



UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE
SUMMARY RECORD OF A MEETING BETWEEN
THE CONCILIATION COMMISSION AND THE
DELEGATIONS OF THE ARAB STATES
 held in New York on Tuesday
 14 November 1949, at 11 a.m.

Present:	Mr. Yalcin	(Turkey)	Chairman
	Mr. de Boisanger	(France)	
	Mr. Palmer	(U.S.A.)	
	Dr. Azcarate		Principal Secretary
	H.E. Abdel Monem Mostafa Bey		Representative of Egypt
	H.E. Fawzi Pasha Mulki		Representative of the Hashemite Jordan Kingdom
	Mr. Edward Ghorra		Representative of Lebanon
	Mr. Ahmad Shoukairi		Representative of Syria

The CHAIRMAN recalled that the Commission was under obligation to report to the General Assembly regarding the attitude of the parties in the matter of protection of the Holy Places outside Jerusalem, and asked whether the Arab delegations had anything to add to their previous statements.

MOSTAFA BEY (Egypt) wished first to extend a welcome, on behalf of himself and his colleagues, to the new United States representative on the Commission. He considered the appointment of Mr. Palmer significant both because of his long experience and close connection with the Middle East, and because of the important role which had always been played in the development of the Palestine question by the United States, which, like the Arab States, was deeply desirous of seeing peace restored. If implementation of the General Assembly's [resolution of 11 December 1948](#) had not yet been achieved, the reason lay in the intransigence of the other party, and he hoped that the United States Government would use its great influence to dissolve that intransigence. When the Arab States had signed, with the Commission, the [Protocol of 12 May 1949](#), their attitude had been influenced by the statements of United States policy toward Palestine set forth in an address by Dr. Jessup before the First Committee during the third regular session of the General Assembly, and in a telegram from President Truman to King Abdullah of Transjordan. The Arab States were entitled to consider those statements of policy as a "Gentleman's agreement" binding upon the United States. The Arab Governments were deeply disappointed at the lack of action taken on the refugee problem, a problem that was becoming more difficult with increasing Jewish immigration into Palestine; he recalled also his statement before the Commission concerning the annexation of Jaffa to Tel Aviv, on which the Commission had as yet taken no action. The Israeli policy of the *fait accompli* required firm action, not appeasement, by the United Nations; he was convinced that the United States had the means at its disposal to produce such necessary action. He again assured the Commission of the continued collaboration of the Arab States, whose attitude would continue to be a reasonable one as in the past.

As regards the question of the Holy Places, Mostafa Bey pointed out that the Commission's draft declaration combined two elements, first, a request for the maintenance of the *status quo* as regards the Holy Places, and secondly, certain references to the provisions of the Commission's [draft Instrument](#) for Jerusalem. The Arab delegation had no objection to the first element, which was in agreement with their own verbal declaration before the Commission, and they were willing to furnish a written declaration along those lines. They did, however, object to inclusion of the second element in the same declaration, since the final disposition of the [draft Instrument](#), as well as the arrangements to be made for Jerusalem, were still in doubt.

Mr. PALMER thanked the Egyptian representative for his cordial words of welcome. It was true that the United States was deeply preoccupied with the Palestine problem, owing to its long-standing interest in the Middle East and the education and social well-being of its people. As regards his Government's influence in the matter, however, he stressed the fact that he was acting as the representative of one Government participating in a Commission created by the United Nations, and that each Government represented on that Commission was responsible to the United Nations. He himself had many happy personal associations with the Middle East and with Palestine, and he assured the Arab delegations that, profiting by the experience of his colleagues, he would do his utmost to help achieve a fair and equitable solution of the problem in the interests of the inhabitants of the area.

Mr. SHOUKAIRI (Syria) joined the Egyptian representative in welcoming the new American representative, whose experience and keen mind would be of great assistance to the Commission and the delegations. He expressed his satisfaction that the American delegation on the Commission now had a permanent chief.

With regard to the Holy Places, he supported the opinion of the Egyptian representative that it was essential in the present case to separate the question of Jerusalem from that of the Holy Places outside the Jerusalem area. The Jerusalem question was still pending and might not be settled for some time; the settlement of the other, less complicated question should not be made dependent upon it. Moreover, he pointed out that paragraph 7 of the [resolution of 11 December 1948](#) gave the Commission the right to call upon the parties for formal declarations only concerning protection of the Holy Places outside Jerusalem. The Arab delegations were empowered to make such a declaration, and only that; he hoped that it would be satisfactory to the Commission.

