

Mr. Satterthwaite said that the United States had always maintained that the Palestine dispute should be kept apart from United States-Arab relations and stated that he was pleased that Egypt had now decided to treat the question in this fashion.

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501.BB Palestine/1-2449 : Telegram

*The Chargé in the United Kingdom (Holmes) to the Secretary of State*

TOP SECRET      US URGENT

LONDON, January 24, 1949—6 p. m.

291. According to Burrows, British Cabinet this morning considered question Palestine (paragraph two, Embassy's 247, January 21<sup>1</sup>) and decided not to make any statement re British recognition Israel since Australia and New Zealand have urged UK to delay action until these dominions ready take same step simultaneously with UK. Australian cabinet meeting scheduled for January 27. Ceylon has asked UK not to recognize Israel at this stage; Pakistan has urged UK not to recognize at all and India has taken same line as Pakistan but less forcefully. Another factor leading to cabinet decision is that question should be discussed January 27-28 at London meeting Western Union consultative council. Re French recognition announced today, Burrows said Belgium and Netherlands are "furious with French".

2. When I saw Bevin on other matters this morning it was evident that he is deeply preoccupied with Palestine. He referred to Moslem resentment toward the West generated by Palestine developments and expressed belief that USSR would "switch to the Arabs". If it did so he thought this should be matter of grave concern to both US and UK. Bevin also mentioned need for Commonwealth consultation before UK can act.

HOLMES

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<sup>1</sup> Not printed, but see footnote 5, p. 674.

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501.BB Palestine/1-2449 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Special Representative of the United States in Israel (McDonald), at Tel Aviv*

TOP SECRET      US URGENT

WASHINGTON, January 24, 1949—7 p. m.

NIACT

42. We have today expressed to Epstein our apprehension at reports indicating Israeli Representatives have announced postponement withdrawal Egyptian force from Al Faluja, which had been scheduled begin tomorrow morning, until after conclusion armistice agreement

between Egypt and Israel. According to our info Israeli Delegation previously had agreed to unconditional release of this force. This voluntary agreement entered into by Representatives of Israel and Egypt was not made contingent upon conclusion armistice.

Epstein said he had just received instructions from Tel Aviv to call at Dept and say his Govt "in general" intended keep its forces on military lines as they now exist during period armistice in which military considerations were paramount. This armistice attitude however would not affect eventual political settlement. Epstein referred to divergent desires Egypt and Transjordan re disposition Arab coastal strip in Negev. He said Egyptians had been vanquished in war but wished return to Cairo in guise of victors, which was not easy achieve.

Epstein said however he would convey Dept's view to his Govt that PGI might find it wise be generous, realizing as it did necessity providing Egyptian Govt with some means saving face. We thought prompt implementation agreement to release Faluja garrison might afford such a means. At same time we stressed our hope neither Govt would take a position which would cause armistice negotiations break down, as this Govt, a friend of both Israel and Egypt as well as member Conciliation Commission, very much desires see these negotiations brought to a prompt and successful conclusion. We added that representations in similar vein had been given to Egyptian Ambassador this morning, ref Cairo's 93, Jan. 24.<sup>1</sup>

Please express similar views to Prime Minister and FonMin in your discretion. Repeated to Cairo for appropriate action as 90. Repeated for info to London as 261, Jerusalem 41 as Unpal 9.

ACHESON

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<sup>1</sup>Not printed; it advised of information from Prime Minister Hady that the "Rhodes conversations had been virtually suspended due to refusal of Zionists to permit evacuation of positions by Faluja garrison." It also stated that the "Prime Minister who expressed gratitude for US Good Offices in bringing about Rhodes conversations voiced confident conviction that a word from US or further interposition its Good Offices was again required in aid of UN in interests of implementation of SC's resolutions which Egyptians had long ago agreed carry out." (501.BB Palestine/1-2449)

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501.BB Palestine/1-2449 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Embassy in the United Kingdom*

TOP SECRET      US URGENT      WASHINGTON, January 24, 1949—7 p. m.  
 NIACT

259. When Sir Oliver Franks called on Secretary this morning we went over draft of proposed statement which Secretary would have made on US-UK attitude toward Middle East, which referred to such development as hoped-for UK decision to recognize PGI, French *de*

*facto* recognition of Israel and appointment of Ethridge as USRep Palestine Conciliation Commission. Basic para. relating to UK-US policy in Middle East was as follows:

[Here follows second paragraph of draft statement, printed page 691.]

Premise on which statement was to be issued was announcement today of UK intention to accord *de facto* recognition to PGI at early date. However, British Ambassador following his meeting with Secretary informed us that Cabinet had decided not to make such announcement today. Accordingly Secretary's statement will not be made.

Remaining problem was remarks which Bevin plans to address to House of Commons on Jan 26. Brit Emb has shown Dept text of For Sec's proposed statement explaining this had crossed tel from Amb same subject. Dept on informal basis indicated certain deletions and alternative phraseology which would make it more acceptable from US point of view. It was stressed however that Dept had no intention "clearing" Bevin's remarks, and that they had not been seen by Sec. Our action was impelled by friendly desire assist For Sec and particularly avoid his making statements which would encourage close questioning of Pres or Sec here who would be forced in making record clear to indicate that two Govts had not always seen eye to eye on how to approach Palestine problem. We told Brit Emb that if questions should ensue prompted by debate in Commons Wed we would probably reply in terms of para quoted above from proposed Sec's statement.

Separate tel<sup>1</sup> provides verbatim text of Bevin's remarks as annotated on strictly informal basis in Dept after necessary elimination parts referring to Sec's proposed statement.

ACHESON

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<sup>1</sup> *Infra.*

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501.BB Palestine/1-2449 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Embassy in the United Kingdom*

TOP SECRET      US URGENT      WASHINGTON, January 24, 1949—7 p. m.  
 NIACT

260. Following is text of proposed Bevin statement referred to Deptel 259 today.

"His Majesty's Government and the United States Government have long been united on the basic policy of increasing the economic wellbeing and sense of security of the Middle East and have sought to speed the return of lasting peace to Palestine. We are keeping in close touch with one another about these objectives. The fact that we and the Americans have similar interests and objectives in this

vital area is a matter of great importance. There has been the constant danger that the Middle East might become a second Balkan area, torn by internal dissensions and international rivalry. We are determined to do all in our power to prevent this happening and believe that the Americans hold similar views.

This links in with the important declaration made by President Truman in his inauguration speech in favour of a bold new programme for assisting other countries in economic and social development. This declaration is in line with many discussions I have had with Mr. Byrnes and Mr. Marshall. President Truman's aim and ours are the same. One of my first actions on taking office was to call home our representatives throughout the Middle East to discuss what contribution Britain could make in that area. The British Middle East Office has given valuable assistance, among others, in the fields of forestry, statistics and labour matters. I am glad to say that among others Iraq Government is preparing large scale plans for irrigation and flood-control which, if successfully applied, may nearly double the cultivable areas. The Persian Govt is about to embark on the first stage of their seven year development plan. In this and other projects we are willing to give all possible assistance. The Americans have also been interested in these projects and the World Bank is showing itself ready to help.

The basic policy on which we believe we and the Americans hold similar views is not merely a matter of words. I would remind the House of the common approach which we and the Americans have made to the problems of Turkey and Greece, and of the significance of this fact in the field of security. American aid and support to Turkey and Greece in close agreement with ourselves is an extremely important contribution to the stability and security of the whole area. American interest and help in Persia, also side by side with ourselves is equally important."

ACHESON

501.MA Palestine/1-2549

*The Secretary of Defense (Forrestal) to the Chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs (Bloom)*<sup>1</sup>

CONFIDENTIAL

WASHINGTON, 25 January 1949.

DEAR MR. BLOOM: Your Committee has pending before it a legislative proposal recently submitted by the State Department with respect to Palestine refugees. On behalf of the National Military Establishment I should like to strongly recommended the enactment of this legislation.

Many reports from Brigadier General William Riley, U.S.M.C., who is the Senior U.S. Military Observer, as well as the Chief of Staff of the UN Mediator, Dr. Ralph Bunche, indicate that the situation of the

<sup>1</sup> Apparently Secretary Forrestal sent an identical letter to Tom Connally, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. He transmitted a copy of his letter to Chairman Bloom on January 25 to the Secretary of State.

refugee is a major obstacle in the path toward peace in Palestine. The presence of almost a half million refugees in various areas of the Middle East not only constitutes a serious threat to the political, economic and social stability of this important region, but seriously endangers the health and welfare of the peoples of the Arab States and Israel. This unhealthy condition also menaces American civilians and military personnel who are present in these countries.

Such a measure would be wholly consistent with the traditional humanitarian role of the United States in cases of major disaster and calamity among the peoples of other lands. Moreover, the Joint Chiefs of Staff are of the opinion that it is militarily important to provide timely and generous aid to these refugees in order to remove the serious threat to the stability of this area which their present plight creates.

To alleviate this dangerous situation our assistance must be prompt and generous and we have every reason to believe that it will be efficiently administered by our American Ambassador, Stanton Griffis, who has been appointed as the UN Director of Relief. I therefore urge early consideration and passage of the proposed legislation.

This office has been advised by the Bureau of the Budget that this legislation and this report are in accord with the program of the President.

Sincerely yours,

JAMES FORRESTAL

IO Files

*Message Released by the United Nations Security Council on  
January 25, 1949*

S/1225

CABLEGRAM DATED 25 JANUARY 1949 FROM THE ACTING MEDIATOR TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL TRANSMITTING A CEASE FIRE AGREEMENT APPROVED BY EGYPT AND THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL

To PRESIDENT OF SECURITY COUNCIL: I have the honour to inform you that the following cease-fire agreement was formally approved by the Delegations of Egypt and Israel at Rhodes for the armistice negotiations. Text of agreement follows:

**"EGYPTIAN ISRAELI GENERAL CEASE FIRE AGREEMENT**

We, the undersigned, do hereby agree that:

1. The general cease-fire agreement between the two parties which became effective on 7 January 1949 at 1200 GMT is hereby formally confirmed as a complete and enduring cease-fire between all elements of our military or para-military forces—land, sea and air—wherever located.

2. No element of the ground or air forces of either party shall advance beyond or pass over the line now held by foremost elements of its ground forces, and no element of naval or air forces of either party shall enter into or pass over the waters adjacent to the coastline now held by the other party for any purpose whatsoever.

3. In pursuance of the resolution of the Security Council of 29 December 1948, complete supervision of the truce by the United Nations observers shall be allowed and facilitated.

4. Movements of civilians shall not occur from one side to the other.

Done and signed in quadruplicate at Rhodes, Island of Rhodes, Greece, on the 24 January 1949, in the presence of the United Nations Acting Mediator on Palestine and the Chief of Staff of this United Nations Truce Supervision Organization. Signed for and on behalf of the Government of Egypt: Self El Dine, Colonel and M. K. El Rahmany, Colonel. For and on behalf of the Provisional Government of Israel: Walter Eytan and Yigael Yadin, Alouf.<sup>1</sup> Rhodes, 24 January 1949."

The negotiations on the armistice agreement made excellent progress in the early stages but severe divergencies in viewpoint have been encountered during the past few days. The negotiations are continuing, however, and it is still hoped that agreement can be reached.

I regret that I have not been in a position to keep the Security Council regularly informed as to the progress made and the difficulties encountered because of the formal agreement entered into by the two Delegations that the proceedings of the negotiations are not to be released in any way until the negotiations are concluded.

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<sup>1</sup> Hebrew equivalent of "Colonel"; Colonel Yadin was Chief of Operations in the Israeli Army.

IO Files

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*Message Released by the United Nations Security Council on  
January 26, 1949*

S/1227

CABLEGRAM DATED 25 JANUARY 1949 FROM THE ACTING MEDIATOR TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL TRANSMITTING THE TEXT OF AN UNDERTAKING ON FOOD AND MEDICAL CONVOYS FOR AL FALUJA

TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL: I have the honour to report the following text of an undertaking on food and medical convoys for Al Faluja entered into at Rhodes on 24 January 1949 by the delegation of Israel.

"UNDERTAKING ON FOOD AND MEDICAL CONVOYS FOR AL FALUJA

The undersigned, on behalf of the Provisional Government of Israel, hereby undertakes that pending the evacuation of Al Faluja, and subject to review at the conclusion of the present Rhodes negotiations, food and medical supplies for the sustenance of the garrison and civilian population in Al Faluja, in such quantities as may be determined by the Chief of Staff of the Truce Supervision Organization, shall be granted unobstructed passage from present Egyptian lines to Al Faluja in convoys exclusively under United Nations supervision and escort. The Chief of Staff shall inform the designated representative of the Government of Israel of the quantities of supplies, the number of vehicles and the times of all such projected convoys, and shall take into account such recommendations relating thereto as said designated representative may deem it necessary to make."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Pursuant to this agreement four separate convoys, supervised and escorted by United Nations personnel, entered al-Faluja with food and medical supplies for Egyptian military forces and civilians resident there, on January 28 and February 4, 11, and 18. These operations were carried out without incident (cablegrams by Mr. Bunche to Secretary-General Lie, dated January 29 and February 4, 11, and 18, which were released by the Security Council as S/1236, S/1243, S/1255, and S/1262, respectively).

501.BB Palestine/1-2649 : Telegram

*The Special Representative of the United States in Israel (McDonald)  
to the Secretary of State*

TOP SECRET

URGENT

TEL AVIV, January 26, 1949—10 a. m.

57. ReDeptel 42, January 24. At 9 p. m., I had conference with Shertok, Knox and Shiloah (latter returned January 25 from Rhodes) present. Shertok reviewed in detail the negotiations and contemplated procedures re Faluja evacuation as follows:

1. In discussions with Bunche and Riley it was made abundantly clear that evacuation of Faluja must be part of the whole armistice negotiation and not a separate operation; accordingly, Israeli delegation had it placed on the agenda as sub-item in "topic four". Bunche argued strongly that it would be impossible because of face for Egyptians accept a document which specified in writing that evacuation of Faluja was contingent on armistice but that he and Riley would explain to Egyptians verbally that evacuation was conditional and warn Egyptians agree or be accused in SC of non-cooperation. Israel then agreed proceed on Bunche's verbal promise which, according Shiloah, was fully understood by more than ten top UN and Israeli negotiators in round-table discussion. In effect Israelis compromised even further in agreeing that evacuation would begin on completion armistice or when armistice appeared very near to conclusion. Bunche finally countered, perhaps with undue optimism, by insistence on specific date of 24 January to start evacuation contingent, however, on armistice nego-

tiations progress before that date. When on January 22 it became apparent armistice could not be concluded, nor was very near conclusion, Israelis asked him inform Egyptians of delay in evacuation and, for window dressing, provided in agreement with Bunche the "technical reason": i.e., confusion re Egyptian request simultaneous evacuation of 2500 civilians from Faluja.

2. Shertok and Shiloah state Bunche fully admits the verbal understanding that implementation of evacuation must be contingent on, and considered in context of, whole armistice negotiations. Unfortunately, only the news of the written agreement is known to world press owing to text of operational memorandum to UN personnel in Tel Aviv which text was leaked to press.

The Egyptians have sent a note to Bunche accusing bad faith on part Israel for postponing evacuation. Israel replied January 25 in "stiff note" to Bunche, with copy for Egyptian delegates explaining exactly the verbal agreement in order avoid Egyptian accusation.

Shertok went on to say that for Israel agree evacuation Faluja with no armistice concluded or very near would be a farce; it is a misapprehension, as Bunche knows, to state that evacuation plan was unconditional.

In reply inquiry re expectations, Shertok stated he did not feel negotiations would break down over Faluja problem which is readily solvable as part of general settlement. He is most apprehensive, however, over following much more fundamental points:

1. Israel made Egypt proposal that it would guarantee stay out of Egypt if Egypt would get armies out of Israel partition area and guarantee not return. Israel furthermore guaranteed that if Egypt would take army out of Gaza-Rafah strip Israel would not move forces in, thus allowing Egyptian civil administrators to stay there along with any arrangement that could be worked out with UN supervisors. This, in Shertok viewpoint, was maximum conciliatory position possible.

2. Now it appears that Egypt, while wanting Israel guarantee not enter Egypt again, is insisting that Egyptian forces be allowed re-enter Negev and occupy El Auja. Shertok says this is serious and Israel cannot agree.

3. While disturbed over Egyptian attitude on El Auja, Shertok states that with chief negotiators still in Rhodes parley begins again Thursday and he still has hope success.

Shertok says evidence desire continue negotiations Israel signed Rhodes January 24 firm agreement with Egyptian delegates allow another food and medical convoy to Faluja brigade, and a "sincere cease-fire" arrangement similar to the Jerusalem one.

Shertok reiterated instructions sent Epstein with hope that US Government could use good offices persuade Egyptians Government



not insist (1) unconditional evacuation Faluja and (2) return Egypt forces to El Auja.<sup>1</sup>

Pass copy to Army CSGID.

McDONALD

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Rusk, on January 27, summarized telegram 57 in an unnumbered, eyes only telegram to Acting Mediator Bunche, at Rhodes. He concluded the message as follows: "We have been very much encouraged with your masterly direction of the Rhodes talks and even though auspices may not now seem bright we do hope you will stick by job until it is finished. While fully conversant your desire to return we feel that no one but yourself should shepherd these delicate negotiations at this time. Conciliation Commission can then build on foundations you have established." (501.BB Palestine/1-2749)

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867N.01/2-1449

*Memorandum by the Secretary of State to the President*

SECRET

WASHINGTON, January 27, 1949.

Subject: *De jure* recognition of the Governments of Israel and Transjordan.

On August 30, 1948 you approved a policy of simultaneously extending *de jure* recognition to Israel and Transjordan, after the Israeli elections.<sup>1</sup> On October 24, 1948, you declared in a public statement that when a permanent government was elected in Israel it would promptly be given *de jure* recognition.<sup>2</sup>

The Israeli elections took place on January 25. Reports so far received are that the moderate Mapai party of David Ben Gurion, which is now in control of the Provisional Government of Israel, has won enough votes to assure that it will remain in control of the administration, with the assistance of political groups sympathetic to it. Accordingly, I believe we should plan to extend full recognition to Transjordan and Israel in the very near future.

There are attached draft telegrams to our representatives in Tel Aviv (Tab A)<sup>3</sup> and Amman (Tab B) instructing them to announce to representatives of the governments concerned the decision of the United States to extend full recognition, and suggested press releases to be issued here after the above notifications have been made (Tab C) and (Tab D).

Subject to your approval, it is suggested that our Mission in Tel Aviv become an Embassy and that Mr. James G. McDonald, who is your Special Representative, be named Ambassador to Israel. It is also suggested that Mr. Wells Stabler, a Foreign Service Officer who

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<sup>1</sup> See memorandum of August 30, 1948, by the Secretary of State to President Truman, and footnote 1, *Foreign Relations*, 1948, vol. v, Part 2, p. 1359.

<sup>2</sup> See telegram Telmar 97, October 24, 1948, to Paris, *ibid.*, p. 1512.

<sup>3</sup> The tabs cited in this memorandum are not printed.

is at present in Amman in the capacity of liaison officer for the American Member of the Security Council Truce Commission in Palestine, be named Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of our Mission in Amman, which should be a Legation.

I should appreciate your advice as to the timing of this recognition. It seems to me that it might come as early as the latter part of this week and that shortly thereafter we could request *agrement* for Mr. McDonald as Ambassador to Israel.<sup>4</sup>

DEAN ACHESON

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<sup>4</sup> President Truman gave his approval in an undated marginal notation. Regarding the telegrams sent to Tel Aviv and to Amman on January 31, see the editorial note, p. 713.

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USUN Files

*Memorandum by Mr. Samuel K. C. Kopper to Mr. Mark F. Ethridge*

SECRET

[WASHINGTON,] January 27, 1949.

I. *General*—The attitude of the Arab states individually and collectively during United Nations consideration of the Palestine question has been marked by the following features:

(a) At the outset of the General Assembly consideration of the question in April 1947 there was unanimous agreement among the Arab states who were members of the UN as well as the Arab Higher Committee that Palestine should become a unitary Arab state. On the surface this position has been officially maintained up to the present. Their opposition to the Partition of Palestine was based on historical, legal, ethnic and other grounds. That many of their contentions had merit cannot be denied.

(b) Arab governmental leaders have for the most part been prodded by the populace, particularly in the cities of the Arab states to liberate Palestine from the Jewish hold. With very few exceptions these Arab leaders have not only done little publicly to try and cool the ardor of the populace, but have more often taken positions which tended to fan the flames even though the governments possessed little or no power to back up their public position with effective action.

(c) Strong resentment existed among Arab leaders and peoples towards the U.S. particularly during the 1947 General Assembly and immediately thereafter, and on May 14th when the US gave *de facto* recognition to the Government of the State of Israel. During the past six months there is evidence that this anti-American sentiment has subsided slightly. There is increasing evidence that a number of the Arab leaders would like to get out of the Palestine situation as gracefully as possible. Nevertheless, there still exists considerable unrest and agitation inspired by more extreme elements which makes the situation in several of the Arab states somewhat unsettled.

(d) The policy of the Arab Governments regarding a Palestine settlement was frequently characterized by a stubborn unwillingness to yield on points which might have created a more suitable solution

from the Arab point of view that the situation which developed after their unwillingness to yield. Many of the points upon which they have failed to concede, have frequently seemed relatively insignificant in light of subsequent developments.

(e) In UN negotiations one is frequently confronted with a situation where Arab leaders are saying one thing publicly for home consumption yet at the same time privately are trying to find ways and means of settling the situation in a more moderate way.

(f) The unity of the Arab states in the Palestine situation was fairly well preserved until they undertook military action in Palestine. The failure of the governments to take effective action or no action at all has led to mutual recrimination and has all but shattered cooperation in the Arab League on the Palestine question. The position of Transjordan throughout the UN discussions was never exactly the same as the position taken by the other Arab states. There is increasing evidence that the Arab Governments would like to have the Palestine question settled so that they can get along with economic and social developments in their own individual countries.

(g) The problem of the 500,000 Arab refugees from Palestine created by the Jewish influx and Israeli military activity has placed a very heavy burden upon all of the Arab states excepting Saudi Arabia and Yemen. An adequate settlement of this potentially dangerous and electric situation is essential.

II. The attitudes of the individual Arab states may be summarized as follows:

[Here follow the attitudes of Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Transjordan, and Yemen.]

III. *Conclusion*—Most of the Arab leaders seem to realize that their cause against the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine is now hopeless. They are not, however, as yet able to take a position in public recognizing the state of Israel. Only time will permit them to take such a position. In spite of their aversion to the policy of the U.S. the great majority of the Arab leaders recognize the realities of the position of the U.S. in the world today and many of them hope that the situation in Palestine can be ended so that they can resume more normal relations toward the U.S. The position of the U.K. in the Arab world has not been enhanced by the policy pursued by that government during the past year and a half. Arab leaders are apprehensive of the intentions of the Soviet Union. They would probably prefer to get out of the present situation and into more normal relations with U.S. The tone and feeling of the Arab Delegations in the General Assembly of 1948 as compared with the previous session was much more friendly towards the U.S. in spite of all that transpired between November 1947 and September 1948. There is a feeling of some bitterness on the part of some of the Arab leaders over the will- ingness of the Security Council to take strong measures in July 1948 directed at the Arab states but absence of a similar willingness to do the same against the state of Israel in the fall of the same year. This

feeling, however, does not permit them to indulge in the hope that there will be a change in the American policy. In spite of insinuations a year ago that the Arab states might leave the United Nations, they have not done so although they are undoubtedly quite cynical about the role of the UN. An economic boost to that area might well alleviate some of the bitter feeling in the Arab states.

When the General Assembly was considering the establishment of the Palestine Conciliation Commission during the latter part of November and early December of 1948 there was considerable speculation as to how the Arab states would vote. If the Arab states, the Soviet Bloc and the other Asiatic states had all voted against the proposal it would not have passed. However, since the particular objective seemed to be conciliation by peaceful means and there did not appear to be any strong reaffirmation of the November 29, 1947 resolution the Arab leaders were able to indicate to their Asiatic friends their willingness to have them abstain or vote in favor of the December 11, 1948 resolution. (This required some prodding by the United States Delegation, however!)

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501.BB Palestine/1-2849 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Embassy in Egypt*

TOP SECRET      US URGENT      WASHINGTON, January 28, 1949—6 p. m.  
 NIACT

107. Epstein on instructions Shertok informed Dept Jan 28 PGI seriously disturbed by deadlock Rhodes and likelihood failure negos. Epstein said PGI sincerely desired reach agreement with Egyptians but that latter uncompromising, unwilling admit defeat, and encouraged in intransigent attitude by Bevin's speech in Commons Jan 26.

Epstein said main stumbling block appeared to be El Auja which Egyptians stated was menace to Egypt as long as in Israeli hands. They desired Israelis withdraw from El Auja but for security reasons PGI unable effect complete withdrawal as long as prospects final peace negos not immed. Israeli reps Rhodes had informed Egyptians that PGI willing withdraw main body Israeli troops back from El Auja leaving only "military outpost" under UN supervision. Such outpost would in no way be strong enough to menace Egypt and yet would afford measure of protection to Israeli settlements in area.

Epstein said he saw no reason why PGI would not agree to sign armistice with Egyptians on basis this arrangement El Auja and that he certain that if agreement concerning El Auja could be reached PGI would release Faluja brigade.

Epstein reiterated PGI position that armistice should be based on present military lines with exception above arrangement El Auja and Faluja, Egypt to remain in occupation Gaza-Rafah coastal strip.

Epstein said proposal concerning El Auja had been decided in PGI Cabinet meeting and that Cabinet had also decided formally request USG's good offices to attempt persuade Egyptians come to agreement this basis. Said despite deadlock PGI would not withdraw negotiators from Rhodes.

Pls call immed upon FonMin and give him above info. Add that USG earnestly hopes Egypt will see way clear to reaching armistice agreement with PGI. Point out that proposed UN supervision Israeli outpost El Auja seems offer assurance El Auja will not be menace Egypt nor Egyptian lines communication. Add that fact that Israeli proposal is result Cabinet decision and that PGI has formally requested US good offices seems indicate proposal sincere. State USG believes substantial progress already made toward Israeli-Egyptian armistice agreement and hopes both sides will make every effort remove final obstacles now standing in way.

Dept made representation Egypt Amb Jan 28 along same lines. Amb pointed out PGI made no mention of compliance with SC resolution Nov 4. Made personal suggestion that Egyptian observers might be stationed at proposed Israeli outpost El Auja in addition UN reps. Dept stated opinion this suggestion merited serious consideration Rhodes but pointed out proposed Israeli-Egyptian armistice comm would be in position to maintain surveillance El Auja outpost. Amb reporting Dept's representation to Cairo.

For your info only Dept this morning also recd request from SYG requesting it endeavor persuade both Govts break deadlock.<sup>1</sup>

ACHESON

<sup>1</sup> This telegram was repeated to Tel Aviv for the American Delegation to the Palestine Conciliation Commission and to Jerusalem. It was transmitted separately to Acting Mediator Bunche, at Rhodes, in an unnumbered telegram of January 28 and to London in telegram 321 the same day (501.BB Palestine/1-2849). The message to London requested the Embassy to "Pls immed convey sense above to FonOff and state USG hopes UKG will make particular effort Cairo attempt persuade Egyptians reach compromise with Israelis at Rhodes. Add USG believes Israeli proposal could serve as effective basis for armistice without reference to dispositions final peace settlement, and that fact that proposal is result PGI Cabinet decision and that PGI has formally requested US good offices this basis seems indicate proposal sincere."

Chargé Patterson called on Prime Minister Ibrahim Abdel Hadi on January 29 and gave him the substance of the Department's telegram. At the conclusion of the presentation, Hadi Pasha "expressed inability consider El Auja suggestion or other points raised by Israeli pending demonstration of Israeli good faith through prior unconditional release Faluja garrison . . ." The Prime Minister left the impression with the Chargé that the "Egyptians anxious continue Rhodes conversations but felt that token evidence of good faith by Israelis and face-saving device represented by unconditional release of Faluja garrison must be insisted upon as prerequisite to renewal of serious conversations at Rhodes." (telegram 116, January 29, 4 p. m., from Cairo, 501.BB Palestine/1-2949)

501.BB Palestine/1-2849 : Telegram

*The United States Representative at the United Nations (Austin) to  
the Secretary of State*

SECRET URGENT NEW YORK, January 28, 1949—9:10 p. m.

107. SYG Lie handed USUN following telegram to him from Bunche dated Rhodes, 27 January. Lie stated he was giving us this confidentially and not to any other delegation although we assume he gave it to McNaughton as President SC. Lie hoped US could do something and surmised UK might be making more trouble.

Following verbatim text of telegram :

“Negotiations resumed afternoon 27th. Following separate talks with each delegation conclusion is inescapable that prospects for an armistice agreement are virtually nil. Each delegation is adamant on its previous position. Have exerted every possible effort to induce concessions from each side but to no avail.

