

UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

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References to the Work of the United Nations
Conciliation Commission for Palestine and to the Palestine
Question made during the General Debate at the Fourth Session
of the General Assembly of the United Nations

	<u>Page</u>
United States of America	1
Iraq	2
Netherlands	4
France	4
El Salvador	6
Lebanon	6
Israel	12

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References to the Work of the
United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine
and to the Palestine question made during the general debate
at the Fourth Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations

MR. DEAN ACHESON (United States of America)
222nd Plenary Meeting, 21 September 1949
A/PV.222

. . It is a source of considerable satisfaction that the period of active hostilities in Palestine has been brought to a close through the conclusion of armistice agreements between Israel and the several Arab states. The efforts of the Acting Mediator and his staff in this task are worthy of the highest praise.

Since the first of this year the Palestine Conciliation Commission has been carrying on its work. While no agreed settlement between the parties has yet been reached, I am nonetheless hopeful that progress will be made in moving beyond the armistice stage to that of a real and permanent peace.

Eventual agreement between the parties is essential for the political and economic stability of the area. Later during this session the Palestine Conciliation Commission will present a report, including the recommendations of the Economic Survey Mission which is presently in the Near East. On the basis of this Report the General Assembly should be able to provide such machinery as may be necessary further to facilitate and encourage the parties to reach that agreement. The United States stands ready to give its full support and assistance to this effort.

The plight of the Palestinian refugees presents to the world a pressing humanitarian problem. It is of the highest importance that the states immediately concerned recognize and accept their governmental responsibilities with respect to this problem. As an interim measure the General Assembly should make the necessary provision for the maintenance of these refugees until the time when they can again become self-sustaining members of the Near Eastern communities.

It is the hope of the peoples of all faiths that the General Assembly will be able to act successfully upon the report of the Palestine Conciliation Commission with respect to Jerusalem. In my Government's view, it should adopt a practical plan for a permanent international regime in the Jerusalem area and for the protection of, and free access to, the Holy Places

... No one can deny that great work is being achieved by the United Nations in the social, economic and cultural fields and in the formulation of human rights. But in the political field the United Nations is still lagging and sometimes erring. The blunt truth is that the great powers have not so far been able to make the United Nations a United Nations. There are signs of disunity. As for the smaller nations, the bitter fact is that my people feel greatly disappointed in what the United Nations has so far effected in Palestine.

I did not intend to touch upon the subject of Palestine at this juncture were it not for a statement issued by the Israeli delegation on the opening day of this session, claiming that: "Israel can never consent to be separated from Jerusalem nor will Jerusalem ever cease to be a part of Israel". Then the statement goes on to say that "the delegation" -- that is, the Israeli delegation -- "will pursue its efforts to emphasize the paramount duty of the Arab states to help resettle the refugees who were uprooted and dispersed by the action of those very states."

This statement certainly proves that Israel is denying the natural, legal and human rights of the Arabs to their country which they have inhabited for thousands of years, and are trying to make members of the United Nations forget obligations towards guarding these rights. Unfortunately, the United Nations has to engage itself at this moment with the task of relieving the miserable, starving, sick and homeless refugees. But who brought this state of affairs about? Under what principles of human and political rights were these conditions created? How could Arab rights to their own homes which they inherited in Palestine be a matter of bargaining and negotiation? We were told that the Jews did not come to Palestine to dispossess the Arabs of their homes; that there is room in Palestine for Arabs and Jews alike, and yet hundreds of thousands of Arabs are made homeless in neighbouring countries, while an average of one thousand Jews enter the country each day to replace them, under the very eyes of the United Nations and as a result of its decision, which was naturally bound to lead to these sad and tragic consequences.

We are told that the Arabs of Palestine left their homes by their own choice or that the Arab states caused this exodus. Nothing could be further from the truth. The fact is that a reign of terror was inflicted upon the Arabs when acts of complete annihilation of masses of Arabs, including women and children, were committed by the Jews. The truth is well described in the following statement made by the Stern leader and reported in the Washington, D.C. newspaper, "The Star" in its issue of 9 August 1948:

"Everybody knows it was the Deir Yassin attack that struck terror into the hearts of the Arab masses and caused their stampede. That blessed miracle which has strengthened us and dealt the enemy a far greater blow than all the combined wisdom of the Haganah Commanders could have done. We hope . . . no more crocodile tears will be shed over the atrocities of Deir Yassin."

This is the answer to the Israeli statement absolving themselves from responsibilities towards the refugees and denying their rights to settle in their own land.

When Hitler's atrocities were known to the civilized world, all nations were shocked. What is the world's attitude today towards the very people who suffered at the hands of Hitler, applying his methods to the innocent Arabs of Palestine?

