Mr. CHAI	Acting Principal Secretary
	Mr. BERNCASTLE	Land Specialist

52-4763

EXPRESSION OF APPRECIATION TO MR. AZCARATE AND MR. ANDERSEN

The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Commission might wish to address to Mr. Azcarate and Mr. Andersen, who had recently relinguished their functions as Principal Secretary and Director of the Refugee Office respectively, letters expressing appreciation of their services to the Commission.

The Commission was happy to welcome Mr. Chai as its new Principal Secretary.

Mr. PALMER (United States of America) supported the Chairman's remarks. Mr. Azcarate had won the confidence and respect of all the parties involved in the Palestine problem, and he (Mr. Palmer) personally had many reasons to remember with gratitude his wise counsel and help. The Commission had also been very fortunate in having Mr. Andersen as head of its Refugee Office, where he had performed a difficult task conscientiously and well.

As it had stated in a letter addressed to the Secretary-General in Paris the Commission had hoped that Mr. Azcarate could have remained longer, for the sake of continuity of the Commission's work. Mr. Palmer felt it would be most fitting to send letters of appreciation to him and to Mr. Andersen, copies being filed in the Secretary-General's office.

Mr. MENEMENCIOGLU (Turkey) said his colleague, Mr. Aras, had asked him to express his appreciation of the valuable services rendered by Mr. Azcarate and Mr. Andersen.

The CHAIRMAN accordingly proposed that the Secretariat should be asked to draft two letters and submit them for the Commission's approval at the next meeting.

It was so agreed.

Mr. CORDIER (Executive Assistant to the Secretary-General) said that the Secretary-General would be pleased to hear of the Commission's expressions of appreciation of the services of Mr. Azcarate and Mr. Andersen and its welcome to Mr. Chai. His desire had constantly been to provide the Commission with highly satisfactory services and the Secretariat would continue to meet the Commission's needs to the best of its ability.

/IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION OF 26 JANUARY 1952 (512 (VI))

The CHAIRMAN invited the Commission to consider its function in the light of the General Assembly's resolution of 26 January, how it should be fulfilled and if any changes were needed. With regard to its place of work, the French Government's view was that it should for the time being meet in New York, and be served by the permanent delegations of the countries represented.

Mr. PALMER (United States of America) said that, as the members were probably aware, the United States Government also felt the Commission should remain in New York until some reason might arise for it to meet elsewhere. A decision in that sense would conform to the desire expressed by the General Assembly, and he felt it could offer as satisfactory a basis for progress as any other plan. The Commission's role was to stand by in readiness to confer with the parties at any time.

The United States Government felt that the first item to be discussed was blocked accounts, as a preliminary to the solution of the question of compensation. As his colleagues already knew, he himself was firmly convinced that to bring the parties to discuss blocked accounts would do much to create a better atmosphere between them. The problem was simple compared with that of compensation for the amounts involved, and the claimants, were known, and the Israel Government had recognized the obligation to settle the matter. It would be futile to try to make progress on the compensation question until the matter of blocked accounts had been settled.

Mr. MENEMENCIOGLU (Turkey) agreed with Mr. Palmer concerning the standby role of the Commission and the fact that it should meet in New York for the present, as long as the Commission felt it was not necessary to move elsewhere. For the time being, he felt that the services available both from the delegations and the Secretariat in New York made it appropriate to start the Commission's work at Headquarters.

The CHAIRMAN thought he was correct in assuming that, under the General Assembly resolutions, Jerusalem remained the official headquarters of the Commission although it was entitled to decide to hold its meetings in New York for the time being.

/Mr. CORDIER

Mr. CORDIER (Executive Assistant to the Secretary-General) confirmed that interpretation.

The CHAIRMAN said he ought to point out that the decision to meet in New York in no way meant that the Commission was losing interest in its mandate. Perhaps a communique should be issued or a letter written to the parties making it clear that the Commission remained at their disposal and was ready to change its meeting place whenever it could better serve its purposes by doing so.

Mr. MENEMENCIOGLU (Turkey) agreed. His Government felt that the Commission could better fulfil its task while meeting in New York and thought that that fact should be made clear.