Egyptian minimum demands are :

- a. Israeli withdrawal to 14 October lines as defined in 13 November memorandum except for defence forces in settlements;
- b. Egyptian civil administrators in Beersheba and Bir-Asluj; they have dropped their original demand that Egyptian forces be permitted to return to Bir-Asluj and along Rafah Bir-Asluj road;
- c. They claim right to advance only at El Auja which Israelis captured in late December and advanced from there into Egypt.

Egyptians therefore taken 13 November lines as basis for armistice lines and insist advantages gained under the truce should not be confirmed by armistice agreement.

Israelis have modified their original demand that Egyptian forces withdraw altogether from Gaza-Rafah coastal strip now strongly held by them and will accept Egyptians remaining there with defence forces only on basis of a reciprocal reduction agreement. Israelis insist on retention of their forces in El Auja at minimum in defensive strength and regard as unrealistic Egyptian emphasis on 4 November resolution and demands concerning Beersheba and Bir-Asluj. They will not consider any general withdrawal to 14 October lines or evacuation of Beersheba and Bir-Asluj.

Israeli position is that any withdrawal arrangement must be on reciprocal basis and will be controlled by distance of Egyptian forces from Palestine frontier. Egyptians embittered about postponement of Al Faluja evacuation. Egyptians urge that they do not have to sign an armistice agreement with Israelis to stay where they are and hold what they have and will not sign one unless Israelis make important concessions in direction indicated. Egyptians do not wish to sign away in an armistice agreement any interests of their own in Negev or custodial claims on behalf of Palestine Arabs there. They realize that as soon as they sign most other Arab states will quickly follow.

We have been officially informed that Lebanese will sign an armistice agreement within half an hour after notification that Egyptians have signed. Abdullah has communicated to me his interest in an invitation if Egypt signs.

It has been made clear to me today that despite a complete impasse neither delegation will wish to take responsibility for walking out on the negotiations. They will wish me to take responsibility for closing the negotiations by declaring no hope for agreement exists. I will be cautious about that. At worst I will try to persuade them to adjourn indefinitely and then I will report fully to SC. Present prospect is that negotiations will be completely stalemated by Sunday if not before. Urgent Council intervention in some form might be helpful even if only a cable from President of Council.<sup>1</sup>

If no agreement is signed here possibility of renewed fighting will be greatly increased."

[Here follows final paragraph, dealing with a matter other than the armistice agreements.]

AUSTIN

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<sup>1</sup> President McNaughton informed Acting Mediator Bunche that he could not "intervene officially in the Rhodes conversations unless he has a specific reason or specific point on which to comment. He advised Bunche in any event not to break off the discussions but, if necessary, adjourn them. If necessary to call adjournment, Bunche should request both parties to issue statements setting forth reasons therefor. McNaughton's thought was that the SC could use such statements as a basis for intervention." (telegram 110, January 29, 3:50 p. m. from New York, 501.BB Palestine/1-2949)

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501.BB Palestine/1-2949

*Memorandum of Conversation, by Mr. Robert M. McClintock*

SECRET

[WASHINGTON,] January 29, 1949.

Subject: Palestine

Participants: Mr. Eliahu Epstein, Representative of the Provisional Government of Israel  
 Mr. Ethridge, U.S. Member of the U.N. Palestine Conciliation Commission  
 Mr. Satterthwaite, NEA  
 Mr. Rockwell, NE  
 Mr. McClintock, UNA

Mr. Epstein called on Mr. Ethridge at the Department at 11 a. m., January 29. He said that he had promptly reported to his Government the interview he had had on the preceding day with Mr. Satterthwaite but had not received any further word from Tel Aviv.

The Department's Officers laid great stress on the evacuation of the Faluja garrison and said that on the basis of their talk with the Egyptian Ambassador it seemed that this was the key point which, if removed, would cause the diplomatic log jam to break. Mr. Epstein went into a long explanation that the Faluja agreement was merely one aspect of the over-all armistice agreement. He said, "We will let them out of Faluja if they will agree to our staying at El Auja."

At this point Mr. McClintock read Mr. Epstein a private telegram from Dr. Bunche to Mr. Rusk, which made very clear that the Faluja agreement had been unconditional and was in no way dependent upon the conclusion of an over-all armistice. Mr. Epstein seemed considerably taken aback but stuck to his guns and reiterated his former thesis.

When it was suggested that possibly a token Egyptian force might also remain at El Auja, Mr. Epstein said vehemently that his Government would never agree to such terms.

(Mr. Ethridge remarked after the interview that he thought the Israelis were unduly rigid with regard to Faluja. He did not seem to have acquired a very good impression of the Israeli case from his talk with Mr. Epstein.)

Regarding the long-range aspects of the Arab refugee problem Mr. Epstein said that he was sure the Israeli Government would welcome back the Christian Arabs. He implied that such a welcome would not be accorded the Moslem Arabs but added that the Mohammedans would not wish to return in any event as they did not feel comfortable as a racial or religious minority group. He commented that it was an interesting facet of Arab character that the Mohammedan Arabs, when in the majority, treated other minorities very well but that they did not feel the same way when occupying the minority position themselves.

Mr. Epstein said that, in addition to these considerations, many of the Arab villages had been destroyed and there were no homes for the refugees to return to. He said that, from the humanitarian aspect, Israel would have to contribute something to the rehabilitation of the refugees but the problem was too vast for any single small government to handle and it could only be solved by the international community. He thought, however, that certain of the Arab States, such as Transjordan and Iraq, were in need of extra population and might be able to take a considerable portion of the refugees.



501.BB Palestine/1-2949 : Telegram

*The Consul at Jerusalem (Burdett) to the Secretary of State*

SECRET URGENT

JERUSALEM, January 29, 1949—10 a. m.

78. Palun 15. It is suggested Department discuss with Ethridge Deptel 35, nineteenth and previous Contels regarding possibility early settlement Jerusalem. In order capitalize on present opportunity achieving agreement, believe question should be raised by Commission with PGI and Transjordan immediately upon arrival Ethridge who will probably become chairman February 1. Commission could then proceed planned tour capital, leaving committee here to continue by negotiations pending return. Dayan's proposals not yet discussed with Commission members. We plan informally discuss this subject with French representative shortly.

Believe agreement should follow lines Dayan suggestions, avoiding references sovereignty, and prefacing agreement with stipulation it is without prejudice international status city as provided GA resolution. Agreement would have object achieving peace and demilitarization city and would be signed directly between parties. It is recognized immediate agreement establishing demarcation line between Arab and Jewish areas and postponing question internationalization may result in intervening period being utilized to make ultimate agreement on internationalization more difficult. However, absence of any agreement now would have same result, present opportunity for peaceful settlement in city would be forfeited and permanent retention by Jews of Arab areas now held would become most likely. USDel and Consulate General, therefore, believe every effort should be exerted reach agreement now delineating Arab-Jewish area and demilitarizing city.

Department will undoubtedly realize Commission discussions regarding internationalization will probably precipitate adverse public reaction in Israel press which may stimulate dissident elements with complications security problem. For example, yesterday morning's press alleged Israeli Cabinet decided to claim full sovereign rights except in Old City where internationalization might be accepted. Nevertheless USDel and Consulate General feel risk must be taken.

French representative is of opinion that PGI should not carry out intentions reported in press to hold constituent assembly Jerusalem nor set up proposed central administrative offices in Jerusalem. He may raise question in Commission, or may make informal representations to PGI or may report to his government for action.<sup>1</sup>

BURDETT

<sup>1</sup> The Department informed Jerusalem on January 30 that Mr. Ethridge had departed for Jerusalem before telegram 78 could be discussed with him. It noted also that Mr. Ethridge was acquainted with the general lines of the proposal (telegram 54, 501.BB Palestine/1-3049).

867N.01/1-2949 : Telegram

*The Chargé in the United Kingdom (Holmes) to the Secretary of State*

RESTRICTED URGENT

LONDON, January 29, 1949—1 p. m.

350. Foreign Office issued following communiqué 11 a. m. London time today :

"HMG in UK have decided to accord *de facto* recognition to the Government of Israel. They hope to arrange with that government for the early exchange of representatives."

2. Final decision this connection was taken late January 28.

3. Bevin will receive Linton, Israel representative at 12:30 to inaugurate UK-Israel relations with "friendly words." Marriott<sup>1</sup> has been instructed to deliver same message to Shertok in Tel Aviv.

4. Fact *de facto* recognition does not in any way effect determination Israel frontiers is being made clear in Foreign Office spokesman guidance to press. Spokesman will refer to many outstanding questions arising from former British mandate which remained to be worked out with Israel and which UK hopes can be settled with Israel at early date. Re *de jure* recognition, spokesman will say that this will be considered in the light these discussions establishment of frontiers and general development of situation in Palestine.

HOLMES

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<sup>1</sup> Cyril Marriott, British Consul General at Haifa.

867N.01/1-2949 : Telegram

*The Consul at Jerusalem (Burdett) to the Secretary of State*

CONFIDENTIAL

JERUSALEM, January 29, 1949—3 p. m.

82. Dayan stated last night number new immigrants Jerusalem steadily increasing, now almost impossible find vacant room and Army requested vacate requisitioned houses and move into camps. First of Cyprus detainees, large number which scheduled settlement Jerusalem, expected thirtieth.

Admitted Arab quarters Jerusalem held by Jews completely settled by new immigrants and becoming thoroughly Jewish. Asserted PGI would have great difficulty forcing people move from homes now consider theirs and Army would probably be required use force with adverse political repercussions. Stated if return of certain sections to Arabs contemplated, agreement should be reached immediately.

According Dayan new immigrants now occupying Arab property throughout Israel and homes no longer exist to which Arab refugees could return. Stated PGI drawn up plans contemplating settlement Arab refugees in other Arab countries instead their return to Israel. Was vague as to details but said PGI estimated cost resettlement refugees at 150,000,000 pounds and prepared contribute considerable portion this amount. Claimed sources from which funds would come already determined. Maintained PGI would pay for Arab property taken over but not at fantastic prices prevailing during mandate.

To avoid possible embarrassment to Dayan, please protect source. Sent Department 82, repeated Beirut 10, Amman 5.

BURDETT

867N.01/1-2649 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Legation in Saudi Arabia*

CONFIDENTIAL

WASHINGTON, January 29, 1949—6 p. m.

37. Dept now preparing instr to you for discussion overall relations US-SAG, but feels that certain questions raised your 68 Jan 26<sup>1</sup> shld be answered immediately as follows:

1) You shld unequivocally state to SAG officials that US Govt has brought no pressure whatever on UK to recognize Israel. Only representations to UK have been concerned with recent shooting down of RAF planes over Egyptian-Israeli border, and these were made to both Israel and UK in effort to avoid incident developing into major proportions. Greatest pressure on UK has been that of Brit public and parliamentary opinion.

2) US arms embargo has been rigidly maintained. While some war material has been successfully smuggled out of US, quantity has not been large, and wherever possible participants have been prosecuted and material confiscated.

3) US attitude re Israel was clearly stated in UN by Dr. Jessup on Nov. 20 to effect that US supported Israeli claims to boundaries set forth UNGA resolution Nov 29 but believed that if Israel sought retain additional territory in Palestine it shld give Arabs territorial compensation.

<sup>1</sup> Not printed; it transmitted an oral communication by Yusuf Yassin on behalf of King Ibn Saud. The communication stated that the United States was continually supporting and assisting the Israeli State; that under United States pressure, the British were starting to incline toward the Israelis; that the Soviet Union was openly extending military aid to Israel; and that the United States was also doing so, openly or secretly. The communication then queried concerning the attitude of the United States toward Israeli aggression (867N.01/1-2649).

4) We would not support any attempt by Israel to occupy any Arab state and would fully support any measures taken by UN to protect territorial integrity such State.

5) With regard to allegation of incursions Israeli planes over SA territory, Dept interested know whether SAG has brought matter to attention of Acting Mediator.<sup>2</sup>

ACHESON

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<sup>2</sup> Jidda, on February 1, answered in the negative concerning the Department's query in paragraph 5 (telegram 80, 867N.01/2-149).

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*Editorial Note*

The White House, on January 31, released statements announcing as of that date the *de jure* recognition by the United States Government of the Governments of Transjordan and of Israel; for the texts of the statements, see Department of State *Bulletin*, February 6, 1949, page 205.

The Department of State sent appropriate telegrams to Amman (No. 16) and to Tel Aviv (No. 55) the same day (867N.01/1-3149).

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501.BB Palestine/1-2949 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Embassy in Egypt*<sup>1</sup>

TOP SECRET

WASHINGTON, January 31, 1949—6 p. m.

117. Ur 116 Jan 29. On Jan 29 Dept informed Epstein of Egypt PrimMin's response concerning Israeli proposal re El Auja. Epstein communicated substance to Tel Aviv and informed Dept Jan 31 that Shertok instructing Israeli reps Rhodes make following new proposal to Egyptians.

Village of El Auja to be seat of Israeli-Egyptian armistice commission and under control UN observers. Troops neither side to be present. Main body Israeli troops to be withdrawn "well back". Israeli "strong points" to be maintained "north and south of El Auja" along Egyptian frontier for defensive purposes.

Epstein said PGI position on release Faluja brigade remains same.

According Epstein PGI considers above arrangement should remove Egyptian fears that El Auja would be menace to Egyptian lines communication. Shertok desired details be worked out in Rhodes in-

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<sup>1</sup> This telegram was repeated to London, Jerusalem, and Tel Aviv.

stead of Washington and Cairo. Epstein said PGI anxious Rhodes negotiations not be broken off.

ACHESON

501.BB Palestine/2-149: Telegram

*The Chargé in the United Kingdom (Holmes) to the Secretary of State*

TOP SECRET US URGENT

LONDON, February 1, 1949—7 p. m.

379. 1. Burrows today gave Embassy considered Foreign Office reply Department's 321, January 28<sup>1</sup> (Embassy's 351, January 29).<sup>2</sup> He said British views based on two important considerations.

2. First consideration is that Rhodes talks are being conducted in extreme privacy. Bunche made this clear in January 25 telegram to SYG (Doc No. S/1225) which mentioned formal agreement between Arabs and Jews that information re progress talks should not be made available in advance of their conclusion to anyone—not even SC. As result Burrows said it is impossible for anyone to have formal official notification of what is going on. PGI has approached USG in sense Depreftel, and Egyptians a few days earlier approached British Government re Israeli intransigence on Falluja garrison withdrawal but in Foreign Office view there is no official basis upon which advice can be given to either party.

3. Burrows said parenthetically that now UK has recognized Israel, latter is at liberty to put directly to it any points and that UK would be glad to consider such points. Israel has made no such approach.

4. Second consideration according Burrows is that intervention in favor Israeli's ideas re Auja by a government would be in pursuit settlement on very different lines to that laid down by SC on November 4 and December 29. Consequently UK feels that any such action should be regarded with utmost caution because of possibility of it being taken as precedent in other cases such as Indonesia.

5. Burrows said UK has no objection to any agreement reached between parties which would help maintain cease-fire and lead to armistice and final settlement but that Foreign Office considers material difference arises if some outside power (not party to negotiation) should intervene to press one or other side to accept something quite different from SC views.

6. Burrows pointed out that UK has repeatedly told all Arab Governments (most recently on January 18) that their best course would

<sup>1</sup> Not printed, but see footnote 1, p. 706.

<sup>2</sup> Not printed.

be to conclude armistice with Israel followed by final settlement. However, Foreign Office for reasons given above does not find it possible to intervene with Egypt in favor of any particular concession re Auja as outlined by Epstein.

7. In conclusion Burrows said Foreign Office would like to make one positive suggestion: One main difficulty Rhodes is Egyptian fear of making agreement which would leave Egypt open to further Israel aggression. Consequently Foreign Office believes that anything USG can do towards removing this Egyptian fear would be most valuable contribution.

8. When Embassy pointed out Department's 321 referred only to particular effort Cairo by UK to persuade Egyptians to reach compromise, Burrows said that in context outlined by Department this could only mean compromise re Auja and that UK for reasons given above is not prepared to advocate this compromise.

HOLMES

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501.BB Palestine/2-149 : Telegram

*The Special Representative of the United States in Israel (McDonald)  
to the Secretary of State*

CONFIDENTIAL

TEL AVIV, February 1, 1949—7 p. m.

79. ReMistel 77, February 1.<sup>1</sup> Re broadening talks at Rhodes, Foreign Minister stated that PGI received letter 31 January from Bunche in capacity Acting UN Mediator, inviting Israel negotiate armistice with Transjordan, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Yemen,<sup>2</sup> on basis of November 16 resolution, place of conference to be Rhodes or elsewhere within ten days. PGI replied in letter to Bunche February 1, that it readily accepted as regards Transjordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq, provided: (a) that Egyptian negotiations be concluded first; (b) and preferably that negotiations be concluded with others on bi-lateral basis in order handle problems one by one and avoid confusion. As regards Saudi Arabia and Yemen, PGI stated it had no quarrel with these states, desired to have friendly relations

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<sup>1</sup> Not printed; it reported that Ambassador McDonald had formally conveyed United States *de jure* recognition to the Israeli Foreign Minister at 12 noon, February 1, and that in the ensuing 95-minute conversation, the latter had volunteered important information, to be made the subjects of following telegrams (867N.01/2-149).

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Bunche sent these invitations to the Governments of Israel and of the Arab States (except for Egypt) on January 30. The Security Council released the text of the latter group of invitations on February 3 as S/1241.

with them, and saw no reason negotiate armistice with them, because never considered itself in actual conflict with them.<sup>3</sup>

Foreign Minister hopeful mood re progress Rhodes Egyptian talks, especially inasmuch as on January 31 Shiloah had first direct talk with Egyptian representative and latter expressed earnest desire conclude armistice.

McDONALD

<sup>3</sup> According to a cablegram of February 8 from Mr. Bunche to Secretary-General Lie, the Governments of Israel, on January 31, and of Transjordan, on February 8, accepted Mr. Bunche's invitation. The Security Council released the cablegram the same day as S/1245.

Saudi Arabia, on February 8, declined the invitation, noting that the "armed Saudi Arabian troops participating in the Palestine campaign do not constitute an independent front, and there is no reason why the Saudi Arabian Government should enter into any negotiations to conclude a new truce while the truce imposed in July is still effective. At any rate, the Saudi Arabian Government accepts the decisions which have already been adopted, or which may be adopted by the Arab League, in respect of the situation in Palestine."

Iraq also declined the invitation, informing Mr. Bunche on February 13 that "the terms of armistice which will be agreed upon by the Arab States neighbours of Palestine . . . will be regarded as acceptable." The texts of the Saudi Arabian and Iraqi replies were transmitted by Mr. Bunche to Secretary-General Lie on February 24 and were released the same day by the Security Council as S/1265.

:867N.01/2-149 : Telegram

*The Special Representative of the United States in Israel (McDonald)  
to the Secretary of State*

TOP SECRET

TEL AVIV, February 1, 1949—7 p. m.

80. Re Mistel 77, February 1.<sup>1</sup> With repeated emphasis need absolute secrecy FonMin informed that January 31 Israel representatives went Transjordan talk with King Abdullah at latter's request. Interview was lengthy and although not yet in possession complete details conversation FonMin said his information main points were:

1. King stated he desired peace and that war was not really war but more like an unpleasant incident between "friends".

2. British knew King was conferring with Israel representatives and had no objection and gave King free hand except on certain undisclosed points.

3. That if Bunche invited Transjordan Rhodes negotiate with Israel representatives there King would send envoy immediately. If invitation permitted delay of ten days or so King would again confer with Israel representatives during interim.

FonMin stated he very pleased King's expression peaceful possibilities but somewhat baffled because King could not disclose points

<sup>1</sup> Not printed, but see footnote 1, p. 715.

of possible disagreement. Bunche's invitation and PGI requests delay until conclusion Egyptian talks (Mistel 79, February 1) allows possibility one or more meetings with King during ten days before possible Rhodes meeting.

McDONALD

867N.01/2-149 : Telegram

*The Consul at Jerusalem (Burdett) to the Secretary of State*

CONFIDENTIAL      NIACT      JERUSALEM, February 1, 1949—9 p. m.  
URGENT

94. Following announcement issued by Public Information Office tonight:

At its meeting yesterday the Cabinet decided to terminate the military governorship of Jerusalem and to institute in that city governmental arrangements obtaining in other parts of the State of Israel.

"On the 2nd of August, 1948, the Government proclaimed that all laws of the State of Israel apply to the area of Jerusalem under Israeli occupation, and in view of the conditions prevailing at the time, the Government then deemed it necessary to establish the military governorship in the city."

Initial local public reaction is that announcement tantamount to annexation Jewish sections city Jerusalem to State of Israel.<sup>1</sup>

Sent Department 94; repeated Amman 7.

BURDETT

<sup>1</sup> Foreign Minister Shertok informed Mr. McDonald of this action and explained, "to avoid international misunderstanding," that it "was administrative and not annexation of Jerusalem." (telegram 78, February 1, 6 p. m., from Tel Aviv, 867N.01/2-149)

501.BB Palestine/2-249 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Consulate General at Jerusalem*

CONFIDENTIAL      WASHINGTON, February 2, 1949—7 p. m.

62. Unpal 14. [For Ethridge.] AmRep Tel Aviv, together with diplomatic and consular Corps Tel Aviv, invited attend opening Constituent Assembly Jewish Jerusalem Feb 14. Dept has serious doubts, view US position in support UNGA decision re internationalization Jerusalem, concerning advisability any American reps Palestine attending opening assembly. Dept has so informed AmRep Tel Aviv,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In telegram 63, February 2, 7 p. m., not printed.



stating further instructions to follow after matter fully considered here. (Ur 86 Jan 31.)<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile, Dept would like receive indication views PCC re implications holding Constituent Assembly Jerusalem and Ethridge opinion re attendance US reps.

ACHESON

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<sup>2</sup> Not printed; it reported a notice published in the local press calling upon occupants of abandoned property in Jerusalem to establish their right to hold such property. To Consul Burdett, this action "appears to be direct application in Jerusalem area of Israeli law disposing of property in manner and on grounds not permitted to military occupant under international law." The Consul cited Israeli plans to hold the Constituent Assembly in Jerusalem, to conduct municipal elections there in March, and to discontinue the military governorship thereafter. He also noted the permanent establishment of the Israeli Supreme Court in Jerusalem. He then suggested that "appropriate representations soonest to PGI re these developments which seemed designed prejudice internationalization Jerusalem and are part current PGI policy treating Jerusalem as integral part Israel." (867N.00/1-3149)

Jerusalem, on February 3, reported that the first full meeting of the Conciliation Commission took place that day, with Mr. Ethridge in attendance. The Commission discussed the developments set forth in telegram 86. Mr. Ethridge asserted that the "Commission had clear mandate from UN in GA resolution December 11 and suggested Commission immediately make informal contact with Israeli Government for purpose of stating its position and ascertaining Israeli Government's views." The Commission agreed to do so and also decided "to arrange informal meeting between Commission and Israeli and Arab military commanders Jerusalem separately for purpose of expediting proposed military and administrative agreement." (telegram 107, 501.BB Palestine/2-349)

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501.BB Palestine/2-249 : Telegram

*The Chargé in Egypt (Patterson) to the Secretary of State*

TOP SECRET NIACT

CAIRO, February 2, 1949—9 p. m.

131. On responding at 6 p. m., February 2 to urgent request by Foreign Minister I was informed by Abaza Pasha of receipt today word from Rhodes of rejection by Israelis of a proposition devised by Dr. Bunche as Palestine Mediator with view to Egyptian-Israeli Palestine settlement (Embtel 126, February 1).

Egyptians had steadily refused Israeli efforts to change basis of Rhodes talks from SC November 4 and 16 resolutions along lines more acceptable to Israelis. However, when Bunche stating that he had been in touch with his government proposed a new basis for a Palestine settlement Egyptians although unhappy to do so assented in the interests of accelerating conclusion of an agreement.

Bunche had proposed that Bersheba (Bir Saba), El Auja and Bir Asluj should be neutralized with the Mediator or his successor, the Palestine Conciliation Commission sitting in one of the three places above-named. The Egyptians under Bunche's proposition would re-

main at Gaza.<sup>1</sup> (It was not clearly stated when Faluja garrison would be released.)

This proposal had been met by a refusal on the part Israelis or perhaps more precisely by counter-proposals which the Egyptians considered wholly unacceptable.

By such counter-proposals the Israelis stated :

1. Bersheba was necessary to them.
2. They required that an Israeli offensive and defensive force be stationed at Bersheba.
3. An Israeli defense force should be stationed at Bir Asluj.
4. On other hand Israeli would not occupy El Auja and would assist to the Egyptians fortifying that spot.
5. Israeli would assent to UN commission sitting at El Auja if desired.

Foreign Minister had learned that if this attitude were persisted in by the Israelis, Bunche, as acting Palestine Mediator, proposed to notify the SC of the attitude of Israeli's delegates or their government.

Foreign Minister, who indicated a continuing belief in ability of US Government to influence PGI, expressed hope that I most urgently communicate foregoing to my government in order that it might use its influence with PGI to further progress of the Rhodes talks to a conclusion having some relationship to the foundation on which the conversations were built and initiated. Abaza Pasha pointed out that Egyptians had made every conceivable concession, having even departed from their insistence on the November 4 and 16 resolutions when Bunche informed them that his proposition above mentioned had been brought to the attention of the US Government.

I trust the Department may find its way clear to extend effective good offices in order to bring parties to an agreement since Abaza Pasha rather despairingly inquired if the only alternative might be another resort to arms. The Minister, despite my categoric assurances that to the best of my knowledge and belief my government was sincerely desirous that the parties to the Rhodes conversations might reach a prompt and just settlement, was inclined to hold that the US in extending *de jure* recognition to Israel<sup>2</sup> at a sensitive point of the

<sup>1</sup> According to a telegram of February 3, sent presumably to Secretary-General Lie, Mr. Bunche stated that his compromise draft agreement had been presented on January 31 and that the Egyptian Delegation had formally notified him on the morning of February 3 that Egypt accepted his draft, with minor modifications not affecting the substance. New York transmitted the text of Mr. Bunche's telegram to the Department in telegram 125, February 3, 1:18 p. m. (501.BB Palestine/2-349).

<sup>2</sup> In a note of February 4, Egyptian Ambassador Rahim expressed to the Secretary of State the very deep regret of his Government that "certain powers" had recognized the "so-called State of Israel," despite the failure to find a solution for the problems of Palestine. The Ambassador pointed out that while such recognition was not to be interpreted "as a definite stand in favor of Zionists," yet the Zionists had exploited it in this sense (501.BB Palestine/2-449).

Rhodes negotiations had rendered PGI more than ever intransigent and so had indirectly intervened in the negotiations in a sense injurious to Egypt.

Please telegraph urgently any statement which the Department may desire me to communicate to Foreign Minister or other representative Egyptian Government.

PATTERSON

867N.01/2-349 : Telegram

*The Minister in Saudi Arabia (Childs) to the Secretary of State*

CONFIDENTIAL

JIDDA, February 3, 1949—10 a.m.

87. Deputy Foreign Minister after giving message conveyed Legtel 86<sup>1</sup> said if Legation's assurances in Deptel 37<sup>2</sup> particularly paragraph 4 could be conveyed SAG in writing, this would very much facilitate and pave way for King use his moderating counsel with Arab States as suggested Deptel 30.<sup>3</sup> Replied Legation without authority give assurances in writing but would refer Department possible authorization.

Yusuf added paragraph 4 assurances were good but did not go far enough in his opinion to create sense of security Arab States. He instanced violation by Jews truce and efforts made SC to vote economic sanctions with US opposition.

I remarked neither US Government nor any other government would wish bind itself to any particular course of action against Palestine aggression and Yusuf admitted this. What SAG is asking is some assurance which we may feel it possible offer that measures recommended SC against Jewish aggression would not be opposed by US Government by reason possible Jewish pressure on US Government but only by reason doubts re their efficacy.<sup>4</sup>

Sent Department 87, repeated London 30.

CHILDS

<sup>1</sup> Dated February 3, not printed; it conveyed the text of a message from King Ibn Saud stating that he was making every effort for peace in Palestine but that what had happened there was the result of aggression and of injustice to its local inhabitants. The King expressed the hope that the United States would instruct its representative on the Conciliation Commission to make every effort to give the Arabs their rights and to help them regain their confidence in the justice and equity of the United States Government. The Department replied on February 7, directing Minister Childs to inform the King that the United States representative on the Conciliation Commission had been "instructed make every effort assist parties reach just and equitable solution Palestine problem." (telegram 50) Both messages are filed under 867N.01/2-349.

<sup>2</sup> Dated January 29, p. 712.

<sup>3</sup> Dated January 28; not printed, but see footnote 3, p. 626.

