

UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

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SUMMARY RECORD OF A MEETING BETWEEN THE
CONCILIATION COMMISSION AND HIS MAJESTY
KING ABDUL AZIZ IBN SAQUD OF ARABIA

held at Riyadh, on 17 February 1949.

Present: His Majesty King Abdul Aziz Ibn Saoud of Arabia

Mr. Yalchin (Turkey) - Chairman
Mr. de Boisanger (France)
Mr. Ethridge (U.S.A.)
Mr. Azcarate - Principal Secretary

The CHAIRMAN, after explaining the Commission's mission and pointing out that the armistice now in force or about to be negotiated was only a first step towards peace, stated the reasons for the Commission's tour of the capitals of the Arab States. The Commission had found that all these Governments were willing and eager to arrive at a peaceful settlement, but the question remained of how it would be possible to transfer that wish into reality. The Commission wondered whether these Governments would be ready to meet in a preparatory conference in which all outstanding questions would be discussed.

H.M. the KING welcomed the Commission and wished it success. He remarked that he appreciated not only the importance of the Commission's efforts to achieve an understanding in Palestine, but also the difficulties that it would have to face in its task. He pointed out that the Arabs had always wished for peace and followed a moderate course. But success in peace negotiations depended also on the other side and there had as yet been no proof that the other side was moderate or wished for a peaceful settlement. For the achievement of such a settlement, the following conditions were necessary:

The United Nations or certain great powers would have to give serious guarantees that the peace treaty would be respected. Such guarantees would have to take the form of an undertaking to impose sanctions on the violators of such..

of such treaties. Up to the present moment the Jews had not been punished for violations of United Nations decisions.

The second condition was that a resolution of the very important refugee problem should be found.

The third condition was that the violator of the peace treaty should not be permitted to benefit from such violation and should be deprived of any gains that he had secured by violations. During the war in Palestine the Jews had been helped by a great power and had violated terms of the truce. The Arabs' position has thus been rendered extremely difficult, since they had to face not only the Jews but also the world that supported them.

Mr. ETHRIDGE remarked that there was one further condition at present for the settlement of this problem which was of great importance to the peace of the world, and that was that all its points should be settled simultaneously. Speaking not only as a member of the Conciliation Commission for Palestine, but also as a representative of the United States Government, he stated that there was a great need for such a peace in the Middle East.

H.M. the KING replied that when the Arabs had received guarantees from the Great Powers that the decisions arrived at would be respected, an understanding would be easy. Unfortunately, the signs of the past had not been calculated to ensure the confidence of the Arabs in this respect. At the present moment the Jews and the Egyptians in Rhodes were not discussing an armistice on the basis of the Security Council's resolutions, but were attempting to work out a compromise in spite of the fact that the Jews had violated those resolutions. This was a further case in which the Jews were profiting by violation of United Nations decisions. Nevertheless, His Majesty promised to do his best to bring about a peaceful settlement and to render the Commission's task successful.

The CHAIRMAN stated that such guarantees might be given after negotiations had resulted in a mutually acceptable agreement. Such an agreement would in itself be a guarantee since it would be voluntary. If the Commission were making proposals of its own, it would also have given guarantees. In the present case, however, it was apparent that the first step would have to be a general

/H.M. the KING.

H.M. the KING asked the Chairman whether the Commission had found any difficulty in arranging such a meeting.

The CHAIRMAN replied in the affirmative and pointed out that the attitude encountered on the Arab side seemed mostly to favour a discussion of the refugee question in advance. He assured the King that the Conciliation Commission also considered the refugee question an urgent one and stated that that was why the Commission wished to begin negotiations as soon as possible, in order to achieve something useful in this respect.

H.M. the KING pointed out that the peace in the Middle East should be a durable one and therefore everyone should be satisfied with it. If the United Nations were only to bring the opponents together and leave them there to arrive at a compromise without guarantees, it seemed fruitless to proceed further in a discussion of details. If, on the other hand, both sides were to be certain that he who violated an agreement mutually arrived at would be chastised, there would then be a guarantee of durable peace. Otherwise there would be no proof that the Jews would not again act as they had in the past, namely to violate the agreement and profit by such violation.

The King, speaking frankly, said that if the Arabs were to receive no guarantees, not only would there be no peace settlement but worse things might happen. The United Nations and the Great Powers should understand this fact and give the required guarantees. Otherwise the Middle East would be lost, both to them and to the Arabs. Up to the present moment they had only guaranteed Jewish aggression.

H.M. the King stated that he was sure that the other Arab States would accept his advice if he advised them rightly, but he could not advise them to act against their own interest and such would be the case if no guarantees were forthcoming. The Arabs would have to be sure that they would not be discriminated against. That was what had encouraged the Jews and that was the cause of the troubles in Palestine. If there were no end to that state of affairs, the conflagration would spread to the whole of the Middle East. He reminded the Commission of recent events that had taken place in Egypt,

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Iraq and Iran, which in his opinion had been caused by people in contact with international communism. If measures were not taken against such acts, communism would spread to the Middle East.

Mr. de BOISANGER thanked the King for his clear exposition of his attitude and position. The Commission's visit to the various capitals was for the purpose of finding out these points of view. He remarked that the guarantees required by His Majesty constituted a very natural request; but it had to be defined at the time of the signing of the peace treaty. All parties concerned would have to receive assurances that the other side had no evil intentions, but the form of the guarantees would have to be studied and decided upon. There were many kinds of guarantees, one, for instance, being the reduction of armed forces. The other was United Nations supervision of the execution of the peace treaty. All these methods would have to be studied by the Conciliation Commission in order to decide which form would be the best to be adopted at the signing of the peace treaty.

H.M. the KING in conclusion remarked that words alone were not sufficient. One would have to have the assurance in one's own mind that these guarantees would be sincere.