As regards the role which the United States could and, he felt, should play in the settlement of the Palestine problem, he drew attention to the achievements of the United States in the Middle East in the field of education and charitable work. It was largely American teaching which led the Arab States to demand their full rights in the present situation. While admitting that all Member Governments of the United Nations were responsible to the United Nations, he thought it impossible to ignore the reality of the great influence wielded by the United States in the United Nations. To a large extent Israel owed its creation and its existence to American support. It was Israel's duty, however, to pay its debt by showing respect for the [resolution](#) of the United Nations. The contribution which the United States could make in the matter could not be underestimated; if the United States would use its influence to exert pressure upon the rebellious party in the dispute, the problem would be quickly solved.

MULKI PASHA (Hashemite Jordan Kingdom) added his own words of welcome to the new American representative, whose experience and understanding of the Middle East would be a great asset to the Commission. He was sure that the Arab delegations had never been found lacking in cooperation and willingness to express their views; if they had occasionally taken positions from which they could not depart; he was confident that the Commission had understood the situation. He hoped that a successful conclusion of the Commission's conciliatory efforts would not now be long delayed.

As regards the Holy Places, he pointed out that the Arab delegations had certain definite views concerning the future of Jerusalem, which would be made known at the proper time to the competent organ of the United Nations. Protection of the Holy Places had always been the policy of the Arab Governments. In view of the fact, however, that the terms of the Commission's [draft declaration](#) appeared to make the future of Jerusalem interdependent with that of the Holy Places outside the area, the Arab delegations must now request that the two problems be separated. He proposed that the Arab delegations should submit to the Commission a re-draft of the Commission's [declaration](#), in the light of the statements already made by them.

MR. GHORRA (Lebanon) supported the remarks of his colleagues regarding the declaration on the Holy Places; he would be willing to sign the Commission's declaration if re-drafted along the lines just suggested.

Mr. Ghorra expressed his delegation's pleasure at the appointment of Mr. Palmer, and was confident that his knowledge of Arab affairs and his sympathetic understanding of the people of the Middle East would help to bring about the just settlement sought by all. He paid tribute to the work of many distinguished Americans in the Middle East, and particularly in his own country, as a symbol of the happy results achieved through cooperation between the United States and the Arab world.

The CHAIRMAN observed that the Commission, in drafting the [declaration](#) submitted to the Israeli and Arab delegations, had considered that it was adhering to the spirit and letter of the [resolution](#). The Arab delegations were entitled to make whatever reservations they wished, but the Commission would be glad to receive their reply at the earliest possible moment, for prompt submission to the General Assembly.

In reply to a question from Mr. SHOUKAIRI (Syria) regarding the Commission's interpretation of paragraph 7 of the [resolution](#), Mr. de BOISANGER explained that although the Commission had interpreted that paragraph in the way which seemed to it correct, the Commission could understand the desire of the Arab delegations not to make a settlement of the question of the Holy Places outside Jerusalem dependent upon settlement of the Jerusalem question. In those circumstances, although the Commission did not wish to revise its own draft, it had no objection to the Arab delegation presenting a new draft, retaining only such parts of the original text as they could approve.

MOSTAFA BEY (Egypt) observed that the Arab delegations had already prepared such a text, which would be submitted in the course of the afternoon. He then asked whether the Commission had taken any action regarding the matter of Jaffa-Tel Aviv.

The CHAIRMAN explained that the Commission had not felt that it could take any action on the basis of press reports, and had accordingly requested official information from its representative in Jerusalem.

MOSTAFA BEY (Egypt) had a comment to make regarding the juridical nature of the Commission. He recalled that when the Commission had first come into existence, he had maintained the view that members of the Commission, being engaged in an international task, should not receive instructions from their respective Governments. His opinion, however, was not shared by the Principal Secretary. He therefore, considered himself satisfied in calling attention to the paramount importance of the influence of the United States, which was a fact which must be recognized and in asking why the Jews had not been forced to adhere to the terms of the resolution.

The CHAIRMAN, while agreeing that United States influence was an unquestionable reality, re-affirmed the fact that the Commission was a United Nations body composed of three Governments, and must work under the terms of the [resolution](#) which had created it and conferred upon it its powers. The Commission had no power to enforce the return of the refugees but only to make recommendations. It had pursued its task to the best of its ability, and would continue to do so during the new phase, that of mediation.

Mr. DE BOISANGER added that the Commission was clearly defined in the [resolution](#), as composed of three States Members of the United Nations; their representatives could not act in their own capacity. Action was taken by the Governments, not in their own name, but in the name of the United Nations and in the interests of the international community.

MOSTAFA BEY (Egypt) affirmed that no misunderstanding existed as regards the nature and obligations of the Commission.

The meeting rose 1 p.m.