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SUMMARY RECORD OF A MEETING BETWEEN  
THE CONCILIATION COMMISSION AND  
H.E. DR. FARID ZEIN ED DIN, REPRESENTATIVE  
OF SYRIA

held in Beirut on 2 April 1949

Present : Mr. de Boisanger (France) - President  
Mr. Yalcin (Turkey)  
Mr. Ethridge (U.S.A.)  
Mr. Azcarate - Principal Secretary  
H.E. Dr. Farid Zein ed Din - Representative of Syria

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The SYRIAN REPRESENTATIVE informed the Commission that he would make an official statement for the record and asked that he should be corrected if the Commission was not in agreement with his assumptions.

It was his understanding that the Commission held the opinion

- 1) That the General Assembly's resolution of 11 December, in so far as it pertained to the refugee question, was imperative and had to be executed and applied;
- 2) That the repatriation, resettlement and economic and social rehabilitation of the refugees who would choose to return under normal or, more precisely, under normalised conditions, i.e., after the obstacles in their way had been removed by the Government of Israel, were not conditional on the settlement of other aspects of the Palestine question;
- 3) That the Commission's intention to implement the resolution as regards the refugee question would be unequivocally stated to the Jews especially as far as the obstacles placed in the way of the return of the refugees were concerned -- obstacles which the Government of Israel

... would be firmly asked to remove. (The Syrian Representative underlined that his Government stood firmly on this last point).

The Syrian Government would be prepared to enter into discussions on the aspects of the Palestine problem which required conciliation, with the clear understanding that it held the views expressed in the above three points, on which the Syrian Representative found himself to be in almost complete agreement with the Commission. This acceptance was not final but constituted an acceptance in principle which would have to be confirmed by the Syrian Government when their representative succeeded in getting in touch with them.

Comments and Discussion on the Points made by the  
Syrian Representative

1. The imperative character of paragraph 11 of the resolution

The Commission agreed, without comment, to the first point made by the Syrian Representative.

2. The solution of the refugee problem not dependent on the final settlement of all outstanding questions.

With regard to the second point Mr. ETHRIDGE stated that he was not in agreement and remarked that the attitude adopted by the Syrian Government was unrealistic. The refugee question could not be settled independently of the territorial question. Mr. Ethridge considered himself bound by the resolution but the resolution should be allowed to speak for itself and no conditions or interpretations for its implementation should be laid down. He had explained to the Syrian Representative as well as to the Syrian Prime Minister that one of the reasons why the refugee problem could not be solved independently was that a great number of refugees originating from areas that might revert to the Arabs

after the territorial settlement would return to their homes automatically. This part of the refugee problem could not be solved in advance. Mr. Ethridge repeated that he agreed with the principle laid down by the Syrian Representative but could not agree with him on the way in which it should be implemented.

Mr. YALCIN agreed with Mr. Ethridge that the General Assembly's resolution of 11 December should be considered in its entirety and could not be separated into its component parts. There was nothing in the resolution which could be construed as indicating that the specific mandates given to the Commission should or could be separated either from each other or from the non-mandatory parts of the resolution. As an example of the danger of such an approach he pointed out the possibility of the one side refusing to proceed further in the general settlement once the refugee problem had been solved. He stated that the resolution only tried to indicate possible methods of solution of the problems of Jerusalem and the refugees but made no attempt to separate them. He assured the Syrian Representative that the Commission would do its duty as it conceived it but that this would mean that all the aspects of the problem would have to be considered and solved together.

The CHAIRMAN agreed with the point of view expressed by his colleagues and underlined the fact that the Commission was very definite in its views on this matter.

The SYRIAN REPRESENTATIVE repeated that in his opinion the refugee problem was not dependent on the final settlement and the resolution should be executed in so far as it concerned the refugees, regardless of whether other questions remained unsolved. There might be certain territorial changes or changes of the control over certain areas resulting from the final settlement which would facilitate the solution of the refugee problem but the solution of this problem as a whole should not be made to wait on such a settlement. The Syrian Government hoped that this would not be

the case.

The Syrian Representative stated that, if he understood correctly, the link that the Commission considered existed between the refugee question and other aspects of the problem was the degree in which the solution of the other aspects would facilitate the settlement of the refugee question. He was of course aware that the question of control of certain areas would affect the refugee problem. If certain areas at present under Jewish control were ceded to the Arabs or placed under international control the refugees from these areas would feel more secure and would return with less difficulty.

The CHAIRMAN replied that this was one aspect of the problem and the Commission would study it.

3. Statement of the Commission's intentions to be made to Israel with respect to the obstacles placed in the way of the refugees

With regard to the third point made by the Syrian Delegate the Commission agreed without comment.

The SYRIAN REPRESENTATIVE remarked that from this step of the Commission it would emerge clearly who was responsible for obstructing conciliation.

4. Syrian acceptance of discussions on other aspects of the Palestine problem

As regards the Syrian Government's acceptance to enter into discussions of other aspects of the problem the SYRIAN REPRESENTATIVE declared that his Government reserved until further discussion, its position on those aspects that were within the purview of conciliation, such as the territorial one as opposed to those questions on which the Commission had a specific mandate, such as the resettlement of the refugees. He expressed the hope that both the Jews and the United Nations would respect the resolutions so as to form a stable basis for further discussions.