<sup>4</sup> The Department's reply on February 7 instructed that if Yusuf brought up the subject again, Minister Childs was to "state with appropriate expression regret that USG not in position unilaterally give written assurances since UN seized of Palestine problem and US working in concert with other members UN to achieve solution." (telegram 49, 501.BB Palestine/2-349)

867N.01/2-349 : Telegram

*The Special Representative of the United States in Israel (McDonald)  
to the Secretary of State*

TOP SECRET      PRIORITY

TEL AVIV, February 3, 1949—11 a. m.

88. ReMistel 80, February 2 [1] and additional thereto. Morning February 2 at residence Sassoon, chief PGI negotiator with Arabs (Herlitz<sup>1</sup> Foreign Office also present) reported on "frank and friendly" secret conference he had with Abdullah in Amman January 31 as follows:

1. Abdullah anxious speedy peace negotiations which should follow immediately after arrangement armistice which in his opinion should involve slight difficulty. Favors public peace negotiations in Jerusalem between Transjordan and Israel, initial meeting preferably in Amman. Has notified all Arab Governments this plan and has received assent from Yemen, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq. Egypt and Syria not pleased but "must follow since I (Abdullah) have decided". Has been assured by two Iraqi high officials and expects soon receive similar from Regent that Transjordan difficulties with Iraq will disappear.

2. Abdullah attributes his hurry to fear that delay will involve loss. Britain he says is using delay in Israel-Transjordan negotiations to gain concessions from other Arab states, notably Syria. King quoted this alleged British argument: "If Abdullah is blocked, what will Syria pay?"

3. Abdullah declined indicate reservations which Britain had imposed on his negotiations with Israel. Will reveal them only after armistice and during peace talks. Inferentially he permitted conclusion that Aqaba and southern Negev were involved. Transjordan he said not interested in Negev, "has enough desert land". Gaza, however, as outlet to sea now that Haifa has been lost is vital to Transjordan.

4. Abdullah is opposed to the internationalization of whole or part Jerusalem, favors partition, with old and portion of new city assigned Transjordan and rest to Israel, both portions remaining under some form United Nations supervision. No details such partition were discussed.

5. Arab refugees, Abdullah said, were now no important problem and after peace will solve itself.

6. Had accepted Bunche's invitation armistice negotiations at Rhodes because all other Arab states had agreed. He is opposed, how-

<sup>1</sup> Miss Esther Herlitz, Acting Director of the American Division of the Israeli Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

ever, to pooled discussions and reiterated preference direct negotiations with Israel.

7. Abdullah thinks Conciliation Commission will waste time and delay settlement. Says peace should be possible before Commission has opportunity acquaint itself with problem and before it could report assembly in September.

8. Israel's elections pleased Abdullah because disclosed such slight Communist strength. Transjordan he said does not need elections. He rules and Parliament carries out his will.

9. Interrupting his report of Abdullah's views, Sassoon emphasized that from PGI's viewpoint, armistice should suffice for many months with all the Arab states except Transjordan. With latter, peace necessary because partition of Palestine involved and many questions other than purely military ones that must be settled by formal treaty.

10. In answer my questions, Sassoon insisted that only "ultimatum" to Transjordan which might have been referred to in report to Department from Transjordan end December (Deptel 281, December 30<sup>2</sup>) was his open telegram from Paris end November Transjordan Prime Minister asking that convoy be allowed, as previously agreed, to go Mount Scopus in order "to avoid incidents". Reply within 24 hours was friendly and Amman issued orders to Jerusalem to permit convoy. Subsequent exchanges all friendly.

11. According Sassoon, Abdullah denied categorically knowing in advance or having been asked about sending British troops to Aqaba early January. After their arrival he was presented with paper asking for troops, for his signature.

12. King told Sassoon he deeply appreciative recognition as sign US friendship, adding that he hoped American Government would increasingly interest itself in Transjordan-Israel relations, intimated desire lessen degree British tutelage.

McDONALD

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<sup>2</sup> *Foreign Relations*, 1948, vol. v, Part 2, p. 1704.

501.BB Palestine/2-349 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Special Representative of the United States in Israel (McDonald), at Tel Aviv*<sup>1</sup>

SECRET

WASHINGTON, February 3, 1949—2 p. m.

64. Text USRep's statement Nov 20 before Committee I of GA stated re refugees from Palestine hostilities "We believe that they

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<sup>1</sup> This telegram was repeated to Jerusalem as No. 65 and as Unpal 15.

should be permitted to return to their homes and that adequate compensation should be arranged for the property of those who choose not to return". Pres on Jan 14 [1949] stated that Nov 20 speech represents US position with respect to Pal.<sup>2</sup>

GA Res of Dec 11, establishing PCC, calls for return of refugees so desiring, and payment compensation for property those choosing not return. USG strongly supported Dec 11 Res.

In light of this US position re refugee question, and in view fact PCC charged with facilitating disposition this problem, pls inform Dept your views re best means resolving question within framework final peaceful settlement Pal problem. Without approaching Israeli Govt, what is your estimate re its intentions permit repatriation and ability reabsorb refugees? What are your provisional recommendations for solution Arab refugee question?

Repeat reply to Jerusalem for PCC.

ACHESON

<sup>2</sup> Such a statement was made by President Truman at his news conference of January 13; for text, see *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Harry S. Truman, 1949* (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1964), p. 98.

501.BB Palestine/2-449

*Memorandum by Mr. Robert M. McClintock to the Secretary of State*<sup>1</sup>

[WASHINGTON,] February 4, 1949.

#### THE ISRAELI-EGYPTIAN ARMISTICE NEGOTIATIONS

On January 31 the Acting Palestine Mediator proposed a compromise solution to the Israeli and Egyptian Governments to serve as the basis for a possible armistice between the two countries. In essence, the Israeli striking forces would be withdrawn toward the North and the Egyptian forces would remain entirely outside of Palestine with the exception of a small coastal strip from Gaza southwest to the Egyptian frontier and minor forces in the vicinity of Hebron. Beer-sheba, which is now held by the Israeli Government and a desert point in the Negev called Asluj, together with an important communications

<sup>1</sup> This memorandum was typewritten on the stationery of the Under Secretary of State. Mr. McClintock wrote, on February 7, that he had dictated the memorandum "for Mr. Webb in his office" and that it was the basis for the intervention by the Secretary, with the "President's backing," as evidenced in the telegram sent to Tel Aviv on February 5 (Mr. McClintock's letter to G. Lewis Jones, First Secretary of Embassy in the United Kingdom, 501.BB Palestine/2-749). Regarding the telegram, see p. 730.

James E. Webb was appointed Under Secretary of State on January 27.

point near the Egyptian frontier called El Auja, would be the headquarters of the Israeli-Egyptian Armistice Commission under UN supervision.

The Israeli Government would keep defensive forces in the Jewish settlements in the Negev.

The Israeli Government has stressed to this Government that, from its point of view, the main stumbling block is who remains in force at El Auja, which is a stone's throw from the Egyptian border. Countering this, the Egyptians have complained that an unconditional written agreement was entered into on Rhodes between the Egyptian and Israeli delegations providing for the evacuation from Faluja of an encircled Egyptian garrison numbering some 3,000 people.

It appears to us that if the Israeli Government can be persuaded to the demilitarization of El Auja, Beersheba and Asluj, and at least a token withdrawal of its striking forces northward in the Negev, there is a strong possibility of concluding an armistice agreement with Egypt. This is the keystone of a rather considerable arch. If an armistice is signed with Egypt, the Government of Israel will be in a position rapidly to conclude similar agreements with its other enemies, including Lebanon, Transjordan, Syria and Iraq. In fact, the Acting Palestine Mediator has officially extended invitations to the Governments of these four countries to come to Rhodes to participate in armistice conversations.

Solution, therefore, hinges upon a successful conclusion of the present Israeli-Egyptian talks and it would seem useful if this Government would express to the Government of Israel its profound hope that the Israeli Government will find its way clear to making certain statesmanlike concessions, without which it seems inevitable that the conversations will fail.

The Egyptian Government, with considerable reluctance, has informed the Acting Mediator that it will accept his proposals and the Mediator has informally requested us to do our utmost to persuade the Israeli Government to make those concessions which are essential to a final agreement.<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Jessup, in New York, has suggested the advisability of your seeing Mr. Epstein, the Representative in Washington of Israel. If the armistice negotiations break down Dr. Bunche will refer the entire matter to the Security Council, where the reasons for the breakdown will be publicly aired.

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<sup>2</sup> Mr. Ethridge, on February 5, advised the Department that he "planned see McDonald February 6 and Shertok February 7 and would point out urgent necessity for favorable conclusion Israeli-Egyptian negotiations at early date in order make it possible for Commission to get on with its task of settling all outstanding problems re Palestine soonest." (telegram 114 (Palun 27) from Jerusalem, 501.BB Palestine/2-549)

867N.00/1-3149 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Consulate General at Jerusalem*

SECRET

WASHINGTON, February 4, 1949—7 p. m.

70. Ur 86 Jan. 31.<sup>1</sup> Dept's preliminary consideration legal basis abandoned property ordinance, based English summary Palestine Post since translation Hebrew text not yet available, indicates there are probably not at present time grounds for USG representation Tel Aviv on legal basis re application ordinance in New Jerusalem. Dept desires be kept informed as to manner administration ordinance in Jerusalem and be notified of circumstances in any case where Administrator moves to vest property of USG or US nationals.

However, subject concurrence Ethridge, Dept believes appropriate for PCC, view its responsibilities re Arab refugees under GA Palestine resolution, to express its concern to Israeli Govt in light of absentee property ordinance that no party take unilateral action in advance of negotiations contemplated by GA resolution which would prejudice achievement of agreed settlement on such questions as return of refugees to their homes and return of property to refugee owners. View these considerations, PCC might inquire of Israeli authorities re arrangements Govt of Israel contemplates making to return vested property belonging to refugees who later return to their homes.<sup>2</sup>

ACHESON

<sup>1</sup> Not printed, but see footnote 2, p. 718.

<sup>2</sup> Telegram 107, February 3, to Jerusalem, was possibly not seen by Mr. Rockwell when he drafted telegram 70. No. 107 was received in the Department on February 4 at 1:28 p. m. It is not printed, but see *ibid.*

501.BB Palestine/2-549

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State*<sup>1</sup>

SECRET

[WASHINGTON,] February 5, 1949.

Subject: Rhodes Negotiations on Palestine

Participants: The Secretary—Mr. Acheson  
 Egyptian Ambassador—Mohamed Kamil Abdul  
 Rahim  
 Egyptian Minister—Anis Azer  
 NEA—Mr. Satterthwaite

After introductions and an exchange of amenities, the Ambassador reviewed, from the Egyptian standpoint, the course of the negotiations

<sup>1</sup> Drafted by Mr. Satterthwaite.



at Rhodes. He said that the Egyptian Government had accepted and was willing to carry out the Security Council resolutions of November 4, November 16, and December 29. Furthermore, in an effort to break the impasse and to succeed in reaching an armistice agreement with the Israeli Government, they had accepted the last compromise suggested by Mr. Bunche, U.N. Mediator, which involved a recession on their part from the November 4 resolution. Unfortunately the "other side" had consistently refused to accept any compromise and adhered to its original position. Notwithstanding this, the Egyptian Government was very anxious to reach an agreement and had instructed him to request me to "intervene" in the hope that the negotiations might not break down. It would be most unfortunate if the Rhodes negotiations were unsuccessful and hostilities were to break out again.

I told the Ambassador that I could not agree with him more fully. I had discussed this problem with the President and knew that he was most anxious that an agreement be reached. I had also discussed the problem with the Israeli Representative here and was glad to be able to tell the Ambassador that as a result I was somewhat more optimistic and felt that there was still a good possibility of reaching an agreement under the guidance of the Mediator. I could not, of course, go into details, as that was the duty of the Mediator. It was, however, important that negotiations not be broken off and that every effort be continued toward reaching an agreement on an armistice. While my government could not "intervene", it would continue to use its good offices toward this end. At this point the Ambassador handed me an *Aide-Mémoire*<sup>2</sup> (copy attached) which I did not read at that time. (It sets forth the latest Bunche proposals and describes the concessions required of the Egyptians.)

After thanking me for my assurances the Ambassador said that he would like to bring up one more point. Once an armistice agreement had been signed, he felt that the time would have come to turn a new leaf in Arab-American relations. The United States has carried out all its commitments to the "other side" and perhaps it could now once more consider what assistance it could give the Arab world which, in spite of whatever might be said, does still exist and cannot be ignored. He mentioned the possibility of rendering financial, economic, cultural and technical assistance. He is, he said, in the process of preparing on his own responsibility a résumé of the possibilities in this field which he would like to discuss with me some time. He felt that if the United States could once more resume its former friendly relations with the Arab world and help to bind its wounds it would

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<sup>2</sup> Dated February 4, not printed.

have a great moral effect and contribute toward the security of that region. He thought that the first step was already under way in the efforts being made to increase the U.S. quota on Egyptian long staple cotton.

I said that I agreed fully with the Ambassador with regard to the desirability of our getting back on closer and friendlier relations and that I would be glad to go over his résumé with him when he had completed it.

In the course of the conversation I also said that we were aware of the cooperative attitude displayed by the Egyptians at Rhodes and were most appreciative of it.

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Truman Papers, President's Secretary's File <sup>1</sup>

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State* <sup>2</sup>

TOP SECRET

[WASHINGTON,] February 5, 1949.

The Israeli Ambassador called at my request.

After an exchange of courtesies, I said to him that we had received yesterday messages from Mr. Ross and Mr. Jessup in New York and from the United Nations Mediator, Mr. Bunche, which caused us considerable concern. It was reported from New York that the armistice proposals put forward by the Mediator had been accepted practically in full, although with reluctance, by the Egyptians. On the other hand, however, Mr. Eban, the Israeli representative in New York, had told our representatives that the Israeli Government could not accept these proposals. We received the same information from Mr. Bunche who expressed grave fears that the negotiations would break down and that the matter would have to be reported to the Security Council by him. It appeared that in such a situation the responsibility for the collapse of the negotiations would rest on the Israeli Government.

I said that this situation caused the President a deep concern and that I was speaking to the Ambassador with the knowledge and approval of the President. The Ambassador knew that the Israeli Government had no more sympathetic friend than President Truman and that no one had done more to support them in trying days. The President believed that this was the psychological moment where an armis-

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<sup>1</sup> In the Harry S. Truman Library at Independence, Missouri.

<sup>2</sup> Sent to the White House under cover of a memorandum of February 5 by Brig. Gen. Marshall S. Carter, Special Assistant to the Secretary, addressed to Matthew J. Connelly, Secretary to President Truman, which read as follows: "The Secretary requests that the attached memorandum of conversation be delivered to the President." (Truman Papers, President's Secretary's File)

tice could be brought about without injury to the vital interests of any of the parties, if the Israeli Government would approach these discussions in a spirit of broad statesmanship and make concessions which were wholly in accord with the moral position of Israel. I hoped therefore that his Government would not reject the proposals but would accept them as a basis for further discussion and work out an armistice along the lines proposed. I did not believe that the attitude of the Egyptian Government was brittle but did believe that there was sufficient flexibility so that with a conciliatory attitude on both sides, a solution could be reached. I said that if this were not done, if the negotiations failed, and if the matter was so reported to the Security Council, the position of Israel, both morally and otherwise, would be prejudiced. I spoke of the importance of reaching an armistice with Egypt as the key decision which would produce similar arrangements with the other Arab States and launch all of them in a favorable atmosphere on the discussions of permanent peace.

The Ambassador expressed his appreciation for what I had said and the spirit in which it was said. He stated that his Government knew that it had no more sympathetic friend than President Truman and that his views would be pondered with the greatest respect. He said that I could assure the President that in the Ambassador's opinion the armistice negotiations would not break down and that as he understood it, his Government was not making a flat rejection of the Mediator's proposal but was finding difficulty on security reasons to eliminating its forces from certain places.

We both agreed that we would not go into the details of the matter and he understood that what I had said did not mean that we believed that the proposal as made in all its details ought to be the one finally accepted.

I stressed again that it should not be in our opinion rejected but made the basis for further talks in which every possible effort should be made to bring about an armistice.

The Ambassador then spoke of some of the problems which his Government had as the government of a democratic country in carrying its own people with it. He then spoke at some length about the spiritual and moral forces which had enabled the Jews to survive their hardships and which lie at the basis of the state of Israel. I said to him that I hoped they would approach the proposals for an armistice from the point of view of these considerations and that what he had said assured me that they believed that reliance upon these forces were more effective than military strong points here and there, and that as I saw it the thing that his Government would wish to avoid more than any-

thing else would be impairing in any way its moral position. He agreed that this was so and that considerations of *noblesse oblige* bore strongly upon the Jewish attitude. He told me again that I could assure the President that in his opinion the negotiations would not break down.

501.BB Palestine/2-549 : Telegram

*The Consul in Jerusalem (Burdett) to the Secretary of State*

SECRET

JERUSALEM, February 5, 1949—1 p. m.

116. Palun 29. [From Ethridge.] US and French Consul Generals met with Colonel Dayan February 4 at request PCC (Congentel 107, February 3)<sup>1</sup> to express interest Commission in successful conclusion Israel-Transjordan agreement consistent with December 11 GA Resolution re Arab-Jewish zones Jerusalem, demilitarization city, protection holy places. Dayan though this [*his?*] government would object his dealing with Commission directly but expressed no objection proposal Commission appoint informal group experts to attempt reconciliation divergent viewpoints without considering future status Jerusalem.

However he doubted anything could be accomplished because alleged Transjordan unwillingness reach separate agreement Jerusalem this time due its hope to use Jerusalem as bargaining point in overall settlement. Pointed to recent rejections at last moment of accords provisionally accepted both sides for complete or limited agreement Jerusalem and said general agreement exists as to where demarcation line should run (Congentels 35, January 13, 36 January 14,<sup>2</sup> 47 January 17<sup>3</sup>). He considers Transjordan interested only in prestige, port of Gaza and Negev. Transjordan considers Israel financial condition deteriorating and that delay will force concessions. Dayan asserts to contrary and that by delay Arabs as in past will obtain less.

Dayan said PGI must take public position Jerusalem must be integral part Israel.

If following talk Abdullah Tel PCC considers Arabs sincerely anxious to sign agreement Dayan willing continue discussions. PGI not prepared present detailed plan and thinks PCC should do so.

PCC not considering Dayan reaction pending report discussion Abdullah Tel. [Ethridge.]

BURDETT

<sup>1</sup> Not printed, but see footnote 2, p. 718.

<sup>2</sup> Latter not printed, but see footnote 4, p. 663.

<sup>3</sup> Not printed, but see footnotes 2 and 3, p. 680.

501.BB Palestine/2-549: Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Special Representative of the United States in Israel (McDonald), at Tel Aviv*<sup>1</sup>TOP SECRET      US URGENT      WASHINGTON, February 5, 1949—5 p. m.  
NIACT

75. Pursuant to formal request of Israeli Govt Jan 28<sup>2</sup> for good offices this Govt in assisting Israel and Egypt to arrive at compromise in armistice negots Rhodes, this Govt approached Egyptian Govt with Israeli proposal related to El Auja.

Pls call on PriMin and leave memo in fol sense:

1) As member of UN PCC and as friendly govt which has been officially requested by Israel to use its good offices to end present impasse in armistice negots, US has approached Egypt in sense requested by Israel.

2) Although unaware of Israeli counter-proposals to Mediator's suggested compromise of Jan 31, USG informed Egypt has accepted compromise in principle, subject only to minor modifications.

3) In same spirit of friendship with which it approached Egypt at Israeli request, USG now desires state earnest hope that Israeli Govt will be able make special effort at accommodation in order accept Bunche draft as possible basis of agreement, particularly in view of action apparently taken by Egypt in this sense. *End memo.*

On Feb 5, with knowledge and approval of President, I informed Epstein that Pres was deeply concerned by possibility breakdown Rhodes negotiations. I said we had been informed that Egypt had accepted Bunche proposal, with certain reservations, but that Eban had told USUN that Israeli Govt could not accept proposal. Pres believed this was psychological moment when armistice could be achieved without injury to vital interests of parties, if Israeli Govt would approach these discussions in spirit of broad statesmanship and make concessions which were wholly in accord with moral position of Israel. I hoped, therefore, that Israeli Govt would not reject Bunche proposals but would accept them as basis for further discussion and work out armistice along lines proposed. It seemed to me that with conciliatory attitude on both sides solution could be reached but if negotiations failed and matter reported to SC, position of Israel, both morally and otherwise, would be prejudiced.

Epstein said views of Pres would be pondered with great respect. I could assure Pres that in his opinion negotiations would not break down and that as he understood it Israeli Govt was not flatly refusing

<sup>1</sup>This telegram was repeated to London, New York, Jerusalem (for Mr. Ethridge), and Cairo. The repeat to Jerusalem was in reply to Palun 27; see footnote 2, p. 724.

<sup>2</sup>See telegram 107, January 28, to Cairo, p. 705.

Mediator's proposal but was finding difficulty for security reasons in agreeing to remove its forces from certain places.

[Here follows last paragraph concerning the call later that day by the Egyptian Ambassador.]

ACHESON

501.BB Palestine/2-649: Telegram

*The Special Representative of the United States in Israel (McDonald)  
to the Secretary of State*

TOP SECRET URGENT

TEL AVIV, February 6, 1949—11 a. m.

101. Re Deptel 75 February 5. At 3:45 p. m. February 6 I left memo with Foreign Minister as per instructions. In conversation with Foreign Minister he stated as follows re memo:

1. Deeply appreciative US efforts vis-à-vis Egypt.
2. Deeply deplored Bunche's January 31 proposal as being far out of line Israel's position, and hopes it has not had fatal effect negotiations. Shertok had distinct impression Egypt had been willing be more conciliatory, but that Egypt now standing firm on Bunche's proposal re thorny problem of El Auja.

3. Israel has in course negotiations already compromised as follows:

(a) Agreed to reduce Israeli Military forces in El Auja area to a few purely defensive units.

(b) Agreed completely evacuate town El Auja and place it under United Nations supervision.

(c) Agreed to having armistice commission sit on Israeli sideline which for the "victor" is considered quite a concession.

(d) Agreed that if Egypt fears Israeli retention small units in neighborhood surrounding El Auja, Egypt free to build new defenses [*defenses?*] on Egypt frontier facing El Auja, this unusual concession in that while Israel binds herself not increase defenses during armistice Egypt may do so.

(e) While first Israeli position was insist complete Egypt evacuation Rafah-Gaza strip, Israel now has made major political and military concession allowing continuance light Egypt forces in strip area.

Bunche's proposal, while admitting in writing that area is "gateway of invasion" and that El Auja controls crossroads, nevertheless insists that whole area comprising approximately 150 square kilometers must be evacuated by Israeli. From viewpoint military defense this apparently means Israel must abandon the most vital strong points in whole area and back up to indefensible positions leaving themselves wide open if Egypt should change mind and resume war.

Shertok's viewpoint is that, while Egypt is the invader it is Israel who must, according to Bunche, withdraw her forces from wide area

and this not fair or acceptable. The area which Bunche delineates and to which the Egyptians quite understandably agree is as follows:

"From a point on the Egypt-Palestine border 5 kilometers north of the Rafah-El Auja road (MR087-047), southeast to Khashm, El Memdud (MR096-041), thence southeast to El Beha (MR108-039), thence southwest intersecting the Egypt-Palestine border at a point 5 kilometers southeast of the intersection of the old railway track and the Egypt-Palestine border (MR099.5-014.5), thence returning northwest along the Egypt-Palestine border to the border to the point of origin."

Shertok, after receiving my memo departed attend regular Cabinet meeting and I presume our representations now being considered by Cabinet. However, I am not at all sure, in view Shertok's viewpoint and concessions already made by Israel, what result will be. Shiloah told Knox after Shertok left room that Rhodes negotiations, although difficult, were by no means terminated and he still appeared hopeful.

In order appreciate Israeli position Knox, Military Attaché and I feel that consideration must be given to Israel's basic fear of Egypt's relative strength. While public feared Arab Legion, General Staff knew real threat was large Egyptian Army which moved methodically up coast within almost striking distance Tel Aviv attacking settlements en route. United Nations could not stop Egyptians and only Israeli Army, at grievous cost, managed stop and defeat them. British action and our intervention has left both armies "hanging in air" with Israel forces not in the best of defense positions owing sudden forced termination action. Egyptian forces, while defeated in field and in part disarmed, are largely intact and, according other armistice provisions, will be able return Egypt. Israeli intention destroy large arms depots at El Arish and Rafah frustrated by US-British intervention and thus Egyptian forces could, when safely across border, regroup, rearm and strike again. Israel, being unsure that UN can restrain Egypt in future any more effectively than in past, may be unwilling abandon its present defense positions in wide area demanded by Bunche.

McDONALD

867N.01/2-749 : Telegram

*Mr. Wells Stabler to the Secretary of State*

SECRET

AMMAN, February 7, 1949—7 p. m.

53. During long talks this afternoon King reviewed his relations with Jews prior and subsequent to end of mandate and said his principal desire now as before was to reach understanding with them on Palestine question. Still felt it was to Jews' advantage to have only

Transjordan and Lebanon on their borders. This could be accomplished if Egyptians were kept out of Palestine and if firm and lasting peace were made with Transjordan. Talks toward that end are still continuing between Transjordan and Israel and King said that up to this time he has had no cause for not being optimistic as to their outcome. While he admitted that mutual suspicion still exists, he hoped it would be possible to reach understanding directly with Jews prior to formal armistice talks, but if not, certainly prior to formal peace negotiations. Formal talks would be mere public confirmation of agreement. With this in mind he is anxious to remove any possible point of friction between himself and Jews. He assumed Conciliation Commission would sanction agreement reached directly.

His Majesty pointed out that status of Jerusalem is giving him cause for alarm since Jews apparently insisting their part should become capital of Israel. Such insistence can only create suspicion on part of Transjordan that Jews intend expand further. King said he would not object if Jews wished construct defenses along corridor from Tel Aviv up to Jerusalem and station any number of troops there but to permit them make Jerusalem capital would be permanent threat in direction Jericho. Best solution would be autonomy for Arab and Jewish areas of city with complete demilitarization and with neutral zone between. Both parties would retain specific number police. However Jews now propose settlement which through retention Scopus area would be constant threat to Transjordan's position in city.

I inquired whether specific reference to Jerusalem problem alone suggested other points at issue agreed on or nearly so. King said no but most recent meeting with Sassoon and Dayan indicated contact closer. In view this, asked if reference to Jerusalem question suggested he was considering Jerusalem settlement apart from overall arrangement. King replied he thought Jerusalem key to whole problem and that it could not be treated separately.

His Majesty remarked his one wish was to finish Palestine question soonest and with honor and assured that if there was any break between himself and Jews, it would not be his fault. Added that in fact he had more to worry about from other Arab States than from Jews.

King finally expressed hope that United States use its influence to persuade Jews he is serious in his intent reach understanding and that they need have no fear from his side. He also hoped United States would not permit Jews to establish Jerusalem as Israel capital. Stated that in such matters he turned to United States and UK for guidance and support. Since United Nations involved others (Russia), he preferred not deal through that body of which he also not member.

Informed King that while his views would be conveyed to United States Government, must remember United States is member United



Nations and Conciliation Commission and would work through those bodies for settlement Palestine problem. Re Jerusalem said that United States still on record as supporting internationalization city but thought that if Transjordan and Israel could reach understanding on question which was sanctioned by Conciliation Commission, probable it would be confirmed by United Nations.

Sent to Department 53, pouched Jerusalem.

STABLER

501.BB Palestine/2-749 : Telegram

*The Special Representative of the United States in Israel (McDonald)  
to the Secretary of State*

TOP SECRET URGENT

TEL AVIV, February 7, 1949—7 p. m.

109. ReEmbtel 101, February 6. Shiloah invited Knox confer this morning stating Foreign Minister and Prime Minister had studied our memo last night and he wished inform as follows:

1. Israeli delegate Rhodes had just advised that Egypt had introduced new highly disturbing conditions negotiations as follows:

a. Egypt now insists Israel withdraw forces from Negev except defense forces in settlements (where there are no settlements now Israeli forces shall be retained) while, at same time, reserving complete freedom disposal Egypt forces in area (for example, Egypt insisting seven outposts in continuous line in Gaza-Rafah strip); this attitude based on November 4 resolution.

b. Egypt now claims Israel should not be allowed have even defensive forces in southern part Negev (south of Ein Hasb MR 173025) even though area not adjacent Egypt.

In comment Shiloah stated that tone Bunche draft proposal all in favor Egypt and that Israel (despite victory) willing ignore tone to help Egypt save face but that Israel position was as follows:

1. Egypt must in practice approach armistice on basis that there is equality of status between two armies.

2. Israel cannot admit that treatment of Negev area is different than any other area of Israel.

3. Israel will agree to tone of draft Bunche proposal (even though tone and formulation make it appear that Israel is the offending party) in order help Egypt Government save face.

