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COMMISSION ON NARCOTIC DRUGS

Fourteenth Session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE FOUR HUNDRED AND TWENTY-NINTH MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Monday, 11 May 1959, at 3.00 p.m.

<u>Chairman:</u>	Mr. NIKOLIC (Yugoslavia)
<u>Rapporteur:</u>	Mr. ARDALAN (Iran)
<u>Joint Secretaries:</u>	Mr. DAVID Mr. JEABVALA Mr. NICHOLS

CONTENTS:

Page

Opium and opiates (including scientific research on opium)
(resumed from the four hundred and twenty-sixth meeting)

Draft resolution on scientific research on opium
submitted by Canada, France and the United Arab
Republic (resumed from the four hundred and twenty-
sixth meeting and concluded)

2

Illicit traffic: reports on the illicit traffic in 1958
(resumed from the four hundred and twenty-seventh meeting
and concluded)

Draft resolution on the illicit traffic submitted by
Iran (resumed from the four hundred and twenty-seventh
meeting and concluded)

4

Carriage of narcotic drugs in first-aid kits of aircraft
engaged in international flight (resumed from the four
hundred and twenty-third meeting)

Draft resolution submitted by the Rapporteur
(resumed from the four hundred and twenty-third
meeting and concluded)

5

Technical assistance for narcotics control (resumed from the
four hundred and twenty-eighth meeting and concluded)

Draft resolution submitted by France, Iran and the
United States of America (resumed from the four
hundred and twenty-eighth meeting and concluded)

6

Questions relating to the control of other substances
(barbiturates, tranquillizers, etc.)

6

The list of government representatives and observers and of representatives of specialized agencies and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations attending the session is contained in the report of the Commission on its fourteenth session (E/3254).

OPIUM AND OPIATES (INCLUDING SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH ON OPIUM) (item 6 of the agenda)
(resumed from the 426th meeting)

Draft resolution concerning scientific research on opium submitted by Canada,
France and the United Arab Republic (E/CN.7/L.216/Rev.1)

Dr. MABILEAU (France) pointed out that the revised draft took into account the views expressed in the Commission. It made a distinction between the samples which were desired from producing countries, mentioned in operative paragraph 2, and those from seizures by countries in which there was or could be illicit production of opium, mentioned in paragraph 3.

Mr. GREEN (United Kingdom) asked for clarification of the phrase "authenticated samples of the opium they have seized" in paragraph 3. Paragraph 1 made a distinction between "authenticated samples" and "samples from seizures" while paragraph 2 requested producing countries to send "authenticated opium samples" from their licit production. The intention of paragraph 3 was presumably that the governments in question should send samples of opium grown illicitly in their countries, but that was not clear from the text. The word "authenticated" in connexion with opium samples had, in his opinion, come to mean precise information concerning the country, region, year of growth and so on, and it was not always possible to give such information in the case of seizures.

Dr. MABILEAU (France) said that, in his view, "authenticated" was distinct from "identified" and in the context of the draft resolution meant that the information supplied was accurate, even if not complete.

Mr. HOSSICK (Canada) interpreted "authenticated" as meaning that the government certified the opium as having been grown within its territory.

Mr. BANERJI (India) said that unless the interpretation offered by the French representative were accepted a slight rewording of paragraph 3 would seem desirable. While in some cases it might be possible for a government to state with certainty that seized opium had been grown within its territory, that could not apply to all seizures, and governments could not be asked to do more than give whatever information was available.

Mr. YATES (Secretariat) said that the origin of the wording could be found in the resolution adopted by the Commission at its tenth session, which stated:

"... methods to determine the origin of opium by physical and chemical means ought to be based on opium furnished and authenticated by the government of the country of origin as opium produced in that country, and that

reference to the particular methods employed should be given when origin of a seizure is determined by such methods".⁽¹⁾

Licit producers could give the required information with certainty, but the whole scheme would lose much of its value if authenticated samples could not be obtained also from countries in which there was, or might be, illicit production. The Commission had on several occasions asked such countries for authenticated samples, and some had been supplied. It was more difficult to obtain them, and the requirement that they should be supplied "from the various regions of production inside the country over a period of years" could not, of course, apply; but it was in practice sometimes possible to authenticate a sample of illicitly produced opium, for example, when opium was seized in the possession of a cultivator.