The Arabs of Palestine have a natural and legal right to their own homes in that country, a right recognized by all human, moral and legal codes of the civilized world. No one can deny such a right except an aggressor who has no intention of abiding by the United Nations Charter or by the Declaration of Human Rights.

The Conciliation Commission which was working on behalf of the United Nations in Lausanne created an Economic Survey Commission for the Arab States and Palestine. I hope this is not meant to evade the issue of a political settlement which must recognize the full rights of all the Arabs of Palestine to their own homes there. My country did not take part in the Lausanne conferences, partly because we believe that there is no room for bargaining or haggling about such rights; partly because we believe that no political settlement can be valid or lasting which does not recognize this right; but mainly because we have so far seen no sign of good will or readiness on the part of Israel to keep their word or to recognize Arab rights to Palestine. It is a fine idea to have the United Nations help the economic development of the Arab world. But it is fatal to the very principles of the United Nations to make this development a price for dispossessing hundreds of thousands of innocent and peaceloving Arabs of the right to return to their homes.

There can be no lasting peace in the Middle East until a just territorial settlement is made in Palestine. The human side of the refugee problem which needs the most generous and most immediate consideration by the United Nations should not supersede a fair and quick territorial settlement. But how can a political settlement be achieved? The United Nations appointed a Conciliation Commission which has, unfortunately, not succeeded in effecting a territorial settlement mainly because the Jews are not willing to abide by the decisions of the United Nations. The statement I allude to above, just issued by the Israeli delegation, proves this fact. The truth is that unless and until the United

Nations makes the Jews recognize Arab rights to Palestine and completely abide by its successive decisions, there is no hope for a settlement. Left to themselves, the Jews have unlimited ambitions. The demands of their extremists of thirty years ago are the achievement of today. The Jews do not wish to abide by the 1947 partition plan. They rejected the Bernadotte plan. During the truce and the armistice they occupied territories which were not inhabited by Jews nor allotted to them by the United Nations decision, Some Jewish elements already speak of enlarging the Jewish state to include Jordania.

The Washington, D. C. newspaper, "The Star", in its issue of 9 August 1949, reports the following:

"Jewish ex-terrorists who made Palestine too hot for British rule are confidently planning a new campaign. The objective is Jewish control of King Abdullah's Transjordan."

The United Nations Organization has the responsibility to enforce its authority on the Jews to abandon aggressive intentions and to bring about a just territorial settlement. Otherwise there can be no peace in the Middle East, and the seeds of future trouble have a mysterious way of growing in such circumstances. Let the settlement be such as to minimize the amount of the agony of injustice created in Arab hearts. It is by this means and this means alone that faith in the United Nations might be partly re-established in the Middle East.

If, on the other hand, the Jews, relying on support which they can always secure in the way of charity and political influence from a great country like the United States of America, continue to flout United Nations decisions and deny Arab rights to Palestine, the United Nations must face a great blow to its prestige, and would have achieved the greatest blunder in its history by having taken a decision which led to trouble and unrest in the most sensitive part of the world today. I wish to repeat again that material help to the suffering refugees, no matter how vital and urgent, can never be a substitute for a just and speedy territorial settlement which must be brought about first. The question of settling refugees who do not wish to return to Palestine might well be considered after territorial settlement, for we believe that the question of refugees will be largely liquidated if a just territorial settlement is effected. . . .

MR. STIKKER (Netherlands)
225th Plenary Meeting, 23 September 1949
A/PV 225

. . . And finally, the problem of the Holy Places in Palestine. The Netherlands Government has learned with great satisfaction the termination of strife in Israel, but this satisfaction is somewhat diminished by its concern for the safeguarding of those places in the Holy Land which are symbols of the highest spiritual values. In view of the specific significance of the Holy Places for mankind the Netherlands Government considers it of the highest importance that measures be taken to safeguard those Holy Places. My delegation is of the opinion that it cannot be left only to the Governments concerned to devise a way by which this safeguarding might be ensured. This seems to my delegation to be a matter for permanent international supervision. My delegation therefore hopes that adequate measures for protection and safeguarding will be agreed upon during this session. If no such agreement could be reached, internationalization of the City of Jerusalem and its surroundings would have to be seriously considered

MR. SCHUMAN (France)
225th Plenary Meeting, 23 September 1949
A/PV 225

. . . When we admitted the State of Israel into our ranks, we had in mind to facilitate thereby the restoration of peace and a normal situation in the Near East. Our hopes were not completely disappointed.

The present situation in Palestine is dominated by two facts. The first is that hostilities have been suspended on all fronts since the signing of the armistice agreements. The truce imposed by the United Nations has been superseded by a contractual situation. This essential situation is largely due to the persevering action and flexible authority of the Mediator and the Acting Mediator to whom we must render once again the tribute of our gratitude.