4. Israel will not agree to any terms which jeopardize her security during this parlous period or which attempt to create a new military balance thus setting precedent which will make negotiations with Transjordan and Syria even more difficult.

At conclusion conference Shiloah commented on intervention of US and its adverse effect of forcing Israeli withdrawal at moment when decisive military victory was within sight; Knox pointed out, however,

that Israeli position could conceivably be worse had Israel found itself in conflict with Great Britain. Shiloah then rather insistently offered mission copy Bunche draft proposal and all relevant papers so that mission could "properly advise the Department". Knox demurred and doubted that mission was in position accept this responsibility. Probably Shiloah, speaking for both Prime Minister (who is ill) and Foreign Minister (who is absent in Jerus) would welcome US as super-arbitrator though he stressed that documents were for our information only.

*Comment:* I believe Knox acted correctly in avoiding acceptance documents because:

1. In view PGI feeling re US intervention, acceptance documents might be further step involving US in unilateral action;
2. Acceptance might give impression that US disposed bypass UN and PCC;
3. Acceptance might give PGI feeling of relieved responsibility;
4. Documents could not give mission all pertinent data and none from Egypt.

Would appreciate Department's instructions.<sup>1</sup>

MCDONALD

<sup>1</sup> The Department, on February 8, expressed its agreement with the comment in No. 109 (telegram 78 to Tel Aviv, 501.BB Palestine/2-749).

501.BB Palestine/2-849 : Telegram

*The Consul at Jerusalem (Burdett) to the Secretary of State*

SECRET      PRIORITY

JERUSALEM, February 8, 1949—5 p. m.

123. [From Ethridge.] Palun 32. On January 7, Shertok, Israeli Foreign Minister came to Jerusalem for informal meeting with Commission prior to its proposed departure on tour of near East capitals on February 12. During 4½-hour discussion following developments took place.

1. Boisanger, French delegate, opened by stating Commission wished to see Shertok to inform him of its intentions and manner in which it proposed to carry out task which UNGA had given it. Task essentially consisted of assisting parties to settle, if possible directly between them, conflict which now separates them. On other hand, Commission had received specific instructions from UNGA regarding Jerusalem, holy places, refugees, certain economic matters. Commission had decided, in order enlighten itself regarding intentions both sides, not only regarding general peace problem but also regarding specific points, to visit Near East capitals, thus permitting immediate discussion with all interested governments. Commission desired,

however, to have preliminary exchange views with Shertok to ascertain PGI views which would facilitate Commission's discussions at Arab capitals.

2. Ethridge, US delegate, continued for Commission stating Commission had decided raise question of Jerusalem in advance because of certain recent events. Commission had been informed PGI planned to open its constituent assembly in Jerusalem at which it was rumored a spontaneous resolution would be offered calling for annexation Jerusalem. Commission had also been informed PGI had extended Israeli civil law to Jerusalem and it had been reported in press PGI intends hold municipal elections in Jerusalem in March. Commission was apprehensive regarding these developments and considered them as regrettable in that they appeared to be contrary to the spirit, if not letter of GA resolution December 11. It was pointed out GA had given Commission specific task regarding Jerusalem and that it seemed both Arabs and Jews had duty to abstain from undertaking any initiative which would modify *status quo*.

3. Shertok replied that although it might seem presumptuous he would refer Commission to his statement of November 15 before first committee of 1948 GA at Paris which contained PGI views regarding various points and specifically Jerusalem. PGI had acquiesced in international status in 1947 but situation had subsequently changed because of failure of international community or any other authority to protect it except Jews themselves. PGI could not now entrust security of Jews in Jerusalem to any outside agency nor could their economic security be safeguarded except by integration in Israel. Shertok added PGI was aware international consciousness regarding Jerusalem and hoped reconciliation views would be achieved. Holding of constituent assembly would not result in *fait accompli*. On other hand, Israeli Jerusalem to all practical intent and purpose is now part of Israel. PGI does not deny its intent to keep it. PGI still maintained position it had stated on November 15. Commission was entrusted with task of presenting detailed proposals to September, 1949 GA and it was up to international community to decide.

4. Shertok continued constituent assembly signified merely expression Jewish people that Jerusalem was great national center its history. PGI did not intend to transfer its capital to Jerusalem. It was appropriate, however, first assembly should be held Jerusalem. While government could not control assembly it had decided on policy and would take no action to change *status quo*. Since government holds large majority unorthodox decisions are unlikely. Session will last only few days. Agenda consists of opening speech by Weizmann, introduction draft resolution, elections and swearing in of President. Decided not to adopt rules of procedure as it might involve protracted debate.

5. Shertok explained civil law had been extended last August and was now merely being [apparent garble] affect superseding military law. It was unreasonable expect one section Israel should be governed by different principles than another. It is only effective way deal with situation.

6. Shertok confirmed intention to sponsor municipal elections Jerusalem in March, justifying as necessary in any democratic community and based on normal evolution from military to civil status.

7. Ethridge, Boisanger and Yalcin<sup>1</sup> [apparent garble] found some reassurance but great deal that was disturbing in Shertok's views. It was pointed out that while each single development might be explained, all of them taken together represented trend which would appear to be contrary to intention of GA in December 11 resolution.

8. Shertok continued, in reply question from Boisanger, refugee problem can only be settled as part of peace settlement. There can be no significant return of refugees before and possibly after that event. Situation has totally changed. If refugees had stayed in Israel, PGI policy would have developed differently. Since they fled voluntarily and at British instigation PGI policy has been based on *status quo*. Exodus was primarily caused by aggression of Arab states. Return now would undermine security of Israel and would impose impossible economic burden on Israel to integrate refugees in Israeli economy. Arab refugees are essentially unassimilable in Jewish Israel. Efforts can now be made in direction radical sound solution, namely integration in neighboring Arab states, especially Iraq, Syria and Transjordan which Shertok claims are underpopulated and require more people and development to fill dangerous vacuum. Shertok recognized obligation to compensate for land left behind and suggested payment might be arranged direct to individual refugees or paid into general resettlement fund. Arab states could provide land with assistance international financing. Shertok doubted capacity Israel to pay huge sum and at same time alleged responsibility Arab states for aggressive war and resulting loss would justify offsetting claim by Israel.

9. Shertok stated regarding general peace settlement that Israel desires to negotiate separate peace treaties and did not wish general conference. Shertok reasoned Israeli-Lebanese problems, for example, were of no concern to Egypt. Boisanger believed general problems could be handled at general conference. Specific problems could be handled separately.

10. Shertok explained, regarding territorial settlement, that Israel had accepted 1947 partition on basis Arab Palestine would become independent state. If it now became part of Transjordan situation was

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<sup>1</sup> Hüseyin Yalçın, Turkish Representative on the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine.

radically altered and Israel's previous acceptance no longer valid and its result would be different. Israel believes there should be rectification of present lines in Palestine but did not press for an increase in total area. Israel claimed, for example, widening of 12-mile wide coastal strip between Haifa and Tel Aviv for security reasons. PGI had decided it would not consent to any foreign bases on its territory in foreseeable future. It would not agree to any foreign bases in Palestine section of an enlarged Transjordan on basis of present British treaty with Transjordan. Shertok gave no indication of any territorial concessions but indicated he would discuss Negev at later date. Shertok voluntarily disavowed intention of seizing non-Israeli Palestine unless provoked.

11. Shertok stated regarding Commission suggestion that discussions between Israeli and Arab Military Commission regarding Jerusalem should be encouraged to continue, that they were limited to demarcation of military areas and that he doubted whether Commission would be of assistance to them. Shertok, nevertheless, agreed to consider whether Commission observers would be helpful. Shertok stated demilitarization of Jerusalem was only possible if there was outside force or no need for protection. As neither condition existed demilitarization was not possible.

12. Tentative arrangements were made for further meeting between Commission and Shertok in Tel Aviv or Jerusalem on February 11. Shertok promised definite reply February 8. Ethridge spoke with Shertok privately after meeting expressing view that Middle East peace was dependent on early settlement of outstanding problems between Israel and Arab states and hoped Israel would approach in conciliatory spirit. Shertok stated PGI was working on alternative solutions to various problems. [Ethridge.]<sup>2</sup>

BURDETT

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Ethridge, the same day, expressed his view that "Shertok's presentation of PGI views regarding Jerusalem appears to me to be unyielding. It is clear that PGI does not accept world opinion regarding internationalization Jerusalem. . . . It is also clear PGI intends continue to take steps looking toward eventual incorporation of Israeli Jerusalem in Israel. . . . It may be true PGI does not intend to transfer its capital from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. On other hand facts that constituent assembly is opening here, that certain central administrative offices are operating here, that Israeli civil law applies here and that municipal elections under Israeli auspices will be held here seem to bear out my analysis. . . . It seems logical, however, present policies will continue and may only be counteracted by firmness on part of command [*sic*] governments there represented."

Mr. Ethridge also asserted that "Shertok's statement PGI views regarding refugees offended Commission. It also astonished me in view imperative necessity for friendly relations between Israel and Arab States and importance of early establishment of economic connections with Arab hinterland. . . . It is my hope PGI may be persuaded to alter these views and to adopt more humanitarian measures which would redound to benefit of Israel and Arab States. It might be wise in long run to resettle greater portion Arab refugees in neighboring Arab States; nevertheless, it appears contrary to Israel's best interests at outset to take inhuman position." (Telegram 124, from Jerusalem, 501.BB Palestine/2-849)

501.BB Palestine/2-1049

*Memorandum by the Director of the Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs (Satterthwaite) to the Secretary of State*

SECRET

[WASHINGTON,] February 9, 1949.

Subject: Attendance of American Officials at Meeting of Israeli Constituent Assembly in Jerusalem

*Discussion:*

The resolution of the General Assembly of November 29, 1947, which recommended the partition of Palestine, stated that the City of Jerusalem was to be established as a *corpus separatum* under a special international regime and was to be administered by the United Nations. The General Assembly resolution of December 11, 1948 on Palestine resolved that Jerusalem should be accorded special and separate treatment from the rest of Palestine and should be placed under effective United Nations control. The resolution also instructed the Palestine Conciliation Commission to present to the Fourth Regular Session of the General Assembly detailed proposals for a permanent international regime for the Jerusalem area. The United States voted in favor of both of these resolutions.

During the fighting which has taken place in Palestine, the Israelis have managed to carve out by military force a land corridor connecting New Jerusalem (Jewish Jerusalem) with the State of Israel. In various public statements Israeli officials have stated their determination that New Jerusalem shall become a part of Israel.

We believe that an agreement between Israel and Transjordan looking toward the division of Jerusalem into two areas to be administered by the two countries would be an appropriate solution of the problem. We feel, however, that the United States cannot support any arrangement which would purport to authorize the establishment of Israeli or Transjordan sovereignty over parts of the Jerusalem area, in view of the above cited United Nations resolutions and our support thereof. Our belief is that the Israelis and Transjordanians, should be supervised in their administration of the city by a United Nations Commissioner, the principle of the internationalization of Jerusalem, in favor of which the world community has voted, thus being maintained.

Our representative in Tel Aviv, Mr. James G. McDonald, has informed us that the Israelis have decided to open their Constituent Assembly in Jewish Jerusalem on February 14. They are inviting members of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps in Tel Aviv to attend and Mr. McDonald requests the Department's authorization to do so. He feels that non-attendance would wound Jewish sensibilities and create an awkward situation for the United States in Israel if the

Russian Minister in Tel Aviv should attend. Mr. McDonald advocates that he accompany his acceptance of the Israeli invitation with a formal statement that his attendance at the opening of the Assembly does not imply any change in the United States position on the status of Jerusalem. (Tab A, original only.)

Mr. Mark Ethridge, the American Representative on the Palestine Conciliation Commission, has cabled that it is clear that the Israeli Government does not accept the world opinion concerning the internationalization of Jerusalem and intends to take steps looking toward the eventual incorporation of Jewish Jerusalem in Israel. He says that the decision to open the Constituent Assembly, with its implications of sovereignty, in Jerusalem is an indication of this intention. In Mr. Ethridge's opinion this Israeli policy can only be counter-acted by firmness on the part of the Commission and of the Governments represented on the Commission. He further states that in his opinion the decision the Department has to make is whether it will perform one more act of courtesy or whether by not doing so, the United States will dramatize its desire for peace in Palestine and its backing of General Assembly resolutions. He believes that the United States would seriously weaken the position of the Conciliation Commission by sending any United States officials to the opening of the Assembly and would strengthen the Commission's hand by not doing so. Mr. Ethridge says that he is convinced that Israeli Foreign Minister Shertok feels that the United States will not back the United Nations and that Israel can get what it wants. (Tab B, original only.)

Our Consul in Jerusalem is in agreement with Mr. Ethridge and believes that attendance of United States officials at the opening of the Assembly will prejudice the Conciliation Commission's task in drawing up a proposal for the internationalization of Jerusalem.

*Recommendation:*

It is recommended that our representative in Tel Aviv be instructed to point out in the most friendly fashion to the Israeli Foreign Minister the difficulties which may be caused by the plan to open the Constituent Assembly in Jerusalem. This would be done not in an effort to dissuade the Israelis from their present plan but as a matter of record should the plan have an adverse effect on the attitude of some Nations Members of the United Nations when the Israeli membership application is again considered by that body, and should the opening of the Assembly in Jerusalem, with its implications of sovereignty, prove to be a stumbling block in the course of Arab-Israeli negotiations. It is also recommended that no American official in Tel Aviv or Jerusalem attend this meeting, since for them to be present at such a ceremony, would run contrary to the position which the United States has taken in support of the internationalization of Jerusalem and, as

Mr. Ethridge states, would weaken the position of the Conciliation Commission and lead the Israelis to believe that the United States will not back up a decision of the United Nations. The French Embassy has informed us that the French Government plans to instruct its representatives in Palestine not to attend the opening of the Assembly and hopes that the United States Government will take a similar decision. We have reason to believe that the British Government would like to send the same kind of instructions. Both countries are apparently waiting to see what we will do in order to concert their policy with ours.

A suggested telegram to Tel Aviv and Jerusalem is attached for your signature if you concur.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Secretary Acheson reviewed this memorandum with President Truman on February 10, "giving him Mr. Ethridge's views and also Mr. McDonald's views and my own recommendation, which was that we should not attend. The President was very clear that this recommendation was correct and himself approved the telegram so stating." (Memorandum by Mr. Acheson, 501.BB Palestine/2-1049) The telegram, No. 83, was sent to Tel Aviv on February 10. It reviewed the situation as set forth in Mr. Satterthwaite's memorandum and concluded as follows: "Dept believes that in spirit of friendly counsel you should make above points to Shertok. View US position in support of UN position on Jerusalem, Dept unable authorize any Amer official from Tel Aviv or Jerusalem attend meeting Constituent Assembly if held Jerusalem. In declining invitation with appropriate expressions regret, pls inform FonOff that you understand assembly to be transferred Tel Aviv after opening Jerusalem and that you would be pleased attend first session in Tel Aviv." (501.BB Palestine/2-1049)

501.BB Palestine/2-949 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Consulate General at Jerusalem*

TOP SECRET

WASHINGTON, February 9, 1949—3 p. m.

80. Unpal 21. For Ethridge. Re Palun 24 Feb. 4.<sup>1</sup> President wrote Weizmann Nov. 29, 1948, re Negev. President said "I remember well our conversation about the Negev, to which you referred in your letter. I agree fully with your estimate of the importance of that area to Israel, and I deplore any attempt to take it away from Israel." Letter then cited announcement by USDel in GA of "our firm intention to oppose any territorial changes in the November 29th Resolution which are not acceptable to the State of Israel".

No mention was made of Jerusalem. In consequence report that President informed Weizmann that US had no objection to Israeli annexation new city is completely without foundation.

<sup>1</sup> Identified also as telegram 108 from Jerusalem, not printed; it stated that a report was current at Jerusalem that President Truman had written to President Weizmann that "US had no objection Israeli annexation New City of Jerusalem or retention of all Negev." (501.BB Palestine/2-449) A marginal notation on No. 108 by Mr. McClintock indicates that it was read to Mr. Clifford at 9:50 a. m., February 5.

For the full text of President Truman's communication of November 29, 1948, to President Weizmann, see *Foreign Relations*, 1948, vol. v, Part 2, p. 1633.



We do not feel that President's comments to Weizmann re Negev are inconsistent with his instructions to you or with overall basic position so clearly set forth by Jessup in his speech to Committee One Nov. 20. President's position still is that Israel is entitled to territory allotted by GA res. Nov. 29, 1947 and that no changes in frontiers set down by that res. can be made without free consent of Israel. However if Israel desires territory not allocated to it by Nov. 29 res. such as Arab areas in western Galilee and Jaffa or such as present corridor to Jerusalem, Israel must be expected to make territorial compensation elsewhere.

President's letter to Weizmann was marked personal and confidential.<sup>2</sup>

This telegram has been approved by the President.<sup>3</sup>

ACHESON

<sup>2</sup> A marginal notation by Mr. McClintock on an information copy of this telegram states that this sentence was added by President Truman.

<sup>3</sup> Telegram 80 was initiated by President Truman. The substance of the telegram was furnished to Ambassador Douglas by Mr. Rusk in a letter of February 11. The letter cited a message from G. Lewis Jones, First Secretary of Embassy in the United Kingdom, to Mr. Satterthwaite, not identified as to date, in which it was set forth that "Dick Crossman, M.P., who recently visited Dr. Weizmann in Tel Aviv, has been spreading the rumor in London that while he was with Dr. Weizmann the latter received a personal letter from President Truman to the effect that no matter what the United States Government might say officially, Weizmann 'should not give up one inch of the Negev.'" Mr. Jones' letter also mentioned that Mr. Bevin was upset by the story. Mr. Rusk suggested that Mr. Bevin be apprised of the true facts. Ambassador Douglas replied on February 28 that Mr. Jones "has passed on in strict confidence the facts in your letter to Michael Wright and Bernard Burrows for their information and such discreet use as seems desirable." Mr. Rusk's letter and Ambassador Douglas' reply are filed under 501.BB Palestine/2-1149, /2-2849. The editors have been unable to find Mr. Jones' letter in the files of the Department of State.

890D.00/2-949 : Telegram

*The Minister in Syria (Keeley) to the Secretary of State*

CONFIDENTIAL

DAMASCUS, February 9, 1949—3 p. m.

51. [On?] February 8, 5 p. m. [, ?] Prime Minister Azm, continuing conversation reported mytel 50, 8th [9th],<sup>1</sup> said Syrians recog-

<sup>1</sup> Not printed; it reported the Prime Minister's observations that "Syria desires facilitate Palestine Conciliation Commission's task in a very proper way and hopes this new approach to Palestine problem will result in some satisfactory settlement more in keeping with principles of right and justice than has heretofore been evident. However, before agreeing undertake armistice discussions in response Acting Mediator Bunche's invitation Syrian Government in agreement certain other Arab Governments . . . desires to have assurances Zionists will carry out UNSC resolutions, particularly those of November 4 and 16." He then noted the repeated flouting of UN authority by the Zionists without incurring UN punitive measures or censure. Syria felt that as a prerequisite to undertaking armistice talks, the Zionists must give "guarantees" to carry out Security Council resolutions faithfully. The Prime Minister was said to have "evaded" Minister Keeley's request for clarification of the guarantees sought. (501.BB Palestine/2-949)

nize their destiny is linked up with that of western democracies and feeling they have something worthwhile to contribute in providing strategic base for defense against Communism, they wish cooperate realistically and in positive sense. Believing that Turkey could not defend itself if its rear were insecure, he wished secure latter but this could be brought about only if western democracies (among whom he specifically mentioned US, UK and France) recognizing danger that threatens and useful part Syria and other Arab countries could play give timely assistance. As Syria lacks means for her own defense and thus for defense of interests of democratic powers, he could only hope situation would be accurately appraised and assistance furnished while there is still time for envisaged collaboration to be effective.

Mentioning Arabian oil which he said could play important role if defended, he said Council Ministers had approved "Tapline" agreement and would shortly place it before Parliament for ratification. He regarded this approval as symbolic desire his government to follow henceforth positive policy looking toward economic development and defense his country in which he hoped US by reason of Tapline and recognition Syria's strategic importance would take greater interest. Department pass Army.

Sent Department 51, repeated London 7, Paris 3, pouched Amman, Baghdad, Beirut, Cairo, Jerusalem, Jidda, Ankara and Moscow.

KEELEY

501.BB Palestine/2-1149: Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the United Nations Acting Mediator for Palestine (Bunche), at Rhodes*<sup>1</sup>

WASHINGTON, February 11, 1949—7 p. m.

Pursuant to communication from Mediator dated August 3, 1948 US Government sent directives to Commanding Generals US Zones Germany and Austria authorizing exit of men of military age destined Palestine only after prior clearance with Mediator. In view cessation of fighting in Middle East and difficulties arising from separation of families under this policy US Government feels this restriction on departure men of military age from its zones of occupation should be removed and plans do so on February 18, 1949, subject to Acting Mediator's concurrence. No change in present policy prohibiting exit of fighting personnel is planned.

<sup>1</sup> Transmitted to New York in telegram 74, with a note "Request fol message be given SYG for transmission Acting Mediator, Rhodes by cable:".

If Acting Mediator perceives any objection this action US Government will appreciate being so advised prior to date mentioned.<sup>2</sup>

ACHESON

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Bunche replied on February 15, through United Nations channels, that he perceived no objection to the proposed change in policy in view of present conditions in Palestine under the truce (telegram 182 from New York, 501.BB Palestine/2-1549).

501.BB Palestine/2-1249: Telegram

*Mr. Wells Stabler to the Secretary of State*

SECRET

AMMAN, February 12, 1949—9 a. m.

58. Mytel 54, February 8.<sup>1</sup> With acceptance by Transjordan of invitation to armistice talks would recommend that Department consider urgently representing to Bunche desirability holding Transjordan-Israel talks in Jerusalem. Both King and high government officials have expressed hope that Jerusalem would be site for talks and believe arguments they produce in support of this not without discernment. Transjordan has given evidence its desire for peace and it is not beyond realms possibility that armistice talks would lead to discussion peace settlement. Consequently any arrangement which would make attainment this objective more facile should, it is thought, be encouraged. Main feature change of venue is propinquity Transjordan delegation to King who must decide important points policy. Delegation as well as others concerned would have easy access to His Majesty at Shuneh or Amman.

This matter has been discussed with Ethridge who has indicated his agreement.<sup>2</sup>

Sent Department 58, repeated Jidda 6 for USDel Palestine Conciliation Commission, Jerusalem 32.

[STABLER]

<sup>1</sup> Not printed; it advised of the official acceptance by Transjordan the same morning of Mr. Bunche's invitation to armistice talks. The acceptance was said to include Iraq "which will be represented by Transjordan at talks". (867N.01/2-849)

<sup>2</sup> The Department, in reply on February 15, concurred in the suggestion made in telegram 58 "but feels it should be made to Bunche by Ethridge as US Rep PCC." (Telegram 21, 501.BB Palestine/2-1249)

501.BB Palestine/2-1249: Telegram

*The Consul at Jerusalem (Burdett) to the Secretary of State*

SECRET

JERUSALEM, February 12, 1949—10 a. m.

134. Palun 38. [From Ethridge.] Commission drove down to Jericho yesterday for a formal meeting and luncheon with Tawfik Pasha, Transjordan Prime Minister. After exchange greetings

Boisanger as Commission Chairman explained UN GA had given Commission its task for general purposes of bringing parties to Palestine conflict together and re-establish Palestine peace. Commission would be interested to ascertain Transjordan's general views and specifically its attitude re Jerusalem holy places, refugees and certain economic matters.

General: Prime Minister replied Transjordan had always been careful to preserve peace. Since establishment Transjordan 27 years ago its objective had been peace. It had never expressed eccentric or fanatical views and even now wanted real peace settlement. Boisanger replied Commission's goal was also peace and wondered whether Transjordan would support general peace conference between Israel and Arab states. Ethridge raised question whether general or separate peace conference would be preferable. Prime Minister believed past experience showed, based on previous cooperative meetings with Jews, separate peace conference would be more productive as to results. Yalcin inquired whether Transjordan would be free to conclude with Commission's assistance separate peace arrangements even if one or more Arab states would object and if Commission extended its assistance would Transjordan follow through. Prime Minister strongly responded Transjordan desired pursue practical policy and stated Transjordan was ready in spite of any other states policy or influence it might exert to act freely and separately. Prime Minister did not think it even necessary to have general peace conference re such questions as refugees as Transjordan itself was willing, with outside assistance, to settle problem.

Jerusalem: Prime Minister stated Jews would try to keep those areas at present under their control. Arabs, on other hand, have inhabited Jerusalem for 1300 years. If, however, Jews want to stay in Jerusalem, Arabs want to take back those Arab areas which Jews took without fighting prior to May 14. (Prime Minister as well as Colonel Abdullah Tel, Transjordan military commander Jerusalem, strongly stress this point, emphasizing Jews took wide areas Arab Jerusalem before termination British mandate without fighting.) Boisanger explained Commission has specific instructions from UN GA to prepare detailed proposals re internationalization Jerusalem, that Commission has recently established committee to study question and that it hoped Transjordan would cooperate. Prime Minister replied he had been expecting Commission express this desire re Jerusalem but wondered how internationalization would be implemented by UN. According to charter UN must send forces. If no forces, permanent members must consult and send forces but as other nations do not want Jews in Palestine no forces would be sent. Boisanger replied Commission was not persuaded international force was necessary because good

will on both sides could accomplish same purpose. Prime Minister replied he could not contest this argument but that only time would show whether Jews would agree.

**Holy places:** Prime Minister explained these areas have always been under Arab protection and that many difficult problems arising among different religious sects have been solved by Arabs. Arabs desire and want to keep right to protect these areas. Arabs would give full guarantees if under their control. Boisanger replied Commission could not contest Arab record in safeguarding holy places.

**Refugees:** Prime Minister expressed hope every refugee would be able to return to his own home and to settle on his land. Those refugees in Syria and Lebanon should for example, be permitted to return but if their property was gone they could settle in Transjordan. If Jews refuse, refugees should be repatriated and indemnified. Other Arab states are not willing to keep refugees who themselves wish to return to Palestine. Transjordan will welcome refugees in Transjordan or in Arab Palestine. Transjordan is inclined believe indemnity for Arab property in Jewish territory should be paid into general fund for resettlement rather than to individuals who may squander it. Transjordan Government may require international loan to assist resettlement as government is not strong financially.

**Negev:** Prime Minister voluntarily stated Transjordan wanted very much to have port on eastern Mediterranean. It specifically wanted Gaza and land access thereto. Transjordan would use every influence to accomplish this purpose. Arab Legion had not yet finished war and might have to resort to war to obtain.

**Armistice negotiations:** Prime Minister stated Iraq has not yet reached stage discussing peace but inclined to conclude armistice. Nuri Pasha, Iraqi Prime Minister, has delegated Transjordan to act for Iraq in armistice talks. Iraqi Army would then be able to withdraw from central Palestine. Transjordan Prime Minister considered armistice negotiations concluded in this fashion would meet problem of Iraqi public opinion re Palestine conflict.

Commission thanked Prime Minister for frank expression Transjordan attitude observing that while not all his conditions appeared acceptable, his views in general were sound and had created favorable impression. Tentative plans were made for second meeting at Amman with King Abdullah following Commission's return from Cairo and Jidda. Prime Minister hoped conclusion to Palestine question would be reached at that meeting.

Sent Department 134, repeated Amman 12. [Ethridge.]

BURDETT

501.BB Palestine/2-1249: Telegram

*The Consul at Jerusalem (Burdett) to the Secretary of State*

SECRET

JERUSALEM, February 12, 1949—2 p. m.

139. Palun 41. [From Ethridge.] At request PCC US and French Consulate [*Consul*] Generals met Abdullah Tel on fifth for conversation similar that held with Dayan (Contel 116 fifth) on fourth. Tel stated willing negotiate and sign immediate agreement in Jerusalem prior to conclusion general agreement through all Palestine and would welcome appointment on PCC group advisers assist two parties. Asserted Arabs have no objections inclusion clause stating agreement without prejudice to future statute of city and would accept internationalization provided could be effective.

Expressed following views re such agreement: (1) Arab sections now held by Jews should be returned to Arab owners; (2) Arabs always willing give any guarantees desired for safety holy places and when peace restored guarantee free access; (3) willing discuss demilitarization by gradual separation two forces but believes Tel Aviv-Jerusalem corridors should be internationalized at same time since its control gives Jews great military advantage.

Stated had carried on informal exploratory talks with Dayan since conclusion cease-fire in order determine what concessions Jews willing make. [Ethridge.]

BURDETT

501.BB Palestine/2-1349: Telegram

*Ambassador Stanton Griffis to the Secretary of State*<sup>1</sup>

SECRET

CAIRO, February 13, 1949—4 p. m.

