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SUMMARY RECORD OF A MEETING BETWEEN  
THE CONCILIATION COMMISSION AND THE  
DELEGATIONS OF THE ARAB STATES

held in New York on Thursday,  
17 November 1949, at 11:30 a.m.

Present: Mr. Yalcin (Turkey) - Chairman  
Mr. de Boisanger (France)  
Mr. Palmer (U.S.A.)  
Dr. Azcarate - Principal Secretary  
H.E. Abdel Monem Mostafa Bey - Representative of Egypt  
Mr. Edward Ghorra - Representative of Lebanon  
Mr. Ahmad Shoukairi - Representative of Syria

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The CHAIRMAN remarked that in accordance with its promise the Commission was transmitting to the Arab delegations a copy of the Israeli note of 27 October and of the Commission's reply of 15 November, and a copy of the Israeli declaration regarding protection of the Holy Places; the Arab declaration on the same subject had already been handed to the Israeli delegation. He wished to stress the fact that all the documents must be treated as strictly confidential; it was particularly important at the present time, for the success of the negotiations, that they should not be communicated to the press. The Commission was also transmitting to the Arab delegations a copy of the preliminary report of the Economic Survey Mission, which must be treated as confidential until it had been officially circulated to the Member delegations of the United Nations.

Mr. SHOUKAIRI (Syria) observed, with regard to the confidential nature of the documents, that the Arab delegations pledged themselves to respect the Commission's request. In view of their past experience, however, the Arab delegations could not hold themselves responsible for leakage to the press which might come from the other side. In that connection, he noted that the report of the Economic Survey Mission was already in the hands of certain delegations; he was sure that the Commission was not responsible for that leakage.

MOSTAFA BEY (Egypt) supported the remarks of the representative of Syria, pointing out that the documents just transmitted by the Commission were already in the hands of a number of persons, and that as regards respect for

their confidential nature, the Arab delegations could be responsible only for themselves.

In reply to a question from the Egyptian representative concerning the Commission's purpose in transmitting the statements of the Israeli delegation, the CHAIRMAN stated that the documents were being communicated solely for the information of the Arab delegations.

MOSTAFA BEY (Egypt) observed that the Arab delegations would wish to transmit the report of the Economic Survey Mission to their Governments, and requested further copies as soon as they became available.

Mr. SHOUKAIRI (Syria) wished to make a formal statement concerning the Commission's press communique on the subject of the draft Instrument for Jerusalem. He wished it recorded that he disagreed categorically with the interpretations placed by the Commission on its own proposals. He considered those interpretations inconsistent with the General Assembly's resolution and with the whole conception of an international regime and a corpus separatum, and maintained that they would tend to undermine the Commission's own purpose. In particular, he objected to the statement that the views expressed by the delegations were "largely the basis for the plan as submitted"; the views of the Arab delegations could in no way be the basis of an interpretation such as the one in question. He had great respect for the Commission and for the draft Instrument, but he felt that he must dissent in the present case, and would present his reasons in detail at a later moment, before either the Commission, the ad hoc First Committee, or the General Assembly.

Mr. de BOISANGER pointed out that while the Arab and Israeli delegations were free to criticise the Commission's proposals, only the Commission itself was competent to interpret those proposals. As regards the particular statement objected to by the Syrian representative, he felt that the French version of the sentence was more exact than the English; that version could be more correctly translated by ". . . inspired to a large extent. . ."

Mr. SHOUKAIRI (Syria) agreed with the French representative that the French phrase was more accurate; there had been only one formal meeting in Jerusalem between the Committee on Jerusalem and the Arab representatives, and the record of that meeting showed no statements which could justify the phrase ". . . were largely the basis for. . ." He pointed out, however, that the document had been drafted originally in English, and suggested that the Commission should make clear the actual facts in the case.

He also agreed that it was for the Commission alone to interpret its own proposals. For that reason he was glad that the interpretation had been made before the Arab delegations had stated their final position on the question; he himself could state at once that he had ~~changed his own position~~ in the light of the ~~press communique~~. The commission had now made its stand

abundantly clear, and there could be no further misunderstanding.

The CHAIRMAN observed that since the Commission's plan for the internationalization of Jerusalem would be discussed soon in the General Assembly, no useful purpose could be served by further discussion of details of interpretation at the present time, nor did the Commission have the right to enter into such discussion with either party.

MOSTAFA BEY (Egypt) took the opportunity of thanking the Commission for issuing an interpretation of its own proposals. There had been some doubt in his mind concerning the intended scope of the draft Instrument, and whether or not there would be partition of the zone and two separate sovereignties. It now appeared clear that that would be the case. He reiterated that the Commission, in any event, had the respect and admiration of the Arab delegations for its work.

The CHAIRMAN recalled that the Commission had recognized from the beginning that the task of conciliation would be a difficult one. In the present case the Commission could not but accept the criticism of both parties, since they were not obliged to endorse or approve its proposals. The Commission welcomed the comments of the parties, whatever they were.

Mr. GHORRA (Lebanon) observed that his delegation would state its position before the General Assembly with regard to the draft Instrument.

The meeting rose at 12:20 p.m.