

Harry S. Truman,
the State of Israel, and the
QUEST for **PEACE**
in the **MIDDLE EAST**

Proceedings of a Conference held at the
Harry S. Truman Research Institute for
the Advancement of Peace,
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edited by
MICHAEL J. DEVINE

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The Arabs, Truman, and the Birth of the State of Israel

Avraham Sela

Introduction

The birth of the State of Israel was the result of distinct historical circumstances compounded by the decisions of, and interactions among, four main parties: Britain, the Mandatory power; the United States; the Zionist movement; and the Palestinian-Arabs and the Arab states. Apart from the Zionist movement and the Jewish community in Palestine, the role of President Truman, however, was the most important factor enabling the establishment of the Jewish state. Truman's impact on this process was especially significant because it was not expected by British policy makers or by the rulers of the fledgling Arab states, some of whom formally allied with Britain, or by the Palestinian-Arab leadership. In contrast, the fallout between Britain and the Zionist movement in the wake of the 1939 White Paper paved the road to a major shift in the center of international Zionist activity from Britain to the United States as a major ally.

The role of President Truman in the birth of the State of Israel must be understood against the post-World War II backdrop of new international alignments, power structures, and expectations for national independence and sovereignty among peoples hitherto ruled by foreigners. The impact of these changes was especially salient in the Middle East, whose geographical proximity to the Soviet Union and proven oil wealth rendered it a highly important strategic asset for the Western alliance in general, and for Britain, the dominant foreign power in this region, in particular. Despite this joint strategic interest, however, the Anglo-American alliance failed to forge an agreed-upon formula for handling the contradictory claims of Arabs and Zionists concerning Palestine, resulting in frustration

among British policy makers and bitterness toward the Zionist impact on the American president.¹

The existing literature on the birth of the State of Israel focuses on the diplomatic and military perspectives of the war, with particular interest in Zionist and the Allied Powers' diplomacy prior to and during the war, and hardly addresses Arab diplomacy and responses to the emerging new world order led by the United States and the Soviet Union.² Especially in view of the crucial role played by President Truman in the events leading to the establishment of the State of Israel, the questions are these: To what extent were the Arab leaders aware of the rapidly changing power relations on both global and regional levels? How did such awareness affect their policy making on the Palestine question? Were there missed opportunities and untried options that could have changed the course of events or tipped the political balance of the war in Palestine to their favor and if so, why were they not taken? This paper aims to explore the attitudes of the Arabs, and explain the policies they adopted towards the United States between the end of World War II and the end of the 1948 war.

Britain, the United States, and the Question of Palestine

At the end of World War II, Britain remained the dominant power in the Middle East, with sizable military forces of about 250,000 troops in Egypt and Palestine, and mutual defense treaties with Iraq, Egypt, and Transjordan, which granted Britain special military rights and in practice were meant to secure its hegemonic position in the region. In retrospect, however, the end of the war also indicated the beginning of a rapid decline of the British Empire, which was as evident in the Middle East as elsewhere in Asia and Africa, not the least because of its glaring failure to cope with the contradictory Zionist and Arab claims to Palestine.

The impact of Britain's postwar economic exhaustion on its ability to maintain its imperial commitments overseas was not immediately recognized by all British decision makers, let alone by the Arab ruling elites. The latter continued to perceive Britain as the primary power in the eastern Mediterranean for many years to come. The British policy in Palestine after the war reflected the tension between the two main approaches in Whitehall: the "little England," economic-based approach, represented by Prime Minister Attlee, and a conservative, strategically oriented approach advocating the preservation of British hegemony in the Middle East through the construction of a regional defense system, represented by Foreign Secretary Bevin and the Chiefs of Staff. Apart from the significance of the Middle East oil resources, the latter maintained that the Arab

Middle East's strategic proximity to the Soviet Union rendered it vital for the conduct of a frontline defense battle against the Soviets, hence the necessity of preserving the Suez Canal, air bases in Iraq and Transjordan, and other strategic facilities in the region in general and in Palestine in particular.³

Although Britain remained the dominant power in the eastern Mediterranean and Iran, due to its constrained resources it could hardly confront on its own the Soviet attempts to encroach on Turkish and Iranian sovereign territories and Soviet support for the Communist rebellion in Greece. These early manifestations of the ensuing Cold War paved the road to the Truman Doctrine, the first American foreign policy statement concerning this part of the world, which promised American support to those countries experiencing Communist and Soviet threats. The American administration's willingness to at least partly share with Britain the burden of defending Western interests in the Middle East in the face of the Soviet Union grew substantially along with the escalating Cold War and U.S. aid programs for the rehabilitation of the Western European economies, which culminated in the Marshall Plan in the summer of 1947. The success of the plan was dependent on continued flow of oil from the Middle East, especially in view of the depleted oil reserves in the United States itself, hence the shared transatlantic interest in establishing a Western-based regional defense system, despite the British decision to withdraw from India.⁴

These developments paved the road to an Anglo-American understanding on the Middle East as a primary strategic asset for these powers' interests in wartime and peacetime alike, including the acceptance of Britain as the party responsible for the organization of the region's defense. From the outset, the parties agreed to exclude the Palestine problem from the Pentagon talks beginning on 16 October 1947 in order to secure their utmost success. Despite this strategic understanding and cooperation, in the Middle East as in global affairs, the Palestine question remained a bone of contention between Great Britain and the US administration. This was mainly because of the American president's repeated personal interventions in the Palestine question, shaped primarily by domestic electoral considerations, in defiance of his administration's policy making on this matter.⁵ From Whitehall's viewpoint, this was doubly frustrating because as far as the American bureaucracy—primarily the State and Defense Departments—was concerned, there was a broad agreement about the need to adopt a pro-Arab policy on Palestine as a prerequisite to securing "Arab goodwill" toward the Western powers. It was only in the fall of 1948 that Britain and U.S. foreign policies on Palestine seemed to finally come together (at least from London's viewpoint) after a long period of differences, in line with

the recommendations the international mediator Folke Bernadotte submitted to the United Nations, all of which underlined the significance of this agreement for the overall relations between the two powers.⁶

The Truman Doctrine coincided with Bevin's vision of the postwar Middle East as a bulwark against Soviet and Communist penetration into the region. This objective was to be reached by establishing a regional defense system with all the regional players led by Britain and, at the same time, by providing them with substantial financial aid to boost their social and economic development, secure the stability and loyalty to Britain of the current regimes in the region and their rejection of communist ideology.⁷ Practically, however, only the United States could provide such financial aid, which further underlined Britain's dependence on American cooperation in preserving its strategic position in the Middle East. Even a greater obstacle was the attitude of suspicion and mistrust with which these plans were received by the Arab nationalist elites who, with the exception of the Hashemites in Iraq and Transjordan, would accept nothing less than total independence with no commitment whatsoever to Britain's return into their court through the back door.⁸

Under these circumstances, reaching a practicable solution to the problem of Palestine epitomized Britain's declining imperial power and deadlocked position in the Middle East. By the mid-1940s, the question of Palestine had struck deep roots in the Arab and Muslim world on both public and official levels, turning it from a local Arab-Jewish conflict into an all-Arab and all-Muslim cause. Indeed, Britain's policy on Palestine during the war was carefully shaped in accordance with this reality, giving priority to regional and imperial interests at the expense of the Jewish national home. The horrific manifestations of the Holocaust and plight of Jewish survivors in Europe, however, made Britain's wartime policy on Palestine obsolete. Settling the contradictory aspirations of Zionists and Arabs in Palestine begged for a careful solution, to which Britain could not commit itself without sustaining intolerable costs to its posture in the Middle East and relations with the United States.⁹

