



Thursday, 10 January 1952, at 10.30 a.m.

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Chairman : Mr. Selim SÄRPER (Turkey).

**Palestine : (a) Report of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine (A/1985, A/AC.53/L.22, A/AC.53/L.24) ; (b) Assistance to Palestine refugees : Report of the Director of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine refugees in the Near East (A/1905, A/1905/Add.1) (*continued*).**

[Item 24]\*

1. Mr. KYROU (Greece) said that Greece's interest in the Palestine question was based not only on considerations of geographical proximity, religion, history and politics, but equally on humanitarian grounds. The Committee was responsible for the fate of hundreds of thousands of refugees, and it would be unrealistic to believe that a final settlement could be achieved which ignored that side of the problem.

2. Mr. Kyrou had studied the report of the Conciliation Commission (A/1985) with some concern. It was regrettable that the Commission's efforts had been unsuccessful and that no progress had been made towards the desired objectives. The problem remained to be solved in its entirety, and the discussions in the *Ad Hoc* Political Committee had done little to render it less acute. It was in any event doubtful whether in the prevailing political and psychological atmosphere in the Near East the Conciliation Commission's efforts could be expected to produce constructive results. It might be dangerous to take any active steps forthwith, and perhaps it would be preferable to allow time to do its work.

3. The situation would not be remedied until a satisfactory solution, in accordance with the resolutions adopted by the United Nations, had been found for the refugee problem. Greece shared the apprehensions

of the Arab countries on that subject, not only because, of the age-old friendship which linked their countries, but because it had itself experienced, during the last thirty-two years, all the bitter tragedy of persecution. There could, however, be no final solution of the problem so long as some parties refused to reckon with the existence of the State of Israel, whose people had given the world some of the greatest men in the history of civilization. He hoped that in its relations with its Arab neighbours the Government of Israel would show a spirit of conciliation ; such an attitude would enhance its prestige.

4. The Greek representative still hoped that the causes of the present friction between the Arab States and Israel would be removed in the not too distant future. His confidence was based on the example of the happy development of relations between Greece and Turkey. For centuries, the two nations had been kept separated by disputes which had seemed irreconcilable and which had led to many bloody conflicts ; but today they were following the same road and sharing the same ideals of peace and progress. That happy change had not been due to resolutions adopted by any international body or to action taken by an international commission. It was the outcome of a period of evolution during which the two nations had taken thought, and had come to realize that transcending any ephemeral reasons for dispute there were more lasting and more important interests which called for their collaboration.

5. Mr. Kyrou did not wish his statement to be construed as an attempt to minimize the worth of the Conciliation Commission ; on the contrary, the Greek Government paid tribute to the Commission and fully recognized the valuable part it had played. The importance of the Commission's functions could not be affected by the location of its headquarters. But the Palestine problem, for all its urgency, should not be dealt with precipitately. The Conciliation Commission could not

\* Indicates the item number on the General Assembly agenda.

exercise effective influence until the present distrust had given place to goodwill and mutual understanding; he hoped that such an atmosphere might be created as soon as possible.

6. Mr. HOOD (Australia) said that the statement by the Syrian representative at the 35th meeting had made it clear that it was not the task of the *Ad Hoc* Political Committee to negotiate or investigate, and that the Committee was not required once again to go into all the issues associated with the Palestine problem or to pronounce a fresh judgment of the question. On the contrary, it had to review what had been done to carry out the earlier directives and recommendations of the General Assembly, and decide, if possible, what further action was required. The discussions which had taken place so far had helped to explain the Conciliation Commission's lack of success, but the essential object of the debate was still that of deciding what methods would be likely, at the present stage, to give effect to recommendations already made by the General Assembly.

7. In 1948, after studying very carefully the relations between Israel and the Arab States in all their aspects, the General Assembly had set up a special commission to which it had assigned the task of conciliation. The discussions which had preceded that decision had been exhaustive, and it was doubtful whether it would be of any advantage to the Committee to repeat them. Moreover, the Conciliation Commission's report explained that body's view of the reasons for its failure. It would thus appear that the most fruitful procedure would be to use the report as a starting point and to go on to consider what action should be taken. The Governments of the States adjacent to Israel were, of course, entitled to state their views once again on the consequences arising from the creation of the State of Israel, which in its turn was entitled to reply; but such a debate was unlikely to be profitable, since it was not the Committee's function to alter decisions taken by the General Assembly in 1948. The Assembly had clearly stated its intentions: it had invited the Governments concerned to endeavour to settle themselves any questions in dispute, with the assistance of the Conciliation Commission and in accordance with the general directives given them. The Assembly's views had not changed, and since the basic facts of the situation remained unaltered, the problem was still to decide what methods would be likely to promote a settlement.

