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UNITED NATIONS PALESTINE COMMISSION  
Communication Received from United Kingdom  
Delegation Directive for General Officer  
Commanding, Palestine

The following communication, enclosing a copy of the Directive to be issued to the General Officer Commanding, Palestine, has been received from Mr. Fletcher-Cooke of the United Kingdom Delegation.

UNITED KINGDOM DELEGATION TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
Empire State Building, New York 1, N.Y.

21st April, 1948.

CONFIDENTIAL  
My dear Bunche,

May I refer you to paragraph 3 of [my letter of the 17th April](#), in which reference was made to the text of the Directive to be issued to the General Officer Commanding, Palestine.

2. I now enclose for the information of the Commission a copy of this Directive, the text of which will be placed in the Libraries of the Houses of Parliament in London at 12 noon, British Summer Time, on Wednesday, 21st April.

Yours sincerely,  
John Fletcher-Cooke (signed)

Dr. Ralph J. Bunche,  
Principal Secretary to the United Nations  
Commission on Palestine,  
United Nations, Lake Success.

DIRECTIVE BY HIS MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT FOR  
GENERAL OFFICER COMMANDING BRITISH TROOPS  
IN PALESTINE

Period Covered by Directive

This Directive will come into force on the relinquishment of His Majesty's Government of the British Mandate for Palestine, and will operate until the evacuation of British forces from Palestine is completed.

Object

2. In accordance with directives issued by the Commander-in-Chief, Middle East Land Forces, you will be responsible:-

- (a) for the orderly evacuation of our forces,
- (b) for the evacuation. Stores will be evacuated up to the latest possible moment and to the greatest extent that circumstances permit. You will ensure that no weapons or ammunition are abandoned in Palestine in serviceable or repairable condition.

Powers

3. During the period covered by this Directive the basis of the powers which you may exercise will be that you are the Commander of a military force in occupation of foreign territory.

You have overriding military jurisdiction in certain areas, specified by yourself, from time to time, which will override all other law and authority in these areas. In these areas you have the power to exercise complete control in all matters including law and order, requisitioning, control of transportation, and so on, but should exercise it only insofar as it is essential for the protection of our forces and for the orderly progress of the evacuation.

So long as the conditions allow you will ensure the orderly evacuation of Royal Navy and Royal Air Force personnel and stores by means of close co-operation with Commodore, Palestine, and the Air Officer Commanding, Levant. Should it be necessary to use Royal Navy and Royal Air Force personnel to assist in maintaining law and order, you will authorise these officers to act on your behalf. If you consider a state of emergency has arisen, you have the power, after informing the other two Service Commanders, to assume command of all Service personnel in Palestine.

4. You may extend or decrease at your discretion the areas in which you wish to exercise your overriding military jurisdiction.

5. You will exercise your overriding jurisdiction, and specify the areas in which you wish to exercise it, by the issue of proclamations.

#### Proclamations

6. You should immediately on the relinquishment of the Mandate issue proclamations stating your overriding military jurisdiction and the areas in which it is to run, including territorial waters where relevant; warning the civil population to abstain from actions calculated to interfere with the progress of the evacuation, and stating that such actions will be punishable by the military authorities; specifying the offences which will be triable by the military authorities; and setting up courts in which those offences will be tried.

#### Responsibilities other than the conduct of the Evacuation

7. You have no responsibility for the preservation of law and order in any part of Palestine except as required by you for the protection of our forces and for the purpose of evacuation. You should, however, take whatever steps may be possible and in keeping with your main responsibilities under this Directive, to protect the lives of British subjects in the areas in which your troops are located.

8. It is no part of your duty to undertake any administration for any part of Palestine except insofar as this is essential in order satisfactorily to achieve your object. You will, however, conduct the evacuation with due regard to the welfare of the civilian population and the economy of the country.

9. All expenditure on civil administration of the areas under your control should be met by whatever civil authorities are functioning in the areas.

10. You will allow such civil authority as may be effective in any areas, and which apart from your military occupation would be the civil authority of that area to operate to the greatest extent possible, and you should interfere only when necessary to achieve your object.

#### Relations with other authorities

11. Assuming that the United Nations' Commission is established in Palestine at the time of the relinquishment of the Mandate you should deal with the Commission as the authority administering Palestine. If a United Nations' Commission is not established, further instructions will be sent to you in regard to the Jewish and Arab authorities with whom you should deal.

12. You will be assisted in such dealings by a political adviser to be seconded by the Foreign Office.

13. In each of the contingencies mentioned in paragraph 11 above you are also authorized to deal direct with local authorities and municipal bodies insofar as may be expedient.

#### Immigration

14. You have no responsibility for the control of immigration into Palestine as a whole. You have, however, authority to control the movement of immigrants into or through the areas in which you are exercising military authority at any time, insofar as you consider it expedient, for the protection of our forces and for the orderly progress of the evacuation.

(signed) E. SHINWELL  
Secretary of State for War

The War Office,  
1st April, 1948.

[Document in PDF format](#)