Even before the war in Europe came to an end, the "Palestine Question" had soared high on the public agendas of the Western Allies, assuming a new urgency and international momentum, which was received with growing concern throughout the Arab world. The British Mandate in Palestine had indeed reached a dead end: on the one hand, the impact of the Holocaust on public opinion in the West manifested itself in support of the vigorous Zionist claim for a Jewish state. At the same time, the long-awaited end of the war boosted the expectations of Arab national movements in the Middle East for nothing less than full indepen-

dence for all Arab lands, including Palestine. Understandably, architects of Britain's Middle East policy portrayed the Palestine question as the "focus of Britain's policy" and the "pillar of Britain's strategic interests" in the region.¹⁰

Though the idea of the partition of Palestine between Jews and Arabs as the ultimate solution of this problem seemed preferable among senior British policy makers, especially in the Colonial Office, the dominant viewpoint in Whitehall was that partition of Palestine would generate severe Arab violence in the region, which would destroy friendly Arab-British relations and undermine Britain's vital interests in the Middle East. These were defined in terms of communications, oil, and strategic bases, which could be preserved only by securing the "goodwill" of the Arabs. Another source of concern was the anticipated penetration of the United States and Soviet Union into the region after the war, and the implications of the Arab quest for unity on future British posture in the region.

British policy makers estimated that in view of the anticipated violent opposition of both Arabs and Jews to partition, or of Jews to a continuation of the White Paper policy, at least another division would be needed in Palestine. Such a level of reinforcement seemed unrealistic as long as the war continued, or during the year after the end of the war, due to the need to secure the occupied European territories. Even before the end of the war, Conservative Prime Minister Churchill, aware of the strong influence Jewish and Zionist organizations exercised in U.S. domestic politics, financially exhausted by the war, and dependent on American aid for Britain's own economic rehabilitation, advocated placing part of the responsibility for the Middle East—including a long-term settlement of the Palestine problem—on the American government. With the advent of a new Labor government in August 1945 led by Prime Minister Attlee, this policy was fully adopted; hence the repeated attempts of this government to win US support for a settlement in Palestine that would mitigate Zionist pressures and legitimize Britain's Palestine policy in the United States.

Although the American bureaucracy saw eye to eye with Whitehall concerning Palestine, Britain's plans for a solution to this thorny problem were repeatedly frustrated by President Truman's interference in defiance of his own government's policy planners. Hence, Britain's efforts to involve the U.S. government in forging a new long-term policy in Palestine in accordance with its strategic interests and Arab demands were undermined by the growing intervention of Truman in favor of the Zionist movement. By late 1945, the Zionist movement had made headway into the heart of America's policy making and decided to wage an armed revolt against the Mandatory government in Palestine in response to Britain's decision

to maintain its policy on Jewish immigration and land sales in accordance with the 1939 White Paper. As Bevin's biographer observed, "The Jewish demands and the Arab reaction were predictable; direct intervention by the American President was not."¹¹

Truman's repeated public demand, expressed shortly after taking office as the U.S. president, to let 100,000 displaced Jews enter Palestine, demonstrated utter disregard of Britain's strict limitations on Jewish immigration, in deference to Arab objections. Washington also refused to commit itself to share the military and financial burden that implementation of the recommendations of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry (AACI) would involve, other than in assisting the transfer of the 100,000 displaced Jews into Palestine. Even before the AACI's report was published, senior British officials had anticipated violent confrontation of British troops with both Jews and Arabs if the AACI recommendations were implemented. This led to a growing sense of weariness of, and frustration toward the Mandate, including calls to get rid of this "thankless job."¹² In view of Washington's reservations over implementation of the AACI report, many of the cabinet's members, including Prime Minister Attlee, expressed doubts about the feasibility of implementing the report, while others were calling to get rid of Britain's responsibility in Palestine. Bevin, however, remained adamant that Britain should not refer Palestine to the United Nations, arguing that implementation of the report was possible with the strategic cooperation of the United States.¹³

Truman's next unexpected act that spoiled Britain's Palestine policy was his retreat from the provincial autonomy plan, a joint Anglo-American scheme worked out in the aftermath of the AACI Report by officials from the British Foreign Office and U.S. State Department with full consent of President Truman. The plan stipulated a regime of separate "cantons" for the Jewish and Arab communities in Palestine in two separate districts—in addition to the districts of Jerusalem and the Negev, which were to remain under direct British administration. The program left open the question of future development of the Jewish and Arab districts—as two independent states or as a unitary Palestinian state with a decisive Arab majority. This vagueness may explain why cantonization was acceptable to the British Foreign and Colonial Offices and initially also to the American administration, though this very unspecified future of Jewish and Arab cantons also unified the Zionists and the Arabs against it as each party feared the worst case scenario for itself.¹⁴ Yet, despite his initial consent to cantonization, by late July Truman retreated from the provincial autonomy plan due to strong Zionist and partisan pressures with the approach of interim congressional elections scheduled for November. Nonetheless, despite the president's disappointing position, the

British government decided to go ahead and propose the program, which came to be known as the Morrison Plan, to the Jewish Agency and the Arab governments as a basis for an agreed-upon solution, and convened for this purpose the London Conference in September 1946.

Although this conference had little or no chance of success due to the unbridgeable gap between the Arab and Zionist leaderships, Bevin apparently drew support from the Zionist leaders' willingness to accept partition of Palestine as indicated by the decision made in Paris in early August, not realizing it was primarily meant to undermine the Morrison Plan, which seemed tantamount to a death sentence to the Zionist enterprise. Moreover, the "counter plan" submitted collectively by the Arab delegations at the London Conference—without consulting the Arab Higher Committee (AHC), which was not represented—unequivocally rejected any form of partition of Palestine or recognition of any collective rights for the existing Jewish community in that country. Nonetheless, Truman's statement on 4 October, in which he repeated his demand for immediate immigration of 100,000 Jews into Palestine and expressed, for the first time, support for partition of Palestine, came as a bitter surprise to the British policy makers who responded with unhidden fury.¹⁵

The president's statement, which was understood as support for a Jewish state, was a serious blow to Bevin's major diplomatic effort to reach an agreed-upon settlement of the Palestine question that would allow Britain to remain in Palestine for an unspecified time and to change its status as the Mandatory power. Truman's statement obviously stiffened the Zionist position against the British proposals. Despite the British gesture of releasing the Jewish leaders arrested by the Mandatory government on 29 June of that year (see below), the Zionist Congress meeting in Basel in December 1946 decided against participation in the second round of the London Conference scheduled for January 1947, boosting the hardliners' insistence on no less than an independent Jewish state, albeit in part of Palestine. The second round of the London Conference, which included unofficial talks with the Zionist leadership headed by Ben-Gurion, indeed proved to be futile. The Arab delegations—now including a Palestinian one—were utterly immovable about the British plan, insisting that Palestine should remain a unitary Arab state. Bevin's last effort of returning to the idea of a five-year binational unitary state under British trusteeship followed by independence was also rejected by the Arabs, primarily because it also stipulated continued Jewish immigration of 4,000 a month (96,000 altogether). As to the Jewish delegates, they insisted on a "viable Jewish state," which even in its narrowest borders would include a large Arab population (300,000 to 400,000) alongside some 600,000 Jews.¹⁶