From Griffis for Secretary Acheson. While I have been on leave for more than two months operating UN relief program I trust that you will permit me following my long meeting with Ethridge yesterday to express to you my feeling regarding Palestine settlement based on six months careful study here and personal contacts with substantially every Arab city ruler and high minister.

Innumerable telegrams on file in Department have carried my firm feeling that no final settlement of Palestine problem can be reached prior to high level agreement between US and UK regarding the three moot questions: borders, rehabilitation of refugees and internationalization Jerusalem. I have expressed and urged this opinion in personal conversation with President, Secretary Marshall, Lovett, all

<sup>1</sup> Transmitted to the Department by Cairo in telegram 165.

members NE Division, members USUNDel Paris and highest level British diplomats here. Everyone has agreed in substance but apparently little result. My complete argument is that matter must be settled first in London and Washington before it can be settled here.

The Arab states have not slightest interest in feelings of France, Turkey or Peru nor indeed in feelings and opinions of UN. They are bored, confused and without confidence in mediators, commissions and UN orders. They are interested in exactly one thing. What are the intents and desires of US and UK and will US and UK make such pronouncements in conjunction with UN as will give them face-saving device of stating that partition of Palestine was forced upon them by higher powers.

This morning Turkish delegate Yalcin in Cairo newspaper statement blazoned statement "We don't wish to force our opinions on anyone". This is exactly opposite of what Egyptians want. They wish to use excuse of coercion and thereby save a critically unstable government which fully realizes that other Arab states except Transjordan have little further interest in entire problem. In other words basically [we?] are dealing only with Israel, Transjordan and Egypt. Rightly or not all Arab states believe that Israel will do exactly what US dictates and Transjordan under complete British domination.

A strong and prompt publicly stated agreement by US and UK will go a great distance towards settlement and I believe quickly solve this potentially terribly dangerous situation but it must be backed up by the strongest US and British representations both to Israel and Egypt by respective US-UK highest levels. Otherwise believe UN settlement will drag out many months or years.

Have no intention or desire bypass UN. Of course final settlements should be made formally through them.

Ethridge has read this cable and states strongly concurs. High regards.

Sent Department 165, repeated London.

[GRIFFIS]

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501.BB Palestine/2-1449 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Special Representative of the United States in Israel (McDonald), at Tel Aviv*

SECRET NIACT  
US URGENT

WASHINGTON, February 14, 1949—8 p. m.

88. Please call at once on FonMin and make following oral communication:

Eban Feb. 11 at own request called on Deputy US Rep UN NY quoting Shertok to effect that armistice negotiations on Rhodes had

narrowed down "to details" and that successful outcome could be expected. Eban told USRep re Auja that compromise being worked out to neutralize area with Jewish and Egyptian defensive forces in roughly equal strength outside area. Re Beersheba Eban understood Israel striking forces would withdraw, leaving defensive forces roughly equal to combined Egyptian-Arab Legion forces in that area.<sup>1</sup>

In contrast to this info officially communicated by Rep of PGI, US member PCC received memo Feb 11 from Bunche indicating that Israel Delegation was adamant in refusing withdrawal from Beersheba and in not accepting UN neutral zone arrangement for Auja.<sup>2</sup>

Dept today inquired of Epstein if he could reconcile these conflicting reports. Epstein said he had heard of Eban's conversation but had had no direct word from Tel Aviv.

Dept stressed earnest hope of this Govt that Eban's report cited above is correct and that PGI has wisely decided make concessions re Beersheba and Auja which seemed to be principal stumbling blocks to successful agreement.

Please telegraph report your interview with FonMin and repeat to Ethridge.

Repeated to Cairo as Unpal 27 for Ethridge. Repeated USUN as 80.

ACHESON

<sup>1</sup> This information was based on telegram 166, February 11, 2 p. m., from New York (501.BB Palestine/2-1149).

<sup>2</sup> This information was based on telegram 133 (identified also as Palun 37), February 11, 10 p. m., from Jerusalem. It quoted Mr. Bunche's memorandum to Mr. Ethridge, which stated that Colonel Yadin had informed Mr. Bunche that the reason the Israelis insisted "on complete freedom in the eastern sector of the Negev is because of the bargaining they expect to be forced to do in order to reach an agreement with Abdullah." (501.BB Palestine/2-1149)

501.BB Palestine/2-1149 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Special Representative of the United States in Israel (McDonald), at Tel Aviv*

CONFIDENTIAL

WASHINGTON, February 15, 1949—4 p. m.

90. AP despatch datelined Jerusalem Feb 13 quotes PriMin Ben Gurion as follows:

*Verbatim text.* "In a brief but fiery speech he said that the commission had one direct instruction from the United Nations—the internationalization of Jerusalem. Therefore, he said, it was his duty on this occasion to tell them that 'judgment on Jerusalem would not be given by them.'"



Pls endeavor ascertain whether this report textually accurate. Appreciate comments in light urtel 120 Feb. 12.<sup>1</sup>

ACHESON

<sup>1</sup> Not printed; it reported that prior to receipt of Department's telegram 83, February 10 (not printed, but see footnote 1 to memorandum of February 9, p. 741), Mr. McDonald had called on Mr. Shertok to express his personal concern lest the Israeli Government take unilateral action affecting the status of Jerusalem at the inaugural meetings of the Constituent Assembly. Mr. Shertok, after informing him that the Provisional Government of Israel was opposed to such action, summarized "the PGI position as desire work out solution Jerusalem with UN." (501.BB Palestine/2-1249)

Tel Aviv replied, on February 18, that the Palestine *Post* of February 14 had quoted the Prime Minister as saying: "But with all respect to Conciliatory [*Conciliation*] Commission of UN decision with regard to Jerusalem was made 3,000 years ago when Bel Yishai (King David) made Jerusalem the Jewish centre." (Telegram 140, 501.BB Palestine/2-1849) Jerusalem, on February 14, cited the same issue of the Palestine *Post*, which quoted Mr. Ben-Gurion as saying additionally that "the living Jerusalem will not again accept any rule but that of its own people, Israel." (Telegram 144, 501.BB Palestine/2-1449)

501.BB Palestine/2-1549: Telegram

*The Chargé in Egypt (Patterson) to the Secretary of State*

CONFIDENTIAL

CAIRO, February 15, 1949—6 p. m.

173. Palun 46. [From Ethridge.] During February 15 meeting between Egyptian Prime Minister accompanied by Foreign Minister and PCC. Prime Minister replied to Commission *aide-mémoire* on subjects of general negotiations, Commission assistance, Jerusalem, economic matters and refugees as set forth in GA resolution December 11 and on subject territorial questions.

Prime Minister reiterated previous view Egyptian Government as reported in Palun 43<sup>1</sup> that present negotiations at Rhodes should be concluded and solution for refugee problem should be achieved before considering other matters which Commission had raised. Egypt and Israel had embarked on Rhodes negotiations as basis SC resolutions. Although Egypt agreed respect these resolutions Israelis not satisfied and does not wish implement. Even Acting Mediator's suggestions which have exceeded SC resolutions in some respects are not acceptable to Jews. Successful conclusion either at Rhodes or for Commission seems impossible as long as Jews do not feel bound respect GA or SC.

<sup>1</sup> Identified also as telegram 166, February 14, 10 a. m., from Cairo, not printed; it stated that the Commission arrived at Cairo on February 12 and that preliminary discussions with Egyptian officials began the next day. Egyptian Foreign Minister was said to have welcomed the Commission but to have denounced the "intransigent line" of the Israelis at Rhodes. He was also reported as saying that Egypt would not approve "historical injustice in Palestine." (501.BB Palestine/2-1449)

Refugees:<sup>2</sup> Principle of return to homes and respect for property and rights is fundamental and must be accepted in advance. Refugees who do not wish return should be compensated. GA considered this matter and instructed accordingly. Until appropriate measures taken UN has responsibility for refugees. Despite right Arab return as guaranteed by UN Jews may continue object. No single country, however, restricts residence on basis of religion. All countries have minorities which have full rights as citizens. If some Arab refugees return and some do not, latter category can be agreed between Israel and Arab states on basis of exchange for Jews now in Arab lands.

Jerusalem:<sup>3</sup> Arabs have had long and good record in Jerusalem. No reason to take from Arabs and make international. Egypt's attitude will, however, be based on GA resolution December 11.

Economic matters: Egyptian Government will be glad examine proposals at later date.

Territorial questions: Prime Minister did not discuss in reply at first but later indicated there was no use discussing pending conclusion Rhodes talks and concrete evidence of Jewish good faith and real wish live up to GA and SC resolutions.

Commission argued each of foregoing points with Prime Minister without avail. Ethridge pointed out as member Commission and as US representative interest in success at Rhodes and observed that if all Arab states had views similar those Egypt endless talk might result. If Rhodes talks should fail Commission might be requested assume responsibility for armistice negotiations. Such delays would be serious for refugees and might contribute to political unrest in Near East. It therefore seemed wise now have informal talks at least on all outstanding problems.

Prime Minister stated he had sincerely attempted give Egyptian attitude to fullest extent now possible and that he would continue cooperate with Commission. Egypt did not believe, however, it would be useful progress further at this stage until Jewish intentions were

<sup>2</sup> In the discussions of February 13, Chairman Yalcin stated that the return of the refugees "was logical though difficult because conditions had changed on account Jewish immigration. If Arabs could not resettle in Egypt, perhaps other Arab states could accommodate?" The Foreign Minister retorted that the Arab States would "never admit no right to return."

<sup>3</sup> In the discussions of February 13, the Foreign Minister refused to commit himself on the question of the internationalization of Jerusalem, "pointing out Jerusalem had always been Arab but that this matter could be discussed after Israel had complied with SC resolutions and refugees solution had been found."

Telegram 166 also stated that Mr. Ethridge sought Egyptian views regarding "general or separate peace conferences or combination of both." The Foreign Minister expressed his belief that "direct negotiations would be preferable but stated Egypt would have to wait and see if Israel wanted peace and would abide by SC resolutions."

really known. Their reaction at Rhodes and to problem of refugees would be best demonstrations their good faith.<sup>4</sup> [Ethridge.]

PATERSON

<sup>4</sup> Mr. Ethridge concluded that "Talks here have convinced me that unless Rhodes negotiations are quickly successful Commission's work will be greatly delayed while situation, particularly as to refugees, disintegrates and becomes more dangerous. In circumstances urge Department exert utmost pressure in addition to that already taken to make them successful and consider suggesting to very highest levels that this is time to intervene with Israel. The mail is badly needed." (Telegram 172, February 15, 5 p. m., from Cairo, 501.BB Palestine/2-1549)

501.BB Palestine/2-1549: Telegram

*The Special Representative of the United States in Israel (McDonald)  
to the Secretary of State*

SECRET NIACT

TEL AVIV, February 15, 1949—6 p. m.

US URGENT

129. ReDeptel 88, February 14. Foreign Minister in Jerusalem. Had extended conference with Acting Foreign Minister Shiloah 12th noon. Knox, Andrus,<sup>1</sup> Van de Velde<sup>2</sup> present. Shiloah informed as follows:

Eban's comments February 11 erred on optimistic side. However, Yadin<sup>3</sup> and Shiloah go Rhodes February 16 resume conference with compromise formula re Auja area. On Beersheba and Auja Israeli position is:

1. PGI agreeing evacuate town El Auja and withdraw forces from a surrounding area only slightly smaller than area Bunche proposed. Also offering withdraw all but three battalions from whole area south and west of Bunche "armistice" line of November 13.

2. PGI cannot agree withdraw forces Beersheba because (1) no armistice negotiations with Transjordan as yet; (2) eastern front not politically related southern-western front; (3) presence Transjordan-Egyptian troops, plus British troops Akaba, plus irregulars, on eastern front constitute entirely different problem and must be dealt with later (presumably in negotiations between Transjordan and Israel). Shiloah opines Egypt realizes this and will concede different status Beersheba and eastern front.

3. Israel not accepting Bunche proposal put seats Armistice Commission in El Auja, Bir Asluj, Beersheba. This proposal not indicative of "equal status" both armies and PGI will insist seat Armistice Commission either on border, or in towns located equally in Egypt as well as Israel.

<sup>1</sup> Col. Burton C. Andrus, Military Attaché in Israel.

<sup>2</sup> Lt. Col. Robert W. van de Velde, predecessor of Colonel Andrus as Military Attaché in Israel.

<sup>3</sup> Yigal Yadin, Chief of Staff of the Israeli Army and participant for his Government at the Rhodes conference.

4. PGI will concede any reasonable formula meet Egypt half way but wherein concessions clearly involve political prejudice or military disadvantage Israel will not agree. Shiloah says he aware desirability help Egypt maintain prestige.

5. Shiloah's cited clause in Bunche proposals stating provisions of armistice do not prejudice any "political, territorial, or custodial" claims will later be considered by appropriate international authority. In Shiloah's opinion this clause should allay Egypt apprehension re PGI position re Auja or Beersheba.

6. PGI of definite opinion that negotiations Rhodes should not create new area of "international supervision" in Negev. Problem El Auja can be solved by Israel-Egypt Armistice Commission.

7. Shiloah stated that as proof sincerity PGI willing give details troops and arms to remain in western Negev and guarantee freely to facilitate inspection by Armistice Commission.

*Comment:* Mission believes that PGI has been withholding further compromise during last six days awaiting outcome Histadrut<sup>4</sup> elections 13 February and opening of Assembly in order clear political atmosphere here. Shiloah's arguments re Beersheba understandable. Mission opinion is that PGI latest proposals constitute reasonable basis compromise and will possibly elicit favorable Egyptian response. Likely these proposals are as far PGI can go.

Department pass Army, Navy, Air.

McDONALD

<sup>4</sup> The Israeli Federation of Labor.

501.BB Palestine/2-1749

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Director of the Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs (Satterthwaite)*

WASHINGTON, February 17, 1949.

Subject: Israeli-Egyptian Negotiations on Rhodes.

Participants: Mohamed Kamil Abdul Rahim, Egyptian Ambassador

Mohamed El Kouny, First Secretary, Egyptian Embassy

J. C. Satterthwaite, NEA

Joseph Palmer, AF<sup>1</sup>

At the conclusion of a discussion on another subject, the Egyptian Ambassador expressed the hope that the United States would again use all its best influence to persuade the Israeli Government to reach an agreement at Rhodes. Upon my mentioning the fact that for the

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Palmer, 2d, Acting Chief of the Division of African Affairs.

first time we understood that the Acting Mediator, Mr. Bunche, was optimistic and felt that the impasse had been broken, Abdul Rahim Bey indicated that the two sides were close to agreement. He felt sure that what progress had been made had been due to the efforts of the United States. He felt sure, however, that an additional push at this time from high levels was necessary in order to bring the armistice negotiations to a successful conclusion.

I told the Ambassador that the United States was using and would continue to use its best efforts with the Israeli Government to reach a reasonable compromise. On the other hand I wished to emphasize again the great importance which we attach to continued patience and good will on the part of the Egyptian Government. That Government had shown a commendable spirit and patience for several weeks now, but it was necessary that it continue to do so and make a genuine effort toward reaching a solution. If it did so I felt that there was every hope that an agreement might be reached. We both agreed that this was necessary in order to give the Conciliation Commission a good basis on which to carry on its work.

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S67N.00/2-1749 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Special Representative of the United States in Israel (McDonald), at Tel Aviv*

SECRET      US URGENT      WASHINGTON, February 17, 1949—11 a. m.

98. Pls take earliest opportunity approach Israeli Govt re Dec. 12 absentee property ordinance along fol lines:

Dept has demonstrated its interest in protection Jewish minorities Arab lands and has taken appropriate occasions in past to remind Arab Govts their responsibilities this regard. Publication of ordinance, as shown by Syrian PriMins views (Damascus 2 to Tel Aviv Feb. 10<sup>1</sup>), has already produced sharp official Arab reaction which might well lead to retaliatory measures against Jews' property Arab countries. US Govt in most friendly spirit desires suggest advisability early action by Israeli Govt such as issuance official statement in order calm fears in Arab countries that property interests of absentee owners may not be safeguarded and in order avoid precipitating retaliatory action. US Govt concerned, in light of absentee property ordinance, that no Govt take unilateral action in advance negotiations contem-

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<sup>1</sup>This was a repeat of Damascus' telegram 55 to the Department, not printed; Prime Minister Azm was said to have expressed the hope to the Conciliation Commission that it would make the rescue of refugees a primary concern. In this connection he exhibited anxiety about the Israeli property law and intimated he wished to study its text before taking reciprocal measures against Jewish property in Syria. (501.BB Palestine/2-1049)

plated by GA resolution Dec. 11 which would prejudice achievement of agreed settlement on such questions as return of refugees to their homes and return of property to refugee owners.

For your info Dept on Feb. 4 (Deptel 70 to Jerusalem) suggested to Ethridge advisability PCC approaching Israeli Govt on last point preceding para, and inquiring Israeli authorities re arrangements Govt Israel contemplates making to return vested property belonging to refugees who later return to their homes.<sup>2</sup>

ACHESON

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<sup>2</sup> Mr. McDonald replied on March 11 that he had "discussed question several times with FonOff since February 18 and government studying question. Emphasis in law is on custodial function although one regulatory provision does permit sale with proceeds blocked." (Telegram 198 from Tel Aviv, 867N.00/3-1149)

Telegram 98 was repeated to Damascus the following day as No. 48.

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501.BB Palestine/2-1849 : Telegram

*The United States Representative at the United Nations (Austin)  
to the Secretary of State*

SECRET PRIORITY

NEW YORK, February 18, 1949—4 p. m.

203. Confirming telephone call to McClintock, Reedman (secretariat) telephoned to report on cable received from Bunche this morning as follows.

Bunche would deeply appreciate any possible assistance he might be given on following issue.

Only remaining issue in current Rhodes discussions is Beersheba. Egyptians are pressing for withdrawal all Israeli forces from the town. They are not however pressing for withdrawal of Israeli forces from surrounding area. Bunche describes Egyptian motive as political rather than military. Egyptians argue (a) there must be some recognition by Israelis of November 4 resolution, (b) Beersheba is an Arab town and (c) Beersheba is included in territory allotted to Arab state by November 29 resolution.

Israeli negotiators are adamant in refusal to enter into any formal agreement to withdraw from town. They have informed Bunche, however, that they are in fact building camps outside the town. It might be inferred from this information that Israelis plan informally to withdraw their forces.

Bunche comments that while Egyptian position is perhaps technically correct he feels they would be making great mistake to stick to their present line, particularly in view of safeguard provision in armistice agreement protecting any political rights or claims. Bunche

goes on to comment that Beersheba is more of an issue between the SC and Israel than between Egypt and Israel if it is an issue at all.

In response Reedman inquiry whether USG might take some action this point, Ross suggested (and subsequently confirmed suggestions after discussion McClintock) that best procedure at this juncture would be for SYG to see Fawzi and Eban here.

Text Bunche cable will be sent Department soon as received.

AUSTIN

501.BB Palestine/2-349 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Consulate General in Jerusalem*<sup>1</sup>

CONFIDENTIAL

WASHINGTON, February 18, 1949—7 p. m.

99. Ur 107 Feb 3.<sup>2</sup> Dept has explored possibility converting ConGen Jerusalem to Diplomatic Agency. Dept believes step inadvisable at present time since no international administrative authority, such as UN representatives mentioned UNGA resolution Dec 11, exists Jerusalem and no international regime as yet established.

ACHESON

<sup>1</sup> This telegram was repeated to Ankara, London, and Paris.

<sup>2</sup> Not printed; Consul Burdett made the suggestion "in order to signify US attitude toward Jerusalem and to forestall further steps by Israel toward annexation." (501.BB Palestine/2-349)

501.BB Palestine/2-1949 : Telegram

*The Chargé in Iraq (Dorsz) to the Secretary of State*

CONFIDENTIAL

BAGHDAD, February 19, 1949—8 a. m.

69. Palun 49. [From Ethridge.] 1. On February 17 Ibn Saud with informality and cordiality received Commission at Riyadh three times: Following arrival, before evening prayer and for dinner. King continually emphasized Saudi Arabia's desire to cooperate in restoring peace but strongly stressed necessity for equal desire on part of Jews. At second meeting King cited three prerequisites to settlement: (1) Real guarantees by UN [and?] by larger powers making sure that settlement would be effective; (2) that immediate action would be taken by UN to make possible for Arab refugees to return to their homes; and (3) that present GA and SC resolutions re Palestine would be made effective and that those who did not comply would be made to do so or be penalized accordingly, [after?] which refugee question could be discussed first. Ibn Saud, following intervention by counsellors such as Sheikh Yussuf, and Hamza Bey, hedged somewhat on Prince Feisal's previously indicated willingness actively to partici-

pate.<sup>1</sup> King was ready, however, to cooperate providing other Arab states also agreeable to conference. In general, Saudi Arabia seems remote both geographically and operationally from Palestine but indicates deep and detailed interest in problem. Saudi Arabian officials manifest little faith in UN effectiveness but appear sincere and desirous of working with UN re Palestine.

2. For Department's special information Saudi Arabian officials apparently accept without question and as fact unofficial reports and rumors via press and radio re continuing military aid from US to Israel in spite SC truce. Report Israel has four American destroyers cited by Saudi Arabian officials. US Delegate suggests it would be helpful American prestige SAG could be informally told of US measures to prevent military export from US and through third countries since Nov. 1947 and particularly since June 1948.

3. On February 18 Commission left Riyadh for Baghdad via Turkish plane, putting down briefly at Dhahran for quick visit with Saudi Arabian and American officials, thereafter arriving at Baghdad at 2:30 p. m.

4. Sent Department; please repeat to Near East capitals as seems appropriate. [Ethridge.]

DORSZ

<sup>1</sup>The Amir Faisal, Saudi Arabian Foreign Minister, had indicated in his discussions with the Palestine Conciliation Commission at Jidda on February 16 that Saudi Arabia would participate at a general conference to discuss the refugee problem, if the other Arab States would (telegram 116, February 17, 10 a. m., from Jidda, 501.BB Palestine/2-1749).

501.BB Palestine/2-2049: Telegram

*The Chargé in Iraq (Dorsz) to the Secretary of State*

SECRET PRIORITY BAGHDAD, February 20, 1949—noon.

71. After delivering *note verbale* (Embtel 70, February 20<sup>1</sup>) which he said Prime Minister asked him hand to me, Foreign Minister made comments along following lines: (1) UNPCC wanted Iraq Govern-

<sup>1</sup>Not printed; it stated that Foreign Minister Hafidh had handed the note to Chargé Dorsz on the morning of February 20 (501.BB Palestine/2-2049). The two main points of the note are embodied in comments numbered 5(a) and (b) in telegram 71.

On February 23, Foreign Minister Hafidh handed a similar *note verbale* to the British Ambassador and expressed the hope that the United Kingdom, in concert with the United States, would do everything possible to force Israel to accept the return of the refugees. He noted that the Arab States had met at Cairo on February 5 and had agreed to ask for such British assurances. The point concerning Jerusalem as an Arab city was an Iraqi idea not cleared with the other Arab States. Little effort was made to "sell" this point. (telegram 72, February 24, 11 a. m., from Baghdad, 501.BB Palestine/2-2449)



ment express its views re conditions for Israel prepared go towards reaching settlement or what steps would be taken to make Israel abide by settlement; (2) before expressing its views, Iraq Government feels that some practical action designed enforce compliance by Israel of such settlement as may be reached must be worked out; (3) UN resolutions have time and again been violated by Israel. Instead taking measures to enforce resolutions, big powers and particularly US have looked aside and helped Jews through such acts as extension *de jure* recognition, sponsoring Israel admission to UN, granting of huge loan, etc; (4) in these circumstances, Arabs have lost confidence in US contention it sincerely desires create conditions in Middle East favorable to restoration of stability and security this area; (5) US could improve situation immeasurably by proving its "good faith towards Arabs" by putting pressure on Israel to accept principles re (a) right refugees return to Palestine and (b) Jerusalem remain Arab city; (6) unless US Government makes Israel accept these principles, Arab world will continue drifting towards chaos from which only Communists can profit; (7) Iraq Government therefore hopes US will give assurances desired as this would help Arab Governments in their efforts to overcome deep and intense feeling against US now prevailing Arab world and enable Arab Governments working constructively; (8) other Arab Governments are expected make similar representations to US and British Governments; and (9) identical note verbale would be delivered British Embassy.

I mentioned that UN resolution December 11 which created UNPCC contained principle that refugees who desire should have right return to their homes in Palestine. Foreign Minister said this was not good enough; Jews had previously violated other resolutions and had exhibited no intention accepting this principle in December 11 resolution. Iraq therefore wants US show good faith by giving desired assurances; otherwise Iraq must assume US trying avoid direct responsibility of seeing that Jews abide by resolutions.

Foreign Minister made it plain that any reference by US for Arabs to look to UN for enforcement of resolution would not be constructive suggestion but merely another indication of US unwillingness to assume necessary responsibility of trying rectify to some extent great injustice Arabs claim US has been chiefly instrumental in imposing upon them.<sup>2</sup>

Sent Department 71, repeated Amman for USDel PCC 3, Beirut 23, Damascus 13, London 28, Jerusalem 3, Tel Aviv 3, Cairo 21, Jidda 4.

Dorsz

<sup>2</sup> Marginal notation in the handwriting of Mr. McClintock: "what responsibility?"

501.BB Palestine/2-449

*The Secretary of State to the Egyptian Ambassador (Rahim)*

The Secretary of State presents his compliments to His Excellency the Ambassador of Egypt, and has the honor to acknowledge the receipt of the Ambassador's note of February 4, 1949,<sup>1</sup> concerning the recognition of Israel.

The Government of the United States has granted full recognition to the Government of Israel since that Government, after the legislative elections of January 25, is now considered to be the legally constituted authority in the State of Israel. The Government of the United States recognized the existence of the State of Israel on May 14, 1948, when it recognized the Provisional Government of Israel as the *de facto* authority in Israel. It will therefore be seen that the existence of Israel as a state has been recognized by the United States for some time and is not a new development.

The Secretary of State desires at this time to reiterate the Department's hope that the conversations now going on may lead to the establishment of permanent peace in Palestine. It is the Department's conviction that all parties must bend every effort to remove any obstacles standing in the way of a final settlement and work to establish a normal atmosphere on questions relating to Palestine.

WASHINGTON, February 21, 1949.

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<sup>1</sup> Not printed; it expressed the "very deep regret" of the Egyptian Government that "certain powers" had recognized "the so-called State of Israel," despite failure to find a solution for the problems of Palestine. It also stated that the Zionists had exploited the fact of recognition as a definite stand in their favor and had thereby been encouraged to persist "in their purely aggressive complicity against the Arabs." It denounced the recent recognitions as "submission to force and acceptance of the accomplished fact even at the expense of the encouragement of aggression and the violation of the Law of Nations." (501.BB Palestine/2-449) The Egyptian Ambassador handed the note to the Secretary of State on February 5.

501.BB Palestine/2-2149: Telegram

*The Special Representative of the United States in Israel (McDonald)  
to the Secretary of State*

TOP SECRET      NIACT  
US URGENT

TEL AVIV, February 21, 1949—1 p. m.

149. Today 9:45 a. m. Foreign Minister asked me his office and stated as follows:

February 20, 4 p. m. "final" meeting held Rhodes. Israel accepted "in entirety without reservations" Bunche draft complete text agreement and appendices. Egyptians make two reservations, one "purely

technical" other of "principle". First referred to definition of "what constitutes defensive units" to be allowed within armistice area. Seemingly this reservation adjustable.

In second reservation Egyptians raise question Israel evacuation Beersheba, though no mention such evacuation Bunche final draft.

According information from Eytan late February 20, Egyptian delegation returning Cairo with divided opinion. The two foreign office representatives favor acceptance Bunche draft without insistence reservations. Military member, said "represent court and King", is believed determined to urge insistence Beersheba reservation as matter Farouk prestige even if new crisis precipitated.

Foreign Minister explained that Bunche draft draws dividing line between western and eastern fronts midway between Transjordan and Egyptian-held territories. Basic idea Bunche text is that eastern front is "irrelevant" until armistice negotiations open with Transjordan. Only <sup>1</sup> front involved in Israel-Egyptian negotiations. Beersheba well east dividing line. Hence, its non-inclusion in Israel evacuation zone.

Foreign Minister says that word from Washington to Egypt urging unqualified acceptance latest Bunche draft might result signature armistice Wednesday or Thursday this week. He pleads urgent action by Department.

McDONALD

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<sup>1</sup> There is an apparent garble at this point. Presumably "western" was intended.

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501.BB Palestine/2-2149: Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Embassy in Egypt*<sup>1</sup>

TOP SECRET      US URGENT      WASHINGTON, February 21, 1949—6 p. m.  
 NIACT

194. Pls call immediately upon FonMin and make representation following sense:

USG informed that Israeli Govt has accepted without reservations final Bunche draft complete text armistice agreement and appendices. USG further informed that Egyptian delegation Rhodes has made reservations to status proposed by Bunche for Beersheba.