8. The situation in Palestine concerned not only two but three parties, the third being the United Nations. All Member States had the duty of ensuring respect for the authority of the United Nations in the matter. In deciding first to establish and then to continue the Conciliation Commission, the General Assembly had not only instructed the Commission to help the States parties to the dispute to settle the problem, but had also called on the Governments concerned to seek agreement independently, to co-operate with the Commission and to take all possible steps to ensure the execution of General Assembly resolution 194 (III). Those decisions had not been lightly taken. The fact that no progress had been made along the lines indicated by the resolution in no way absolved the Governments

concerned of the injunction laid on them. As long as the position of the parties remained unchanged, the Assembly could not abate its concern. Far from abandoning its responsibilities because the situation had not developed as it had wished, the United Nations should emphasize that the directives it had given retained all their force.

9. Those were the considerations which had motivated the draft resolution jointly submitted by France, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States (A/AC.53/L.22). That draft resolution enjoined the Governments concerned, in even more explicit terms than in the past, to seek a settlement of the problem between themselves. That fundamental recommendation reflected the Assembly's position in the matter, and must be respected if the authority of the Assembly was to be upheld. The outcome of the debate might be that delegations would expect the Governments concerned to appreciate the emphasis of the General Assembly's recommendation, to which the joint draft resolution rightly gave particular importance. In the present circumstances that was as far as the Committee could go in asserting the authority of the United Nations.

10. With regard to the assistance which the United Nations might give to facilitate the settlement of the problem, further measures were, however, possible. The joint draft resolution therefore provided for the continuance, in a slightly modified form, of the Conciliation Commission. It also added one highly important new element: that the Conciliation Commission should be authorized to designate a representative or representatives to assist it in carrying out its functions. Such a representative or representatives could operate in a way in which the Commission was not free to do; for example, he would be able to make his own private contacts with the Governments concerned. That was of great practical importance, and, like the draft resolution as a whole, was supported by the Australian delegation.

11. Mr. Hood could not agree with the Israel representative's view that all the necessary means for further conciliation could be found through the existing machinery of the Security Council or the establishment of a good offices body, since the effect of such procedure would be to push the General Assembly into the background. He hoped that the Israel representative would reconsider his position and pointed out that the Conciliation Commission would be the equivalent of a good offices body. It could not be too strongly emphasized that the Governments concerned should seek between themselves the means for settlement, and the Australian delegation hoped that such a settlement would soon be achieved.

12. Mr. TSARAPKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) recalled that at the time when the Conciliation Commission was established, the interests of peace and the importance of the task assigned to the Commission had demanded that its members should be selected with the greatest care, in order to guarantee the Commission's objectivity, impartiality

and authority, and to win for it the confidence of the peoples directly concerned in the solution of the Palestine problem. For that reason the USSR delegation had proposed that the Commission's members should be chosen in accordance with the principle of equitable geographical distribution, as laid down in the Charter, and that the representatives of the great Powers, such as the United States, should be excluded from it.

13. However, the United States and the Anglo-American bloc, wishing to gain direct control of the affairs of Palestine and the Middle East, had imposed upon the Assembly a commission composed of the representatives of the United States, France and Turkey. A commission of that kind boded no good, and its actions had confirmed such fears. In the Commission's earliest days, the representatives of the Anglo-American bloc had proposed the annulment of the draft resolution adopted by the First Committee and had submitted for the General Assembly's approval the paragraph by which the Conciliation Commission was requested to promote the establishment of friendly relations between the Government of Israel, the Palestine Arabs and the Governments of the Arab States. That amendment (A/789), submitted by Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Brazil, Colombia, France and the representative of the Kuomintang group, had been strongly supported by the United States and United Kingdom delegations. The USSR delegation, on the other hand, had denounced the proposal, which revealed the real aims of the United States, the United Kingdom and other States that had an interest in maintaining disorder in Palestine. Thus, the Conciliation Commission had in fact been released from the responsibility of re-establishing normal conditions in Palestine and its work had been so directed that three years of activity had resulted in complete failure. The efforts of the United States and the United Kingdom had been aimed at serving not the interests either of Israel or of the Arab States, but selfish interests alone. The United States and the United Kingdom were seeking to lay hands on the oil and other wealth of the Near and Middle East and to establish their dominion in that area. It was time that the countries involved understood that the imperialist and colonial Powers were no longer in a position to exercise sway over the under-developed countries and to bend the populations of those countries to their will.