The failure of the London Conference underlined the unbridgeable gap not only between Jews and Arabs, but also between each of the disputants and Britain itself. Indeed, it was the failure of this conference that led to Britain's decision in February 1947 to refer Palestine to the United Nations without any recommendations, to the chagrin of the American administration, assuming that the UN would decide to back up Britain's policy as represented by Bevin's plan. Indeed, as Gabriel Cohen maintained, even at this point Bevin still insisted on maintaining Britain's grip on Palestine, perceiving its reference to the United Nations as a tactical and reversible measure.¹⁷

After eighteen months of delays and procrastination in Britain's decision making on Palestine, the cabinet's decision to refer Palestine to the United Nations without any recommendations represented the ultimate failure of Bevin's hesitant and contradictory policies. Above all, it represented Bevin's failure to recruit the United States to a pro-Arab solution of the Palestine conflict. Bevin still hoped that the Zionist and Arab parties would be willing to make the necessary compromises that would save Britain from having to admit total failure. His wishful hopes, however, were soon to be frustrated by the Arabs, the Jews, and President Truman, whose positions remained unmoved, leading to inevitable inertia in the United Nations.

In the next few months, Britain's bargaining position on Palestine continued to weaken. Instead of extending a renewed Mandate to Britain, the unexpected support of both superpowers for a Jewish state in part of Palestine led to the appointment of the UN Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) resulting in a report presenting two options: partition of Palestine into two states (the majority plan), or a unitary federative state (the minority plan). Publication of the UNSCOP report on 1 August was met with furious Arab responses on both public and official levels, leading to a growing trend on the part of the AHC and the Arab governments to prepare for armed resistance to the partition, if the UN adopted that solution.

The inevitability of this course seemed all the more likely with the 26 September 1947 statement by Secretary of the Colonies Crich Jones that his government would only execute an agreed-upon solution between the Jews and Arabs, adding that in the absence of such an agreement, Britain would relinquish the Mandate and withdraw its military and civil administration from Palestine. The statement represented Britain's last effort to pressure the U.S. administration, the Arabs, and the Jews to achieve an agreed-upon settlement that would allow Britain to preserve its position in Palestine, and thus their 26 September statement was not irreversible.¹⁸ However, the regional and international responses to the UNSCOP report and to this statement over the next few weeks all but convinced

British policy makers and the British public that a complete withdrawal from Palestine was indeed in Britain's best interest.

The Arab States and the Question of Palestine, 1945–48

The nature of Arab responses to the reemergence of the Palestine question toward the end of the war can be explained in the context of three major trends in Arab regional and domestic politics: growing nationalization of the masses and the quest for national liberation from foreign domination; rising popular grievances in the form of social and national protest against both indigenous elites and colonial presence; and intensified rivalries among Arab rulers and competition for all-Arab leadership.

Specifically, the end of the war and consequent removal of restrictions on political activity, coupled by growing economic difficulties as a result of the withdrawal of foreign military forces from Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and Egypt, fueled antigovernment and anti-British sentiments. Postwar conditions enabled newly emerging secular and religious, social and nationalist, radical movements to mobilize the masses for their extraparliamentary campaigns, especially in Iraq, Egypt, Syria, and Lebanon, which had undergone a rapid process of urbanization and nationalization.¹⁹

The growing domestic turmoil led to an increasing inclination by political elites to espouse not only an intransigent position concerning national independence but also the doctrine of pan-Arab nationalism, rendering it the dominant public discourse. Practically, political commitment to common Arab values and interests took the form of growing adoption of the Palestine issue as a core all-Arab concern and a symbol of common Arab identity. Above all, the issue of Palestine proved to be an indispensable source of legitimacy on both domestic and regional levels, which explains its rapid rise since the late 1930s to the top of the agenda of Arab ruling elites as well as of political parties and movements.

Palestine thus came to serve as a focus of regional Arab politics, stirred by interdynastic rivalries and competition for regional leadership represented by the Hashemites' ambitions of championing unity of Greater Syria (of Amir `Abdullah of Transjordan) or the Fertile Crescent (of the Iraqi royal family) and their rivals' resistance to any change in the regional status quo, championed by the Saudi king and supported by Egypt, Yemen, Syria, and Lebanon. These rivalries often matched a web of cross-national alliances and networks of governments and political movements.

The Palestine question indeed played a unique role in enhancing *formal* common Arab action and crystallizing the regional system's nucleus, institutionalized

by the foundation of the League of Arab States in March 1945. With the foundation of the League, the Arab-Palestinian national movement, still exhausted by the 1936–39 revolt and with its political leaders detained or in exile, lost any effective representation of its own cause. The question of Palestine thus became a collective Arab issue supervised by the Arab League.²⁰ In practice, however, the growing Arab concern over and interest in the question of Palestine, both in public opinion and at official levels, turned out to be a paralyzing influence on joint Arab action in support of the Palestinian Arab cause, diplomatically and militarily alike. This was particularly the case because of the serious blow sustained by the Palestinian Arab leadership headed by the Mufti al-Haj Amin al-Husseini, as a result of the 1936–39 Arab rebellion in Palestine and its repression by the British Mandatory power. Worse still, the Arab and international policies conducted by the Mufti prior to and during the war turned out to be disastrous for the Palestinian Arab cause once the war came to an end. In 1939 to 1941, the Mufti played a leading role in inspiring and guiding the anti-British/anti-Hashemite rebellion in Iraq led by army officers and backed by Prime Minister Rashid `Aali al-Kilani. With Britain's suppression of the short-lived rebellion, the Mufti relocated his center of activity to Nazi Germany, where he stayed until the end of the war, fostering close collaboration with the Nazi regime, serving the German war effort by helping to recruit tens of thousands of Muslims from Yugoslavia for the German army and broadcasting Nazi propaganda to the Muslims of North Africa and the Middle East. The Mufti's record of collaboration with the Nazis would render him a pariah to future British and American governments at a time when he remained a symbol of religious devotion and national heroism among the Arab-Muslim masses.²¹

The apparent success of Zionist propaganda and diplomatic efforts in the United States toward the end of the war triggered deep concern among Palestinian and Arab political leaders, followed by intensive diplomatic action on behalf of the Palestinian-Arab cause. Effectively, the Arab governments decided to extend their support to the Palestinian-Arabs in the form of three main projects: applying a boycott of the Jewish economy, "saving" Arab lands from sale to Jews, and establishing Arab propaganda offices in Washington and London to enhance public understanding of the Arab cause and check Zionist influence on public opinion.²² In practice, the Arab governments were slow or reluctant to provide the necessary funding for any of these schemes unless it served their own narrowly defined national interests, as indicated by the Iraqi insistence on supporting the Arab propaganda offices and land-saving projects directly rather than through the collective Arab League apparatus. Specifically,

the Arab governments and public media insisted that Palestine should become a unitary independent state where Jews would constitute a permanent minority, threatening that acceptance of the Zionist claims would ruin the Arabs' friendly relations with Britain and the United States.