Mr. PALMER (United States of America), whilst wishing to reserve his position until the following meeting concerning any communication to the parties, agreed in principle with the Chairman's views.

Mr. CORDIER (Executive Assistant to the Secretary-General) agreed with the views expressed concerning the Commission's presence in New York for the time being and with the proposal to issue a communique, or write a letter to the parties, clearly stating the Commission's intentions.

The CHAIRMAN proposed that the Commission should discuss the form of any such communication at its next meeting.

It was so agreed.

The CHAIRMAN then invited the Commission to turn to the questions of compensation, blocked accounts and a representative of the Commission in Jerusalem. Concerning the first, he referred to the study prepared by Mr. Berncastle, dated 10 March 1952. Compensation was, of course, closely related to blocked accounts but should not be disregarded; the French Government would like to see studies with a view to its settlement continued.

/Mr. PALMER

Mr. PALMER (United States of America) further explained his reasons for considering that a study of the question of blocked accounts was an essential preliminary to the possibility of any progress in the matter of compensation. It would be unwise for the Commission to undertake further studies on compensation unless it saw some reasonable chance of settlement.

Mr. MENEMENCIOGLU (Turkey) said he had only just received Mr. Berncastle's paper and would comment on it more fully later. He thought, however, that useful preparatory work could be done on the lines indicated but care must be taken not to raise false hopes of compensation among individual refugees.

The CHAIRMAN said the impression should not be conveyed that the question of compensation was being shelved. He feared that no quick results in the matter of blocked accounts could be expected and, if so, it would be unfortunate to have also to report to the General Assembly that the Commission had taken no steps towards solving the problem of compensation. Moreover, it was always possible that the Israel Government might change its attitude towards the question. Perhaps Mr. Berncastle might have some suggestions for possible studies at the technical level, on the spot, to further the question.

Mr. PALMER (United States of America) explained that he would not wish to stand in the Commission's way if it and Mr. Berncastle felt that there was some prospect of success. The important point was to ascertain the attitude of the Israel Government on the two interrelated questions. He enquired for Mr. Berncastle's views concerning steps that could be taken forthwith with reasonable hope of success.

Mr. BERNCASTLE (Land Specialist) said that the question of compensation could be divided into two parts: discussion with the Israel Government concerning the global amount, and discussion with Arab refugees concerning the individual amounts. So far as the first was concerned, Israel had made a clear offer, though qualified by political considerations, and the Commission

/might do

might do wrong to ignore it. Study of the second could be approached in the first instance either through the proposed questionnaire to refugees or through the micro-photographs referred to in his paper. In his view the former method was preferable as the microfilm only covered a part of the country, albeit the greater part, and would not be ready for use until July. Replying to Mr. Palmer, he thought the Commission might communicate with the Israel Government, referring to their offer to discuss valuation (the term that Government itself had used) and asking whether Israel was prepared to discuss the question of valuation at the technical level. The Commission would have to consider whether any such approach should be made by letter from New York or by sending a representative to Tel Aviv.

After a further exchange of suggestions, the CHAIRMAN proposed that Mr. Berncastle should be asked to prepare a study on the possibilities of further action on compensation and that another paper, dealing with blocked accounts, should be prepared by the Secretariat for consideration at a subsequent meeting.

It was so agreed.

The CHAIRMAN then introduced the question of the Commission's representation in Jerusalem. The French Government's view was that it would be a great disadvantage and would create an unfortunate impression if the Commission did not maintain a representative there, to act as observer, maintain local contacts and symbolize the presence of the United Nations in Palestine. He urged the Commission to agree to the principle of having a representative in Jerusalem.

Mr. PALMER (United States of America) said that he would have to refer the matter to his Government for instructions. He recognized that a situation might develop in which a top-level representative might be needed in Jerusalem for a specific purpose or a specified period, but there were two dangers to be avoided: that of sending a representative who did not possess the right background and qualifications for action at the highest level, and

/that of

that of having such a person there when there was little possibility of his taking any action.

Mr. MENEMENCIOGLU (Turkey) said that he would have to consult his Government on the matter.

The Commission approved the text of a communiqué for release to the press.

The meeting rose at 5.15 p.m.