Mr. GREEN (United Kingdom) said that the Secretariat's explanation confirmed his interpretation of paragraph 3. To ensure that the meaning was clear to countries not present at the Commission's meeting he proposed the addition, after the words "to send to the Secretariat", of the words "where seizures are made in circumstances which make it possible to authenticate the seized opium as having been grown illicitly in their territories"

Mr. BANERJI (India) seconded the United Kingdom amendment.

The United Kingdom amendment was adopted.

The CHAIRMAN read out paragraph 5, which had been omitted from the French text of the revised draft.

Mr. GREEN (United Kingdom) proposed that in the first line of paragraph 5 the words "within the resources at present available" should be added after "development", in order to make it clear that the Commission was not encouraging the Secretariat to expand its facilities at the present time.

Dr. MABILEAU (France), Mr. HOSSICK (Canada) and Mr. ISMAIL (United Arab Republic), as co-authors of the draft resolution, accepted the amendment.

Mr. ARDALAN (Iran) thought the Commission might be interested to hear of a study made in Iran of the classification of opium samples by microscopic test. The purpose of the study had been to re-evaluate the microscopic test as a means of testing different types of opium and of determining the origin of seized opium.

(1) See report on the tenth session (E/2763/Rev.1 - E/CN.7/303/Rev.1, Annex B).

The test was now seen to have very great importance for opium origin determination since it yielded more information about opium types than any other single test and its simplicity was a great advantage for practical work.

Mr. ROSENZWEIG-DIAZ (Mexico) recalled the statement made by the Mexican representative at the four hundred and twenty-sixth meeting.⁽¹⁾ His Government had shown its desire to co-operate by sending opium samples on several occasions, but legal difficulties had made it impossible for it to give its complete co-operation. For the reasons explained previously he would abstain from voting on the draft resolution.

The revised draft resolution submitted by Canada, France and the United Arab Republic on scientific research on opium (E/CN.7/L.216/Rev.1), as a whole and as amended, was adopted by 14 votes to none, with 1 abstention.

ILLCIT TRAFFIC: REPORTS ON THE ILLICIT TRAFFIC IN 1958 (item 4 of the agenda) (resumed from the four hundred and twenty-seventh meeting and concluded)

Draft resolution on the illicit traffic submitted by the Iranian Delegation (E/CN.7/L.217/Rev.1) (resumed from the four hundred and twenty-seventh meeting and concluded)

Mr. ARDALAN (Iran) said that he was prepared to amend paragraph 1 of his draft resolution on the illicit traffic (E/CN.7/L.217/Rev.1) by deleting at the beginning of operative paragraph 1 the words "the governments of countries situated in this region, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq and Turkey", and substituting the words "all governments". In reply to the criticisms of the Turkish representative, he wished to emphasize that the Iranian Government was taking intensive measures to combat the illicit traffic in opium in its country, and the new bill before Parliament provided for severe penalties, including the death penalty in extreme cases. It was essential however that there should be more active co-operation among all the countries concerned.

Mr. ÖZKOL (Turkey) said that the questions he had raised at the earlier meeting had not been answered. The draft resolution remained unacceptable, since it made vague unfounded accusations against countries some of which were not represented in the Commission, while omitting any mention of the serious deficiencies in the measures taken by Iran. He suggested that the proposed meeting of representatives of the governments concerned to review the situation and take appropriate measures might be held in Turkey but felt that in the meantime the Iranian representative should withdraw his draft resolution.

(1) See summary record of the four hundred and twenty-sixth meeting (E/CN.7/SR.426).

Mr. GREEN (United Kingdom) said that although the draft resolution, as amended, should not offend any particular country, it did not seem likely to achieve its aim of improving collaboration between Iran and its neighbours. While the United Kingdom delegation had always supported the Iranian Government's courageous stand in its fight against the illicit traffic and would continue to do so, it was difficult to support the draft resolution merely on the strength of the brief report from that Government, which gave no details of the seizures, although he believed that the Iranian delegation had more information at its disposal. He suggested therefore that the Iranian delegation should consider making available during the coming year all the information in its possession in order to provide the Commission with a firm basis on which to form a judgment and should at the same time get in touch with the neighbouring countries and give them the same information.

