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SUMMARY RECORD OF A MEETING BETWEEN THE CONCILIATION
COMMISSION AND HIS EXCELLENCY MR. DAVID BEN GURION,
PRIME MINISTER OF ISRAEL,

held at Tel Aviv on 24 February 1949.

Present: H.E. Mr. David Ben Gurion - Prime Minister of Israel
Mr. Ethridge (U.S.A.) - Chairman
Mr. de Boisanger (France)
Mr. Yalchin (Turkey)
Mr. Azcarate - Principal Secretary

The CHAIRMAN observed that an initial gesture on the part of Israel with regard to the refugee problem would pave the way for peace negotiations. Israel now had a good opportunity to open the way for peace, which it both wanted and needed.

The PRIME MINISTER replied that while Israel needed peace, it also needed security, on which depended, in fact, its very existence. He urged the Commission to realize that for Israel this question meant survival or extermination; his country had been invaded and no-one had lifted a finger to assist the Jewish people.

The CHAIRMAN remarked that the Prime Minister's statement that Israel had received no assistance would cause surprise among people in the United States.

The PRIME MINISTER observed that Jews and Arabs had a common destiny. Israel, he said, was interested in the real independence of the Arabs and in the improvement of their lot. The factors of history and geography made inevitable a rapprochement between the two peoples.

/Mr. de BOISANGER

Mr. de BOISANGER said that the Arabs desired peace but were apprehensive of the intentions of the Jews, particularly with regard to their frontiers. Security, he said, involved not only the ability to defend oneself, but also freedom from the fear of attack by one's neighbours.

The PRIME MINISTER asserted that patience was necessary to overcome such fears. If the Arabs had abandoned the idea of pushing the Jews into the sea, there would be two ways left open. One of these was co-operation between the two peoples; the second involved international action directed towards peace.

Mr. YALCHIN asked the Prime Minister how he envisaged the security of Israel. One way was to augment the population of the country. But what was the capacity of the Jewish part of Palestine? Would it be necessary to expel the Arabs once that capacity had been reached? Mr. Yalchin thought that the Arabs would have to be reassured on that point. He wondered what the Prime Minister meant by co-operation with the Arabs, for if Israel continued to augment its population their security would be placed in danger.

The PRIME MINISTER replied that one could not forget what had happened to six million Jews in Europe and that therefore no-one would or could be expelled in order to make room for others. If there were fear of Israel on the part of the Arabs, such a fear was unnatural and artificial. The solution, he said, lay in developing the resources and capacity of the country and in co-operating with the Arabs to further the economic and cultural development of both Israel and the Arab countries.

Mr. de BOISANGER said that, although it might be difficult for the Prime Minister to understand, it remained a fact that the Arab States entertained such fears and that they sought guarantees of Israel's good intentions.