The collective Arab rejection of the recommendations made by the Anglo-AACI indicated the growing Arab commitment to support the Arabs of Palestine "by all possible means," in addition to making an unequivocal commitment to allocate financial support to attain this purpose. In fact, given Britain's reserved position about the AACI's recommendations and reluctance to see to their implementation, the Arab governments strove to reach a consensus with Britain that would help London to retreat altogether from the Committee's recommendations rather than taking any direct action to prevent their implementation. Hence, the "extraordinary" Arab League Council meeting of prime ministers that convened in Bludan, Syria, in June 1946 rejected the option of appealing to the United Nations, giving preference to coordinating with Britain about a new policy toward Palestine. This could mean either replacing the Mandate with collective Arab trusteeship, in accordance with articles 79 to 80 of the United Nations Charter, or prolonging the British Mandate by ten years, after which Palestine would become independent.²³

Just how polarized the Zionist and Arab positions were was demonstrated by the vigorous rejection of the AACI's recommendations throughout the Arab world. The protests, strikes, demonstrations, and militant proclamations all combined to create a sense of crisis. Apart from rejecting the immigration of 100,000 Jews into Palestine and the abolition of restrictions on land sales to Jews, the Arabs were particularly bitter about the AACI's recommendation that Palestine should become neither a Jewish nor an Arab state. The Arabs argued that with continued Jewish immigration and land purchases, a Jewish state would be inevitable.²⁴

The Arab League's meeting in Bludan resulted primarily in the decision to adopt a memorandum that each member state would issue separately to Britain and the United States, phrased in a threatening tone, regarding any attempt to implement the AACI's recommendations. The threat included a hint that economic sanctions would be applied, namely an embargo on oil supplied to Britain and the United States, and that volunteers from the Arab countries would be encouraged to support the Arabs of Palestine. Indeed, similar to the Zionist position before the AACI, Arab-Palestinian leaders insisted that the Mandate should come to an end to let the Arabs decide the dispute with the Zionists on their own. Beyond declarations, however, the Arab coalition was deeply divided

over policy making, making any compromise on Palestine impossible. Hence, the Iraqi pressure to adopt resolutions threatening specific economic and political sanctions against Britain and the United States if the AACI's recommendations were implemented—a position that reflected the domestic Iraqi mood concerning Palestine—was met with strong reservations by most Arab delegates, who feared that such a threat would harm their own interests. The disagreement was finally settled by accepting the Iraqi demand, albeit keeping it secret, although the resolutions on sanctions and “popular” military and financial support to the Arabs of Palestine were informally reported to the British government.²⁵

As expected by most Arab delegates, the Bludan decisions and memoranda threatening to use oil sanctions against Britain and the United States made little impression on the latter's policy makers. The U.S. State and Defense Departments attempted to employ the Arab threats to urge the White House to take a pro-Arab position on Palestine despite their awareness of the unrealistic nature of the Arab threats concerning oil embargo against the Western powers. Indeed, King Ibn Sa`ud of Arabia repeatedly stated that for purely economic considerations, his oil would not be used as a political weapon. Effectively, the fact that the Bludan threat to employ oil sanctions against Britain and the United States remained secret rendered these decisions meaningless and absolutely noncommittal. Indeed, on 8 and 10 August, only two months after Bludan's decisions had been made, the governments of Jordan and Lebanon, respectively, signed agreements of concessions with the Tapline company of Aramco. A year later Syria followed suit and signed a similar agreement with this company.²⁶

In contrast to the Arab intransigent position on Palestine, the Zionist movement demonstrated political realism when, at an August 1946 meeting in Paris, a decisive majority of the Jewish Agency took a historical decision to support partition and the establishment of a “viable Jewish state” in part of Palestine. The Zionist decision, which signaled a retreat from the Biltmore Program of May 1942 recommending that “Palestine be established as a Jewish Commonwealth,” came in the aftermath of eight months of unified armed resistance by the three Jewish militias (Hagana, IZL, and LHI) to the British Mandate in Palestine, which peaked in mid-June 1946 with the bombing of eleven bridges connecting Palestine to the neighboring countries and the bombing a month later of the King David Hotel, where the Mandatory civil and military headquarters were located. The timing of the Paris decision reflected a sense of fear of a violent confrontation with Britain and loss of White House support, following the British comprehensive military crackdown on the Yishuv's leadership and military infrastructure on 29 June 1946 (known as Black Saturday).²⁷

Above all, however, it was the Morrison plan of provincial autonomy and its perceived danger to Zionist aspirations—and yet, its potential as a basis for negotiations on partition of Palestine into two states—that determined the change in Zionist diplomacy. Contrary to the Arab collective rejection of the provincial autonomy plan even as a basis for negotiations with Britain—mainly because it was understood as laying the cornerstone to partition of Palestine and the establishment of a Jewish state—the Zionist position paved the road to secret negotiations on partition of Palestine into Jewish and Arab states with King Abdullah of Jordan and Egypt's Prime Minister Isma'il Sidqi on the one hand, and with the British government on the other. Although these negotiations resulted in no immediate tangible results, they led to an unwritten understanding between King Abdullah and the Jewish Agency on the principle of partition of Palestine between them and the establishment of a Jewish state in an unspecified part of the territory.²⁸

The main opportunity the Arabs missed was Bevin's favorable position toward their claims and his willingness to impose a settlement on the Zionist party as long as Arab and American support could be secured. This was repeatedly manifested in the two rounds of the London Conference (September 1946, January 1947), which represented the dynamics of extremism dominating both domestic and inter-Arab politics. The need of Arab rulers to appease militant nationalist and Islamic groups at home ultimately led these governments to adopt uncompromising positions on Palestine, thus intensifying inter-Arab rhetorical competition. This was fairly demonstrated by the Arab Counterplan submitted in the first round of the London Conference in the absence of the AHC's representatives and without consulting with them. The plan called for the establishment of Palestine as a unified independent state with a constant Arab majority and recognition of the Jewish population as a political minority. Specifically, the plan stipulated that Jewish immigration and land sales would cease immediately and Jewish citizens would be represented in the legislature and government in accordance with their proportion—but no more than one-third—in the total population (only those residing in Palestine for at least ten years would be considered citizens, practically excluding tens of thousands of those who immigrated in the 1930s); ensured freedom of worship and protection of holy places to all religious denominations; and stated that Hebrew would be recognized officially as a second language.²⁹

These relatively far-reaching compromises on the Arab part, however, proved short-lived, especially in view of Truman's statement of 4 October supporting partition of Palestine. In addition to the resentful mood this statement produced

in the Arab states, the Arab governments came under bitter criticism from the AHC. In the Arab League's council session on 20 October 1946, Jamal al-Husseini argued that the Arab governments had failed to consult with the AHC's members and misrepresented the Palestinian-Arab interests. Though the Arab League's session concluded with decisions on further memoranda and protests, this criticism would have little impact. Deliberations between the AHC and the Arab League secretariat resulted in no change of the Arab Counterplan and acceptance of the AHC reservations as a noncommittal annex. The AHC insisted that Palestine should be "unitary" rather than "unified" to prevent any indication of federalism, that the proportion of Arab to Jewish representation in the legislature and government would not exceed one to six—instead of one to two according to the Arab collective plan—and citizenship for Jews would be restricted to those who lived in Palestine before 1918, effectively disenfranchising hundreds of thousands.³⁰ In the second round of the London Conference, now attended by the AHC—and unofficially also by the Zionist delegates—the Arab delegates, in the absence of Arab League's Secretary-General 'Azzam and other senior Arab officials, adhered to its previous principles and rejected without any discussion Bevin's plan for the establishment of a central binational government with broad autonomy for both Arab and Jewish communities and continued Jewish migration of 4,000 a month for three years. In view of the failure of the conference, the Arab delegates suggested that the Palestine question be referred to the UN, asking that Britain remain in Palestine during the interim period before Palestine became an independent state.³¹

The UN deliberations following the UNSCOP report exposed, once again, Arab rigidity and inflexibility on Palestine. The Arab delegations exhausted all possible arguments in an attempt to convince the British and U.S. governments to refrain from supporting partition, as this could lead the Arabs to vote against them in future UN resolutions. They also implicitly mentioned the Soviet Union as an alternative ally in the international organization.³² These efforts came to an end when the U.S. and the Soviet Union announced their support for partition on 11 and 13 October, respectively. Estimating that joint American and Soviet support would ultimately lead to the approval of partition, the Arab delegations adopted another tactic aimed at convincing the American administration to withdraw or suspend its support for partition, thus preventing its approval by two-thirds of the UN members.