The second fact is that since then no progress has been made toward a more lasting settlement. We had hoped that the armistice regime, once it was completely established, would enable the parties to enter into direct negotiations that would lead to a final stabilization of the situation. A Conciliation Commission was set up by the General Assembly to bring about these contacts and promote agreements. It is with profound regret that we have to record today that the countries concerned have not been amenable to the hoped-for rapprochement and that on this account the peace which is to take the place of the armistice is not yet within sight. I do not doubt that the General Assembly will unanimously appeal both to the Arab countries and to Israel to abandon this passive attitude in their own interests as well as in the interests of international peace.

Two concrete problems affecting the whole of mankind in its sentiments and in its beliefs require our particular attention.

One of these problems is that of the Arab refugees, for whom only measures for immediate relief have so far been taken. An economic study group has been set up by the Conciliation Commission to study the possibilities of repatriation or resettlement. Its terms of reference seem to have given rise to erroneous interpretations which explain, though they do not justify, the cautious reserve of certain Governments. It is incumbent upon us to remove these misunderstandings and to pave the way for constructive humanitarian action.

The second problem is that of the International regime of Jerusalem. In this connection, the principles were clearly defined in the General Assembly's Resolution of 11 December 1948. In the first place, the General Assembly decided that the Holy Places must be protected and free access to them guaranteed in accordance with existing rights and historic usage, both in Jerusalem and in all the other areas of Palestine. In the second place, a permanent international regime must be established for the whole area of Jerusalem, a regime separate from the treatment of the other areas of Palestine and placed under the effective control of the United Nations. This international regime is to include in particular the demilitarization of the area and must guarantee to each of the separate groups the maximum local autonomy so far as autonomy is compatible with the special international status.

It is on the basis of these decisions of principle that the Conciliation Commission studied the problem and drew up the proposals which have now been submitted to us. For its part, the French Government is studying them with great care and will state its attitude when the discussion is opened on this topic. In examining these proposals it will be guided by its anxious desire to respect and to put into practice the spirit of the resolution of December 1948, which in this matter constitutes a formal decision of the highest international authority. But, although the aims are clearly defined, the means are

less so. It seems to me that the essential thing is that the solution should be a workable one and that for this reason it should be less concerned to satisfy juridical preferences than to guarantee the practical objectives we have set before us; that it should impose no more than the indispensable obligations and that they should be reasonably acceptable to all the parties concerned . . .

MR. CASTRO (El Salvador)
225th Plenary Meeting, 23 September 1949
A/PV 225

. . . With regard to the problem of the internationalization of the City of Jerusalem and respect for the Holy Places -- which is a matter of grave concern not only to those states which profess the Catholic religion or one of the other Christian faiths, but also to followers of the Islamic and Hebraic religions -- the delegation of El Salvador has always supported the idea of an international Jerusalem. We have defended it on all occasions when it has been discussed, and we shall continue to do so in the hope that such internationalization will be put into effect in order that any domestic conflicts in Jerusalem may be completely solved. Therefore, my delegation will in no way change its stand on this matter or on the two resolutions of the General Assembly, the last of which was adopted in Paris in December 1948 and referred to the internationalization of Jerusalem and the adequate protection to be given to the Holy Places . . .

MR. MALIK (Lebanon)
228th Plenary Meeting, 26th September 1949
A/PV 228

. . . The Palestinian refugees were heartened when they heard the Secretary of State of the United States declare the other day:

"... As an interim measure, the General Assembly should make the necessary provision for the maintenance of these refugees until the time when they can again become self-sustaining members of the Near Eastern communities."

My delegation will place its full knowledge of this tragic problem at the disposal of the General Assembly when it comes up for debate and decision.

While continuing the temporary relief measures, it is imperative for the General Assembly to take effective measures to apply the principles it had formerly affirmed. The problem of the refugees is much more than a humanitarian problem. It cannot be adequately settled by purely relief measures. The ultimate fate of one million human beings should not remain indefinitely undecided; the dignity and self-respect of these men and women cannot be preserved or regained by precarious international charity.

The General Assembly has already committed itself, in its decision of 11 December 1948, to the principles on which the permanent settlement of this problem has to be based: the principle of repatriation for those refugees who desire to return to their homes and live in peace with their neighbours, and the principle of compensation for those of them who choose not to return. There is also the implicit obligation that the General Assembly guarantees to those of them who return to their homes full respect for their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

But these principles have not so far been put into effect. It is therefore incumbent on the General Assembly in this session not only to reaffirm these principles, but also to give them concrete content and definite form and to set up adequate machinery for their implementation. The diversion of attention from these principles will only serve to prolong the agony of these refugees and to intensify the tension and potential struggle in the Near East. It will also bring about a serious deterioration in the social and psychological situation in our part of the world.