USG understands that provision in Bunche draft agreement looks toward safeguarding of any political rights or claims. Status Beer-sheba will be determined at time of final peace settlement and USG believes question should not be permitted obstruct signing of armistice agreement.

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<sup>1</sup> This telegram was repeated to Tel Aviv, London, and New York.

As PrimMin aware, USG worked to persuade Israeli authorities modify their former adamant position, which was holding up negotiations. Tel Aviv subsequently made several accommodations in order meet Bunche proposals such as status El Auja and Bir Asluj. USG would deplore any action likely create further obstacles at time when armistice agreement seems near, after so much hard work by both sides. In spirit of friendship for Egypt and in its desire see peace return to NE, USG urges Egyptian Govt accept Bunche draft without insistence reservations.

Above representation of course not to be made if prior receipt this tel Egyptians have accepted Bunche draft.

ACHESON

501.MA Palestine/2-2249

*The Special Representative of the United States in Israel (McDonald)  
to the Secretary of State*

SECRET  
No. 46

TEL AVIV, February 22, 1949.

SIR: In answer to the Department's telegram 91 of February 15, 1949,<sup>1</sup> in reference to Palestine war refugees, I have the honor to submit in this communication an analysis of the elements of the problem and some factors in its possible solution.

[Here follow sections on "Summary," "Background," and "Present Obstructive Tendencies."]

*The Israeli Official Position*

There is no evidence that the Israeli Government through action by the Cabinet or the State Council has as yet defined an official position towards the problem of Palestine refugees. None of the few public or semipublic statements by the Foreign Minister have been comprehensive or authoritative. On several occasions, I have talked at length with Mr. Shertok (my last talk was today) and on two or three occasions with the Prime Minister, Mr. Ben Gurion, about the problem. The general impression I gather is that no one here has yet thought the matter through. Nonetheless, what is known of Israel's position at this time I summarize as follows:

1. Sole responsibility for the creation of refugees rests upon the Arab states who, in violation of the UN November 29th recommendation on partition, began and continued an offensive war against Israel. All other factors which may have played a part in the exodus are

<sup>1</sup>Not printed; it expressed the Department's belief that prospects for early approval of the refugee bill were favorable (501.BB Palestine/2-1349).

secondary and comparatively unimportant. Had there been no Arab attack upon Israel there would have been no Arab refugees.

2. Israel will gladly make available technical assistance and personnel in planning the resettlement of refugees outside of its territory.

3. It will consider sympathetically financial contributions towards such resettlement either in the form of compensation for Arab properties left behind by the refugees or as direct governmental grants.

4. There can be no formal consideration of Israel's role in such resettlement except as an integral part of peace negotiations and settlements with the several Arab states.

5. To allow any substantial return of refugees prior to peace would be to impose upon the Israeli military and police authorities an unbearable and wholly unacceptable responsibility.

6. Though the Israeli spokesmen do not say so, the unprecedentedly rapid influx of Jewish refugees during 1948 and the plan to admit a quarter of a million more in 1949 will, if carried out, fill all or almost all of the houses and business properties previously held by Arab refugees. Arab unoccupied farms will similarly, though not to quite the same degree, be occupied by the recent or expected Jewish refugees. Hence, there will be almost no residence or business property and only a limited number of farms to which the Arab refugees can hope to return.

### *Recommendations*

On the basis of the above analysis of governmental attitudes in general and of those of the Israel and Arab governments in particular, I recommend:

1. The immediate supplying of Ambassador Griffis and his colleagues with the resources necessary to keep the refugees alive pending their resettlement. The appropriation by Congress of the full amount of \$16,000,000 requested by President Truman as our Government's contribution will, I trust, have been passed before this despatch is received by the Department, for without this American example of generosity, Mr. Griffis' drive for essential relief funds must fail.

2. Constant and concerted pressure on both Israel and the Arab states to eschew politics in their thinking and planning about refugees and to take account of humanitarian considerations. Emphatically these governments should be told that in the long run the human approach will be the best policy.

3. Israel be urged to accept the principle that:

a. The serious and sympathetic study of plans for the return of those refugees who wish to return be not postponed until formal peace has been made or peace negotiations begun;

b. Permission to return be not tied up with such extraneous problems as permission to Jews now living in Arab countries to leave in order to enter Israel.

4. The Arab states be urged to recognize that to make the prior return of the refugees a *sine qua non* of peace negotiations would be to destroy any chance of concession by Israel and instead would tend to protract indefinitely the present twilight which is neither peace nor

war. It should be obvious to the Arab governments, if not to their peoples, that it is impracticable if not impossible for Israel to open its doors to the returning refugees before its enemies have agreed to begin peace negotiations.

5. Fundamental to any resettlement plan will be large capital funds. No estimate of the amount required can, however, be made until there has been a detailed study of the number to be resettled and where.

6. The required resettlement funds might be obtained from these sources:

*a.* Compensation by Israel for refugee property taken over by the state or by private individuals or corporations.

*b.* Lands suitable for resettlement made available by the Arab governments,

*c.* An international loan similar to that which under League of Nations auspices made possible the transfer of more than a million Greeks from Smyrna and vicinity to their motherland.

7. Comprehensive but general recommendations by the Palestine Conciliation Commission of an Arab refugee resettlement program is the obvious next step. Any plan to be acceptable in Tel Aviv must make provision for resettlement of the larger proportion of the refugees outside of Israeli territory.

#### *A Definite Plan Now?*

Nothing would be easier—or less useful—than for me, or any other informed person, to attempt to draw up now a detailed plan of resettlement, including adequate financing. Any such plan might appear to be sound and just, but in reality it would be so theoretical as to be almost worthless. There are still too many unknown factors to permit the preparation of a sound program.

Here are some of the unknowns:

1. The number of refugees—the estimates still vary by hundreds of thousands.

2. The real attitudes of the governments directly concerned;

*a.* How many refugees will be permitted to return to Israel? The sooner armistices with the neighboring states have been concluded, the sooner there can be an approximate answer to this question.

*b.* How many will be permitted to be resettled in the Arab states? I anticipate (despite present Arab public statements) that this number will be very large if adequate funds are made available.

3. The degree of unity of the states in UN in support of a resettlement program.

4. The degree of willingness of such states to make sacrifices toward a comprehensive solution.

This incomplete list of unknowns suggests that at most the Palestine Conciliation Commission can at the present time probably do no more than draft a very general outline of a possible program, or programs,

for the refugees. The Commission's present tour of all the capitals will have supplied it with political background against which a refugee scheme can be realistically envisaged. Perhaps the Commission might at the outset limit itself to the drawing up of a set of principles upon which basis a group of technicians could then be authorized to begin the preparation of a more definitive scheme.

Meantime—and this I regard as the essence of the matter—all possible friendly influence should be brought to bear upon all the states involved to study sympathetically ways in which each can make its maximum contribution to an agreed solution—a solution which would over the years be advantageous to all.<sup>2</sup>

Respectfully yours,

JAMES G. McDONALD

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<sup>2</sup>The Department, in reply on April 1, stated that "This timely and objective report has had an important influence upon the formulation of the Department's long-range policy towards the Palestine refugee question, particularly with regard to the definition of the objectives of this Government. The Department is in accord with your recommendations . . . and would welcome your more detailed comments on means by which your recommendations number 2, 3, and 4 can be implemented." (airgram 55, 501.BB Palestine/2-2249)

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501.BB Palestine/2-2249: Telegram

*The Chargé in Egypt (Patterson) to the Secretary of State*

TOP SECRET

CAIRO, February 22, 1949—2 p. m.

186. Deptel 194 February 21. Since my previous conversations concerning Rhodes negotiations were with Prime Minister I requested Abdul Hadi Pasha to receive me today which he did within the hour. I reviewed situation as understood by my government and repeatedly stressed US Government's view that Beersheba should not prove obstacle to signature armistice agreement, especially since Bunche draft safeguards political rights or claims to that town for determination during final peace settlement.

In response to my exposition Prime Minister stated that he would use his best efforts in interest of a settlement. Although I urged him to be more definite he was not disposed to bind himself by precise promise, and probably indeed could not have done so.

Prime Minister emphasized that Egyptian attitude toward Beersheba was not arbitrary, but was based on importance of town as symbol of UN November 4 resolution; as strategic point important for Egypt's defense (although such importance now diminished by Zionist fortified villages in vicinity); and as communications center on an important highway. For these reasons Egypt had been anxious to maintain a civil administration at Beersheba without troops or fortifications.

My final impression gained from our talk was that Abdul Hadi Pasha would use his influence to remove Egyptian reservation respecting Beersheba.

Thereafter possibly with view of making a Palestine settlement more palatable to Egyptian public (since Prime Minister stated that it had been difficult for Egyptians to negotiate and to make concessions) Hadi Pasha urged at considerable length importance of US support for return of Palestine refugees to their homes since temporary relief would not suffice and also US economic aid to Egypt.

If a Marshall plan for the Middle East were not practicable at least the US Government should insist that Marshall Plan dollars supplied European countries should when such countries required Egyptian cotton be used to pay for at least a portion of such cotton in dollars.

The Prime Minister in response to my question stated that he stood by the thoughts contained in his recently published responses to questions propounded by Walter Collins, Cairo United Press correspondent.

PATTERSON

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*Statement by the President*<sup>1</sup>

I am immensely gratified over the news from Rhodes that the Representatives of Egypt and Israel have signed an armistice agreement. This act is a tribute to the restraint and statesmanship of the two governments. I wish, also, to congratulate the United Nations Mediator, Dr. Ralph Bunche, whose untiring efforts have so greatly contributed to the success of these negotiations.

I hope that now a formal armistice has been agreed upon between Egypt and Israel, this pattern for peace will be followed rapidly in the conclusion of similar agreements between Israel and the other Arab States. The general armistice will then, I trust, lead to the attainment of permanent peace, thus freeing the talents of these Near Eastern peoples for constructive work in the development of their respective countries. As a Member of the Palestine Conciliation Commission, the United States stands ready to assist the parties to the rapid conclusion of a just and honorable peace.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Released to the press by the White House on February 24; reprinted from Department of State *Bulletin*, March 6, 1949, p. 302.

<sup>2</sup> The Department, on February 24, sent a joint telegram to Tel Aviv (No. 113) and to Cairo (No. 202), stating that it was "greatly encouraged by Egyptian-Israeli armistice concluded at Rhodes and particularly by the public and cordial association of Egyptian and Israeli delegations in normal negotiation relationship." (501.BB Palestine/2-2449)



*Editorial Note*

The Governments of Israel and Egypt, at Rhodes on February 24, signed a General Armistice Agreement, the first agreement signed between Israel and an Arab neighbor. The text is published in United Nations, *Official Records of the Security Council, Fourth Year* (hereinafter identified as SC, 4th yr., *Special Supplement No. 3*).

Cairo reported, on March 2, that "public reaction in Egypt hostile to the signature of the Israeli-Egyptian armistice signed at Rhodes on February 24 has been practically nil with no disturbances or demonstration[s] as originally feared by many informed persons and security officials. While criticism has been barred from the press by government directive no indirect criticism, even by the opposition press, has yet appeared. The press has, in fact, devoted itself to statements upholding the valor and honor of the Egyptian Army and calling attention to Egypt's respect and support for international organizations working for peace. The view is taken that the military experience gained in the Palestinian affair has more than compensated for sacrifices involved." (Airgram 260, 501.BB Palestine/3-249)

*Editorial Note*

Israeli Representative Eban, on February 24, sent a letter to Secretary-General Lie requesting the Security Council to give renewed consideration to his country's membership in the United Nations. The Council, on December 17, 1948, had failed to recommend such membership; see Mr. Lovett's memorandum of conversation of December 21, 1948, *Foreign Relations*, 1948, volume V, Part 2, page 1676.

The text of Mr. Eban's letter is printed in United Nations, *Official Records of the Security Council, Fourth Year, Supplement for March 1949*, page 7.

501.BB Palestine/2-2449: Telegram

*The Minister in Lebanon (Pinkerton) to the Secretary of State*

CONFIDENTIAL

BEIRUT, February 24, 1949—11 a. m.

83. Palun 52. [From Ethridge.] Department please pass appropriate Near East Missions. On February 21 Syria Prime Minister received Commission. Ethridge as chairman explained its general and specific tasks from UNGA and requested Syrian views.

Prime Minister replied Syrian views had been stated last UNGA and questioned whether Syria should now be urged to recognize Jewish state *de facto* which established contrary to justice. Jews are even now

acting contrary to UN resolutions by importing arms, by other truce violations, by holding Constituent Assembly Jerusalem, and by other Jewish governmental action in Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup> Syria has presented formal protest to ministers of all countries represented Damascus re Jewish assembly and Jewish capital Jerusalem. Syria protests to commission also Prime Minister continued. Arab states are confronted by establishment of state in Palestine on racial basis. Arab population being replaced by Jews. Refugees are first and most important problem. Why cannot Arabs return if Jews can immigrate? Syria requests implementation paragraph 11 GA resolution December 11 including indemnification. Solution lies between Jews and UN and not between Jews and Arabs.

Although commission pointed out its main task was conciliation and how specific problems were intertwined, Prime Minister maintained position emphasizing Syria was abiding by UN resolutions but Jews were not. Arab states therefore required guarantees re Jewish intentions and UN implementation.

Re meeting Arab states with Commission Prime Minister agreed could take places soon at Arab capital providing other Arab States concurred.<sup>2</sup>

Sent Department; repeated Jerusalem 13. [Ethridge.]

PINKERTON

<sup>1</sup> Damascus, on February 25, reported Prime Minister Azm's fear of a Zionist *fait accompli* at Jerusalem and his request that the United States counter such move. The Prime Minister was said to have contended that "as the Conciliation Commission was specifically charged by the UN resolution with the internationalization of Jerusalem, it should limit itself in its discussion of Jerusalem to means of carrying out this specific duty. As 'Azam said nothing to me [Minister Keeley] with respect to Arab claims upon Jerusalem, the inference was that the Arabs would not object to internationalization if the UN Resolution could be used as means of defeating Israeli pretensions." Publicly, however, the Prime Minister was said to have expressed dissatisfaction with internationalization and to have insisted on the "Arabism of the city and its suburbs." (Airgram 57, 867N.01/2-2549)

<sup>2</sup> The Conciliation Commission saw the Lebanese Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs on February 23. Their views paralleled those of the Syrian spokesman as set forth in telegram 83. The Foreign Minister stressed the view that the "internationalization Jerusalem and solution refugee problem were test cases to determine whether Jews would abide or buck UN resolution." (Telegram 84, identified also as Palun 53, February 24, noon, from Beirut, 501.BB Palestine/2-2449)

501.BB Palestine/2-2449: Telegram

*Mr. Wells Stabler to the Secretary of State*

SECRET

AMMAN, February 24, 1949—5 p. m.

72. Defense Minister confirmed this morning delay in departure of Transjordan armistice delegation to Rhodes. Said delegation has definite instructions to consider armistice questions only and to inform

Israelis that any matter beyond scope armistice will have be referred back to Transjordan Government with view possible consideration later in connection PCC. Transjordan Government believes it would be mistake rush into peace settlement discussions at Rhodes and that more reasonable and lasting agreement could be reached by proceeding slowly toward ultimate objective under aegis PCC. Indicated again that Transjordan Government hoped PCC would soon be brought into discussions.

Re Iraqi position on armistice Defense Minister said Transjordan delegation prepared inform Israelis, if subject raised, that agreement reached by Transjordan Government will also extend to Iraqi areas but that Transjordan delegation unable commit itself in writing on this. Understanding re Iraqi areas will have to be in nature "gentleman's agreement." Fawzi Pasha believed Iraqis would abide by such agreement. Delimitation armistice lines in Iraqi area should not prove difficult as present front lines approximate desired lines of territorial settlement.<sup>1</sup>

Said PCC had proposed meeting of Arab states at Beirut March 21. Arab League Council also proposed hold meeting end of March at Cairo but felt this would be without practical result.

Sent Department 72; repeated Baghdad 15; pouched Jerusalem.

STABLER

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Stabler, on February 25, reported information that the Iraqi Defense Minister had telephoned to the Iraqi Minister at Amman to inquire whether the latter had issued a denial that the Transjordanian Delegation at Rhodes would also speak for Iraq. The Minister was alleged to have "replied such not possible in view existing relationships with King and that matter would settle itself at Rhodes where Transjordan delegation will be unable present to Israelis, if they request it, written 'power of attorney' from Iraq Government." (Telegram 73 from Amman, 501.BB Palestine/2-2549)

501.BB Palestine/2-2449 : Telegram

*The Chargé in Egypt (Patterson) to the Secretary of State*

RESTRICTED

CAIRO, February 24, 1949—9 p. m.

193. Official communiqué announcing signature today at Rhodes armistice transforming cease-fire into permanent truce states "agreement has no political character. It deals exclusively with military questions and does not affect in any way the political destiny of Palestine." Communiqué also declares military delegation sent January 12 to discuss with UN Mediator the application of SC resolutions of November 4 and 16 ran into many difficulties until Bunche established project bringing together the different points of view.

Press reproduction of agreement forbidden by censor although radio heard in Egypt carries full text. Security officials warned Embassy officer violent reaction possible when agreement is published.<sup>1</sup>

[PATTERSON]

<sup>1</sup> Cairo transmitted the text of the official communiqué in airgram 239, February 26, which noted that censorship of the terms of the agreement "relented under orders, to the extent of permitting the publication of seven brief points which were ascribed to sources outside Egypt. These points as published in the local press of February 25 are as follows:

"1. The coastal strip from the Egyptian frontier to a point 15 kilometres north of Gaza will remain under the control of the Egyptian forces.

"2. The Egyptian forces in Faluja will start evacuating the town today.

"3. El Auja becomes a headquarters of the United Nations observers enforcing the armistice.

"4. Prisoners of war will be exchanged within the next ten days.

"5. Both parties will not undertake any military operations or bring in reinforcements in arms and equipment.

"6. Both parties will not build new airfields in Palestine.

"7. Both parties are to reduce their main forces within four weeks in compliance with the armistice." (50LBB Palestine/2-2649)

#### *Editorial Note*

The Department of State announced, on February 25, that "The Government of the United States and the Government of Israel have agreed to the establishment of embassies in the respective capitals. The Government of Israel has informed the United States Government that His Excellency Eliahu Elath has been appointed first Israeli Ambassador to the United States. . . .

"The President announced on February 25 that he had nominated James Grover McDonald, of New York, to serve as the Ambassador of the United States to Israel."

The Department's *Biographic Register*, as of April 1, 1949, stated that Mr. McDonald became Ambassador on March 18, 1949.

The Department announced, on February 28, that "Pursuant to the formal recognition of the Hashemite Kingdom of Transjordan by the United States on January 31, 1949, the United States Government on February 28 established a Legation in Amman, the capital of Transjordan. The Government of Transjordan has notified the United States Government of its intention to establish a Legation in Washington." Mr. Stabler was designated Chargé d'Affaires of the Legation, effective March 19, pending arrival of a Minister. Dr. Yousef Haikal presented his credentials as Minister of Jordan on June 1, 1949.

The Department's press releases on these matters are printed in Department of State *Bulletin*, March 6, 1949, page 302, and March 13, 1949, page 332.

501.BB Palestine/2-949 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Minister in Syria*<sup>1</sup>

SECRET

WASHINGTON, February 25, 1949—6 p. m.

57. You may inform PriMin and FonOff as follows re ur A-8 Jan 10 and urtels 50<sup>2</sup> and 51 Feb 9:

(1) This Govt warmly appreciates friendly attitude Syrian Govt and its desire align itself with US and Western Powers.

(2) Dept wishes reiterate that our support estab State of Israel in no sense lessens our basic policy of friendship toward Arab countries and our earnest hope they will prosper and develop.

(3) US has not assisted Israel in violation of truce but on contrary has rigidly maintained arms embargo impartially. Quantity war material smuggled despite embargo has not been large and whenever apprehended participants have been prosecuted and material confiscated.

(4) US attitude re Israel was clearly stated in UN by Dr. Jessup on Nov 20 to effect that US supported Israeli claims to boundaries set forth UNGA resolution Nov 29 but believed that if Israel sought retain additional territory in Palestine it shld give Arabs territorial compensation.

(5) We wld not support any attempt by Israel to occupy any Arab state and wld fully support any measures taken by UN to protect territorial integrity such State.

(6) US hopes its relations with Syria and other countries NE will develop constantly. However Syrian Govt will appreciate association of US with nations outside Western Hemisphere for defense purposes, as exemplified in proposed Atlantic Security Pact, constitutes radical departure from traditional peacetime policies. It is new concept and one with which we must proceed slowly. We have not as yet envisaged broadening defensive security relationship beyond Atlantic grouping. While it wld be premature pursue subject further at present time, Dept is gratified learn of Syrian Govt's preoccupation with its basic relationship with Western Powers and its manifestation of friendship in this regard. Views of Syrian Govt will be kept well in mind.

(7) US Govt pleased that Arab states have endeavored observe truce under UN resolutions, and has urged utmost cooperation of

<sup>1</sup> This telegram was repeated to London and the Arab capitals.

<sup>2</sup> Latter not printed, but see footnote 1, p. 742.

Israeli Govt this same regard. US Govt hopes that all parties concerned will give full support General Assembly resolution of Dec 11 calling upon all parties seek agreement by negotiations either with Conciliation Commission or directly with view to final settlement of all questions outstanding between them.

ACHESON

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501.BB Palestine/2-2549 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to Ambassador Stanton Griffis, at Beirut*

TOP SECRET

WASHINGTON, February 25, 1949—8 p. m.

89. Eyes only for Griffis. Greatly appreciate views expressed your personal telegram Feb. 13 from Cairo. We have been following negotiations at Rhodes with closest possible attention and will pay similar attention to negotiation phase PCC. Experience thus far has not convinced us that final solution Palestine lies primarily in strong joint US-UK position which we would attempt to impose by pressure upon parties. Joint US-UK effort in last GA to support Bernadotte Plan failed completely because Arabs and Jews would have none of it and united their votes against US-UK. Arabs even rejected those elements of plan which were specifically directed to Arab advantage rather than recognize Bernadotte solution. This despite earlier assurances we had been given that Arabs would "acquiesce" in Bernadotte plan if supported by US-UK and might even vote for it. Parties have had ample opportunities in past to accept diplomatic *force majeure* as explanation to their own peoples but have shown no inclination to do so. Result has been that we have been victimized by choice between accepting rebuffs (which we have done) or exerting pressures beyond limits imposed by maintenance friendly relations as well as by obligations under Charter. Despite tortuous course of Palestine problem we have consistently maintained position that solution must be (1) by peaceful means, (2) through the UN, and (3) without acceptance of unilateral responsibilities by US. If Rhodes armistice negotiations continue to produce successful results, new possibilities for settlement through normal processes may open up. Recent news on that is encouraging. In any event, we shall keep in close touch with Ethridge and British and do everything we can to bring about settlement by peaceful processes. We do not exclude line of approach you suggest

but are inclined to view that for time being processes of conciliation should develop much more precisely the positions of the parties.<sup>1</sup>

ACHESON

<sup>1</sup>This telegram was repeated to Jerusalem for Mr. Ethridge and to London. Additionally, the Department informed Mr. Ethridge that "Our thought has been that PCC should initially endeavor to find common ground for agreement among parties without regard to preconceived ideas of our own about final settlement. Only if impasse is reached would we, as PCC member, wish to put forward terms of settlement, in which event we would consult with other members PCC as well as British. Emphasis in US position has been upon any settlement which would be agreeable to parties or in which they would at least acquiesce without further fighting. UK position is inclined to be more precise as to specific territorial arrangements.

"We note from Griffis' telegram that you concur in his suggestion. Please feel free at any time to make recommendations on such joint US-UK action as you believe required by situation. Altho we are not sanguine about such approach at this time, you are closest to the problem and we would wish to give your views very great weight." (Telegram 111, February 25, 8 p. m., to Jerusalem, also identified as Unpal 36, 501.BB Palestine/2-2549)

501.BB Palestine/2-2649: Telegram

*The Consul at Jerusalem (Burdett) to the Secretary of State*

SECRET

JERUSALEM, February 26, 1949—11 a. m.

167. Palun 54. Commission arrived Tel Aviv from Beirut February 24 via Turkish plane. Shortly following arrival Commission conferred with Israeli Foreign Minister and aides. Shertok welcomed Commission, proffered utmost assistance and heralded February 24 armistice agreement between Israel and Egypt as long step forward and first Jewish agreement with Arabs since 30-year old Feisal-Weizmann agreement.<sup>1</sup>

Ethridge as chairman explained Commission had just completed tour Near Eastern capitals at which it had received strong impression that Arab states were primarily concerned re Arab refugees but not necessarily as condition precedent to final peace arrangements. Arab states appeared equally concerned re Israel's general intentions. In view signature Israeli-Egyptian agreement, Commission hoped details of peace making could quickly be arranged. Under GA resolution

<sup>1</sup>This agreement, dated January 3, 1919, was signed at London by the Amir Faisal on behalf of the Arab Kingdom of Hejaz and Chaim Weizmann, representing the Zionist Organization. The text is available in David Hunter Miller's *My Diary at the Conference of Paris, with Documents*, vol. III, p. 188, and in George Antonius' *The Arab Awakening: The Story of the Arab National Movement* (G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1946), p. 437. The *Diary* was printed for the author by the Appeal Printing Company, New York, presumably in 1924.

The Antonius version gives a translation in English of a stipulation to the agreement by the Amir Faisal originally in Arabic. Mr. Antonius has concluded, based on the stipulation, that the agreement was actually signed no earlier than January 4, 1919.

December 11 Commission had certain principal tasks: (1) conciliation; (2) preparation of plan re internationalization Jerusalem; (3) refugees, and (4) various economic matters. Commission had questioned Arab states re these matters and now requested frank expression Israeli views.

Foreign Minister replied recent success at Rhodes had resulted from direct negotiations between Israeli and Egyptian representatives. Direct negotiations force crystalization of governmental views. When two parties negotiate concessions are made. If Israel now indicates to Commission concessions it might make, other party may not cooperate.

Shertok continued that developments in Palestine since May 15, 1948 have taken different course than that envisaged on November 29, 1947 because of Arab aggression in Palestine and exodus of Arab refugees. Return of large mass of Arab refugees would require extensive integration and expense. Resettlement must therefore logically be considered. Israel would be unable to consider repatriation. Israel believes resettlement would eventually prove of greater benefit to both Israel and Arab states. Foreign Office had undertaken preliminary research on subject, as previously promised Commission and would submit document to Commission as working-paper about March 3.

Ethridge suggested Israel might indicate whether it accepted principles set forth in GA resolution December 11 re Jerusalem and Arab refugees after which complete range of plans for implementation could be discussed.

Shertok replied Israel could not accept abstract principles as juridical rights but added that Israel did not wish to ride roughshod over Arab rights and was ready to discuss with Arabs.

Ethridge stated Commission had found genuine desire for peace at Arab capitals but that Arabs were sincerely apprehensive re Israeli intentions. If Israel could find some way of indicating its concern and demonstrate magnanimity, Arab fears might be allayed and new spirit might prevail which would permit progress. Commission had tentatively proposed that Arab states meet with Commission to consider refugee question. Plan might or might not result. Opportunity would be provided for discussion not only of refugee problem but other problems as well. Conciliatory statement by Israel re refugees might thereby facilitate peace settlement.

Shertok seemed impressed by argument Arabs genuinely desired peace and appreciated importance of conciliatory state in view Arab psychology. Shertok added possibility of affirmative statement would be discussed with Israeli Government officials. Commission might raise at February 25 meeting with Prime Minister. Shertok would support. Shertok believed resettlement elsewhere was essential but that



some Arabs might return depending on conditions of peace settlement.

Shertok also agreed to designate Foreign Office official to consult with committee of Commission re plans for internationalization Jerusalem.

Shertok also indicated re question of exchange of populations with specific reference to Jews in Arab states that Israel would be happy to receive latter.

Commission proceeding to Jerusalem February 26.

Sent Department 167; repeated Beirut 19; Damascus 5; Baghdad 6; Cairo 9; Amman 9; Jidda 3.

BURDETT

501.AA/2-2849

*Memorandum of Conversation, Drafted by Mr. Robert M. McClintock*

CONFIDENTIAL

[WASHINGTON,] February 28, 1949.

Subject: Admission of Israel into the United Nations.

Participants: Mr. Bromley, First Secretary, British Embassy.

Mr. Raynor—EUR

Mr. Rockwell—NE

Mr. McClintock—UNA

I<sup>1</sup> invited Mr. Bromley of the British Embassy to call on the afternoon of February 25 to receive the Department's oral response to the memorandum which the British Embassy had left with the Department<sup>2</sup> on the preceding day regarding the admission of Israel into the United Nations. I explained to Mr. Bromley that we did not feel it necessary to make a written reply to his Embassy's memorandum.