The main Arab effort before the decisive vote on 29 November focused on a secret effort to reach an agreement with the U.S. delegates on settling the Palestine problem on a cantonal basis, along with the principles of the provincial autonomy

plan. This diplomatic effort, presented to the British and American delegates as a collective Arab position, was led by Nuri al-Sa`id, a veteran Iraqi statesman who headed his country's delegation and had a record of supporting a cantonal solution to the Palestine problem. There is no evidence, however, that these proposals, similar to ones that came also from `Azzam, were discussed at all among the Arab delegations or with the AHC's members present at the UN session. Indeed, the Arab governments tried to serve their own interests regardless of the official collective Arab position. Hence, the Jordanian minister in Cairo suggested that his country annex Palestine as a whole to its domain, enabling further Jewish immigration to Palestine, as an alternative to partition. Publicly, however, the Arab delegates remained fully committed to their counterplan at the London Conference, claiming that Palestine should be a unitary independent state.³³ In any case, the American administration refused to discuss Nuri's proposal during the UN General Assembly's deliberations. Moreover, the president's support of partition and inclusion of the Negev in the Jewish state, and the pressures exerted by the American government on China, Liberia, and Latin American countries to support partition regardless of the State Department's reservations, further frustrated the Arab hopes for blocking partition.³⁴

Parallel to secret diplomacy, in the course of the official deliberations of the ad hoc committees, the Arab delegations warned their counterparts of the disastrous results of any attempt to establish a Jewish state in Palestine—bloodshed among the Jews in Palestine and the Arab countries. Following the Secretary of the Colonies' statement on 20 November that his government would not impose any settlement by force and would prevent the implementation of partition as long as the Mandate existed, the Arab delegations, concluding that implementation of partition would necessitate employment of international force, warned the Americans that this would introduce Soviet troops into the Middle East. Such forces, the Arab representatives claimed, would intensify the threat of Communist penetration in the region, which had already been in progress as a result of anticipated Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe.³⁵

The Arab argument fell on fertile soil and, though it failed to change the American vote in favor of partition, its impact was seen in the next few months in the American retreat from partition. As the moment of voting on partition approached, the Arab delegations, at the instigation of the head of Pakistan's delegation, made a last desperate effort to postpone the voting by expressing their willingness to consider UNSCOP's minority proposal of a federative state. The new Arab initiative, which was made without consulting the AHC's delegate, Jamal al-Husseini, and despite Saudi Arabia's objection, was met with

strong objections from the U.S. and Soviet delegations, who claimed it was a transparent effort to stall. The U.S. delegate also pointed to the absence of Jamal al-Husseini as an indication that the AHC was not party to this proposal. Indeed, Husseini later accused the Arab delegations of treason, stressing that only the Palestinian Arabs had the right to decide their fate and would not allow others to decide it.³⁶ The tactical nature of this “last minute” initiative notwithstanding, it could hardly have been processed at the highest international level had there not been strong advocates of the federal/cantonal idea, especially in the Iraqi, Lebanese, and Egyptian delegations.³⁷

The Arab effort against the partition plan was marked by an unbridgeable gap between public and practical policies, between threats of violence and the Arab governments’ real intentions regarding implementing them. The flamboyant declarations and threats of bloodshed made by Arab officials in New York and public figures in the Middle East left the impression that these were empty threats. Indeed, due to socially based interests and established dependence on the Anglo-American powers, let alone their own divisions and competition, the Arab states were by no means in a position to employ their political and economic bargaining capabilities. In fact, the Arab governments repeatedly insisted on their interest in preventing any damage to their relations with Britain and the U.S. or, alternatively, in strengthening their relations with the Soviets at the former’s expense.³⁸

The UN General Assembly’s resolution for partition left the Arabs with one realistic choice, namely, supporting violence in Palestine to deter the international community from attempting to implement the resolution unless an international force could be deployed to undertake the mission—an option that was justly considered to be nearly impossible. This decision coincided with spontaneous Arab riots that erupted in Jerusalem immediately after the UN resolution on partition and soon expanded to other parts of the country. Facing strong public pressures at home to rush military support for the Palestinian Arabs (which radical movements nurtured for political mobilization and self-aggrandizement), the Arab governments decided to adopt a popular model whereby warfare in Palestine would be conducted by irregular volunteers from Arab countries backed by funds and arms provided by the governments. This was also the only possible option because the Arab governments could not officially operate in Palestine without violating the Mandate’s sovereignty. Moreover, Britain’s repeated statements that it would not allow the implementation of partition by the UN before 15 May—the date set by the British for terminating the Mandate—were interpreted by Arab leaders as signals to overturn the UN resolution.³⁹

The Arab League's emergency meeting in Cairo in December 1947 indicated a deeper involvement in the Palestine question. By adopting the idea of recruiting, training, equipping, funding, and supervising irregular troops, often commanded by officers in active military service, the Arab governments moved from political to military involvement in the Palestine question. The decision reflected a joint endeavor of the Arab states and popular nationalist and Islamist movements for whom the war in Palestine provided an opportunity to promote their prestige and overshadow the government's role. The volunteers were to be mobilized from traditional communities—such as Syria's 'Alawites, Druze, and tribesmen of the Jazira, and Shi'i volunteers from south Lebanon—known for their military tradition. Yet a large segment of the volunteers came from radical opposition groups, such as the Muslim Brotherhood movement and ultranationalist activists from Iraq, Egypt, Syria, and Lebanon. These were, to a large extent, a reflection of the motives and agendas of popular heroes and cross-national political networks that had been active in anticolonial revolts since the 1920s in Syria, Iraq, Palestine, and Lebanon.⁴⁰

The military performance of the irregular forces was by and large disappointing, if not disastrous, for the Palestinian Arabs. Despite scoring some local achievements, the fragmentation of command between the Mufti loyalists and the semiregular Army of Deliverance (Jaysh al-Inqadh), the low discipline of the latter troops and their tendency to withdraw under pressure of Jewish attacks, and occasional harassment of Palestinian Arab civilians, all contributed to the inadequacy and eventual collapse of the irregular forces once the main Jewish militia, the Hagana, opened its offensive in early April 1948. Yet though it registered few successes on the ground, the Arab military effort had a substantial impact on the U.S. government. Based on contacts with the Arab governments, by late February the State Department had pushed a plan for withdrawal from partition through a series of Security Council decisions that emphasized the inability of the UN to implement its resolution on partition peacefully, which would have paved the road for a reconsideration of the whole issue in the upcoming General Assembly session.⁴¹

