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UNITED NATIONS PALESTINE COMMISSION

Communication Received from Jewish Agency  
for Palestine Concerning the Arab Legion in Palestine

The following communication, concerning the position of the Arab Legion in Palestine, has been received from Mr. Lourie of the Jewish Agency for Palestine.

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April 14, 1948

Dr. Ralph J. Bunche,  
Principal Secretary  
United Nations Palestine Commission  
Lake Success, New York  
Dear Dr. Bunche:

I want to thank you for friendly transmitting to us a copy of the [letter](#) dated March 24th, 1948, addressed by the United Kingdom Delegation to the United Nations Palestine Commission concerning the position of the Arab Legion in Palestine.

On behalf of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, I am directed to refer to the concluding paragraph of that letter in which it is stated that allegations that personnel of the Arab Legion have fired unprovoked on Jewish convoys have been investigated, and that in no instance has it been established that the Arab Legion fired first. It will be observed that the investigations referred to, which were presumably under British auspices, apparently arrived at no positive conclusion and merely failed to fix responsibility for the commencement of firing. It must again be emphasised however that the very nature of the circumstances in each case, were such as to make it indubitably clear that the blame for what were in fact murderous attacks by heavily armed military formations against Jewish villagers and Jewish transport, must be placed at the door of the Legion.

In this connection the attention of the United Nations Palestine Commission is respectfully drawn to the paragraphs 64-67 of the Memorandum on British Policy in Palestine submitted to the Commission by the Jewish Agency and dated February 21st, 1948. Paragraph 67 of that Memorandum is appended as an annex to this letter.

The gravity of the situation with reference to the Arab Legion will be realised in the light of repeated statements in the Arab press that upon the termination of the British Mandate the Legion will be available for action against the Jewish community in Palestine.

The matter is greatly aggravated by the fact that, according to authentic information received from Palestine, the British authorities, in the process of evacuation, are turning over to the Arab Legion large quantities of military stores, ammunition and equipment for the latter's own use. Among such supplies whose issue has been approved within recent weeks are:

- 60 armoured cars
- 3,500 mortar bombs (high explosive)
- 4,500 mortar bombs (smoke)
- 100,000 rounds .300 ammunition
- 900,000 gallons of M.T. 70 petrol

Stocks now held by the Arab Legion are abnormally high and there is also evidence that equipment of the disbanded Trans-Jordan Frontier Force is being transferred to the Legion.

In these circumstances it is suggested that the bland assertion that the "Arab Legion is being employed in Palestine as part of the Security Forces under the command of the General Officer Commanding", and that "in order that the Arab Legion may be in a position effectively to carry out its task of assisting in the maintenance of security, it has, of course, to be supplied with arms and equipment as required" is entirely unsatisfactory and ignores the grave perils which the continued use of the Arab Legion and the building up from British sources of its supplies and equipment represent to the Jewish population in Palestine.

Sincerely yours,  
(signed) ARTHUR LOURIE  
Arthur Lourie  
Director  
New York Office

AL:LM  
Encl.

Paragraph 67: Attacks on Jews by Arab Legion

The very fact that the Legion is removed from its own territory weans it from such restraining influences as the direct political control of its Government might have exercised. British control being purely military, the Legion is free to identify itself politically with its immediate Arab environment. Its members being strangers in Palestine, they are also free from much restraint, as the fear of possible Jewish retaliation against their villages might otherwise exercise. It would seem elementary that in an atmosphere of Arab-Jewish tension involving Arab attacks on Jews, the Arab Legion cannot sincerely be regarded as an impartial defender of the peace. Refusal to subscribe to this fundamental axiom has led to the retention of the Arab Legion in Palestine and now involves the British Government in responsibility for the Legion's murderous acts.

The continued presence in Palestine of the Arab Legion is revolting to the sense of security of the Jews and considered as a grave menace by the Jewish Agency.

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