

June 28, 1965

**Minutes of Conversation between Zhou Enlai and
Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization
Ahmad Shukeiri**

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Summary:

Zhou and Shukeiri discuss Chinese aid to the PLO and the situation of Palestinian refugees.

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Minutes of Conversation between Zhou Enlai and Palestine Liberation Organ (PLO) Chairman Shukeiri

(Premier has yet to review and approve)

Time: 6:40 p.m., 28 June 1965

Place: Embassy of China, Cairo

Summary

1. Regarding the issue of our training PLO cadres
2. Regarding the issue of providing financial and construction project assistance to the PLO
3. Regarding the issue of establishing a fund for Asian and African countries to aid Palestinian refugees

Shukeiri: On my trip this time to Syria, I saw that they all, party and government leaders as well as others, were very happy and very grateful for the Premier's brief visit. They only wish that Your Excellency will also be able to make an official visit.

This time I toured refugee camps in Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon and saw that life there has become even more difficult.

The United States has already reduced the relief fund by 10 million dollars. The relief fund for the past several years has been 55 million dollars a year. The relief fund is nominally from the United Nations, but 70 percent of it comes from the United States. I have said to the Americans, every day you spend five million dollars in Vietnam and every day three million dollars in the Dominican Republic, so clearly it is not because you cannot provide it that you are cutting relief. The Americans in the past 10 years have already given Israel 10 billion dollars.

(Shukeiri then spoke of the situation concerning the PLO meeting and gave the meeting resolution to the Premier.)

(Shukeiri then said that he would do his best to promote the establishment of diplomatic ties with China of those Arab countries still without diplomatic ties to China. When the Premier asked whether he could promote relations with Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and the United Arab Republic (UAR), Shukeiri said that in 10 days he would be going to see King Faisal and discuss this issue.)

(Portion blacked out....)

Regarding the issue of training cadres, we must choose our best cadres to go to China to study. In a few weeks we can inform your ambassador about the names and numbers of persons, which will probably be 20 or 30 people.

Premier Zhou: As I said last time, extremely few persons should be sent to China for training. Most should be trained in fraternal Arab countries.

Is each Arab country also providing assistance to the refugees?

Shukeiri: Yes, they are providing it to the PLO, providing it via the United Nations, or

directly providing it. I also hope to see China able to give something. (Blacked out portion) I am referring to things that people can see, things of lasting value, such as schools and hospitals. Our hope is to build a 100-bed hospital and a school for 200 hundred students in Gaza, in Jordan, in Syria, and in Lebanon. We ourselves have engineers, technicians, and building materials. What we need is money. At the start and conclusion of these construction projects, naturally, we must ask your country's ambassador or those in charge to preside over the ceremony.

Regarding our PLO's budget, it is 8 million pounds sterling a year, but this figure is not implemented, as each Arab country only has a moral obligation. There are some countries, such as Tunisia, that do not hand over the money.

Premier Zhou: Regarding the issue of aiding you, we have the following considerations:

(1) It has been our intention to propose at the Asian-African Conference having Asian and African countries step forward and provide a sum of money to help the refugees. It would be mainly from the aspect of production to help them and enable them to maintain their livelihood. At the start, this number would be relatively small, less than that of the United Nations, but it would be a model of mutual assistance and, after we have become strong, we can increase the amount of funding. We want to put on a show to rival the United Nations. This Asian-African fund to aid the Palestinian refugees will be established on the basis of production. This way, if there are other regions with disasters that produce refugees, we also can carry out mutual assistance when that happens.

(2) China itself will step forward to propose some construction projects. I agree with Your Excellency's vision. We can also consider other construction projects. I will be in China in July and August this year and hope that Your Excellency, after thinking it over, will tell me via your representative in Beijing about those construction projects. After our two sides reach an agreement, these projects will be included in our Third Five-Year Plan, which is to say that we will stipulate each year to provide something to you.

(3) Regarding financial aid, your annual budget is 8 million pounds sterling. We can provide a part of that. I will have to figure it out after returning to China. After the decision is made, we must incorporate it into the Third Five-Year Plan, which we must pass in September this year.

Shukeiri: Thank you very much. Your Excellency's suggestions are all good. This will make people further understand the nature of UN relief.

Zhou: When the United Nations is unjust, we must be just. We will put on a show to rival the United Nations.

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