Parallel to formulating proposals for the establishment of a trusteeship regime in Palestine, American officials endeavored to ensure Arab cooperation and support for their proposals. Yet despite the State Department's repeated requests and Arab governments' pressures on the Mufti to delegate his representative to Washington, the Palestinian-Arab leader refused to take any action before the U.S. president announced his withdrawal from partition. Once again, the Arab governments backed the Mufti's decisions while in closed diplomatic meetings

with the State Department they expressed their willingness to discuss a solution on a federal-cantonal basis and to make compromises with the Jews on constitutional and immigration matters. They also stressed their willingness to remove the Mufti and other extremists from key positions in the Arab world and asked that Britain delay the end date of the Mandate until an alternative solution to partition was developed.⁴²

The sense of success on the part of irregular Arab forces in Palestine, along with other factors caused the Arab leadership to be optimistic about an American willingness to settle for something other than partition. The optimistic Arab responses to the American initiative apparently grew out of the American wish to reverse its support for partition, and successes of the irregular Arab forces in Palestine. March 1948 was the most depressing month for the Jewish population in terms of military failures and casualties, mostly resulting from attempts to maintain communication with isolated or besieged settlements, including attempts to keep the road to Jewish Jerusalem open. The Communist takeover in Czechoslovakia on 25 February served as an opportunity to remind the Americans of the significance of Arab friendship in view of the struggle between the Western and Eastern blocs, and to repeat the warning concerning penetration of Jewish Communist agents into the Middle East as immigrants to Palestine. In addition, following an American proposal, Arab governments began discussing practical arrangements for coordinated warfare against communism in the Middle East, including an exchange of information between Iraq, Egypt, Syria, and Lebanon. The intensifying Cold War also seemed to Arab governments as an opportunity to trade off their support for favorable mutual defense treaties with the Western powers.⁴³

The Arab response to the official U.S. proposal to the Security Council on 19 March, by which the United States would endeavor to end hostilities, abandon the concept of partition, and recommend UN trusteeship over Palestine, was cautiously positive as the Arab states waited to see further developments. The Arab League's council, which convened in Beirut, responded by calling for disarmament of the Hagana and prevention of further Jewish immigration. While the official Arab position remained as intransigent as ever concerning partition, Arab diplomats appeared willing to cooperate with the Western powers and the UN in every possible way to establish a truce in Palestine and prevent partition, as long as the Jewish forces were disarmed.⁴⁴

Yet the American plan was doomed to fail, not only because it was vague or because the president and the State Department held contradictory positions on it, but mainly because the administration was not willing to beef up the plan by

providing military force to ensure its implementation. On 23 March, the Jewish Agency and the National Committee announced their total rejection of the trusteeship plan and any other alternative denying or postponing partition and the establishment of a Jewish state. Two days later the president, in an attempt to alter the deviation of the State Department, stated that the trusteeship regime would be temporary and that there was no retreat from partition. Yet, even without Truman's objection to the trusteeship plan, Washington was unwilling to replace British military presence in Palestine to ensure the implementation of its plan. There was also concern that an American military involvement in Palestine would have to include protecting the Jewish community against possible invasion by the Arab regular armies. In any case, the British government would not change its plans to withdraw from Palestine by 15 May and would not take part in implementing any solution that would be agreed upon by both Jews and Arabs.⁴⁵

The American and Arab plans were further doomed by the course of military events in Palestine, which seemed increasingly the most significant factor shaping the fate of Palestine. The collapse in mid-April of the Arab irregular forces in Palestine came as a bitter surprise to the Arab governments, shifting their main concern to preventing the establishment of a Jewish state, which had become a more realistic possibility. Yet their willingness to cooperate with the American efforts to attain a truce in Palestine before 15 May were futile, and not only due to the divided Arab front and lack of control of the forces in place. The Jewish leadership was willing to accept the truce only if it would allow partition and establishment of a Jewish state, call for removal of all Arab foreign forces from Palestine, and open the gates for Jewish immigration. In contrast, the Arabs perceived the truce as a means of preventing the establishment of a Jewish state.⁴⁶

The decision to invade Palestine with Arab regular armies and the consequent conduct of the war resulted from Arab ruling elites' deep political concern for their own security. Indeed, it was largely a preemptive measure conducted in the face of sustained popular indignation and protest in response to the Arab Palestinians' plight, particularly their mass exodus from their homes as refugees under Jewish military pressure. The decision also represented deeply disputed inter-Arab interests, which hampered the initial military effort of invasion on the night of 14/15 May, immediately at the expiration of the British Mandate. The timing of the invasion and the collective Arab statement explaining its objectives in fact indicated that the Arab governments assumed they were invading a territory without internationally acknowledged sovereignty, a fact that would exempt them from the charge of violating international law and/or the UN resolution on

partition. This assumption, however, turned out to be baseless. President Truman's decision to extend *de facto* recognition to the Jewish state just a few minutes after its proclamation by the provisional government, followed shortly by recognition by the Soviet Union, became an international legal obstacle for the Arab states in their effort to nip the Jewish state in the bud, if indeed this was what they meant to accomplish. The Arab invasion and the conduct of the war, exemplified the prominence of domestic considerations in the minds of the Arab rulers, who reluctantly entered the fray against the best advice of their military echelons.⁴⁷

Conclusion

Britain's repeated efforts to reach a reasonable solution agreed to by the two communities in dispute could not overcome the national and religious sentiments that motivated the disputants' political aspirations and mutual alienation. Bevin's calculations and efforts to secure American support for his policy in Palestine were all linked to the concept of coercion of the Jews, or at least ensuring the Arab states' acquiescence, an option that would only be realistic with full U.S. partnership and commitment.

It is in this context of Britain's ambivalent policy on the Palestine question and tendency to take a pro-Arab position that the response of the Arab ruling elites—who were largely inexperienced in the art of international relations and were counting on or following Britain's lead in this realm—to the unexpected U.S. presidential intervention in the Palestine question can be better understood. Moreover, in view of the generally pro-Arab attitude of the American State Department and diplomatic echelons in the Arab capitals, and their lack of access to the White House, Arab governments were in no position to realistically appreciate the impact of Truman's Palestine policy, let alone affect his decisions.

The Arab ruling elites, comprised of conservative notables with very narrow popular support and political legitimacy, were by and large dependent on Britain's support as a guarantee for containing the radical social and political forces of nationalists, Communists, and Islamists. Thus, in addition to the paralyzing effect of inter-Arab politics that prevented political realism in relation to the question of Palestine, Arab policy makers were further constrained by social and political challenges that disabled any possible adjustment to the new international conditions resulting from the war, especially the impact of the new and unexpected role of the U.S. president on the Palestine question.

