UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

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

held in Lausanne on Wednesday, 24 August 1949, at 10:15 a.m.

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

Dr. Azcárate - Principal Secretary

Mr. Reuven Shiloah)
Mr. Elias Sasson) - Representatives of Israel
Mr. Zalman Lifshitz)

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The CHAIRMAN pointed out that the Commission had not yet received a reply from the Israeli delegation to its memorandum of 15 August; he hoped that that reply would be forthcoming at an early moment.

The Chairman then informed the Israeli delegation of two decisions taken by the Commission. First, the Commission had decided to name a United Nations representative in Jerusalem, in accordance with the specific instructions given in paragraph 8 of the resolution of 11 December 1948. This representative would collaborate with the local authorities, and the Commission hoped that the Israeli authorities would cooperate in this field as they had in others. Secondly, an economic survey mission would shortly be constituted and begin its work; the recommendations it would eventually make would, he felt, be of great interest to all the Middle East.

Mr. SHILOAH, on behalf of his delegation, took note of the Chairman's statement and assured the Commission of his Government's cooperation.

At the Chairman's request, Mr. PORTER explained the functions and proposed terms of reference of the survey mission (see SR/90). The Commission desired to activate the mission at the earliest possible moment; in that connection he recalled that one of the questions in the Commission's memorandum of 15 August had concerned this mission. He hoped that during the present meeting the Commission might receive assurances that the Government of Israel would welcome and cooperate with the mission

when it proceeded into the field to make its detailed study of the complex economic problems of the Middle East countries.

Mr. SHILOAH recalled that at a previous meeting he had stated for his delegation that his Government would cooperate with the survey group when it was established, and would give due consideration to its eventual recommendations. He could not comment in detail at the moment upon the question of this mission, and requested a brief period of time in which to study the terms outlined by Mr. Porter. In general, however, he hoped the Commission and the survey mission would recognize the fact that there existed certain fundamental differences in the requirements of Israel and of the Arab States as regards development programmes and methods in relation to the refugees. As far as Israel was concerned, the problem was not only one of economics but also one of security. He wished to stress the fact that Israel was in the process of creating a new economy, and that whatever projects the survey mission might recommend must be adapted to the general pattern which had been established.

Mr. Shiloah asked for clarification of the exact significance of the phrase "areas affected by the recent hostilities in Palestine", used by Mr. Porter in his statement. He also asked for information as to the proposed composition of the survey mission.

With regard to the security considerations mentioned by Mr. Shiloah, Mr. PORTER assured the Israeli delegation that when the survey mission began its work in the near future, the representatives of Israel, as of all other States concerned, would have full opportunity to make known to the mission their point of view on all questions which would concern the mission. The Commission could not anticipate the conclusions which would be reached by the survey group, but in general it envisaged a broad and dynamic Middle East development programme. The "areas affected" would include Israel and all of the Arab States. The mission would endeavour to ascertain what projects would be immediately adaptable to the economies of the States concerned, and would permit wider exploitation of the resources of those States and the establishment of a more favourable political climate.

Mr. Porter then explained the proposed composition of the mission (see SR/90). He felt sure that the Government of Israel had at its disposal many technicians whose advice would be of great value to the mission.

Mr. SHILOAH had not intended to suggest that the Commission should anticipate the analysis or recommendations of the survey group. His delegation understood, however, that the mission would not be an independent body, but a subsidiary body working within the framework of the Commission's terms of reference, and that the Commission remained the supreme body for purposes of the negotiations. He therefore considered it his duty to place before the Commission, before the constitution of the survey group, certain considerations which were of great importance to his Government. The terms of reference laid down for the survey mission were broad but nevertheless explicit; he therefore thought it would be helpful if the Commission could inform the survey mission, in whatever way it desired, that a guiding principle governing the attitude of Israel toward the whole matter would be found in certain questions of internal stability within Israel, and that any projects recommended must fit into the framework of Israel's present economic and social effort.

As regards the composition of the survey group, Mr. Shiloah recalled that in the past his delegation had maintained certain reservations regarding the competence of certain persons as objective investigators. He therefore reserved the right of his delegation to comment at a later moment upon the question of the composition of the mission.

Mr. PORTER pointed out that any mission operating under the auspices of the Conciliation Commission and of the United Nations would in all ways respect the sovereignty of the States with which it was dealing; moreover, such a group could not even undertake its functions without a full guarantee of cooperation from the States which it was endeavouring to assist.

As regards the composition of the mission, Mr. Porter affirmed that it was the responsibility of the Commission and of the United Nations to take all necessary steps to ensure the complete objectivity of the survey, but it must be understood that complete understanding and cooperation on the part of the States concerned would be an essential condition. He felt sure that the Commission could take the comments of the Israeli delegation as an indication of a constructive and cooperative attitude.

Mr. SHILOAH fully endorsed Mr. Porter's interpretation of his remarks.

Mr. PORTER added the comment that this new phase of the Commission's activity should not be taken as an indication that its efforts at conciliation were in any sense being terminated or abandoned; it was the Commission's purpose to continue those efforts in one form or another. In that connection, he wished to ask the Israeli delegation whether during the recent period of the negotiations there had been any opportunity for direct talks between the two parties.

Mr. SHILOAH welcomed Mr. Porter's comment regarding conciliation efforts, as being in keeping with his delegation's views on procedures necessary for achievement of a final settlement. As regards Mr. Porter's question, he felt sure the Commission would understand that he could not give a specific reply. He could make only the general comment that it had always been his delegation's policy to work toward direct negotiation, and it had made all possible efforts in that direction whenever possible. His delegation had never desired to by-pass the Commission; its efforts to negotiate directly had been merely an effort to complement the work of the Commission.

Mr. PORTER affirmed that the Commission understood and respected the attitude of the Israeli delegation. He wished to make it clear, however, that the Commission's policy went beyond mere encouragement of efforts at direct negotiation. At the present stage he wished it clearly understood that the Commission hoped that every effort would be made by both parties to achieve such direct talks, and that the Commission would welcome any suggestions from either side which might help to promote them. He made it clear, moreover, that this was a policy which the Commission had consistently maintained throughout the negotiations.

The CHAIRMAN wished it to be expressly understood that Mr. Porter's remarks constituted an official decision of the Commission.

Mr. SHILOAH stated, on behalf of his Government, that Israel welcomed this clear statement of policy by the Commission, and believed it would eventually bear fruit. His delegation would call upon the Commission for assistance in that direction upon suitable occasions.

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