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UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

Summary Record of the 311th Meeting (Closed)

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 23 March 1954, at 11. a.m.

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Meeting with Mr. Leslie Carver, Acting Director, UNRWA

PRESENT:

<u>Chairman:</u>	Mr. ORDONNEAU	France
<u>Members:</u>	Mr. DERINSU	Turkey
	Mr. BARCO	United States of America
<u>Secretariat:</u>	Mr. CHAI	Acting Principal Secretary
<u>U.N.R.W.A.</u>	Mr. CARVER	Acting Director
	Miss FLYNN	

311th meeting

11:00 a.m. Tuesday, 23 March 1954.

The CHAIRMAN welcomed Mr. Carver (Acting Director - UNRWA) and asked him for his views on the question of collaboration between the Conciliation Commission and the Relief and Works Agency.

Mr. CARVER (United Nations Relief and Works Agency) wished first of all to express his satisfaction with the Commission's decision to send a Liaison Officer to the Middle East. That decision had coincided with his own letter to the Commission, of 2 January 1954, and it was clear that the two bodies had been thinking along similar lines with regard to improving liaison between them. He and Mr. Ladas had already had several meetings, in Beirut and Jerusalem; furthermore, General Bennike had also been brought into the picture and there was new agreement in principle to hold common meetings at regular intervals. At Mr. Ladas' suggestion one of the joint meetings at Government House was extended to a luncheon to which were invited Messrs. Lourie, Rafael and Cidor of the Government of Israel. After luncheon the three Israelis, Mr. Ladas, Mr. Lavile, General Counsel of UNRWA and Mr. Carver had held an inconclusive though interesting discussion of compensation and other matters of mutual concern. The meetings had been fruitful in the sense of containing possibilities of future action, and a useful exchange of information had taken place.

A further example of the growing collaboration between the two bodies involved the preparation of refugee studies to be appended to the Joint Report of the Advisory Commission and the Acting Director to the next session of the General Assembly. Reference had been made in last year's Report to the preparation of a special report on the refugee problem in all its aspects. It had now been agreed to produce a series of staff studies on various aspects of the refugee problem and Mr. Ladas had agreed to lend his assistance in the fields of repatriation and compensation. In view of Mr. Ladas' background and invaluable experience in those questions, Mr. Carver felt that his assistance would be of a great benefit.

With regard to the relations between UNRWA and the Truce Supervision Organization, Mr. Carver felt that the interests of the two groups were inevitably and closely linked. As an example of the need for coordination, Mr. Carver mentioned an irrigation scheme which was being considered for the Jordan valley,

Engineers had located the only site capable of being developed for this work, only to learn that the site was one-fourth in Jordan territory and three-fourths in the Syrian demilitarized zone. Consultations have since been held with General Bennike to arrive at a solution of the difficulty.

Mr. Carver then raised the question of the Commission's pilot project for the identification and valuation of Arab property in the Caza sub-district. In view of the Commission's limited funds and the importance of the study in terms of an ultimate solution of the compensation question, Mr. Carver had suggested to the Advisory Commission of UNRWA that Agency funds might be advanced to expedite the works. To his surprise the idea had been opposed by those who he had assumed would be most likely to support it and he did not see much hope of reviving the suggestion at the present time. However, he had proposed that UNRWA should, in its Report, express its belief that the sooner the compensation question was advanced towards a solution, the more nearly would a solution of the refugee problem as a whole be reached.

Mr. BARCO (United States of America) welcomed the evidence presented by Mr. Carver of the growing collaboration between UNRWA and the Commission. His delegation felt, and he thought the other members of the Commission would agree, that such a liaison arrangement in Jerusalem had long been needed and was already proving fruitful. He was most gratified that a measure of really sound co-operation on a friendly working basis had at last been achieved, a thing which, for one reason or another, had not proved possible in the past.

Mr. Barco wondered how this initial co-operative arrangement could be furthered, to extend beyond the stage of exchanging information to a real, joint co-operative effort of a constructive nature, and thought that the various reports to the Assembly in the fall might well lay a basis for co-ordinated action.

The CHAIRMAN and Mr. DERINSU (Turkey) thanked Mr. Carver for giving the Commission a first-hand account of the way in which the liaison arrangements were working out. The Chairman expressed the willingness of the Commission to assist Mr. Carver in any way it could.

With regard to the question of compensation Mr. CARVER (UNRWA) thought that it was extremely important from the United Nations point of view to make every effort to liquidate the problem. Both the Arabs and the Israelis were claiming that the question constituted an obstacle which prevented them from moving ahead

towards a solution of other problems. All practical measures being taken by the United Nations in connexion with compensation would greatly facilitate the task of securing the co-operation of both sides.

In connexion with the method of payment of compensation to Arab refugees Mr. Carver thought that the Conciliation Commission might wish to review its declared position in favour of individual payments. He had discussed the matter with Mr. Ladas and discovered that they had, independently, reached similar conclusions. The view of Mr. Carver and Mr. Ingrand, of the Advisory Commission was that the distribution of hard currency to individual refugees in small amounts would be wasteful and impractical. A more effective method might be to distribute the total hard currency, whatever the sum, to the host countries in amounts proportionate to the number of refugees each government was prepared to resettle within its borders. The host countries could then make payments to the refugees in their own currencies. The actual handling of the funds could be entrusted to a subsidiary of the International Bank, thereby relieving the governments concerned of an over-taxing administrative burden. Mr. Carver felt that it would be extremely useful to have some constructive joint thinking along those lines. In answer to a question by the Acting Principal Secretary he said that as yet no concrete plan had been formulated but that he would keep the Commission informed in the matter.

Mr. Carver considered that the time had come to report to the General Assembly in such a way as to enable it to adopt a new approach to the Palestine problem and break the deadlock created by outdated and unworkable resolutions.

The meeting rose at 12 noon.