

UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE

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THE CONCERNMENT OF THE COMMISSION
WITH THE INCIDENTS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND SYRIA

(Working paper prepared by the Secretariat)

The Conciliation Commission, although not officially seized of the question, has followed with interest and concern the recent developments in the demilitarized zone between Israel and Syria, bearing in mind its instructions from the General Assembly to assist the Governments and authorities concerned to achieve a final settlement of all questions outstanding between them.

As this particular question outstanding between Israel and Syria is at present being handled by the Security Council and the Chief of Staff of the Truce Supervision Organization, it was not placed on the Commission's agenda, but the members of the Commission, separately and together, took steps to keep themselves informed of the situation and thus to ensure that the assistance of the Commission would be available if and when required.

Among the steps taken in that direction were various informal discussions between members of the Commission and officials of the governments concerned and an informal conversation, on 3 May, between the members of the Commission and the Acting Chief of Staff with the object of gaining information on the background and the political implications of the Syria-Israel crisis, which the Acting Chief of Staff has termed a "grave" one.

In that connection, the members of the Commission also studied a Note prepared by the Principal Secretary (W/65) drawing their attention to aspects of the Israel-Syrian incidents which were of interest to the Commission, and an Addendum to

that note (W/65/ADD.1) setting forth the pertinent texts of resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council.

The Commission might wish to formulate certain general conclusions reached by its members in the course of the informal steps outlined above. Such conclusions, it is suggested, might include the following :

1. It is desirable that the closest possible liaison be maintained or re-established between the Commission and the Chief of Staff of the Truce Supervision Organisation, keeping in mind the Security Council resolution of 11 August 1949, which provides that the Commission be informed by the Chief of Staff of all developments affecting its work.
2. Incidents between Israel and her neighbours, arising out of the General Armistice Agreements, might possibly assume proportions or involve political aspects beyond the scope of the Agreements themselves. It is therefore necessary for the Commission to watch developments carefully so as to be in a position to decide at a given moment whether such developments make it desirable for the Commission to offer its assistance to the parties with a view to the solution of this outstanding question.
3. The Commission is deeply conscious of the fact that the General Armistice Agreements, concluded in the spring and summer of 1949, were envisaged not as permanent instruments but as instruments "to facilitate the transition from the present truce to permanent peace in Palestine" - a task which has been entrusted to the Conciliation Commission by the General Assembly - and that the provisions of these Armistice Agreements have been "dictated exclusively by military, and not by political considerations."
4. In view of the factors outlined in paragraphs 2 and 3 above, the Commission recognizes that developments arising out of the implementation of the Armistice Agreements might at any time in the future indicate the desirability of supplementing one or other of the Armistice Agreements by engagements dictated not exclusively by military, but also by political considerations. It also notes that the Armistice Agreements themselves provide for the possibility of revision

by mutual consent of the parties.

5. The Commission considers that under its terms of reference it is bound to hold itself in readiness at any time to offer its assistance to the parties if any of these contingencies should arise and to propose to them means of reinforcing the existing Agreements by the introduction of machinery designed to take into account political as well as military considerations.