Our deep concern for the Palestinian refugees does not blind us to the situation of other refugees in other parts of the world. The International Refugee Organization is dissolving itself next year. I took part three years ago, both in the Economic and Social Council and in the Third Committee of the General Assembly, in the elaboration of the constitution of the International Refugee Organization. It is the opinion of my delegation that some organ capable of taking full care of the needs of these refugees, and especially of the children among them, should be set up at this session of the General Assembly to replace the International Refugee Organization.

I now come to the question of Jerusalem. The task which faces us at the present session in regard to Jerusalem is to give effect to two resolutions of the General Assembly, those of 29 November 1947 and 11 December 1948. Both these resolutions call for the establishment of an international régime for Jerusalem and the surrounding area. This session offers perhaps the last occasion we may have to remove Jerusalem permanently from the danger of further damage or destruction and to satisfy the deepest desires of the Christian world, as expressed repeatedly in recent months by His Holiness the Pope and by many other Catholic spokesmen, as well as by the spiritual leaders of other denominations, for a truly international régime for the Holy City. This is also a unique occasion because, for the first time in History, the Moslem world is freely offering to share the custodianship of one of its most sacred places with the other great world religions. If, therefore, at this historic moment, the Western Christian world should allow itself to be overwhelmed by political considerations and should falter in its determination to place Jerusalem above the struggle of Jew and Arab, I believe history would one day reveal a tragic

bankruptcy in present-day Christian statesmanship. Jerusalem belongs to the whole world, not only to those who live in it. We should fail sorely in our duty toward the international community if we did not grasp this opportunity to realize in Jerusalem a regime in which the rights and interests of Christians, Moslems and Jews are made effective.

The last year has witnessed a war in Palestine in which Jerusalem itself was not spared. The City of Peace is now occupied by the forces of two sovereign States which only a short while ago were at war and may be, for all we can now tell, at war again in the near or distant future. Unless the entire city of Jerusalem with its surrounding areas as laid down in the decisions of the General Assembly to which I have referred, is removed completely and permanently from the jurisdiction of both these States, there can be no guarantee that it will not again be damaged, and perhaps some day altogether destroyed.

Any plan for the internationalization of Jerusalem must, in our view, fulfill the three following conditions: it must eliminate the possibility of the area becoming again a battlefield; it must assure the protection and liberty of access to all Holy Places and religious sites, buildings and institutions; and it must allow and make possible the restoration of private property and public trusts to their rightful owners in accordance with conditions prevailing before the termination of the British Mandate.

In order to fulfill these conditions, the elimination of sovereign authority wielded within Jerusalem by specific States is essential. In its place the international community must exercise its full unrestricted and inalienable sovereignty and authority. Any plan which concerns itself only with the internationalization of specific sites within Jerusalem is not consistent with the intentions of this General Assembly in previous resolutions or with the wishes and interests of the three world religions. There can be no safety or security for Holy Places within Jerusalem unless the whole city is removed from the sovereignty of either party now occupying it.

Our attitude to the plan presented by the Conciliation Commission -- document A/973 -- is governed by the extent to which it fulfills these conditions. Insofar as this plan is vague about the restoration of property in Jerusalem and the surrounding area to its rightful owners, and about the degree of authority to be exercised by the Arabs and the Jews within their respective zones, we believe it demands further clarification and precision; but we shall be willing to take it as a basis for discussion and consideration.

The Palestine Conciliation Commission has had a long session in Lausanne. The eminent French, Turkish and United States members of that Commission merit sincere congratulations for the tact, patience and detachment with which they carried out their very difficult task. The delegation of Lebanon played an active and, I believe, constructive role at the Lausanne conversations. At a certain stage in these conversations, the Arab and Israeli delegations agreed--

perhaps the first agreement among them -- to a certain definite basis for any further useful continuance of the Lausanne discussions. Certain presuppositions were laid down and agreed to as forming the basis for further discussion through the good offices of the Conciliation Commission. I venture to assert that this procedural agreement, bordering in reality at the same time also on the substance of the issue, was one of the most important events in the recent development of the Palestine question. The Israelis have later shown themselves disinclined to abide by that agreement. It is my opinion that if the Israelis declare that what they formally accepted four and a half months ago they are prepared today in good faith to honour, the Conciliation Commission will find itself immediately engaged in^a new significant spurt of hopeful activity.

Since the last session of the General Assembly three developments have occurred which have tended to impart new gleams of hope into the hearts of the people of my country, as also, I am sure, of all the peoples of the Middle East. The first event was the announcement by the President of the United States of his "bold new program" for helping in the development of the less developed areas of the world. Mr. Truman has, in many of his statements since, expressly referred to the Middle East as one of the regions he had in mind in connection with Point Four in his inaugural address. Other United States leaders have also in formal statements associated the Middle East, among other regions, with the President's programme. It is a principle as old as Aristotle that potentiality must depend on actuality for its own realization: what is possible cannot by itself realize itself. Consequently, when vast areas of the world, with immense human and material resources, hear the voice of a great country like the United States proclaiming its determination to help in their development, without the presence of imperialistic undertones, the peoples of these regions have every right to be heartened. We may thus be on the threshold of a new era, one in which increasing numbers of less developed peoples, whose lack of development is partly their own fault, partly the fault of certain historical contingencies, but in no event the unalterable imposition of doom, will be creatively swept into the historical orbit of responsibility and participation. I cannot possibly over-emphasize the potential significance of President Truman's idea.

