

UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

RESTRICTED
SR/FM/1
13 September 1951
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL : FRENCH

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

held at the Hôtel de Crillon, Paris,
on Thursday, 13 September 1951,
at 11 a.m.

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PRESENT

Chairman : Mr. PALMER United States of America

Members : Mr. MARCHAL France

Mr. ARAS Turkey

Alternates : Mr. BARCO United States of America

Mr. de NICOLAY France

Secretariat : Mr. de AZCARATE Principal Secretary

Also present : H.E. ABDEL MONEM MOSTAFA BEY Egypt
H.E. AHMED BEY DAOUK Lebanon
H.E. FAWZI PASHA MULKI Hashemite Jordan
Kingdom
Mr. AHMAD SHUKAIRI Syria

OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE

Statement by the Chairman of the Commission

The CHAIRMAN made the following opening statement:

"As the Chairman of the Palestine Conciliation Commission, during the Commission's initial meetings here with you, it is my privilege, and it is a pleasure for me, to welcome you on behalf of the Commission as participants in this Paris conference.

We find in the acceptance of our invitations to this conference, by the Governments of the five neighbour States to which the invitations were addressed, encouragement for our belief that those who entered into the Armistice Agreements have an earnest desire to promote the return of permanent peace in Palestine.

Those engagements, entered into almost three years ago, had a two-fold purpose: to put an end to bitter warfare and to pave the way for a transition to a lasting peace in a land sacred to three of the world's great religions.

The first purpose has been achieved; the warfare between the neighbour States has been stopped. But there has been little progress toward the achievement of the second purpose - that is, the working out of a peaceful settlement of the problems dividing these neighbour States.

The objective of this conference, in which we hope to continue to find encouragement from your participation, is to seek, through mediation, solutions to these problems which, as we see them, can be broadly grouped into two categories: (a) problems mainly affecting the rights and status of individuals, and (b) problems mainly affecting the rights, obligations and relations of States.

The first group includes such questions as the repatriation, compensation and resettlement of refugees; claims for indemnification for damages resulting from hostilities; and disposition of blocked accounts.

Among the specific problems in the second group are: delineation of boundary and demarcation lines; demilitarized zones and no-man's lands; arrangements for free-port facilities; water, fishing and navigation rights; communications and telecommunications; and such problems as narcotics, contraband and health control.

Many of these problems have been the subject of discussions between the Commission and the parties during the past three years. In a sense, these discussions have been useful. They have made abundantly clear the views, aspirations and ideas of the parties to the dispute. But the time has now come to make constructive use of this clarification of views, aspirations and ideas. That is the task the Commission has undertaken by assuming its mediatory functions at this conference and by offering to submit concrete proposals for consideration by the parties.

/ In drafting

In drafting the proposals to be submitted to you, the Commission has been guided by two considerations: fairness and realism. We have tried to take into consideration all the views expressed during the past three years by the parties to the dispute, as well as the political, social and economic realities observed by us. We have come to the conclusion that the Palestine problem must be considered in its entirety, and that its solution must be sought in a fair and realistic spirit of give-and-take.

In considering the Palestine problem in its entirety, we are following the guidance given to us by the General Assembly. The Assembly resolution under which our Commission operates - and under which you are co-operating with us - emphasizes the general character of the Palestine problem. In drafting our mediatory proposals for discussion in this conference, we have had to keep in mind that the General Assembly has instructed us to assist the governments and authorities concerned to achieve a final settlement of all questions outstanding between them. I feel certain that in considering our proposals, you will keep in mind that the Assembly, in the same resolution, has called upon the parties to the dispute to seek agreement by negotiations with a view to the final settlement of all outstanding questions. It is impossible to miss the meaning of this call and the clear emphasis of the resolution on the interdependence of the various elements of the Palestine problem.

Experience has shown that concentration on one or the other isolated paragraph of the resolution out of context has not helped in the promotion of peace in Palestine. All the elements are necessary, but they are useful only if linked together according to an overall plan. For example, the resolution instructs us to facilitate the repatriation, resettlement and rehabilitation of refugees, and we did not forget that instruction when we drafted our proposals for this conference. Nor did we forget the instruction given us in the same resolution, to seek agreements between the governments which will facilitate the economic development of the area, including arrangements for free access to ports and airfields and the use of transportation and communication facilities. On the one hand, a sound economic development is impossible in an area with hundreds of thousands of homeless people uncertain of the future and their standing in society. On the other hand, refugees - and non-refugees for that matter - cannot be settled securely anywhere in an area badly lacking economic development.

Surely, the inter-relation of all the aspects of the problem is too obvious to be overlooked. The Conciliation Commission has not overlooked it in weighing the mediatory proposals to be placed before you at this conference. In drafting these proposals, we have considered that any solution of the refugee question will involve important commitments by Israel. But we have also considered that Israel cannot be expected to make such commitments unless, at the same time, she receives reasonable assurances from her neighbours as to her national and economic security,

The solution of the refugee problem proposed by the Commission envisages the repatriation and integration of some of the refugees in Israel and the resettlement of others in Arab countries.

