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SUMMARY RECORD OF A MEETING BETWEEN
THE CONCILIATION COMMISSION AND
THE DELEGATION OF ISRAEL

held in Lausanne, 27 April 1949 at 11.30 a.m.

Present: Mr. Ethridge (U.S.A.) - Chairman
Mr. de Boisanger (France)
Mr. Yalcin (Turkey)
Mr. Azcarate - Principal Secretary
Mr. Sasson) Representatives
Mr. Hirsch) of Israel

The CHAIRMAN welcomed the representatives of Israel and expressed his hope that the meeting would be a fruitful one.

Outlining the position of the Commission, he explained that it was charged with presenting a plan for the internationalisation of Jerusalem; a sub-committee was working on the question and would ask for the views of all delegations. The Commission had the further functions of achieving a settlement of the refugee problem and of bringing about conciliation of the opposing views of the two sides. The Arab Governments had indicated their willingness to carry on an exchange of views with the Government of Israel, directed toward settlement of all questions outstanding between the parties. The delegations of Syria, Lebanon and Egypt were already present in Lausanne; there had been no direct word from the Hashemite Jordan delegation.

The Chairman stressed the fact that the delegations were free to negotiate directly or through the Commission; the Commission's only desire was that negotiations should proceed.

Mr. HIRSCH thanked the Chairman, in the name of his delegation, for the welcome extended by the Commission, and explained that the remainder of his delegation would arrive later. The delegation was a large one, composed of high officials of the Israeli Government and the staff; its composition was an indication of the serious purpose with

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which his Government entered upon the present negotiations.

Summarizing his delegation's purpose in coming to Lausanne, Mr. Hirsch quoted a statement by Mr. Sharett to the effect that there would be "an earnest endeavour by the Israeli delegation to explore every avenue and strive toward a peace that is fair and lasting". His Government considered that the Rhodes talks had been one step toward such a peace; the conversations now opening were the logical next step.

Mr. Hirsch expressed the belief that if the Lausanne talks were to be successful, the first requisite was the establishment of mutual confidence. The Commission would have an important part to play in bringing about such confidence. His Government was vitally interested in peace for the area in which its people lived; he was sure that his country's legitimate claims would be considered.

The CHAIRMAN expressed the hope that the time had now come when the Israeli Government could state its position on the vital questions at issue. He recalled that the Arab Governments at Beirut had had little faith in the fruitfulness of further conversations unless the Government of Israel demonstrated its good faith by acceptance of the Commission's mandate as regards the refugee question. The Commission, however, had taken the view that further talks could be helpful, and that progress could be made toward a solution of the refugee problem through discussion of the question of boundaries. The Israeli Government had not yet indicated its position on the refugee question in a way that would permit the Commission to transmit those views to the Arabs. It would be helpful if the Israeli delegation could now give some indication of its Government's stand on that question, as well as on the question of boundaries.

Mr. SASSON fully understood that the Commission's mandate included solution of the refugee problem; however, it also included other questions, among them the final re-establishment of peace in Palestine and the Near East countries. He considered it preferable that the talks should begin with discussion of the essential question of the final peace, rather than with the more specialized questions mentioned by the Chairman. In that connection he expressed the view that the refugee problem and the boundary question could not be discussed and solved both in Lausanne and at Lake Success at the same time. He felt that the Commission should advise the

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General Assembly that these questions were being dealt with in Lausanne.

The CHAIRMAN explained that he did not wish to restrict the basis of the discussions in any way, but rather to make it as broad as possible. The Jerusalem question, the refugee problem, and the other matters at issue were all elements entering into the final peace settlement. As regards Mr. Sasson's statement that the Arabs had not come to Lausanne to negotiate peace, he pointed out that they had agreed to further exchanges of views in order to determine whether peace was possible. It was the Commission's hope that the present talks would be sufficiently fruitful to lead directly into peace negotiations.

Concerning Mr. Sasson's final suggestion, the Chairman was of the opinion that it would be presumptuous on the part of the Commission to advise its parent body, the General Assembly, what the latter's procedure should be. According to his information, the question would not come up in the First Committee before the end of ten days, at which time there might or might not be a full debate. He asked whether or not the Israeli delegation was prepared to proceed with discussions in the meantime.

Mr. HIRSCH explained that his delegation was concerned lest the procedure at Lake Success should create difficulties in the day-to-day discussions at Lausanne.

The CHAIRMAN promised that he would discuss the matter with his colleagues of the Commission. He asked whether the Commission might now transmit to the Arab delegations the assurances of the Israeli representatives that they were ready to enter upon discussions, either directly or through the Commission.

Mr. SASSON qualified that statement with the remark that his Government was not ready to exchange views with the Syrian Government until an armistice agreement had been concluded. In reply to a question by Mr. de Boisanger, he said that the Commission was of course free to contact the Syrian Government and discuss any questions it wished; his Government felt, however, that Syria was attempting to delay or sidetrack the armistice negotiations, and the Israeli Government did not wish to discuss specialized problems until the armistice was assured. Israel believed that the existence of an armistice agreement between itself and an Arab

State was an indication of a definite desire on the part of that State to advance toward permanent peace. Such an indication had not been given as yet by the Syrian Government.

Mr. Sasson held the opinion that the exchanges of views should be limited to points which interested the various delegations directly. For example, the Jerusalem question could not be expected to interest all the Arab States equally.

The CHAIRMAN pointed out that the resolution mentioned the worldwide interest of all countries and religions in the future of Jerusalem. The Jerusalem Committee would naturally solicit the views of all delegations on the type of internationalization which the Commission would recommend to the General Assembly at the September session.

With reference to the matter of duplicate discussions in Lausanne and Lake Success, Mr. YALCIN could not see the relation between discussions in two places, since they would be based on two entirely separate questions, and neither success nor failure of the talks in Lausanne would necessarily prejudice Israel's case before the General Assembly.

Mr. HIRSCH explained that what concerned his delegation was the fact that in view of recent developments at Lake Success, it seemed probable that the same questions which the Commission wished to raise would be discussed in the First Committee, where formal statements of policy would be made. His delegation in Lausanne wished to work through the medium of informal exchanges of views; it was therefore concerned lest these informal talks should be prejudiced by the declarations made at Lake Success.

With regard to the Jerusalem question, he did not wish in any way to exclude that question from discussion. He suggested, however, that a separate agenda should be drawn up for each of the Arab States, to include all problems which were of particular interest to that State and to Israel.

Mr. YALCIN asked what would be the subjects of discussion if all questions of specialized interest were postponed. He considered that the presence of the Arab delegations in Lausanne constituted sufficient proof of their sincere desire for peace.

Mr. HIRSCH replied that his Government was not yet convinced of the sincerity of that desire in the case of all the Arab States; it would be the chief objective of the present meetings to establish that conviction in the minds of all parties.

/Mr. SASSON

Mr. SASSON affirmed that the Israeli Government, and doubtless the Arab States as well, desired only security and tranquillity in the Middle East. Israel, however, believed that that security could exist only if peace and friendly relations were established between itself and the Arab States, a belief which, apparently, was not yet shared by the Arabs. There had been public statements by leading Arab personalities which indicated the existence in those States of a propaganda in favour of making preparations in view of re-opening hostilities against Israel in the future. In those circumstances, serious as the refugee problem was, Israel could not agree to allow the return of the refugees when it had no assurances that they would be loyal Israeli citizens. Israel did not ask that a peace treaty should be signed before these questions were discussed; it asked only for concrete proof and assurance of sincerity of the Arabs' desire for peace.