The second hopeful event has been the elaboration by the Economic and Social Council of a plan for the organization and financing of an expanded co-operative programme of technical assistance for economic development to be to be carried out by the United Nations and the specialized agencies.

During the four years of almost continuous consideration of the question of development by the Economic and Social Council, the delegation of Lebanon played, in our opinion, a very important role in the clarification of the purposes and principles of economic development. In fact we regard our contribution in this field to be second only to our contribution in the field of human rights; it was our delegation which sponsored and defended against much discouraging skepticism the first resolution adopted by the Assembly on technical assistance to under-developed countries, which now stands in our books as Resolution 52 of 14 December 1946.

While in the view of my delegation the plan now presented to the Assembly by the Council is not on a sufficiently large scale and lacks in the boldness which the vast problem of under-development requires, it marks nevertheless an important beginning towards the practical realization of United Nations objectives in this important field. We would like to point out, however, that economic development requires capital investment without which the productivity of the under-developed countries cannot be increased and their standards of living cannot be raised. No amount of technical assistance would bring about economic development if capital resources are not available for investment in productive undertakings in the under-developed countries. The United Nations has not yet fully faced the problem of the enormous gap that exists between the capital resources of the industrialized countries on the one hand and of the under-developed countries on the other. As long as this gap exists, and as long as the flow of capital from the advanced to the under-developed countries is not properly organized, economic development would be governed by the slow evolution of economic processes with no prospect of any appreciable rise in standards of living for decades and even centuries to come. My delegation will pursue its policy of emphasizing that not only in technical assistance but also in the actual financing of schemes of development, the United Nations must play an original, active and constructive role for the promotion of one of the main purposes of the Charter, namely, that of higher standards of living for all peoples.

Another pregnant development is the establishment of the Economic Survey Mission headed by Mr. Gordon Clapp of the Tennessee Valley Authority. Here again the statement by President Truman which accompanied the setting up of this body was encouraging. It appears that the United States will lend both its moral and material support to the conclusions of this mission, conclusions which, it is again and again asserted by responsible authorities, will endeavour to steer as far away from politics as possible.

The Assembly will have occasion later in this session to examine and pass on the recommendations of Mr. Clapp's mission. Every scheme that this eminent American will devise to help us face and solve our ultimate social and economic problems will be most carefully and, I might add, sympathetically examined by

my delegation.

The Arab world is positive in its approach to these problems. The Arab world does not want to be isolated from responsible currents of opinion and action. We recognize fully the presence of genuine good will in many quarters. But what we do require, and I believe rightly, is that no scheme, no matter how otherwise alluring, be offered us at a political price. It is one thing to attack the economic and social problems on their own merit, without preconceived ideas and in a spirit of detachment, in the hope that once they start yielding to expert treatment a favourable psychological climate will be created for tackling the formidable outstanding political issues; it is a totally different thing to proceed in this affair on the assumption that the economic and social can be a substitute for the political, or that the basic political rights of the Arabs can be bought off by economic expedients. The Economic Survey Mission will make an historic contribution of the first magnitude to the cause of peace and progress and concord in the Middle East, and the injustice that has been inflicted on the Arab people will be partially redressed, if the former of these two approaches is strictly, understandingly and farsightedly adhered to.

The implementation of immediate and long-range schemes of economic development throughout the Middle East is certainly one condition for permanent peace in our part of the world. But economic development alone is not sufficient. I believe two other fundamental conditions are necessary for real peace. These conditions would be possible of attainment, if only all powers concerned had time, in these grim and distracting days, to get together and concentrate on our problem. For I cannot escape the tragic observation that our problems are perfectly manageable if it were not for the fact that there are endless other more important claims on people's attention than our own.

In addition to economic development, the sense of deep injustice which rankles in people's hearts must be removed. When this sense embodies itself in literature, in poetry, in folksongs and in tales of horror handed down from parents to children, and when the whole thing is viewed as a world conspiracy between the great powers and the Jews against the Arabs, then it is clear you are dealing with a very difficult situation. Something must be done to restore the balance of justice in the minds of the people and to convince them that the whole world is not against them. Mere economics, no matter how brilliant, will not restore the sense of justice, nor will prosperity alone lift you out of your deep sense of loneliness.