The CHAIRMAN, speaking as representative of Yugoslavia, endorsed that suggestion.

Mr. ARDALAN (Iran) said that, in order to show his delegation's goodwill and desire to co-operate, he would withdraw the draft resolution. He would reserve the right however to submit it again at the Commission's next session if the co-operation of neighbouring countries, and of the rest of the world, during the coming year did not show satisfactory results, and if the flow of illicit opium into Iran did not stop.

The CHAIRMAN expressed the Commission's thanks to the Iranian representative for his understanding gesture.

The draft resolution on the illicit traffic submitted by Iran (E/CN.7/L.217/Rev.1) was withdrawn.

CARRIAGE OF NARCOTIC DRUGS IN FIRST-AID KITS OF AIRCRAFT ENGAGED IN INTERNATIONAL FLIGHT (item 12 of the agenda) (resumed from the four hundred and twenty-third meeting and concluded)

Draft resolution submitted by the Rapporteur (E/CN.7/L.218/Rev.1) (resumed from the four hundred and twenty-third meeting and concluded)

Mr. BANERJI (India) suggested that in the fourth preambular paragraph of the revised draft the word "also" should be inserted before the word "taking" and that the end of the paragraph should be redrafted to read: "the need for as little interference as possible with the expeditious handling of air traffic on the ground".

It was so agreed.

The revised draft resolution submitted by the Rapporteur (E/CN.7/L.218/Rev.1), as amended, was unanimously adopted.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR NARCOTICS CONTROL (item 14 of the agenda) (E/CN.7/L.221/Rev.1) (resumed from the four hundred and twenty-eighth meeting and concluded).

Draft resolution submitted by France, Iran and the United States of America (E/CN.7/L.221/Rev.1) (resumed from the four hundred and twenty-eighth meeting and concluded)

Mr. ÖZKOL (Turkey) proposed that operative paragraph 2 of the revised draft should be amended to read:

"Recommends further to the Council that emphasis should be placed upon regional or national programmes where the problems of addiction and illicit traffic are acute".

Mr. MERRILL (United States of America) said that as one of the sponsors of the joint draft resolution he could not accept the Turkish amendment.

Dr. MABILEAU (France) also was unable to accept the amendment.

The CHAIRMAN, speaking as representative of Yugoslavia, said that he accepted the Turkish amendment. He could also accept the revised draft resolution which would cover synthetic as well as natural substances.

Mr. ARDALAN (Iran), speaking as a co-sponsor of the revised joint draft resolution, would have to vote against the Turkish amendment.

Mr. ZULETA (Peru) supported the Turkish amendment.

The Turkish amendment was adopted by 5 votes to 4, with 6 abstentions.

Dr. MABILEAU (France) assumed from the way in which the Peruvian representative had voted that he did not regard the coca leaf as a priority problem.

The draft resolution submitted by France, Iran and the United States of America (E/CN.7/L.221/Rev.1), with the Turkish amendment, was adopted by 10 votes to none, with 5 abstentions.

QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE CONTROL OF OTHER SUBSTANCES (BARBITURATES, TRANQUILLIZERS, ETC.) (item 11 of the agenda) (E/CN.7/356 and Add.1 Chapter X; E/CN.7/L.210)

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. PANOPOULOS (Observer for Greece) read out the note he had submitted to the Secretariat on the problem of barbiturates, tranquillizers and other hypnotic substances (E/CN.7/L.210).

Mr. MERRILL (United States of America), after recalling the Yugoslav request made earlier in the session for information on the use of tranquillizers in the United States, said that in recent years American physicians had found tranquillizers extremely valuable in the practice of medicine, especially in the treatment of mental disorders.

His Government was alert to the possibility of their abuse and they were accordingly placed under strict control and sold only on medical prescriptions. There was at present no sign of any illegal activity to avoid such control and no evidence that drug addicts could support their addiction by taking tranquillizers.

The increased use of tranquillizers in the United States was, in his delegation's opinion, due to two causes: they fulfilled a new need in medicine and they took the place of drugs which had proved less effective.

