

RESTRICTED
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28 March 1949
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE TWENTY-FIRST MEETING

held in Beirut on 28 March 1949 at 10 a.m.

Present: Mr. de Boisanger (France) - Chairman
Mr. Yalchin (Turkey)
Mr. Ethridge (U.S.A.)

Mr. Azcarate - Principal Secretary

In reply to a question from Mr. Ethridge, Mr. AZCARATE reported that he had two days previously handed the draft communique to the Director-General of the Lebanese Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and to representatives of the delegations of Iraq, Syria and Egypt, with a brief explanation that what the Commission contemplated was not a peace conference but simply a continuation of exchanges of views with a more positive approach to the whole problem. The representatives of Syria, Lebanon and Iraq maintained their stand regarding the priority of the refugee question, although the attitude of the Egyptian delegation appeared slightly more flexible. Official replies from the delegations would be communicated to the Commission in the course of the talks scheduled for the beginning of the week. Concerning the remaining two delegations, Mr. Azcarate had arranged to hand the draft communique to the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia the same day; the delegation of Transjordan having departed, leaving no liaison officer, he would attempt to communicate it through the Transjordan legation in Beirut.

The CHAIRMAN reported that during a conversation the previous day, the Egyptian representative had requested certain changes in the draft communique which appeared acceptable to the Chairman. He had asked for the suppression of the phrase "under

paragraphs 4, 5 and 6", in paragraph 2 of the draft, and for the amendment of a later sentence to read "...continuation of these exchanges of views in order to reach positive results, in particular on the question of the refugees".

It appeared that some delegations wished to lay down certain conditions as a prerequisite for further talks. The Chairman had explained to them that he considered such a course impossible; the Commission was disposed to ask the Government of Israel to make certain apparently spontaneous gestures, but it could not accept the laying down of any preliminary conditions for the talks. The Commission had already waited two months to begin its actual work of conciliation as provided for in the General Assembly's resolution; it was now time to embark seriously upon that task. The Commission was quite willing to continue discussing the refugee problem, but the way must be left open for eventual extension of the scope of the new talks. The Chairman had made it clear that there was no question of assembling the Arab delegations together around a table with a Jewish delegation and undertaking peace negotiations, but the Arab Governments must accept the presence of a Jewish delegation in the same city.

Mr. ETHRIDGE had no objection to the first proposed change in the draft text, but as regards the second, he felt that undue stress should not be laid upon the refugee question if the new talks were not to become a mere repetition of the present ones. The Arab delegations must accept the understanding that the scope of the talks was definitely to be broadened. He would prefer a revision such as "...to achieve positive results on all outstanding questions including the question of the refugees".

The CHAIRMAN and Mr. YALCHIN supported Mr. Ethridge's view and agreed that the Commission should try to persuade the Egyptian delegation to accept a less restrictive text than it at present advocated.