The second condition is the removal of the deep sense of fear. Nothing is more obvious than that Israel, left to herself and to the dynamic forces which she has set in motion, will tend to expand and to dominate the Arab world. It can be extensively shown that this is precisely the desire and the dream of her visionaries. It is very well for the great powers to wash their hands and say: "You must agree with the Israelis: this is your problem, we will not

interfere." But the whole thing, from beginning to end, has been one long series of interferences. To keep on interfering up to a point and then, at the crucial moment when you are most needed to effect a stable equilibrium, to withdraw, is itself, if I may be permitted to utter it, a most cynical form of interference. Peace cannot endure in the Near East in the absence of effective international guarantees against aggression. I believe it is the responsibility of the great powers, with their vast and vital interests in our parts, to provide the necessary and sufficient external political conditions which will make enduring peace possible. . . .

MR. EBAN (Israel)
229th Plenary Meeting, 26 September 1949
A/PV, 229

. . . My Government has had opportunities of intimate contact with the work of the United Nations in this field (mediation and conciliation). Early last month the Security Council was able to endorse the armistice agreement concluded between Israel and its four contiguous neighbours, with the aid of the United Nations Acting Mediator. A pattern of normal and orderly life has grown out of those agreements. The armistice lines do not merely separate armed forces; they mark the clearly defined areas of full civil jurisdiction. The government, the courts, the legislatures, the security authorities of each respective state operate smoothly and unchallenged up to the appropriate armistice line. The agreements themselves commit all their signatories to abide firmly by this provisional settlement until new and final agreements are reached by further negotiation. The United Nations may well find satisfaction in the end of hostilities and the assumption by the interested governments themselves of full responsibility for a final settlement to be attained by peaceful means.

On this occasion I pledge my Government to continue with zeal and perseverance its efforts to reach such a settlement in direct negotiations with the Arab Governments concerned. The lesson of the past year was concisely expressed by Dr. Bunche to the Security Council in the following words: "Once the parties could be brought together they could, with United Nations assistance, be led to reasonable and honourable agreement." Our recent experience has convinced us that it is only by meeting together that the parties are likely to evolve the provisions of a new agreement. It is our hope that the United Nations will make it its main resolve to promote this objective. It is now generally recognized that the Arab States and Israel need a maximum of contact and a minimum of intervention in order to settle the political problems still outstanding between them.

The fact that such a savage and inveterate conflict could be brought to an end and healed by methods of pacific settlement cannot be without significance for the treatment of other conflicts which have baffled this Organization so far. The mediation which brought about the armistice was patient, impartial, detached from the predilections of individual governments, and assiduously addressed to the maintenance of contact between the parties. It may be of some value for the General Assembly to explore whether such principles of conciliation under neutral and mutually accepted auspices might not be applied anew during this current session towards the solution of such acute problems as the relations between the States of the Balkans, and the overriding issue of atomic control.

Among the residual problems of the Palestine conflict two are still in the forefront of international interest. During the second part of the previous session my delegation put forward the view that the refugee problem created by the attack upon Israel could find its solution only in a cooperation regional effort on the part of all the governments concerned. We have not changed our view on the initial responsibility for this great human catastrophe; surely those who decide to initiate military operations cannot wash their hands of all responsibility for helping to dispel the suffering thus created. For this reason we felt it to be both unrealistic and inequitable to require a solution of this problem by exclusive concentration on Israel alone. My government is now gratified to observe a growing consciousness that all the State of the Near East must bend their efforts, each to the limits of its genuine capacity, to contribute towards a rapid solution. Had the resolution adopted on 11 December 1948 laid greater emphasis on the principle of wide regional responsibility, it might have been possible for Israel and the Arab States to find a common approach at Lausanne.

But the humanitarian issues involved in the refugee problem are undoubtedly tragic and grave. Moved by those considerations, and eagerly desirous of creating conditions of cooperation and stability throughout the Near East, my Government, though beset by grave financial problems of its own, has decided to contribute to the United Nations Relief Fund, to reunite Arab families separated by war, and also to undertake a specific commitment for facilitating a solution by a measure of repatriation to be carried out in the context of peaceful relations and as part of a regional programme of resettlement. Israel made these offers before a single one of the Arab States had undertaken any commensurate responsibility on its part. We did so in the hope, thus far unfulfilled, of eliciting a similar response among other governments in the Near East. Having already taken from the shoulders of the international community the major burden of the refugee problem bequeathed by the racial persecutions of Nazism, the Government of Israel has now become the first government to make a tangible offer towards the solution of another humanitarian problem produced by

the military action of other states. In a continuation of this effort my Government is now preparing to cooperate closely with the United Nations Survey Group which is exploring the possibilities of development and resettlement in the Near East. A fuller discussion of this problem may well await the report of that mission.