14. The attitude of United States ruling circles to the Middle East was reflected in an article in the *Wall Street Journal* of 3 November 1951, which pointed out that domination of the Middle East signified domination of the whole world. Such an admission clearly showed that for United States ruling circles the Middle East was the principal objective of an imperialist policy aiming at gaining world domination for the United States. Indeed, men in official positions in the United States made no secret of the matter. In that connexion, Mr. Tsarapkin referred to the statement made on 3 October 1951 by the Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern, South Asian and African Affairs in the State

Department, who had stressed the importance of the Middle East in the attainment of the United States' military and strategic aims. After referring to the oil wealth in the area, he had stated that the petrol supplies of the United States' European allies depended principally on the wells in the Middle East. He had further stressed the strategic importance of the area, which was a nodal point of air, land and sea communications linking three continents. The United States' designs on the Middle East were clear. As was testified by the communication which the Governments of the United States, the United Kingdom, France and Turkey had addressed on 10 November 1951 to the Governments of Israel and the Arab States on the establishment of an allied command in the Middle East, the United States' intentions were to assign to the countries of the Near and Middle East the role of suppliers of that vitally important strategic raw material, oil, and to turn them into the strategic base where the armed forces of the countries of the Atlantic bloc would be stationed.

15. As could be seen from its report, the Conciliation Commission had acted in the interests of the United States and, instead of aiding the parties concerned, had attempted to impose its own decisions upon them, thus exceeding its mandate. The members of the Commission, namely, the representatives of the United States, France and Turkey, had acted on the instructions of their Governments, and the Commission's actions had reflected the views of those Governments and not those of the United Nations. The Commission had favoured the interests not of the peoples of Palestine but of the Governments of the United States, the United Kingdom and France. It was therefore not surprising that the final account of the Commission's work was complete failure, to the deep disappointment of the Governments directly concerned. Being a tool of the United States State Department, the Conciliation Commission, as it admitted in its report, had been unable to achieve any constructive result, and, during the three years of its existence, the situation had shown no improvement—although the Commission's expenses had been very considerable; in three years they amounted to \$4,658,195.

16. To maintain the Conciliation Commission was not only useless but dangerous. For that reason the USSR delegation was submitting a draft resolution (A/AC.53/L.24) proposing its dissolution. The USSR delegation believed that the Palestine problem could not be solved in accordance with the interests of the Palestinian peoples until the United States and the other countries of the Atlantic bloc had ceased to interfere in the affairs of Palestine and of the countries of the Near and Middle East, leaving the populations of those countries to settle their differences among themselves.

17. Mr. AL-JAMALI (Iraq) said that the representative of Israel had shown great ability in defending an unjust and aggressive cause, but had distorted and falsified facts and truths.

18. The Israel representative had expressed regrets that the Governments of the Arab countries had been unwilling to make any concession. The fact was that the Governments of the Arab countries had yielded much ground since 1947, while the Zionists had presented, and secured the acceptance of, increasingly ambitious demands. Starting from a readiness to have a national home in Palestine, they had obtained the creation of a symbolic Jewish State, including those areas where the Jewish population was particularly dense; a little later the partition of Palestine had taken place and, finally, they had succeeded in retaining the territories which they occupied at the conclusion of the armistice. The reproaches falsely addressed by the Israel representative to the Arabs were applicable to the Zionists who had shown persistent defiance of United Nations resolutions.

19. The Israel representative's statement that the Governments of the Arab countries had refused to negotiate with Israel was untrue. It was a matter of record that the representatives of the Arab countries had repeatedly announced their readiness to negotiate with Israel, provided Israel abided by the resolutions of the United Nations and allowed the refugees to return to the areas of Palestine allotted to the Arabs in the partition plan adopted by the United Nations. If the Israel Government was really desirous of opening negotiations with the Governments of the Arab countries, it must show a readiness to make concessions. So far, the Arab States had made all the concessions. The Israel representative's admonitions should be addressed to his own Government and to his own people.

20. The same considerations applied to the Israel representative's request that the United Nations should ask the Arab world to accept Israel's existence and determine their policies in the light of that acceptance. The Arab States, for their part, asked the United Nations to request Israel to recognize Arab rights and to abide by United Nations resolutions before asking for recognition of its own existence. The Governments of the Arab countries could not recognize a State whose boundaries were not defined and which sought to expand at their expense.