With the benefit of hindsight, the Arab reliance on Britain concerning Palestine was not necessarily doomed to fail. The failure of Arab collective policy on Palestine, represented by the proclamation of the State of Israel, and the latter's

ability to defeat the Palestinian Arabs and repel the invasion of regular Arab armies, was not primarily the result of exogenous factors—American, represented by the White House, Zionist influence in the international arena, or British constraints. Rather, it was the intransigent position advocated by the Arab Higher Committee led by the Mufti, Haj Amin al-Husseini, and publicly adopted by the Arab governments toward any solution that would include substantial Jewish immigration into Palestine and recognition of the Jews of Palestine as a political minority. The rejection of all the solutions for the conflict suggested by Britain, the United States, and the United Nations between May 1946 and November 1947—a binational unitary state, provincial autonomy, partition, or a federative state—eventually accounted for the diplomatic deadlock that rendered the use of force inevitable. The rigid, unrealistic, and ineffective Arab collective responses to these options weakened the willingness and the ability of the pro-Arab British and American decision makers to meet the essential Arab needs—namely, putting an end to continued Jewish immigration to Palestine and establishing Palestine as an independent Arab state.

Notes

1. A typical Foreign Office Arabist, Harold Beeley, stated that the growing Zionist impact on American public opinion and party politics “poisoned Britain’s relations with the United States.” See his “Summary on Britain’s Policy and the Palestine Question, 1945–1948,” attached to his letter to Burrows, 24 March 1949, PRO, FO371/75340/E4121.
2. See for example Cohen, *Palestine and the Great Powers*; Wilson, *King Abdullah, Britain and the Making of Jordan*; Shlaim, *Collusion Across the Jordan*; Pappé, *Making of the Arab-Israeli Conflict 1947–1951*; Ilan, *Origins of the Arab-Israeli Arms Race*; and Tal, *War in Palestine 1948*. For a certain exception, see Khalidi, “Arab Perspective.”
3. Louis, *British Empire in the Middle East*, 104; and Bullock, *Ernest Bevin*, 113–14, 121–25. On the viewpoint of the British military command, see also Montgomery, *Memoirs of Field Marshal the Viscount Montgomery of Alamein*, 428–30.
4. Bullock, *Ernest Bevin*, 307–16, 368–70.
5. For a comprehensive study of Truman’s decisions on Palestine/State of Israel, see Cohen, *Truman and Israel*.
6. Minutes by Beeley (Bevin’s adviser on Palestine) and Wright (assistant director-general, Foreign Office), 8 and 11 October 1948, respectively, PRO, FO371/68379/E13309.
7. This policy was presented by Bevin in early September 1945 at a conference in London attended by all British representatives in the Middle East. For the conference’s proceedings and decisions, see minutes, 6 September 1945, PRO, FO371/45379/E6954. See also Louis, *British Empire in the Middle East*, 17–22; and Bullock, *Ernest Bevin*, 114–15, 154–55.
8. Bullock, *Ernest Bevin*, 156; and Campbell to Foreign Office, Report on strong Egyptian resistance to the Anglo-American schemes of extending aid for social and economic development, 10 June 1948, PRO, FO371/68379/E8131.
9. On the development of British decision making on Palestine in the post–World War II years, see Sela, “Britain and the Palestine Question 1945–1948.”
10. Grigg to Eden, 27 June 1945, PRO, FO371/45378/E4711, and 29 June 1945, PRO, FO371/45378/

- E4775; and Secretary of the Colonies Hall to the cabinet, 1 September 1945, PRO, FO371/45379/E6744.
11. Bullock, *Ernest Bevin*, 48. See also Cohen, *Palestine and the Great Powers*, 50–51, 55–57.
 12. Louis, *British Empire in the Middle East*, 430–33; and Bullock, *Ernest Bevin*, 298–99.
 13. Discussion of the cabinet's Defense Committee, 24 April 1946, PRO, FO371/52517/E3839; and Summary of the Cabinet Office, Brook to How, 3 June 1946, PRO, FO371/52527/E5066. On Washington's approach to London's expectations, see Halifax to Bevin, 4 May 1946, PRO, FO37152521/E4098.
 14. Louis, *British Empire in the Middle East*, 436–38, 454; Bullock, *Ernest Bevin*, 300; and Beeley's summary, "Britain's Policy and the Palestine Question," Beeley to Burrows, 24 March 1949, PRO, FO371/73540/E4121.
 15. For the statement, see U.S. Dept. of State, *Foreign Relations*, 1946, 7:703. See also Bevin's response in the cabinet meeting, 25 October 1946, PRO, FO371/52563/E10827.
 16. Cohen (*Palestine and the Great Powers*, 182–83) perceives Truman's statement and the Zionist Congress's decision as the main causes for the failure of the London Conference. For the Bevin plan, see his letter to U.S. Secretary of State, 7 February 1946, in U.S. Dept. of State, *Foreign Relations*, 1946, 5:1033–35.
 17. Cohen, "Ha-Mediniyut ha-Britit," 59–60. See also Louis, *British Empire in the Middle East*, 462, 464–67; and Cohen, *Palestine and the Great Powers*, 221–22.
 18. Cohen, "Ha-Mediniyut ha-Britit," 129, 134–35. See for example reports on meetings held by the High Commissioner for Palestine, Allan Cunningham, with Hussein Khalidi and Ben-Gurion, 2 October 1947, Cunningham Papers, V/1/77, Middle East Center Archive, St. Antony's College, Oxford; and Minutes by Burrows, 25 September 1947, and Foreign Office to Beirut, 7 October 1947, PRO, FO371/61882/E9665.
 19. These trends are presented in Tripp, "Egypt 1945–1952." For Iraq, see a manifesto of the ultranationalist Istiqlal (Independence) Party, connecting the issue of Palestine to the freshly signed Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of Portsmouth (January 1948), in Kubba, *Mudhakkirati fi Samim al-Ahdath*, 225–27. See also Bullock, *Ernest Bevin*, 507.
 20. Maddy-Weitzman, "A New Middle East?"; and Sela, *Decline of the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 31–54.
 21. On the Mufti's role and activity in Iraq, see Hirszowicz, *Third Reich and the Arab East*, 90–95, 117–20; Mattar, "Amin al-Husseini and Iraq's Quest for Independence, 4, 271–81; "The Mufti's Activity in Iraq," 1 January 1941, CZA, S/25, file 3482; and al-Sabbagh, *Fursan al-'Uruba fil-Iraq*, 109, 139, 218–20. For his activity in Germany, see Hopp, *Mufti papiere*; and Schwanitz, "Germany's Middle East Policy," 3.
 22. For a comprehensive discussion of these plans and their implementation, see Sela, "Question of Palestine in the Inter-Arab System," 202–41.
 23. League of Arab States, *Protocols of the Fourth Extraordinary Session*, esp. 47–48; How to Bevin, 3 July 1946, PRO, FO371/52543/E7065; and Clark to Secretary of State, 25 June 1946, in U.S. Dept. of State, *Foreign Relations*, 1946, 7:635–36.
 24. See for example Stonehewer-Bird to Foreign Office, 3 May 1946, PRO, FO371/52521/E4088; Shone to Foreign Office, 5 May 1946, PRO, FO371/52521/E4136; and Tack to Secretary of State, 3 May 1946, in U.S. Dept. of State, *Foreign Relations*, 1946, 7:592–93.
 25. The Arab League's Secretary-General, 'Abdullah 'Azzam, and senior Arab delegates kept the British diplomats present in Bludan updated about the proceedings and inter-Arab disagreements; see for example reports from Clayton and Smart to the Foreign Office about their talks with 'Azzam, 8 June 1946, PRO, FO371/52526/E4523; 13 June 1946, PRO, FO371/52314/E5454; and 14 June 1946, PRO, FO141/1084/384/30/46. The Bludan