Our agenda contains another item of vital importance to the relations between the United Nations and its newest member; I refer to the question of Jerusalem and the Holy Places. Earlier this year, when the Jerusalem problem was a subject of profound international interest, the President of Israel made a public pronouncement, to the terms of which my Government still faithfully adheres. He said:

"The Government and people of Israel are conscious of the international interest in the safety of the Holy Places and the right of free access to them. We pledge ourselves to ensure full security for religious institutions in the exercise of their functions; to grant the supervision of the Holy Places by those who hold them sacred; and to encourage and accept the fullest international safeguards and controls for their immunity and protection. Just as we are resolved to give complete and practical expression to the universal interest arising from the Holy Places, so we expect that the international community will understand the direct and inescapable responsibility which Israel bears and exercises in the daily life and administration of Jewish Jerusalem."

On 5 May 1949, when a Committee of this Assembly proceeded to discuss the Jerusalem question in relation to Israel's obligations under Article 4 of the Charter, I was instructed to develop these principles by advocating the establishment by the United Nations of international agencies extending over the whole city but "concerned exclusively with the control and protection of Holy Places and sites."

It will thus be seen that we regard the Jerusalem problem as composed of two elements. First, there is the responsibility of the United Nations for ensuring that Holy Places and sites are reverently preserved and that religious institutions are assured full liberty in the exercise of their functions. The other purpose, no less valid, and for the Government of Israel not one whit less compelling, is the need to assure the Jewish population of the city the full enjoyment of its democratic political rights in association with the only government to which it is now prepared to offer its allegiance. We see no incompatibility between these two purposes. Conflict can arise only if there is an unjustified encroachment by one upon the other. Thus, if the political aspirations of Israel and of Jerusalem's population were carried to the point of repudiating the concern of the United Nations for the safeguarding of Holy

Places and sites, there might be an encroachment upon a universal religious interest. No such eventuality will ever take place. On the other hand, if the United Nations were to impose upon the population of Jerusalem any burden or deprivation not strictly related to the satisfaction of universal religious interests, an encroachment would take place upon cherished political freedoms.

It must be remembered that the safeguarding of Holy Places and the religious rights has always been the exclusive justification of any measure of international supervision. The resolution of 11 December itself does not make an unconditional demand for "separate treatment" or "effective United Nations control" in Jerusalem. It recommends separate treatment and effective international control explicitly "with a view to Jerusalem's religious associations". Once full provision has been made for the satisfaction of those religious associations under United Nations supervision, the international and religious aspects of the problem will have been settled and we shall be left only with a problem of political relations in Jerusalem, to be solved in accordance with the principle of self-determination and by the method of conciliation.

It would be a disservice to realistic investigation to ignore the exact relationship existing between the Jews of Jerusalem and the State of Israel at this time; for that relationship must profoundly effect the task of the General Assembly in the Jerusalem question. The situation may be briefly described. When a law is promulgated in Israel, the Jews of Jerusalem obey it. When a tax is levied in Israel, the Jews of Jerusalem pay it. When the parliamentary institutions of Israel are elected, the Jews of Jerusalem help to elect them and participate in their operation. When civil or criminal mitigation arises in Jerusalem, it is to the courts of Israel alone that the Jews of Jerusalem take their case. The coinage and stamps of Jewish Jerusalem are the coinage and stamps of Israel. The slowly reviving economy of Jerusalem is sustained and nourished from the State of Israel, which provides from its own resources all the social services of the new city -- its health, its education, its water supply and its social welfare. The language and religion, the cultural sentiment and national allegiance of the Jews of Jerusalem are those which they hold in common with the State of Israel and its people. There is thus no link uniting a citizen of Paris to the Republic of France; there is no bond between a citizen of London and the United Kingdom which does not exist at this time between a Jew in Jerusalem and the State of Israel. For in modern society no man, however conscious of civic pride, feels complete in the limits of a purely municipal allegiance; he must reach out to identify himself with a wider political and social culture. In this respect, too, the Jewish citizens of Jerusalem are as those of all other cities.

Yet there is one particular aspect in which the link between Jewish Jerusalem and the State of Israel has an altogether special strength. In 1947 the United Nations, having undertaken full responsibility, both for the religious and secular life of Jerusalem, declined to carry^{out} any responsibility for either one of the two. Jerusalem fell into siege and famine. Its population underwent a martyrdom unknown in post-biblical times, while the international community looked on for several months helpless and inert. Men, women and children fell by the hundreds, both in the city's defence and in its relief. At critical moments both its water and food supplies were cut off with no hope of replenishment. If this situation had endured for a matter of days, there would have overtaken every living Jew in Jerusalem an annihilation more total and complete than the most effective and devastating bombardment can ever inflict. Salvation came from one quarter alone. The State of Israel, struggling against dire odds for very survival itself, girded all its strength to throw a lifeline to the beleaguered city, reopening its communication and saving it from dreadful strangulation. Every man, woman and child in Jewish Jerusalem today can thus ascribe the very fact of his physical survival directly and concretely to the State of Israel and its Government. It is not surprising therefore that they are ready to give their loyalty and cooperation to that Government alone.