21. The Israel representative's statement that four decades ago every Arab, or every Moslem, was living under foreign domination, either within the Ottoman Empire or under the rule of colonial Powers, was a falsification of history.

22. The Israel representative had no justification for his remarks regarding the vast areas which the Arabs now possessed, for the size of an area did not determine its value. The Arab population in Palestine, whether Christian or Moslem, had the same rights to live in the Holy Land as the Jews themselves. It was unjust to think of depriving the Palestine Arabs of their rightful heritage in that country.

23. According to the Israel representative, Jewish immigration in Palestine involved no danger to the peace and stability of the Middle East. But Jewish immigration which tended to increase the density of population at the expense of the Arabs was immoral

and unjust. Moreover, when it was coupled with aggressive intentions and expansionist ambitions, it was a real danger to international peace and security.

24. In the circumstances, the Iraqi delegation was bound to feel some suspicion regarding the Israel representative's invitation to the Arab States to sign a non-aggression pact. That suspicion would be dispelled only if Israel proved the sincerity of its intention by honouring United Nations resolutions.

25. With reference to the Conciliation Commission's report, the Iraqi delegation desired to reiterate a number of fundamental facts.

26. In the first place, Palestine was an Arab country and had been predominantly inhabited by Arabs for fourteen centuries. Secondly, Arab rights to Palestine could never be questioned on any moral, legal or spiritual grounds, for the Arabs of Palestine were mainly descendants of people who had lived in Palestine from time immemorial. Thirdly, Palestine was a Holy Land to Moslems, Christians and Jews, and the last-named could not claim a privileged position there. Fourthly, the United Nations, under the influence of various pressures, had decided to divide Palestine in 1947; it had also decided to internationalize Jerusalem. Fifthly, the Arab States, as well as the Arabs of Palestine, had declared that the partition resolution of the General Assembly was contrary to the principles of law and justice and a danger to international peace. The injustice of the resolution whereby the General Assembly had decided to divide Palestine resulted from the fact that no human society could be asked to surrender its natural and inalienable rights to aliens on the ground that the ancestors of those aliens had occupied the country 2,000 years previously. The division of Palestine was a danger to international security because there could be no peace in the Middle East so long as Arab rights there were whittled down. Those facts had been duly pointed out by the delegations of the Arab and Moslem countries, as well as by the delegations of Cuba, Belgium, the Philippines and Colombia.

27. It was inevitable that the division of Palestine should have caused an upheaval in that country. The Jews, who were well armed, had begun military operations and mass assassinations as a result of which hundreds of thousands of Arabs had been forced to flee from Palestine even before the termination of the British Mandate in May 1948. It was for that reason that the Governments of the Arab States had, in virtue of the provisions of Article 51 of the Charter, found it necessary to intervene in Palestine to defend and protect the Arabs in that country. The Jewish authorities in Palestine had found in that intervention an excuse for defying successive United Nations decisions from 1947 up to the present time.

28. Those were the facts which the Conciliation Commission seemed not to have taken fully into account.

29. The General Assembly and the world were faced by three basic questions. First, were the Arabs entitled to their homes in Palestine or not? Second, had Moslems and Christians the same right as Jews to live in Palestine or was Palestine to be a Jewish State? Third, if the

rights of the Arabs to their homes were recognized, and if the rights of Moslems and Christians to live in Palestine on the same terms as Jews were recognized what were the ways and means of securing respect for those rights?

30. Upon the answers to those questions peace in the Middle East and the prestige of the United Nations depended. Hitherto, the United Nations had recognized Arab rights to Palestine and accepted the fact that spiritually Palestine belonged to Moslems, Christians and Jews alike, although the idea had lost some ground.

31. There were three approaches to the Palestine question. The first was based on the Charter, on the principle of the right of peoples to self-determination. That was the Arab approach. The second was based on the principles underlying the resolution for the partitioning of Palestine, the internationalization of Jerusalem and the solution of the problem of Arab refugees in accordance with the wishes expressed by the latter. That was the United Nations approach. The third way was the way of power politics, to refuse to allow the refugees to return to their homes and to defy the United Nations because the support of international Zionism and more especially of the Jews of the United States could be counted upon. That was the Israel approach. It was unlikely to lead to peace and stability in the Middle East.