- Conference and decisions, including the texts of the memoranda to the British and American governments, are documented in *Report of the Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry in the Palestine Question*, 55, 58; and Iraq Government, *Taqir Lajnat al-Tahqiq al-Niyabiyya*; League of Arab States, *Protocols of the Fourth Extraordinary Session*, esp. 101–3, 107–8.
26. Kadi, *Arab Summit Conferences and the Palestine Problem*, 83.
 27. Hurewitz, *Struggle for Palestine*, 260–61; and Heller, “Me-’Hashabat ha-Shehora’ la-Haluka...,” 315–16.
 28. Caplan and Sela, “Zionist-Egyptian Negotiations and the Partition of Palestine, 1946”; and Sela, “Maga’im Mediniyim bein Netzigei ha-Sochnut ha-Yehudit u-Memshalot ‘Ever-ha Yarden u-Mitzrayim ‘al Haluka, 1946.”
 29. Annex to minutes of Howe to Sargeant, 19 December 1946, PRO, FO371/52567/E12394; and al-Armanazi, *Ashar Sanawat fil-Diblumasiyya*, 186–87.
 30. For the text of the AHC’s Memorandum presented to the London Conference, see al-Hut, *Al-Qiadat wal-Mu’assassat al-Filastiniyya*, 820–22; and *al-Wahda* (Jerusalem), December 23, 1946.
 31. Protocol of the conference’s last session, 13 February 1947, PRO, FO371/61748/E1386.
 32. Foreign Office to UK delegation in UN, 26 September 1947, PRO, FO371/61880/E9054; and Minutes of UK delegation to UN, 24 September 1947, PRO, FO371/61530/E9225. In his memoirs, Iraqi Foreign Minister Jamali argued that the Arabs approached the Soviet Union delegation with a proposal to support them in other UN votes in return for opposing partition, which the Soviet delegation declined; al-Jamali, *Dhikrayat wa-’Ibar*, 70.
 33. Cables to Foreign Office from Evans, 16 October 1947, PRO, FO371/61883/E9712; Dundas, 13 November PRO, FO371/61888/E10731; Clayton, 22 November 1947, PRO, FO371/61889/E11008; and Kirkbride, 26 November 1947, PRO, FO371/61890/E11162.
 34. Beeley’s minutes, 1 March 1948, PRO, FO371/68536/E3048.
 35. UK delegation in the UN to Foreign Office, 25 and 27 November 1947, PRO, FO371/61890/E11127 and E11207, respectively; *al-Misri* (Egypt), 25 November 1947; Muhammad Hussein Haykal, *Mudhakkirat fil-Siyasa al-Misriyya*, 3:30; and *Report of the Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry*, 111.
 36. Eilat to the Zionist Executive (n.d.), summarizing the Arab “last minute” activity to prevent a pro-Zionist decision by the UN, ISA, 93.03, file 2270/6. See also Jamal al-Husseini’s statement on this matter, *al-Misri*, 11 February 1948.
 37. Haykal, *Mudhakkirat fil-Siyasa al-Misriyya*, 35, 38–39; and Eilat, *Ha-Ma’avak ‘al ha-Medina*, 458.
 38. Evans to Foreign Office, 15 October 1947, PRO, FO371/61882/E9648; and “Letter from Egypt,” 3 October 1947, CZA, S/25, file 9034.
 39. Summary of public opinion for December 1947 based on the Lebanese press, Houston-Boswell to Attlee, 17 January 1948, PRO, FO371/68493/E1216; and Maccatti to the Foreign Secretary, 1 December 1947, in U.S. Dept. of State, *Foreign Relations, 1947*, 5:1322–26.
 40. For example, the Iraqi former prime minister and general Taha al-Hashimi, Fawzi al-Qawuqji, who was appointed as the commander of the Army of Deliverance, and the Mufti, al-Haj Amin al-Husseini, and some of his followers.
 41. For the development of the State Department’s position, see Cooper’s minutes, 21 February 1948, in U.S. Dept. of State, *Foreign Relations, 1948*, 5.2:643–45; Austin’s speech in the Security Council, in *ibid.*, 5.2:651–54; Marshall’s memorandum, 5 March 1948, in *ibid.*, 5.2:678–79; Marshall’s (Top Secret) letter to Austin, 5 March 1948, in *ibid.*, 5.2:679–81; and Eilat, *Ha-Ma’avak ‘al ha-Medina*, 549–53.

42. On the Mufti's position, see al-Husri, *Mudhakkirat Taha al-Hashimi*, Pt. 2, 1942–1955, 206–7. On the AHC's position, see UK delegation to the UN to Foreign Office, 15 March 1948, PRO, FO371/68538/E3496. On the Arab delegations' position, see Cooper to Austin, 14 March 1948, in U.S. Dept. of State, *Foreign Relations, 1948*, 5.2:723–25; and al-Misri (Egypt), 9 and 15 March 1948. For a clear indication that U.S. State Department officials shared their intentions with the Arab representatives in the UN, see Childs to Secretary of State, 13 March 1948, in U.S. Dept. of State, *Foreign Relations, 1948*, 5.2:719; and UK delegation to the UN to Foreign Office, 13 March 1948, PRO, FO371/68538/E3431.
43. UK delegation to the UN to Foreign Office, 13 March 1948, PRO, FO371/68548/E3577; Foreign Office to Amman, 18 March 1948, PRO, FO816/27/S/885/46; Tuck to Secretary of State, 12 April 1948, National Archives (US), 890B.00/4-1248; Tuck to Secretary of State, 8 April 1948, National Archives (US), 890B.00/4-848; and British Middle East Office (Cairo) to Foreign Office, 15 April 1948, PRO, FO371/68385/E4759.
44. Maccatti to Secretary of State, 22 April 1948, in U.S. Dept. of State, *Foreign Relations, 1948*, 5.2:753; Editor's note, *ibid.*; Kirkbride to Foreign Office, 23 March 1948, PRO, FO371/68539/E3879; Houston-Boswell to Foreign Office, 22 March 1948, PRO, FO371/68539/E3781; al-Misri, 20 March 1948; and Broadmead to Foreign Office, 1 April 1948, PRO, FO371/68369/E4175.
45. Report by General Greunther to the State and Defense Departments, in U.S. Dept. of State, *Foreign Relations, 1948*, 5.2:631–33; Henderson to Marshal, 23 March 1948, in *ibid.*, 5.2:756–57; Inverchapple to Foreign Office, 20 March 1948, PRO, FO371/67648/E3726; Bevin to Washington, 20 March 1948, PRO, FO371/68648/E3662 and E3726.
46. Minutes by Lovett on Marshall's conversation with Shertok and Epstein, 26 April 1948, in U.S. Dept. of State, *Foreign Relations, 1948*, 5.2:761–63; Eilat, *Ha-Ma'avak 'al ha-Medina*, 659; and UK delegation in the UN to Foreign Office, 1 April 1948, PRO, FO371/68540/E4173.
47. Iraq Government, *Taqrir Lajnat al-Tahqiq al-Niyabiyya; Report of the Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry in the Palestine Question*, 34, 191; and Kirkbride to Foreign Office, 1 May 1948, PRO, FO816/118/S/1014/48.

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Archives

- CZA Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem, Israel
- ISA Israel State Archive, Jerusalem, Israel
- National Archives (US), Washington, DC, USA
- PRO Public Record Office, London, UK