Thus the situation in Jerusalem today is both a cause and a consequence of the city's rescue and pacification; and it rests firmly upon valid armistice agreements fully entered into by the parties and endorsed by the Security Council. It is therefore a legal situation and not merely an accomplished fact. This connection between Israel and Jerusalem does not interfere in the slightest degree with the desire and the duty of the United Nations to undertake responsibilities for safeguarding the Holy Places and sites.

The fact that such firm patterns of authority and government already exist in Jerusalem makes it imperative for the United Nations to seek a solution in harmony with established and legitimate interests. Indeed, in its Second Progress Report presented to the General Assembly on 19 April 1949, the Palestine Conciliation Commission wrote that it was endeavouring to "formulate proposals in conformity with the resolution of 11 December which would at the same time be acceptable to both parties." Yet the Commission has since apparently reached the conclusion that the consent of the parties is not an important or even a relevant consideration. The General Assembly may not be aware of the remarkable fact that the plan presented by the Commission in document A/973 was never discussed with the Government of Israel, which now administers almost the entire new City of Jerusalem, and does not arise out of any consultation with it. Nor was it at any time the subject of negotiation with representatives of the population of Jerusalem.

This procedural disregard of the opinion of the authorities and population directly concerned is unfortunately reflected in the substantive proposals themselves. The plan sets up organs of government as though Jerusalem had no government; it establishes courts as though Jerusalem has no courts; it makes detailed arrangements for the control of public services as though Jerusalem were now living in anarchy; it replaces independent institutions resting upon consent with new institutions having no roots in the City and no duty of response to democratic processes. Not one of these administrative councils is really necessary for the protection of the Holy Places; not one of these courts has duties essentially related to the religious associations of the City. The whole administrative superstructure which would revolutionize the budget of this Organization, is not relevant to the primary objectives of the United Nations in Jerusalem.

Moreover, by dispensing with any effort to reach consent, the Commission sometimes collides sharply with the devout political and religious conscience of the population. Thus, for example, we have a proposal in Article 5 whereby Jews might be forbidden to take up residence in Jerusalem on the ground of being Jews. My Government knows this General Assembly too well to believe that there is a chance of such a proposal being adopted, and we have no real feeling of alarm. We know this Organization will not put up a notice "no more Jews wanted" at the gates of the Holy City, which was made illustrious in history through the spiritual experience of the Jewish people, wherefrom there branched off the great streams of Christianity and Islam. Yet the fact that such a proposal could be made shows how urgent it is to begin formulating the Jerusalem policy of the United Nations anew, in close association with the peoples and interests involved.

Finally, a similar criticism can be made of the proposal for demilitarization, which fails to take account of two facts. In the first place, the simultaneous dismissal of Jewish and Arab forces from Jerusalem would not create equal security for both parts of the City. It would put the entire City once more back in the situation which nearly produced its downfall last year -- back to the mercy of Arab forces which, by the facts of geography, would then be free to surround it from three sides. The demilitarization programme also conflicts with the armistice agreement which exclusively governs the security situation in the whole Jerusalem area, including the disposition and reduced size of armed forces.

Irrespective of its strong feelings on the Commission's Report, my delegation will work earnestly and constructively in this Assembly in search of a practical and final definition of United Nations responsibilities on one hand and those of the Government of Israel on the other. We shall pursue a solution

securing both the interests and concerns of the world religions and the United Nations and the aspirations of the people of Jerusalem to assure their government and security in conformity with their national allegiance. We are already encouraged by some principles put forward in the general debate. The Foreign Minister of the Netherlands rightly ascribed primary importance to the protection of the Holy Places and the need for an agreed solution. The eminent Foreign Minister of France carried this discussion into new and constructive channels by concisely emphasizing three factors: the importance of carrying out the practical objectives of the United Nations without undue insistence on "juridical preferences"; the need to avoid imposing obligations not strictly indispensable; and the desirability of seeking the consent of the population concerned.

My delegation will propose that the General Assembly should limit the commitment of the United Nations to the safeguarding of Holy Places and initiate such formal agreements as may be necessary between the United Nations and the State of Israel for the implementation of those safeguards. My Government aspires to full international recognition of the political status of the Government of Israel in Jerusalem.

A solution along these lines would have the following advantages over that proposal by the Commission; it would rest on consent and therefore present no problem of implementation or enforcement; it would terminate the long period of doubt and potential conflict that has already lasted too long; it would be financially and administratively feasible; and it would simultaneously give complete satisfaction to the interests of the great world religions and of the people of Jerusalem. In these conditions, an era of peace and development would descend upon the Holy City, while the United Nations would stand forth as the ultimate and accepted guarantor of its religious immunity . . .