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UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE EIGHTY-FIRST MEETING

held in Lausanne on Monday,
25 July 1949, at 10:30 a.m.

Present : Mr. de Boisanger (France) - Chairman
 Mr. Yalcin (Turkey)
 Mr. Porter (U.S.A.)
 Dr. Azcárate - Principal Secretary

The CHAIRMAN, on behalf of the Commission and the Secretariat, extended a warm welcome to Mr. Paul Porter, newly appointed United States representative.

Communication from the Secretary-General regarding inclusion of the Palestine question in the agenda of the fourth regular session of the General Assembly.

The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the text of the Secretary-General's cable of 19 July asking whether the Commission intended to report to the General Assembly on the overall situation in Palestine, in addition to its definite duty under the terms of the resolution to report on Jerusalem and the Holy Places. The Secretary-General had stated that the provisional agenda for the fourth session would be circulated on 22 July, although the item could be included in a supplementary list which would be circulated by 11 August. The Chairman noted that the Principal Secretary had replied to the cable stating that a decision could not be taken before the arrival of the new United States member of the Commission, on 23 July.

The PRINCIPAL SECRETARY pointed out that since the provisional agenda had already been distributed and the supplementary list would not be circulated until 11 August, there was no need for an immediate decision by the Commission on the matter.

The CHAIRMAN observed that the Palestine question in general might be placed on the agenda by request of any Member country. If it were not so included, it would be the duty of the Commission to decide whether it would itself request the inclusion of the question and make a report, which was not required by the terms of the resolution of 11 December 1948. He felt that the Commission should consider the matter further and take its decision at a later moment.

Mr. PORTER expressed his agreement with the Chairman, but hoped that postponement of the decision would not prejudice possible future action by the Commission to place the entire question on the agenda. He pointed out that for purposes of an open debate the various aspects of the Palestine question might prove inseparable, and that a debate on Jerusalem and the Holy Places might thus lead to a general discussion of the whole question.

The CHAIRMAN, while agreeing with Mr. Porter, felt that the Commission might place itself in an embarrassing position if it now asked for inclusion of the whole question in the agenda, and if subsequent developments should make a debate in the General Assembly undesirable. It was even possible that the General Assembly, finding the Jerusalem question inseparable in its debates from the other aspects of the problem, might postpone consideration of the Jerusalem question itself. For these reasons he suggested that the Commission should consider the question again in a week or ten days and take a decision at that time.

The Commission approved the Chairman's suggestion.

Draft Communique

The CHAIRMAN proposed that discussion of the confidential draft communique to the press should be postponed until the members of the Commission had had an opportunity to have further talks with the members of the Arab and Israeli delegations.

The Commission decided to postpone consideration of the draft communique until its next meeting.

Progress Report of the General Committee for the period 14 May-18 July (document Com.Gen./9)

The CHAIRMAN wished to draw the Commission's special attention to Section IV, "Observations", of the General Committee's Progress Report which submitted certain suggestions for the Commission's approval.

With regard to paragraph 34, the Commission agreed to the Chairman's proposal that the procedure suggested by the Committee be approved.

The Commission approved the first part of paragraph 35 and agreed with the Principal Secretary's view that, whereas the representatives of Israel in the proposed Arab-Israeli mixed commission for the reunion of separated families would naturally be representatives of the Israeli Government, the Arab representatives might in some cases be Government representatives and in others representatives of the refugees, or both as would seem appropriate in each case. The Principal Secretary pointed out that the form of Arab representation on such a commission had not yet been decided by the General Committee.

The CHAIRMAN pointed out, with regard to the latter part of the same paragraph concerning Arab accounts blocked in Israeli banks, that it would be desirable for the Chairman of the General Committee to endeavour to obtain the Arab delegation's reply to the Israeli proposal already transmitted to them, as speedily as possible in order that the Committee might proceed to further discussion of the question.

Composition of the Israeli Delegation

The CHAIRMAN drew the Commission's attention to the letter received from the Israeli delegation, stating that Mr. Reuven Shiloah would replace Dr. Eytan in the delegation of Israel, Mr. Shiloah would be arriving in Lausanne within a day or two.

Further business

The PRINCIPAL SECRETARY informed the Commission that he had received a reply to his telegram to Mr. Vigier in Damascus, which stated that General Riley would be arriving in Genova on 28 July and would be at the Commission's disposal.

The Commission decided to request General Riley to attend a meeting of the Commission on Friday, 29 July, and, furthermore, to ask the Secretariat to prepare a working paper showing the differences in detail between the armistice signed by the Israeli Government with Syria and those signed with the other Arab States.

The Commission decided to hold its next meeting on Thursday, 28 July in the morning.