Such undertakings will necessitate the creation of additional land by means of development and irrigation and agreements between the parties on the use of water resources. These agreements will, in turn, involve revisions or extensions in scope of existing Armistice Agreements, as well as appropriate economic arrangements.

No constructive progress towards a solution of your problems is possible unless all the parties to the dispute, at the outset of our discussions here, express their determination to respect each other's right to security and freedom from attack, to refrain from warlike or hostile acts against one another, and to promote the return of permanent peace in Palestine.

These are the considerations which have inspired the comprehensive proposals which the Commission will place before you as the pattern for this conference.

At this time of our initial meeting here with you, my colleagues and I have endeavoured to help you to understand the general pattern of proposals which we desire to submit to you for consideration after you have had an opportunity at our next meeting to respond to this statement. We believe that you will understand our feeling that the measure of the helpfulness of our proposals will be found not only in the extent to which they offer opportunities for progressive action but also in the extent to which we can all work together to make the most of these opportunities.

It is now almost three years since the General Assembly formulated a United Nations policy for the settlement of the problems arising out of the Palestine conflict. Notwithstanding successive efforts to find a way to such a settlement, we have as yet made no progress that to the casual observer is in any way apparent. Without attempting to determine where the primary responsibility for that failure may be, we all here must now recognize that we share the responsibility for coming to grips with these problems in a new spirit of determination, realism and honesty. No one of us can fail to hope that the problems with which we are dealing will be solved, or fail to wish to make his distinct contribution to their solution. It is easy enough to look at the record of the past three years and remain sceptical. What is needed now from all of us is extra determination, extra faith, extra goodwill. Too much depends on the outcome of our efforts here for any of us to indulge in second thoughts, flagging determination or lack of faith in our ability to arrive at a just solution. The Conciliation Commission is ready and determined to do its part. In doing its part, it counts on your understanding and co-operation in fullest measure."

H.E. ABDEL MONEM MOSTAFA BEY (Egypt) thanked the Chairman for his words of welcome to the representatives of the Arab Governments. The statement he had just made merited careful consideration as it contained several points which called for comment. He reserved the right to explain his delegation's attitude to the statement later.

He was glad that the Commission was at last able to engage in mediation. He recalled that at Lausanne the Arab Governments, on the Commission's invitation, had presented proposals based on the Lausanne Protocol of 12 May 1949; Israel had also presented proposals; the Commission had considered that the latter went too far;

the Arab delegations had then asked the Commission to present counter-proposals. That was the stage at which the question had remained until the Commission had planned the present conference. He approved of the Commission's mediatory function but stated that it should be based on certain principles set forth in the General Assembly resolutions. It was heartening to note that the Commission had prepared proposals which it intended to present in a spirit of fairness and realism. However, he could not yet pronounce an opinion as to the realism of the proposals; if realism meant sanction of a fait accompli and a violation of rights, it could not be accepted. He assured the Commission that he would cooperate fully with it in seeking a fair and lasting solution of the Palestine question.

H.E. FAWZI PASHA MULKI (Hashemite Jordan Kingdom) associated himself with the representative of Egypt and reiterated the latter's thanks to the Commission. His delegation had always evidenced a spirit of cooperation in seeking a solution of the outstanding problems. The Arab Governments had always wished to see the Commission play the rôle of mediator instead of merely serving as a "letter-box". The Jordan Government assumed that the mediation would be carried out within the framework of the General Assembly resolutions. Fawzi Pasha Mulki stated that the Chairman's opening speech merited careful study. He admired the Commission's perseverance throughout the past years and hoped that the present conference would be more fruitful than the preceding ones.

H.E. AHMED BEY DAOUK (Lebanon) joined with the representative of Egypt in thanking the Commission for its welcome and endorsed that delegate's preliminary remarks, expressing the hope that they would be taken into account, so that, by close cooperation in the task, a fair and lasting solution of the question could be reached.

Mr. AHMED SHUKAIRI (Syria) supported the remarks of the representatives of Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon. He felt it his duty briefly to explain his reaction

to the Chairman's statement, which contained certain elements alien to the resolution of the 1948 General Assembly establishing the Commission's terms of reference. He reserved the right to refer to this aspect of the matter later and to explain his delegation's point of view in greater detail.

The CHAIRMAN, on behalf of the Commission, thanked the delegations of the Arab Governments for their cordial reception of his opening statement. The members of the Commission had heard with great interest the preliminary remarks of the four delegations and would await a more detailed explanation of their attitudes at the next meeting between the Commission and the Arab delegations.

He proposed that the next meeting be held in the morning of Monday, 17 September.

It was so decided.

H.E. ABDEL MONEM MOSTAFA BEY (Egypt) pointed out that the term "conference" was used for the present session of the Commission and questioned the necessity of the innovation, as it was in fact simply a continuation of the Commission's meetings.

The CHAIRMAN pointed out that the word was written without an initial capital and consequently did not indicate a special event. It was used in the proper sense of the term and meant simply a "meeting".

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.