32. The Conciliation Commission had failed in its work for a number of reasons. It had been subjected to pressures favourable to the Israel point of view. It had taken decisions contrary to the spirit of the United Nations resolutions, particularly when it had proposed that only a certain number of the refugees should be repatriated. It had gone beyond its authority and encroached upon the sovereignty of the Arab States in concerning itself with the resumption of economic relations between Israel and its Arab neighbours. The Commission seemed to have forgotten that the issue with which it was charged was that of Palestine and the rights of the people of Palestine. No Arab State, no State Member of the United Nations, was entitled to decide that the Palestine Arabs should surrender their rights to their own homes. The refugees insisted on their right of self-determination. In that connexion the Iraqi representative read a letter to the Director-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine in which it was stated that the refugees had been bitterly disappointed, had lost all faith in the United Nations and in the United States and urged an immediate and equitable solution of the Palestine problem.

33. Since it had been impossible to solve that problem in the spirit of the Charter, the only feasible approach was to implement the General Assembly resolutions on the subject. Why did the United Nations not determine, as it had done in Korea, who was the aggressor in Palestine and apply political and economic sanctions? By doing so, the United Nations would be restoring justice to the Palestine Arabs and would check the continued denial of their rights. Israel owed its creation to the United Nations and must conform to its decisions.

The Israel Government claimed that it had fought the Arabs in 1948 to ensure the implementation of the resolution adopted by the General Assembly in 1947. When however it had achieved that goal, it had ignored the resolution by not halting its armed forces at the frontiers so established and by occupying a succession of territories allotted to the Palestine Arabs.

34. It rested with the great Powers to use their influence to ensure the implementation of the decisions of the General Assembly, in particular with regard to territorial adjustments. If such adjustments were made, the refugee problem would be largely solved and it would only remain to ensure the full implementation of paragraph 11 of resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948 dealing with the return of the refugees to their homes.

35. The United Nations, and in particular the great Powers, which were responsible for the creation of Israel and for the wound inflicted on the Palestine Arabs, could not shrink from their responsibilities. They must require the Government of Israel to respect Arab rights in Palestine, to cease the repeated acts of aggression committed by its armed forces against the frontiers of its Arab neighbours, to cease its anti-Arab propaganda, especially in the United States, and to stop interfering in the affairs of Jews outside Israel and encouraging Jews to settle in Palestine, including Jews who had lived and prospered for over two thousand years in Iraq in perfect harmony with the Arab population of that country.

36. On that basis alone could peace and stability be restored and ensured in the Middle East. The Conciliation Commission thought that by recognizing the *fait accompli* and by further whittling away the rights of the Palestine Arabs, it would be able to settle the dispute more easily. It was mistaken. There could be no settlement in the Middle East so long as the frontiers were dictated by Israel and Israel refused to recognize the right of the Arab refugees to return to their homes.

37. The Iraqi Government had not taken part in the discussion between the Arab States and the Conciliation Commission because it had known full well that the Jews, left to themselves, would not yield and would not conform to the United Nations resolutions. His Government had also believed that the Commission, as constituted, would not bear any fruit. Its expectations had proved correct. The Commission had been unable to discharge its mandate and had itself recognized its failure.

38. The only way by which the United Nations could avoid losing face was by strengthening the Commission's powers so as to enable it at last to ensure the implementation of the General Assembly resolutions. Also the Commission's membership must be increased. The great Powers should realize that only if United Nations decisions were implemented could peace and stability be restored in the Middle East.

39. The CHAIRMAN announced that the list of speakers was closed. He would grant the right of reply to representatives requesting it and reminded the Committee of his discretionary powers in that respect.

40. Mr. ZULUAGA MEJIA (Colombia) said that the documents before the Committee and the statements made by the various speakers in the general discussion showed not only that no progress had been made in the settlement of the problem but that the prospects of settlement were less favourable than in the past. It was clear from the Conciliation Commission's report that no solution had been found. Frontier incidents continued; the number of refugees were as high as ever and their conditions had hardly improved. It seemed that the assistance afforded by the United Nations served merely to prolong their agony. Moreover, the refugee problem, critical though it was, was only one aspect of the Palestine problem, the fundamentals of which were still untouched.

41. The dead-lock must be broken, for it might well impair the prestige of the United Nations which had undertaken the partitioning of Palestine and had

therefore the basic responsibility for difficulties which represented a grave threat to international peace.

42. The four Power draft resolution aimed at ending the dispute between Israel and its Arab neighbours but would be more effective if it proposed some more realistic action. One of the reasons for the failure to solve the Palestine problem was the fact that the decisions and recommendations of the General Assembly had not been implemented or had been implemented only in part.

43. It was in order to ensure the full and unreserved implementation of the Assembly's decisions and recommendations that the Colombian delegation was submitting an amendment to the joint draft resolution which would appear as document A/AC.53/L.25.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.