



SUMMARY RECORD OF FOURTEENTH MEETING OF THE  
UNITED NATIONS PALESTINE COMMISSION

Lake Success, New York,  
Tuesday, 20 January 1948, at 3.00 p.m.

## Present:

Chairman:	Mr. MEDINA	(Bolivia)
Members:	Mr. Federspiel	(Denmark)
	Mr. Morgan	(Panama)
	Mr. Roxas	(Philippines)
	(Observer for Mr. Francisco)	
Secretariat:	Mr. Sobolev	(Assistant Secretary-General)
	Mr. Bunche	(Secretary)

CONSIDERATION OF WORKING PAPER ON "ESTABLISHMENT BY THE COMMISSION OF ARAB AND JEWISH PROVISIONAL COUNCILS OF GOVERNMENT" ([document A/AC.21/W.5](#))

With regard to the first two paragraphs of the working paper the opinion was expressed that the Commission should exert every effort to establish contacts with democratic parties and other representative organizations in Palestine. Discussion ensued on the question of contact with all such parties and organizations and the nature of the credentials of the Jewish Agency for Palestine.

The SECRETARY pointed out that the Jewish Agency had been accorded at least tacit recognition as the spokesman of the Palestinian Jews in previous United Nations consideration of the Palestinian Question.

The Commission felt that it might be useful to establish the principle of accepting and examining credentials and to apply it to all bodies which would appear before it. Such a system would enable the Commission to determine the strength and influence of political parties and other bodies and would also help in avoiding constitutional difficulties arising out of heavily divided electorates. The Jewish Agency was to be asked by the Secretary to submit the necessary information. Reference was made to a despatch from Jerusalem in the *Herald Tribune* of Monday, 19 January 1948, that some members of the Secretariat might be admitted by the Mandatory Power into Palestine to familiarize themselves with the machinery of government before the arrival of the Commission. It was proposed that the possibility of taking such a step should be discussed with the Secretary-General.

The SECRETARY pointed out that he had learned from British sources that members of the Secretariat who might be sent in advance to Palestine might be permitted to work in the same offices with their British opposite numbers. But he felt that such members of the Secretariat would have no power to act and that their presence might provide the excuse that the Commission had had ample time to prepare to take over administrative responsibilities from the Mandatory Power even though the Commission itself would not be welcome until two weeks before the termination of the Mandate. He felt that the Secretariat might become something of a scape-goat on whom all the blame for the inevitable difficulties which would be experienced during the transitional period might be put. Moreover, he thought that the premature arrival of some members of the Secretariat without any authority to act might have adverse psychological effects on the Palestinian population with regard to the effectiveness of the Commission.

The SECRETARY informed the Commission that Sir Alexander Cadogan would be prepared to attend its meeting the following day in order to discuss the problem of immigration; to raise certain issues confronting the Mandatory Power for the consideration of the Commission; and to give some information on what the Palestinian Arabs were planning to do in relation to the Commission's work.

The question was raised as to whether the figures giving the numerical strength of the various Jewish parties included new immigrants and other persons who had not acquired full citizenship. Reference to pages 6 and 11 of [document A/AC.21/W.5](#) showed that the figures embraced all Jews.

Mr. SOBOLEV (Assistant Secretary-General) informed the Commission that he had discussed informally with Sir Alexander Cadogan the likelihood of some members of the Secretariat being permitted by the Palestinian Government to go to Palestine and to start a partial taking-over of the administration. Sir Alexander Cadogan had described the statements published by the *Herald Tribune* as premature. He thought that some members of the Secretariat might be permitted to precede the Commission into Palestine to observe the trend of developments. Mr. Sobolev doubted whether, in view of the political and other risks involved, a decision to send a group of Secretariat observers to Palestine would be worthwhile.

The Commission considered that it would be more useful if the members of the Secretariat, who might precede the Commission, could be associated with administrative duties and be permitted to start preparatory work for the establishment of the Provisional Councils of Government. Failing this, they still felt that it might be worthwhile to have observers on the spot to report on the various phases of current development.

It was pointed out that the Commission had not reached a stage in its work which would enable it to submit precise instructions to officers who might be sent in advance. Moreover, the presence of such officers in Palestine could not be kept secret and the political and psychological consequences of the decision to send them would be very serious.

The proposal was made that the Commission should try to establish contact with Arabs who might be inclined to co-operate in the Partition Plan.

The SECRETARY pointed out that such individual Arabs or groups would almost certainly need to be protected against reprisals.

It was observed that that would require a police force greatly in excess of that which might constitute an effective escort force Commission.

The Commission decided to raise the following issues during their conference with the United Kingdom representative:

1. The likelihood of the Mandatory Power permitting an advance group of members of the Secretariat to be sent to Palestine.
2. The extent to which the Mandatory Power would be prepared to allow such members of the Secretariat and a limited number of local inhabitants to work in the same offices with their British opposite numbers in order to enable them to familiarize themselves with the administrative machinery.
3. The extent to which the Mandatory Power would be willing to arrange for a partial taking-over of the control of the administrative machinery and the assumption of executive responsibilities by the personnel of the Secretariat.

#### CONSIDERATION OF WORKING PAPER ON "RELATIONS WITH THE PROVISIONAL COUNCILS AND ESTABLISHMENT BY THE LATTER OF ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANS OF GOVERNMENT" ( [A/AC.21/W.6](#) )

The question was raised as to the significance of the dates mentioned in the [Plan for Partition](#). Mr. Sobolev (Assistant Secretary-General) pointed out that the Mandatory Power had undertaken to use its "best endeavors" to help in the implementation of sub-paragraph 3, paragraph 2, Section A of Part I of the Plan. It had assumed only moral obligation to assist in the realization of the various phases of the [Plan](#) and in such a way as not to disturb the normal functioning of the Administration. The only two dates which were binding on the Mandatory Power were 15 May and 1 August 1948.

It was observed that the [Plan](#) had not provided for a specific interval between the assumption of administrative responsibility by the Commission and its transfer to the Provisional Councils of Government. The interpretation of the references to administrative responsibility during the transitional period had to be determined because it would influence the size of the staff of the Commission.

The Commission interpreted the [Plan](#) to mean that on the termination of the Mandate the Provisional Councils of Government would assume responsibility for actual administration and that the Commission would be charged with the supervision of administration until the realization of complete independence by the States.

It was further observed that paragraph 8, Section B of Part I did not draw a sufficiently sharp distinction between the functions of the Police Force and the Militia.

The Commission thought that it might be possible to take over the Palestine Police Force in order to avoid the eventuality of entrusting the maintenance of internal law and order to the Militia.

It was pointed out that on the termination of the Mandate the Palestine Police Force might cease to exist and that the use of the Militia, at least temporarily, for the maintenance of internal law and order might prove unavoidable.

The Commission also realized that the likelihood of securing the Services of some of the experienced officers or the Palestine Administration would depend on the policy of secondment adopted by the United Kingdom Government.

The Commission decided to discuss the question of a transfer of the Palestine Police Force to the Commission on the termination of the Mandate, and the likelihood of the Commission being able to secure the services of some of the experienced officers or the Palestine Administration on secondment from the British Colonial Service.

The meeting rose at 5.00 p.m.

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