Mr. GREEN (United Kingdom) said that the situation in the United Kingdom was similar to that described by the United States representative. It was true, as the Observer for Greece said in his note, that there had been a great increase in the use of barbiturates and other hypnotics. That however was due to their increased use by the medical profession and not to illicit traffic or abuse. He considered that the Commission was not in a position to decide whether the substances in question should or should not be used by the medical profession or how they should be used. If there was any objection to the growing use of the substances it was an objection on medical grounds which the Commission was not competent to discuss.

So far as abuse was concerned, he agreed that it was something on which governments should keep a careful watch, but resolutions VI and VII, adopted by the Commission at its twelfth session⁽¹⁾, were quite adequate for that purpose.

Mr. HOSSICK (Canada) said that the situation in Canada also was similar to that described by the United States representative. All drugs of the tranquillizer or barbiturate type were strictly controlled and could be obtained only on medical prescription.

Dr. LABILEAU (France) agreed with the United Kingdom representative that barbiturates and tranquillizers were being increasingly used for therapeutic purposes and added that in France they could be obtained only on medical prescription.

Mr. ISMAIL (United Arab Republic) said that strict control was exercised in the United Arab Republic over the use of barbiturates and tranquillizers, and they could be obtained only on medical prescription. Pharmacists were bound by law to keep registers of the sale of such substances.

Mr. ZULETA (Peru) emphasized the importance of tranquillizers in the treatment of mental disorders; in Peru also they could be obtained only on medical prescription.

(1) See E/3010/Rev.1, Annex II.

Dr. HALBACH (World Health Organization) said he had no essentially new information about the abuse of barbiturates and tranquillizers. The WHO Expert Committee on Addiction-Producing Drugs had decided that those substances could be called habit-forming and some, if taken in large doses over long periods, might even produce physical dependence. After recalling resolutions VI and VII adopted by the Commission at its twelfth session, he said that WHO had no statistics on the use of such substances, since they had not been placed under international control. The habit-forming properties of the glutarimide derivative Doriden mentioned by the Observer for Greece were recognized and cases of physical dependence on it had been known.

Mr. OBERMEYER (Austria) said that in Austria pharmacists were permitted to supply tranquillizers only on medical prescription. Certain barbiturates could be supplied several times to the same patient on a medical prescription, but others not more than once. For the time being pharmacists were not compelled to record prescriptions for barbiturates, but his Government would keep a close watch on their use.

The CHAIRMAN, speaking as representative of Yugoslavia, agreed with the United Kingdom representative's view and suggested that the Secretariat be asked to watch the situation as regards barbiturates and tranquillizers and to report any important developments to the Commission.

Dr. LABILEAU (France), supporting that suggestion, said he had been much interested in some of the information contained in the note submitted by the Observer for Greece, especially as regards the quantity of barbiturates and tranquillizers manufactured in certain countries. He pointed out that the use of tranquillizers by car drivers might sometimes be responsible for road accidents.

Mr. YATES (Secretariat) said that the Division of Narcotic Drugs, in consultation with WHO, kept a close watch on the question of the use and abuse of barbiturates and tranquillizers, but since such substances were not under international control a special questionnaire would have to be sent to governments if it were desired to obtain detailed information as to their use. Any information on the use of such substances received by the Secretariat and calling for special consideration would be communicated to the Commission.

Mr. BANERJI (India) suggested that the use of barbiturates and tranquillizers should be dealt with when the draft single convention was considered by the conference of plenipotentiaries. His Government had spent

a great deal of effort and money combating the abuse of natural drugs and might now be faced with the problem of the abuse of barbiturates and tranquillizers. Their increased use in Switzerland, for instance, could hardly be ascribed to an increased availability of medical facilities.

Mr. YATES (Secretariat) said that such substances as barbiturates could be covered by the draft single convention if it were found in the future that their use was "liable to the same" abuse as the narcotic drugs already controlled. The decision whether they were addiction-producing lay with WHO. The Secretariat and WHO would keep the Commission informed on the general situation regarding such drugs.

Dr. HALBACH (World Health Organization) associated himself with the Secretariat's statement.

The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Commission, while maintaining its position expressed in resolutions VI and VII adopted at its twelfth session, could at present take no further action except to ask the Secretariat to watch, in conjunction with WHO, the developments in the field and to report significant facts whenever they became available.

It was so agreed.

The meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.