The views expressed in the United Kingdom memorandum had been given careful consideration in the Department and it was generally felt that it would be wiser to let the application of Israel for admission to the United Nations be considered alone and on its own merits in the Security Council, rather than to attempt to link the Israeli application with those of Transjordan and Ceylon. We thought that Russian vetoes of the latter two applications were almost a foregone conclusion. Furthermore, should the membership issue be broadened it would probably be necessary for this Government again to advance the claims of Italy. A probable result would be that the whole member-

<sup>1</sup> It is not clear from the record copy of this memorandum whether the "I" refers to Mr. McClintock or to G. Hayden Raynor, Special Assistant to the Director of the Office of European Affairs.

<sup>2</sup> Memorandum No. 412/11/49 is not printed. It was dated February 23 and was handed to Messrs. Hare and McClintock by Mr. Bromley on February 24. (501.AA/2-2349)

ship question would be reopened, with the USSR insisting on admission of Outer Mongolia, Albania, Hungary, Roumania, and Bulgaria. With respect to the last three countries, as Mr. Bromley knew, we were contemplating action with regard to their violation of treaty obligations for the maintenance of human rights. Accordingly, to go over the same acrimonious debate involving all these countries and instigate a very probable attempt by Secretary General Lie to arrange a deal whereby all applicants would be admitted, whether good, bad, or indifferent, seemed scarcely worth the qualms which the British Foreign Office expressed with regard to the admission of Israel.

Furthermore, it seemed apparent that, whether or not the United Kingdom should vote adversely on the procedural question of reconsidering the Israeli application, the Security Council would in any event vote favorably on that application. A list of probable affirmative votes indicated that perhaps nine of the Members of the Security Council would vote for the Israeli application, with only Egypt and the United Kingdom possibly abstaining.

Mr. Bromley took careful notes of the conversation and said he would report it to London.

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501.BB Palestine/2-2849: Telegram

*The Consul at Jerusalem (Burdett) to the Secretary of State*

SECRET

JERUSALEM, February 28, 1949—9 a. m.

170. Palun 55. [From Ethridge?] Meeting with Ben Gurion February 25 opened by Ethridge as chairman Commission who stressed refugees were main concern Arab States and constitute such human and psychological problem to them that if Israel could make advance gesture regarding refugees, beyond concessions which might be made in negotiations, general settlement would be greatly facilitated. Ethridge also emphasized Israel needed and wanted peace.

Ben Gurion agreed but strongly stressed Israeli need for military security as well as peace. Security meant survival for Israel. Question of security more acute for its people than any other because Arab States through concerted action might be able exterminate them. Prime Minister repeated Shertok's previous statement that no one raised finger to help Jews on termination mandate. When challenged by Ethridge, Ben Gurion explained no help had been given when efforts were made to destroy Israel. Ben Gurion conceded, however, that UN had been of substantial help. Ethridge said it would be great shock to people of US to hear that Shertok and Ben Gurion had said they had not helped in creation and survival of Israel.

Regarding Prime Minister's insistence on security all three Commissioners commented Israel could not enjoy security on basis military strength. Peace and cooperation with neighbors were essential elements, Ethridge pointed out UN alone has potentiality of collective military force. Boisanger recalled Arab distrust of Israel's intentions and need for relaxation of tension as prerequisite for peace. Ben Gurion believed security would rest on steady increase in country through immigration. Second element would be peace and cooperation with Arabs. Third element would be world peace. Yalcin questioned whether immigration would not result in expulsion of Arabs. Ben Gurion replied not one single person has been or would be expelled to make place for others. Development of country would provide adequate space.

Ben Gurion emphasized belief Israel and Arab States have common destiny in Middle East. Expressed belief not only in peace but in full-sided cooperation with Arabs including help in mutual development. Promised all possible help in search for peace. If Arabs give up objective of throwing Jews into sea, peace will be easy. Israel has no claim on Arab States but for peace and friendship.

Ethridge pointed out that Arab distrust of Israeli intentions and Israeli insistence on military security might both be resolved through deposit of negotiated treaties with UN. UN represented best and only means of guarantees at present time. Ben Gurion agreed.

Commission plans remain Jerusalem week of February 28. Boisanger and Yalcin tentatively plan return Paris and Ankara respectively March 3 for consultation with their governments returning Jerusalem about March 13. Ethridge plans remain Jerusalem working out future plans and perhaps visiting various areas of Palestine such as Galilee and Negev for background.

Repeated Baghdad 7, Beirut 20, Damascus 6, Cairo 10, Jidda 4, pouched Amman. [Ethridge?]

BURDETT

501.BB Palestine/2-2849 : Telegram

*The Consul at Jerusalem (Burdett) to the Secretary of State*

SECRET

JERUSALEM, February 28, 1949—10 a. m.

171. Palun 56. For Acheson from Ethridge. This is summary of my impressions after tour of Arab capitals:

(1) Signing of Egyptian-Israeli armistice has greatly facilitated work of Commission. Despite Bunche's skill and patience that would not have come about except for Department's representations. Department can take satisfaction that armistice was warmly welcomed in

Israel particularly in circles below officialdom. Dozens of people have told me how happy they are about it. Government is more cautious in its approach to peace than people since government has in mind touchy nature of refugee problem, Jerusalem, upon which it has committed itself pretty far, and in making any concessions of territorial nature because of army soreness.

(2) Immediate key to peace negotiations if not to peace, is refugee problem. Arab League is not dead intellectually even if militarily ineffective. There was complete concert of approach to us with almost open request for imposed peace, for guarantees accompanying it and for beginning of solution of refugee problem as *sine qua non* of discussions on other questions. To all Arab Governments Commission pointed out utter unrealism of that position and Lebanese Foreign Minister sent word to me through Delatour DuPin of French delegation that he had been convinced it was unrealistic and wrong and was sending a letter immediately to other Arab representatives urging change of policy. I believe Lebanon and Transjordan therefore are willing to go ahead in spite of concerted policy. Commission plans to set date for meeting with Arab representatives under its chairman to explore further refugee problem. Out of that meeting, providing Arab policy has changed in meantime and providing Israel has accepted in principle GA resolution as to refugees, will come discussion of other phases and also arrangements for negotiations between Israel and Arabs.

(3) I pressed strongly upon Shertok that key to peace negotiations lies in hands of Israeli Government. There can be no fruitful negotiations until Arab psychosis as to refugees has been wiped out and Arab public opinion prepared for fact that not all refugees will return. Both sides now regard refugees as political pawn with Arab agitation constantly directed toward inhumanity of Israel's apparent indifference to them. Israeli Government strongly desirous of using refugee problem as bargaining point upon which it can give something in return perhaps for other concessions. Problem must of course be solved along with all others but generous gesture at moment on part of Israeli Government even if it be words that accept principle of GA resolution, would give Commission entry to other problems. Shertok was impressed with arguments in which I was strongly backed by French and Turkish and said he would lay it before Cabinet. He also urged that I take up with Ben Gurion with his (Shertok's) support. That was done. I am sure that Israeli Government has under consideration some action or statement as gesture to Arabs if way could be found. Department could give help by encouraging that on part of Israeli Government and by encouraging favorable response on part of Arabs if it

comes about. Will have further suggestion as to what Department can do when Commission decides formally on meeting with Arabs.

(4) Moves US has made to indicate to Israeli Government that it wants peace here have been effective. Shertok's attitude in his latest meeting with Commission and Ben Gurion's mild approach altogether different from first meeting when Shertok insulted intelligence of Commission with repetition of GA speeches. Maybe only technique but I am inclined to doubt that. I take it as part of natural process of cooling off, of feeling of greater stability on part of government as reaction to stiffened American attitude and also as Commission's reaction to Shertok's rantings in first meeting. Commission has shown no disposition to be terrorized by strong talk. [Ethridge.]

BURDETT

501.BB Palestine/2-2849: Telegram

*The Consul at Jerusalem (Burdett) to the Secretary of State*

SECRET

JERUSALEM, February 28, 1949—11 a. m.

172. Palun 57. For Acheson from Ethridge. Since refugee problem is key to peace negotiations, would like Department's views on my tentative ideas of approach to question.

(1) It must be considered for some time relief problem for which money must be forthcoming, even after present commitments have run out. Would be most useful if US would quickly make available its own appropriation and indicate in some other way additional concern for 700,000 homeless people living largely in tents under most distressing circumstances in this weather. My own feeling is that the United States has accumulated an enormous moral and even financial responsibility in the situation in our justifiable zeal for creation of a state. Nevertheless these people have been displaced either by force, or terrorism or have fled because of their own fear. Even if the American public has not been told about Deir Yassin massacre,<sup>1</sup> all Arabs know about it and all Arabs with whom Commission has talked have either implicitly or directly blamed US and UN for displacing 700,000 persons. Personally I feel that important element in our friendly relations with Arab states is to indicate active concern with refugees as humanitarian, political and social problem in which US must be vitally interested. Not least of our concern should be political repercussions of having so many people homeless in an already politically shaky part of the world.

<sup>1</sup> For information on this subject, see telegram 431, April 13, 1948, from Jerusalem, *Foreign Relations*, 1948, vol. v, Part 2, p. 817.

(2) From standpoint of work of Commission, first step in peace negotiations is to get from Israeli Government some gesture of agreement in principle [garble<sup>2</sup>] resolution re refugees and if possible even more specific commitment as to number Israel will take back and method of indemnification of others.

(3) Second step would be meeting with Arab states<sup>3</sup> to make them realize:

(a) That not all refugees will go back,

(b) That they must help find homes for those to be resettled outside Israel.

(4) Provide, through experts, plan for resettlement and proposal for financing resettlement which would involve indemnification from Israel to Arab Governments, rather than individuals, roughly on basis of number taken in by each Arab state with allowances, of course, for variations in value of property held by individual Arabs in Israel, and outside help either through loans or contributions, from UN member states or both. Commission more than two weeks ago asked UN for qualified expert who would be able to work out plan with technical help of engineers but has received no reply. Vitally needed as soon as possible particularly since refugee problem will require long time in solution.

(5) Obviously when time comes for agreement on refugee settlement, all Arab Governments and perhaps Israel will ask: How can we finance resettlement? It is question Commission must face. Has Department any views on it or is the American Government prepared to make any commitment either of sponsoring loans or of making direct loans? It would be most helpful if I could have some commitment to be used at proper time in negotiations. Abdullah, for instance, has said he is willing to take all refugees. In view of his state's bankruptcy that is fantastic financially even if it is feasible technically. But it may turn out that he will have to take most of them since all other Arab states have so far indicated unwillingness and inability to take any. Commission can press other states to absorb some refugees but Dept is aware through airgrams from Missions of reluctance of any state except Transjordan to add to its problems. I have impression beyond what has been reported in airgrams that part of reluctance is due to realization that Palestinian Arabs, having lived through 30

<sup>2</sup> Presumably the word "toward" was intended.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Ethridge, on February 28, advised the Department of State that "On February 27 Commission agreed to invite Arab States to send representatives to meeting at Beirut on March 21 with Commission. Invitations just going out but all states except Egypt indicated to us on our tour that they would accept." (telegram 174, identified also as Palun 60, from Jerusalem, 501.BB Palestine/2-2849)

years of political strife and having enjoyed somewhat higher standard of living than most Arabs, are more politically aware and more demanding as to living standards and would, therefore, constitute core of agitation. In view of great reluctance to absorb refugees, Arab states must be compensated with loans for projects designed to raise all living standards rather than create new problems. [Ethridge.]

BURDETT

501.BB Palestine/2-2849: Telegram

*The Consul at Jerusalem (Burdett) to the Secretary of State*

TOP SECRET

JERUSALEM, February 28, 1949—noon.

173. Palun 58. For Acheson from Ethridge. I am in agreement with principle of second paragraph of Deptel 111, February 25.<sup>1</sup>

Have considered that Commission has mandate only as to presentation of plan for internationalization of Jerusalem but believe that even on that Israel and Arab states should come as close to agreement as possible and Commission should take any agreement into consideration in making its own plan. Internationalization is noble ideal but Jerusalem must be made a going concern as city in which people live and need water and lights and garbage collection.

Only other rigid principle enunciated by GA is on refugees, but I do not regard it as nearly so specific as instruction on Jerusalem. Otherwise my position has been exactly that set out in first sentence of your second paragraph.

Have been at pains to talk to British. In Cairo had meeting with Sir Ronald Campbell, Chapman Andrews and Sir John Troutbeck; in Transjordan with Kirkbride and Glubb; in Baghdad with Sir Henry Mack and John Richmond. In all talks except at Cairo, British emphasized that their main desire was to liquidate bad and expensive situation. Campbell and Andrews, stressing fact they were not speaking for their governments, said, nevertheless, primary British concern had been for land access from Egypt through Transjordan up to north, presumably to Iraq [oil?] fields. Andrews contended that road could not be built across southern Negev without great expense and indicated British wanted to hold on to Gaza-Beersheba-Jericho-Amman road. I pointed out that Jews hold great part of road and world hardly in negotiations give it up. British conceivably might urge Arabs in negotiation to hold out either for road or for free use. However, we have not got to territorial questions.

<sup>1</sup> For paragraph 2 of No. 111, see the quoted portion in the first paragraph of footnote 1 to telegram 89, February 25, p. 772.

In general, it would be most useful if Department would concert its policy with British so that they would be constructive rather than obstructionist. However, I have given no encouragement anywhere, although strongly pressed by Arabs, that there would be any unilateral guarantee by US or bilateral guarantee by US and UK of peace terms. It is true that Arabs profess to have no confidence in UN but I believe their concerted insistence upon two-power guarantee is political move to place them in position to say to their people that peace has been imposed upon them by Big Powers. Prime Minister of Egypt said almost that to me. Ben Gurion in stressing need for security did not go so far but spoke of guarantees. I strongly countered that since UN had been the mother of Israel and perhaps its savior by giving Israel time to arm after first truce, he would have to rely upon moral, sanctionable and military force of UN. He dropped argument and as set out in telegram 170, twenty-eighth, reacted affirmatively to deposit of treaties with UN.

Further along in negotiations, we will need all the help we can get. It is, however, too early for any joint action by US-UK except for conferences that make clear each government's position to each other and to me. [Ethridge.]

BURDETT

867N.48/3-149

*Memorandum by the Director of the Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs (Satterthwaite) to the Secretary of State*

SECRET

[WASHINGTON,] March 1, 1949.

Subject: Necessity for early liquidation of Arab refugee problem.

*Discussion:*

It is the considered opinion of this office that measures for the solution of the Arab refugee problem must be well advanced prior to the termination of the United Nations relief program on August 31, 1949, if a political crisis in the Near East is to be averted. In view of the difficult economic position of the Arab states, and the impossibility of launching large-scale development projects in the near future as a means of assimilating large numbers of refugees, there are only two means of beginning to liquidate the problem during the coming months.

The first is the stimulation of "sample" development projects, limited in scope and in financing, which would provide work for some of the refugees and, in some cases, facilitate their gradual assimilation into the countries now harboring them. This approach is regarded as



an interim measure, pending the realization of larger scale development projects. NEA, in conjunction with other interested offices, is engaged in drawing up plans for such limited projects.

The second means of liquidating the refugee problem is, of course, that of repatriation. Although Israel has made it clear that it will not take back the majority of the refugees, every effort should be made to persuade Israel, in the interests of its long range relations with the Arab states, to accept the return of a substantial number. (It will be recalled that the Arab population of the Jewish state as envisaged under the partition plan of November 29, 1947 was 500,000.)

In view of the expected return of peaceful conditions in Palestine in the near future, it is felt that every effort should be made to convince Israel of the necessity of contributing to the solution of the refugee problem by initiating a gradual repatriation program now. Attempts by Israel to defer action this problem pending the achievement of a formal peace will result in a *fait accompli*, since the present accelerated Jewish immigration into Israel will have totally preempted the lands and housing on which Arab repatriation depends.

We believe that failure to commence the liquidation of the refugee problem prior to termination of the relief program will have the gravest consequences upon the political and economic structure of the Arab states. The Arab states presently represent a highly vulnerable area for Soviet exploitation, and the presence of 700,000 destitute, idle refugees provides the likeliest channel for such exploitation. In addition, their continued presence will further undermine the weakened economy of the Arab states, and may well provide the motivation for the overthrow of certain of the Arab Governments. Moreover, unless Israel demonstrates its willingness to assist by repatriation in settling the refugee question, both the possibility of a permanent settlement in Palestine and the establishment of any basis for cooperative relations between Israel and the Arabs will be adversely affected. It is felt that the relative absence of agitation and disorders up to the present arising from the refugee situation can be explained only because the majority of the refugees confidently expected to be returned to their homes.

In the opinion of this office, there is little likelihood that the Conciliation Commission will succeed in implementing its instructions with respect to refugees under the December 11 resolution unless it has the strongest support from this Government from the very outset of its negotiations. (Tab A)<sup>1</sup> Mr. Ethridge has expressed his concern over Israel's attitude towards the refugee problem, and has indicated

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<sup>1</sup> Tabbed material cited in this paragraph not found attached, but, for the telegram as actually sent, see telegram 144, March 9, at Tel Aviv, p. 804.

that he would welcome this Government's support in carrying out his task. Such support will, moreover, have a favorable effect upon our relations with the Arab states, which strongly desire our assistance in this matter. (Tab B.) It is therefore recommended that you sign the attached draft telegram (Tab C), which is designed as a preliminary and exploratory approach to this question.

501.BB Palestine/3-149

*Memorandum of Conversation, by Mr. Stuart W. Rockwell of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs*

CONFIDENTIAL

[WASHINGTON,] March 1, 1949.

Subject: Status of Jerusalem

Participants: Mr. Tom Bromley, First Secretary, British Embassy  
NEA—Mr. Satterthwaite  
NE—Mr. Rockwell

Mr. Bromley called at his request to leave the attached self-explanatory memorandum concerning the status of Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup>

After reading the memorandum we told Mr. Bromley that it would not be possible for the Department at the present time to give the Foreign Office a definite statement of this Government's final policy regarding the status of Jerusalem. We said that the primary responsibility for recommendations concerning the future status of the Holy City has been placed upon the Palestine Conciliation Commission by the United Nations, and that the Department was awaiting with interest the Commission's recommendations in this regard. We said, however, that the Department could now assure the Foreign Office that the United States Government supported the principle of the internationalization of the whole Jerusalem area, as set forth in the General Assembly Resolution of December 11, 1948.

We informed Mr. Bromley that the present trend of thinking on the working level in the Department was that in view of the financial

<sup>1</sup> Undated memorandum not printed. The Department of State summarized the memorandum in telegram 127, identified also as Unpal 44, March 3, 7 p. m., to Jerusalem, as follows: "FonOff has heard that USRep PCC, reflecting US policy, taking strong line re internationalization Jerusalem. FonOff interested know how far US will seek pursue this policy even against Israeli wishes. General policy HMG support of internationalization but they do not feel it is for them to restrict Abdullah from seeking whatever arrangement he thinks best. If USG intends support internationalization firmly, above Brit attitude may lead to divergence from US-French policy. HMG also worried that view practical difficulties internationalization whole city, Israeli proposal will be adopted that new city be part Israel and old city international. This totally unfair to Trans-jordan and HMG could not accept. HMG could only support internationalization whole city." (501.BB Palestine/3-349)

and administrative difficulties of establishing a fullfledged international regime in Jerusalem, it might be possible to set up an arrangement whereby Israelis and Arabs (the latter presumably Transjordanians) would separately administer sections of the City, the division to be agreed upon by them, under the general supervision of some representation of the United Nations. This representation might take the form of the Office of a United Nations Commissioner, which would see to such matters as protection of and free access to the Holy Places, and unimpeded access to the whole city. We also informed Mr. Bromley that current thinking in the Department did not incline to the idea of internationalization of the Old City only and the incorporation of Jewish Jerusalem in Israel, as mentioned in paragraph 3 of the attached memorandum.

We pointed out to Mr. Bromley that should Jerusalem be internationalized in a manner similar to the Department's line of thought set forth above, there would be no question of Transjordan's "losing the Old City" which would largely remain under Transjordan administration although Transjordan sovereignty would not apply.

In conclusion, we assured Mr. Bromley once more of the United States Government's support of the principle of internationalization of the whole Jerusalem area, but reiterated our inability to make at the present time a definite statement of our own policy as regards the exact fashion in which the city might be internationalized, in view of the fact that the Palestine Conciliation Commission had not as yet made its recommendations. We stated that the Department would be pleased to receive any views that the British Foreign Office might have as to how the internationalization of Jerusalem might be achieved.

In reply to our query, Mr. Bromley said that our verbal exposition would serve as a satisfactory reply to the British memorandum.

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*Editorial Note*

In a cablegram dated March 1, Mr. Bunche advised that the Egyptian garrison of 2,900 men at al-Faluja, with their military equipment and personal possessions, had been evacuated across the Egyptian border, pursuant to Article 3 of the Egyptian-Israeli armistice agreement. The text of his communication is printed in United Nations, *Official Records of the Security Council, Fourth Year, Supplement for March 1949*, page 7. Hereinafter, these official records will be identified as SC, *4th yr.*, with indication of date of supplement.

IO Files

*Message Released by the United Nations Security Council on  
March 2, 1949*

S-1272

CABLEGRAM DATED 2 MARCH 1949 FROM THE ACTING MEDIATOR TO THE  
SECRETARY-GENERAL CONCERNING ARMISTICE NEGOTIATIONS

FOR PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL: In pursuance of resolution of Security Council of 16 November 1948, armistice negotiations under the Chairmanship of the United Nations between representatives of Israel and Transjordan, and Israel and Lebanon are being held simultaneously at Rhodes and Ras en Nakoura (on the Lebanese Palestine border) respectively. In both of these negotiations the Delegations carry credentials from their respective governments authorizing them to negotiate and conclude an armistice agreement. Both negotiations began on 1 March.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Israeli Delegation, headed by Mr. Shiloah, arrived at Rhodes on March 1; the Transjordanian Delegation, headed by Col. Ahmed Sidgi el-Jundi had arrived the previous day (United Nations press releases PAL/449 and PAL/448, respectively, dated March 1 and February 28).

501.BB Palestine/3-249: Telegram

*The Consul at Jerusalem (Burdett) to the Secretary of State*

CONFIDENTIAL

JERUSALEM, March 2, 1949—2 p. m.

177. Palun 62. On March 1 Commission telegraphed Foreign Ministers seven Arab League states that, wishing pave way for general settlement Palestine question and reestablishment of peace, had decided to invite governments of Arab states to send representatives for purpose preliminary exchange views with Commission. Exchange views would concern refugee problem, solution of which was matter of urgency, and might eventually, if desire were expressed in course of conversation, be extended to other questions.<sup>1</sup> Commission con-

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Shiloah, in a conversation with Mr. McDonald on February 28 (reported in telegram 164, March 1, from Tel Aviv, not printed; 501.BB Palestine/3-149), had advised of his Government's warning to the Palestine Conciliation Commission about holding an all-Arab conference on refugees on the grounds that no solution for the problem would be produced; that no Arab State would dare to take a cooperative position at the conference; and that the conference would develop into a political gathering where the Arabs would harden their attitudes against an armistice and a peace settlement (telegram 167, March 1, from Tel Aviv, 867N.01/3-149). The Commission decided to go ahead with the conference, however, since "such step might facilitate progress toward peace and risk would be fully justified. In fact committee [Commission] feeling is that there is no other approach possible at the moment," (Telegram 1991, identified also as Palun 73, March 7, noon, from Jerusalem, 501.BB Palestine/3-749)

sidered owing ease of communications, Beirut would be particularly suited to serve as place of meeting and that March 21 would be suitable for opening. Commission requested Foreign Ministers to communicate whether agreeable and to inform names of representatives.

Commission representatives each agreed that its government would be requested inform respective missions at Arab capitals re invitation and to urge that Arab Governments accept invitation as means of cooperating with Commission and facilitating progress toward peace in Near East.

If Department approves, US Delegation suggests US Missions at Arab capitals be instructed accordingly.<sup>2</sup>

BURDETT

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<sup>2</sup>The Department, in a circular telegram of March 3, 5 a. m., to Cairo, Jidda, Baghdad, Beirut, Damascus, and Amman, instructed the diplomatic officers at those posts to take appropriate action along the lines of the second paragraph of telegram 177 (501.BB Palestine/3-349).

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501.BB Palestine/3-249 : Telegram

*The Consul at Jerusalem (Burdett) to the Secretary of State*

RESTRICTED

JERUSALEM, March 2, 1949—3 p. m.

178. Palun 63. Commission on March 1 agreed on text of first progress report to SYG of UN.<sup>1</sup> Text being pouched Department.

Main sections of primarily narrative account Commission activities thus far were:

1. Establishment official headquarters at Government House Jerusalem.
2. Concentration on conciliation under GA resolution December 11.
3. Commission's opinion Acting Mediator rather than Commission should conclude armistice negotiations under SC resolution November 16.
4. Quotation UNGA instructions re Jerusalem, Holy Places and refugees.
5. Establishment [garble<sup>2</sup>] committee re Jerusalem; meetings with Griffis re refugees and steps to obtain refugees expert; reference to Holy Places based on GA resolution December 11.
6. Brief account of official tour of Near East capitals for preliminary exchange of views.

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<sup>1</sup>The report, dated March 1 at Jerusalem, is printed in United Nations, *Official Records of the Fourth Session of the General Assembly, Ad Hoc Political Committee, Annex to the Summary Records of Meetings, Volume II, 1949* (hereinafter identified as GA, 4th sess., *Ad Hoc Political Committee, Annex*, with the appropriate volume number), p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Presumably, the word "special" was intended.

7. Commission opinion Arab states and Israel were "definitely favorable to peace." Further opinion, however, task would not be accomplished quickly or easily.

8. Commission action to invite Arab states to meet Commission Beirut March 21.

Yalcin and Yenisey of Turkish delegation departed Jerusalem for Ankara March 2; Boisanzar of French delegation plans depart for Paris March 4 or 5; both plan return Near East several days before March 21. Commission will, however, not suspend its activities but will continue work through committee[s] especially that on Jerusalem.

Sent Department 378, repeated Beirut 22, Damascus 8, Baghdad 8, Tel Aviv 15. Pouched Jidda 5, Cairo 11, Amman 10.

BURDETT

501.BB Palestine/3-249: Telegram

*The United States Representative at the United Nations (Austin) to the Secretary of State*

SECRET PRIORITY

NEW YORK, March 2, 1949—11:04 p. m.

258. Telegram from Bunche received at Lake Success evening March 2, reports that Vigier<sup>1</sup> informs him Israeli-Lebanese negotiations are running into difficulties. Israelis unwilling evacuate Lebanese territory while Syrians remain on Lebanese front. Also object to an international frontier armistice commission, stating that the frontier will require rectification for security reasons.<sup>2</sup>

Bunche has received no word from Syrians regarding acceptance his invitation to armistice negotiations.

Israeli-Egyptian armistice commission initial meeting went off smoothly in cordial atmosphere.

Israeli-Trans-Jordan negotiations going slowly while Trans-Jordan delegation waiting clearance by Amman of agenda on cease-fire discussions.<sup>3</sup>

AUSTIN

<sup>1</sup> Henri Vigier, Mr. Bunche's Deputy in connection with the armistice negotiations between Israel and Lebanon.

<sup>2</sup> The Lebanese Foreign Minister informed Minister Pinkerton that Lebanon "would not yield one centimeter territory and would not discuss in armistice negotiations revision of frontiers." (telegram 98, March 4, 6 p. m., from Beirut) The Department of State, on March 5, instructed Mr. McDonald to "ask ForMin whether report concerning request by Israeli repr during Israeli-Leb armistice negots for amendment Leb-Pal frontiers is correct and if so whether request reflects formal position Israeli Govt." (telegram 133 to Tel Aviv) (Both telegrams are filed under 867N.01/3-349)

<sup>3</sup> Amman reported, on March 2, that at the Transjordanian-Israeli negotiations on Rhodes, Mr. Bunche had proposed "that before discussing armistice, formal cease-fire agreement covering all Arab Legion fronts (not only Jerusalem) be signed. So far question Iraqi fronts not brought up." (telegram 78, 867N.01/3-249)

501.BB Palestine/3-349

*Memorandum by the Assistant Secretary of State for United Nations Affairs (Rusk) to the Under Secretary of State (Webb)*

CONFIDENTIAL

[WASHINGTON,] March 3, 1949.

Subject: Assignment of Mr. George McGhee<sup>1</sup> as U.S. Coordinator on U.S. Palestine Refugee Matters.

1. It is becoming increasingly clear that a final settlement of the Palestine question will turn upon our ability to obtain some solution to the complicated question of Palestine refugees. There are now some 700,000 such refugees in Arab held Palestine and in neighboring Arab states. Only an insignificant fraction of these can be absorbed in the communities where they are now located. It is roughly estimated that not more than a fourth might be returned to their former homes in Israel in connection with a final peace settlement. The present United Nations program is a straight *relief* program which will terminate in September and it is not expected that the United Nations will undertake any long-range responsibility for these refugees.

The bulk of these refugees must be resettled in Arab-Palestine and in the neighboring Arab states. To do this, specific projects for their settlement must be worked out and supported by means of Ex-Im Bank loans, International Bank loans, private capital, or other resources not now committed. Such projects would include irrigation and drainage projects which will make new lands available for settlement. Construction work on such projects would itself absorb a considerable number of refugee laborers.

The national interest of the United States is so heavily involved in the solution of this problem that we should detail immediately an American of high rank, diplomatic ability and sound judgment as a Special Assistant to the Secretary of State with personal rank of Minister, to mobilize the public and private resources of the United States which might be brought to bear on this problem.

It is strongly recommended that Mr. George McGhee be named to this post. Mr. McGhee's experience and performance with regard to Greek assistance, his knowledge of the Department and of other U.S. agencies concerned, and his broad political and business experience would make him admirably suited for this assignment. I hope that you will agree and will put this assignment to Mr. McGhee in the strongest terms.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Coordinator for Aid to Greece and Turkey.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. McGhee was named to the new post.

*Editorial Note*

The Security Council, on March 3, resumed consideration of the application of Israel for membership in the United Nations; see the second editorial note, page 766. During the ensuing discussion, Senator Austin announced that "The United States fully supports and will vote affirmatively on the application of the State of Israel for membership in the United Nations." The text of his statement is printed in United Nations, *Official Records of the Security Council, Fourth Year* (hereinafter identified as SC, *4th yr.*), No. 16, page 8.

On March 4, Senator Austin submitted the following draft resolution to the Council:

*"The Security Council,*

*"Having received and considered the application of Israel for membership in the United Nations,*

*"Decides in its judgment that Israel is a peace-loving State and is able and willing to carry out the obligations contained in the Charter, and*

*"Recommends to the General Assembly that it admit Israel to membership in the United Nations." (ibid., No. 17, page 8)*

The resolution came to a vote the same day and was adopted by nine votes to one (Egypt). The United Kingdom abstained (*ibid.*, page 14).

890E.00/3-449

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*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State*<sup>1</sup>

SECRET

[WASHINGTON,] March 4, 1949.

Subject: Proposals for strengthening Lebanese-American Relations

Participants: The Secretary—Mr. Acheson

Dr. Charles Malik, Minister of Lebanon

NE—Mr. Clark

The Minister said that on behalf of his Government and on his own behalf he wished to congratulate me on my appointment and to wish me much success. I thanked him for his kind remarks and Dr. Malik proceeded to a discussion of the points he wished to present for our consideration.

Dr. Malik stated that during the past two years he had been in frequent contact with the State Department on United Nations problems of world-wide interest. While these problems had also been of

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<sup>1</sup> Drafted by Harlan B. Clark of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs.



importance to Lebanon he now wished to discuss Lebanese-American relations in a more specific sense, since it was his conviction that it was in the long-range interest of both our countries for such relations to be strengthened. He said that a draft treaty of Commerce and Friendship had been drawn up several years ago but that it had never been signed. What he wished to propose would go far beyond the terms of that treaty.

Dr. Malik said that Lebanon remembered with gratitude the active interest that the United States, under the leadership of President Roosevelt, had manifested in the achievement of Lebanon's independence, especially during the Free French crisis of 1943.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, it looked back upon nearly a century of friendly assistance by American philanthropic and religious organizations which have contributed much to the educational and cultural advancement of Lebanon and the entire Near East. He declared that Lebanon was unique throughout the whole of Asia and perhaps Africa as well as an oriental country which identified itself with Western Christian civilization. By virtue of this unique position, however, it was exposed to certain threats by more powerful forces stemming from the Islamic Arab hinterland to the east and the State of Israel to the south. He felt that the threat from these sources was real and dangerous and that it was not to the long-range interest of the United States to see Lebanon swallowed up by one or the other of them, whether it was from an Arab state such as Syria or Transjordan, as was sometimes heard discussed in these times, or from the Jewish State to the south. Lebanon required protection by the Western Christian states with which it had identified itself in culture and religion.

I inquired as to whether the Lebanese considered that the State of Israel constituted a genuine threat and if so in what manner and degree. Was it the pressure of continued Jewish immigration into Palestine that was feared, or was it something more? He replied that the Lebanese do in fact greatly fear Israel and that this fear was shared by all other Arab countries in the Near East. Continued Jewish immigration would, of course, increase the potential of Israel, but Israel already constituted a vast new factor in Middle Eastern affairs. For one thing, the Jews had powerful friends everywhere in the world, including the major countries. Zionism was a dynamic force and the people of Israel were energetic and possessed industrial and other potentials to a far greater degree than the Arabs now have.

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<sup>2</sup> For documentation on this subject, see *Foreign Relations, 1943*, vol. iv, pp. 953 ff.

He went on to say that, since I had asked this question, he would like to state his firm conviction that until the fears of the Arab world he had just described were relieved by some positive guarantee on the part of the great powers and particularly the United States, the peace and well-being of the Near East would continue to be in doubt. He suggested that it would be most helpful if the United States Government should issue, preferably in a statement by the President, a declaration that the *status quo* in the Near East must be maintained and that no further expansion on the part of Israel would be permitted. In this regard, he would like to express further his belief that the most important prerequisite to the establishment of a firm and lasting peace in the Near East would be for the United States, Great Britain and France jointly to agree on a common policy with respect to the political settlement of outstanding problems and on plans for the economic and cultural development of the entire area. I thanked him for this suggestion regarding consultation with Great Britain and France and said that it would receive our full consideration.

Returning to his proposals for closer relations between Lebanon and the United States, Dr. Malik said that Lebanon, by virtue of its unique position of Western orientation in the Arab world, would continue to need strong support from some Western power and hoped that such support would be forthcoming from the United States. Should it be disappointed in this hope, it was Dr. Malik's personal opinion that Lebanon should in that event turn to some other source of active assistance such as, for example, France or the United Kingdom. I replied that I believed that Dr. Malik had correctly stated the interest of the United States in Lebanon and that we would continue to explore ways for strengthening our economic and other relations with both Lebanon and other countries of the Near East. I pointed out that the concept of our associating ourselves with other powers for defense purposes was a radical departure from our traditional policies and one with which I was sure the Minister would appreciate we must proceed slowly. I said that, for example, we had not yet completed our discussions with respect to the proposed North Atlantic Pact and that this question would continue to occupy our attention for some time. Nevertheless, we would be glad to explore with Dr. Malik the source of the Lebanese fears he had outlined, and the measures by which he might propose to relieve these fears. With reference to his statement that such proposals would go far beyond the provisions of our proposed treaty of Commerce and Navigation I inquired whether he envisaged taking them up in advance of the treaty or to discuss them along with preparations for concluding this treaty. Dr. Malik

replied that he envisaged following both lines of approach and in fact all possible lines. I said that I thought he might wish to discuss the specific proposals he had in mind with Mr. Satterthwaite and at an appropriate stage I would be glad to renew our personal discussion of the proposals.

Dr. Malik said there was one other matter he would also like to discuss and that was the financial assistance of which the Lebanese had great need. A request had been made some time ago by Lebanon for an International Bank loan and he hoped Lebanon could count on the support of the United States for this request. I replied that, as Dr. Malik was aware, it has been our policy to put foremost the question of reestablishing peace in the Near East. As soon as that had been done we would be in a position to consider a program of technical assistance to the entire area, as envisaged in Point IV of the President's inaugural address. In parting, Dr. Malik stated that, in accordance with my suggestion, he would get in touch with Mr. Satterthwaite and discuss the specific proposals he had in mind for strengthening Lebanese-American relations.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The conversation between Messrs. Satterthwaite and Malik took place on March 8. The latter raised the question of Lebanese security, remarking that "the Arab League had proven ineffective as a means of protecting the Arab world against the dynamic force of Zionism and at least some of the Arab states and especially Lebanon believed that only one or more of the Great Powers could afford it the degree of protection it required." The Arab League, he said, "had never been effective at all in economic and cultural matters and had shown itself a failure in military affairs." He continued that "His Arab friends kept appealing for some form of public assurance by the United States which had shown itself to be so friendly to Israel that expansion of Israel at the expense of neighboring states would not be permitted."

Mr. Satterthwaite replied that "it would not be in accordance with the traditional policy of this Government to issue a unilateral statement of the sort envisaged by Dr. Malik. In any event, the fact was that a peace settlement in Palestine had not yet been reached and that the delineation of Israel's frontiers and related questions were now terms of reference of the Conciliation Commission in which the United States was represented. It would undoubtedly prejudice the working of that Commission for the United States to intervene unilaterally at the present time in the manner suggested. More basic, however, was the United States' conviction that the Charter of the United Nations provided guarantees to meet a contingency such as feared by Lebanon, and the United States believed that its good faith in upholding the Charter had already amply been demonstrated in the Azerbaijan dispute and elsewhere. Certainly it would be premature to make an announcement concerning the frontiers of Israel prior to their determination by the peace settlement and any statement which this Government might issue would, of course, have to be carefully phrased so as not to impugn the integrity of any single state."

The Minister then suggested that "if some public announcement could not be made at this time, the United States would be prepared to reassure the various Arab Governments in confidence that the *status quo* in the Near East would be maintained." Mr. Clark's memorandum recording the conversation gives no indication of a reply by Mr. Satterthwaite (890.00/3-849).

501.BB Palestine/3-1749

*Mr. John W. Halderman to the Acting Assistant Chief of the Division of Dependent Area Affairs (Cargo)*

CONFIDENTIAL

JERUSALEM, March 5, 1949.

DEAR BILL: The enclosed paper,<sup>1</sup> prepared by me in consultation with the delegation and Bill Burdett, and also the French member of the Jerusalem Committee and the French Consul General, was submitted to the Jerusalem Committee on the third. I emphasized that it was not an American proposal, but simply a working paper to serve as a basis of discussion.

The Committee has now approved the first part. The purpose of this section (under "I") was to enable the Committee to arrive at a general basic position prior to undertaking talks with the states concerned. Now that this preliminary stage has been reached, we are taking steps to get in touch with Israeli and Transjordanese representatives, and hope to be able to discuss the matter with the other Arab states in Beirut later on this month.

I envision these talks as the real beginning of the work on the Jerusalem problem. Up to now we have had nothing but general statements in which Governments have presented their positions much as they do in General Assembly debates. We hope that when we get together in more of a negotiating atmosphere, and get down to actual cases, opportunities may be presented to work out something. We also plan to urge Israel and TJ to proceed at once to a division of the city into Jewish and Arab areas, which may become administrative areas in the permanent regime of the city. We will suggest that our consuls are available as a committee of experts to assist in this. I understood from General Riley when he was here that they would not undertake this matter in the Rhodes talks, but even if they do touch upon it, the fact that we are in touch with the respective Governments here should avoid any confusion.

When I said that the Committee had approved the first part of the paper, I should have added that they did so with the amendments indicated on the copy enclosed. The deletion concerning the suggested court is rather interesting, as it resulted from a fundamental different approach on my part from that of the French and Turks. It seemed to me most natural that when there are conflicts of jurisdiction, the differences should be settled judicially. However, they are not accustomed to this idea, and would leave the decision in the hands of the U.N. authority—the executive branch, so to speak. I don't think they

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<sup>1</sup> Below.

feel very strongly about it. The deletion was made because it did not seem essential to decide upon it right now.

Another point which may be difficult is the French desire to have an international police subject to the United Nations authority. So far they haven't been precise about it, except that they feel there should definitely be such police in those Holy Places which shelter more than one religion or sect. In particular they mention the Holy Sepulchre, and they have given me startling stories of the jealousies and actual conflicts that occur there.

I [have] already reported by telegram the point made to me by the French in our private consultation that the United Nations authority should consist of a committee consisting of representatives of the U.S., France, Turkey, an Arab and a Jew.<sup>2</sup> This is the reason why, in the working paper, I merely referred to a "United Nations Authority", without describing it.

The second part of this paper is also intended to serve as a basis of discussion among ourselves and so that we will have various points in mind when we undertake our consultations. We haven't yet discussed this part of the paper, except that the French member raised an objection to having the U.N. Authority report to the Trusteeship Council. In his view, the Trusteeship Council is associated with areas incapable of self-government, and not yet ready for independence. We did not debate the point, as it was really out of order, as he admitted.

Our general plan is gradually to develop a plan for Jerusalem as a result of our own work, and the consultations we will have. We hope that as a result of these consultations, the plan, when complete, will be acceptable to both sides, as well, of course, as to the U.N. This is being optimistic. We have little reason to expect, up to now, that the parties will give at all. But assuming we are successful to this extent, it would be possible to appoint the U.N. representative provided for in the resolution, and then appoint some committees of eminent experts in various fields to collaborate with him in working out detailed plans in such fields as public utilities, finance, etc. This is mostly to acquaint

<sup>2</sup> The telegram referred to is No. 185 (identified also as Palun 66), March 2, 6 p. m., from Jerusalem. At one point in the telegram it is stated that the "French objected to single UN representative on grounds inadequate to responsibilities, insufficient prestige, inadequate representation Christian interest . . . no certainty who representative would be, might well be Latin American, no strong objection to this, but would not have tradition of interest Jerusalem comparable, for example, to France, US. French-Turkish formula would exclude Soviet, and inclusion US should satisfy divergent Christian elements with interest in Jerusalem. . . . In defending single UN representative we did not state doubt US willingness continue official responsibility as Commission member for Jerusalem indefinitely. We considered five member commission unwieldy, and mistake to appoint representative on basis nationality. Should be person of proved ability to get along with both sides." (501.BB Palestine/3-249)

you a general line of thought, mostly my own at this point, though we have had some very general discussion along these lines in the Committee.

[Here follow personal observations and a request for comments on the letter.]

Sincerely yours,

JOHN W. HALDERMAN

[Enclosure]

## THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF JERUSALEM

### I. BASIC REQUIREMENTS OF THE INTERNATIONAL REGIME

A. The City of Jerusalem shall be governed by the authorities and organs hereafter denominated.

B. A United Nations Authority with power to regulate:

1. Protection for and free access to the Holy Places.
2. Protection of human rights and the rights of minority groups.
3. Common public services.
4. External relations.

C. An International Judiciary.

D. Local democratic self-government in Jewish and Arab areas respectively as to all matters not placed within the jurisdiction of the international authority.

E. Provision for financing the city.

F. Provision for the maintenance of peace and order in the city.

### II. POINTS TO BE INCLUDED IN STATUTE

A. Jerusalem is constituted as an International City. Its boundaries shall be . . . (as described in the resolution).

B. A United Nations authority shall have power to make ordinances regulating:

1. Protection for and free access to the Holy Places.
2. Protection of human rights and the rights of minority groups, using as a guide, to the extent possible, the United Nations Declaration approved by the General Assembly in 1948.
3. The demilitarization of the city and the preservation of public order. Local law and order to be maintained by the respective Jewish and Arab administration.
4. Financial and budgetary matters. The local Arab and Jewish administrations shall make contributions to the international authority in amounts to be determined from time to time by the Authority.
5. Common public services.
6. Free access to and from Jerusalem and within the city for persons and goods.

7. Administration of special districts or supervision of neutralized areas as may be provided in the present statute.
8. External relations.

D. [*sic*] Local democratic self-government in Jewish and Arab areas respectively as to all matters not placed within the jurisdiction of the United Nations Administration.

E. An International Tribunal to be composed of three Judges to be selected by the President of the International Court of Justice, to decide questions relating to the competence of the organs of government herein provided, including the local Arab and Jewish administrations, and jurisdictional conflicts between courts, including religious courts.

F. The United Nations authority shall report to the Trusteeship Council, and shall also report to the Security Council on matters relating to the security and integrity of the international city.

G. The United Nations authority may, with the consent of the local Jewish and Arab administrations, provide for Jerusalem citizenship. In the absence of such provision, the right to participate in the government of the city shall not depend upon citizenship in any state.

H. Mount Scopus shall be under Jewish administration, but subject to demilitarization and supervision of the United Nations Authority.

I. Frontier inspections and other incidents of international boundaries shall be carried out on the perimeter and not on the demarcation line within the city.

J. The United Nations Authority shall cooperate with the local administrations with a view to the preservation and development of the physical aspects of Jerusalem, and the promotion of the economic, social and cultural welfare of its inhabitants.

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501.BB Palestine/3-549 : Airgram

*The Minister in Syria (Keeley) to the Secretary of State*

CONFIDENTIAL

DAMASCUS, March 5, 1949.

A-67. Following communication to Prime Minister (mytel 109 March 5<sup>1</sup>) of Department's support of PCC invitation to Beirut meeting of Arab states (second paragraph Ethridge's Palun 62 March 2<sup>2</sup> and Depcirtel March 3, 5 a. m.<sup>3</sup>) which Prime Minister said Syria would accept, I took occasion to express my hope that Syrian representatives would respond to Ethridge's suggestion when

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<sup>1</sup> Not printed.

<sup>2</sup> See telegram 177 from Jerusalem, p. 785.

<sup>3</sup> Not printed, but see footnote 2 to telegram 177, p. 786.

here that they eschew generalities and give PCC the benefit of their thinking in specific terms. The Prime Minister assured me that he would be explicit. He said that heretofore two fears had stood in way of complete frankness: (1) Adverse Syrian public opinion which no politician had had courage to face and (2) Probable hostile (UN-backed Israeli coalition against Arabs. Believing firmly that no country could any longer afford isolationism, he has been endeavoring to educate Syrian public opinion in that sense and is determined resolutely to pursue a positive policy of collaboration with West. He recognizes that, as part of the price of effective western friendship, concessions must be made and settlement reached on Palestine issue. Hoping that PCC will be means of assuring Arabs fair settlement, Syria is prepared to cooperate with it in good faith. I told him that I personally was convinced of Ethridge's integrity, independence and courageous attachment to ideals of justice and felt certain that within realm of realities he would insist upon fair deal to all concerned. I warned him, however, not to expect too much, that Arab and Israeli ideas of justice were far apart as their ideas of justice were undoubtedly wide of abstract justice and that what might be within realm of attainable might well be far from Arab hopes. Yet, in my opinion, best hope of peaceful settlement lay in frank statement to PCC of Arab views and sincere collaboration with PCC in trying to reach satisfactory compromise. I knew, I said, from past statements that Syrians would prefer to throw the Israeli into the sea but continued insistence upon such extremes was unrealistic. "They are there; let them stay," replied Khalid Bey<sup>4</sup> but added that justice to refugees and frontiers is all important and should be realistically faced. In conclusion, the Prime Minister said they would frankly express to PCC their views and hope for justice within realizable limits.

In two-hour exchange of views with President Quwwatli March 3, His Excellency showed more moderation than heretofore and, accepting my appraisal of Ethridge, said Syrians would cooperate with PCC for solution within realm of realities. He no longer contended, as always heretofore, that Syrians would never accept Jewish state in Palestine, but he said it was unrealistic to suppose that any partition boundaries could contain millions of Jews that unlimited immigration would bring to Palestine. Hence guarantees of territorial integrity of Arab neighbors was all important but, in light of recent history, could Arabs be blamed for skepticism as regards any guarantees in sight? Who, for instance, said Shukri Bey, will make the Jews withdraw from Western Galilee, seized in violation of truce without even

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<sup>4</sup> Prime Minister Azm.



a murmur of protest from the nations that had threatened sanctions? I replied that I believed the Israeli likewise seek peace and to get it would have to make concessions. I also recalled in this connection US position in Item 4 of Deptel 57, February 25. The President thereupon expressed his appreciation of the Department's policy statement with which he said the Prime Minister had acquainted him. I said that most of it was not new but that perhaps some of these indications of our basic policy of friendship toward the Arab countries had been overlooked by the Syrians in their chagrin over what they felt to be our partisanship for the Zionists. It was, however, a timely restatement of those things which showed our friendly feelings for the Arab peoples and our desire to serve the cause of peace and stability in the Middle East. I added that given evidence of Syrian good will, of which Palestine settlement is a necessary first step, it was my personal belief that US would increasingly give Syria evidence of its friendship, mentioning possibilities in some of President Truman's statements, including Point Four of his Inaugural Address and, for first time, message given me by the President,<sup>5</sup> and which I had not until now found what I considered a propitious moment to deliver, concerning his genuine friendship for the Arabs and what their peaceful cooperation might envisage. Shukri Bey said he believed in President Truman's sincerity, and he hoped that our two countries could henceforth collaborate fruitfully to their mutual advantage. Again expressing my personal views, I said much would depend upon Palestine settlement and warned him that while I felt Ethridge would stand firm for justice within bounds of attainable, and receive US backing to that end, Syria must not expect that US would abandon its friendly support of Israel; it might only expect an equivalent friendly attitude toward the Arabs, or rather equal friendship to both friends.

KEELEY

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<sup>5</sup> The editors are unable to identify this paper.

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501.BB Palestine/3-749 : Telegram

*The Consul at Jerusalem (Burdett) to the Secretary of State*

SECRET

JERUSALEM, March 7, 1949—10 a. m.

192. Palun 71. [From Ethridge?] In private conversation Musa Bey Husseini said to me that representatives of Israeli Government who have been carrying on conversations with Transjordanians have suggested that Arabs and Jews get together and make a deal that will defeat internationalization of Jerusalem. Jews, he said, have told Transjordanians that they can give the Arabs a better deal than internationalization. Jews have said repeatedly that US is not interested in internationalization and only France is. In press conference in-

spired question was directed to proposition of what is Commission's attitude if private arrangement is made. I replied as chairman of Commission that if the deal is in accord with letter and spirit of GA resolution Commission would welcome it but no deal would relieve US of responsibility of reporting a plan. [Ethridge?]

BURDETT

501.BB Palestine/3-549: Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Legation in Syria*

SECRET US URGENT

WASHINGTON, March 7, 1949—6 p. m.

75. PriMin in conversation reported your 109 Mch 5<sup>1</sup> seems completely to have overlooked fact that SC on Nov. 16 decided that "In

<sup>1</sup>Not printed; it reported advice from the Syrian Prime Minister that "he had received another invitation from Bunche to open armistice talks with Israeli [officials] at Rhodes. . . . Might accept but did not like Rhodes as locale because of its connotations. Moreover as armistice is only formalization of cessation hostilities and as both parties already pledged to UN to observe truce during which hostilities forbidden under threat sanctions he sees no need for armistice discussions."

Minister Keeley expressed his agreement with this view, stating that "as Syrian and Israeli forces both occupying part of Galilee and presumably neither prepared short of reciprocal concessions in final peace settlement to withdraw, armistice talks between them unlikely to serve any useful purpose and might well have unfortunate repercussions. It is Legation opinion that if Syria now enters armistice negotiations with Israeli, Azm Government may be compromised if not forced out by hostile public opinion thus endangering success peace negotiations as well as ratification important measures such as French monetary accord and tapline. It would seem more in interest all concerned tacitly to accept *status quo* between Syrian and Israeli forces as virtual armistice or at least as no impediment to peace talks through PCC, with which Prime Minister is willing proceed, thus giving well disposed Azm Government more time to prepare public opinion and reinforce its position by hoped-for Parliamentary approval controversial measures important to country's economy and government's stability. Any government that may succeed present one likely to be less amenable to peaceful Palestine settlement, less disposed to ratify pending agreements and less wedded to orientation westward." (501.BB Palestine/3-549)

President Kuwatly, on March 6, expressed to Minister Keeley his opposition to armistice talks; and on March 8, Prime Minister Azm showed the Minister a draft of a "conciliatory if negative reply to Bunche" (telegram 113, March 8, noon, from Damascus). The Department, in reply on March 11, instructed the Minister to "explain to President and PriMin Dept's point of view as stated Deptel 75." It concluded by stating "we feel that Syrian Govt would be wise to undertake armistice talks and desire you make this point explicitly clear to Syrian Govt." (Telegram 85 to Damascus) Nos. 113 and 85 are both filed under 501.BB Palestine/3-849.

The formal Syrian reply to Mr. Bunche, an "evasively-worded reply amounting to negative" was handed to René F. Seroise, Mr. Bunche's political representative in Syria and Lebanon. After further discussion with Mr. Seroise, the Syrians withdrew their written reply and "instead took position Syria would only reply after conclusion current Israeli-Transjordan and Israeli-Lebanese talks." (telegram 121, March 10, 6 p. m., from Damascus, 501.BB Palestine/3-1049)

Minister Keeley delivered the sense of Department's telegrams 75 and 85 to Prime Minister Azm. The latter "patiently explained difficulties of Syrian position emphasizing that difference with Bunche seemed only one of procedure as Syria agreeable to armistice but saw too many dangers in direct negotiations with Jews." (telegram 142, March 16, from Damascus, 501.BB Palestine/3-1649)

order to eliminate the threat to the peace in Palestine and to facilitate the transition from the present truce to permanent peace in Palestine, an armistice shall be established in all sectors of Palestine.

Calls upon the parties directly involved in the conflict in Palestine as a further provisional measure under art. 40 of the charter, to seek agreement forthwith, by negotiations conducted either directly or through the Acting Mediator on Palestine, with a view to the immediate establishment of the armistice."

In our view therefore Syrian Govt is under unescapable responsibility to undertake armistice negots. Furthermore it might be useful to Azm Govt to plead *force majeure* as excuse to public opinion for entering into the inevitable agreement with Israel, pointing to SC res. Nov. 16 and making much of fact that Syria defers to UN judgment.

Rptd to Jerusalem 135 for Ethridge as Unpal 50.

ACHESON

501.BB Palestine/3-849

*The Acting Secretary of State to the Secretary of Defense (Forrestal)*

SECRET

WASHINGTON, March 8, 1949.

MY DEAR MR. SECRETARY: You will recall that last summer the Secretary of State requested, in his letters of June 7 and 17, and July 9 and 28,<sup>1</sup> that the National Military Establishment make available military observers to assist Count Bernadotte, the United Nations Mediator for Palestine, in supervising the observance of the Security Council's resolution of May 29, 1948.<sup>2</sup> Since that time the National Military Establishment on a rotation basis has supplied a very considerable number of officers and enlisted men for the staff of the Palestine Mediator. Similarly, the Governments of France and Belgium have furnished personnel from the armed forces for this task.

Under the provisions of the General Assembly's resolution of December 11, 1948 a Palestine Conciliation Commission was established to assume, so far as it considers necessary in existing circumstances, the functions given to the United Nations Mediator. On the request of the Security Council this Commission is authorized to undertake any of the functions now assigned to the Mediator on Palestine or to the United Nations Truce Commission by resolutions of the Security Council. To date, however, the Security Council has not relieved the

<sup>1</sup> None printed, but for summary of letter of July 9, see *Foreign Relations*, 1948, vol. v, Part 2, footnote 3, p. 1196.

<sup>2</sup> For documentation on this subject, see *ibid.*, pp. 533 ff.

Acting Palestine Mediator of his duties, although it is anticipated that in the relatively near future, when the Acting Mediator has succeeded in arranging armistice agreements between Israel and Transjordan, Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq, the Security Council will terminate the Office of the Mediator and confer his functions on the Conciliation Commission. The Conciliation Commission is at the moment, therefore, in a transition stage between the assumption in full of the Mediator's functions and its present task, under the Assembly's resolution of December 11, of taking steps to assist the Governments and Authorities concerned to achieve a final settlement of all questions outstanding between them.

The American Member of the Palestine Conciliation Commission, which is composed of Representatives of France, Turkey, and the United States, has already called upon the Acting Palestine Mediator for assistance with respect to air transportation and possibly also with regard to the use of certain of the military observer staff. It is anticipated that Mr. Ethridge will have increasing need for services of the military observers, although probably in much less degree than was the case with the Palestine Mediator because, as armistices are concluded, they will provide their own machinery for enforcement although there will still be a considerable measure of United Nations observation and control.

In light of this situation, the Department of State requests that the National Military Establishment furnish, in so far as compatible with the needs of the Armed Services, such personnel and assistance to the Palestine Conciliation Commission as the American Member thereof may request through channels either of the Department of State or by direct application to Commanding Officers in the Near East.

In view of the very great responsibility held by this Government as a Member of the Palestine Conciliation Commission, and in light of the President's public statement of February 24, 1948, emphasizing his hope for the success of the Commission's efforts in establishing peace in Palestine, I desire to stress the belief that the national interests of the United States are involved in this question and will be well-served by the continuing and valued cooperation of the National Military Establishment in supplying personnel and other aid to the United Nations effort for the reestablishment of peace in Palestine.<sup>3</sup>

Sincerely yours,

JAMES E. WEBB

<sup>3</sup> In reply, on March 15, Secretary Forrestal stated that he had instructed the Secretary of the Navy to comply with the Department's request (501.BB Palestine/3-1549). The reply is printed in airgram A-31, March 24, p. 864.