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UNITED NATIONS PALESTINE COMMISSION

Communication from the United Kingdom Delegation with Reference to the Inquiry Concerning Incursions into Palestine from a Neighboring State.
The following communication has been received on 5 February, 1948 from Mr. Falla of the United Kingdom Delegation.

COPY

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

No. 52/106/48

4th February, 1948

Dear Bunche,

With reference to your letter of 28th January on the subject of the incursion of armed bands of Arabs into Palestine, I as directed by Sir Alexander Cadogan to forward to you, for the information of the Commission, the enclosed memorandum in which are set out the latest available facts in regard to these bands.

2. The memorandum is based on telegraphic reports received from the High Commissioner for Palestine.

Yours sincerely,
(Signed)
P.S. Falla

Dr. Ralph J. Bunche,
Principal Secretary of the
United Nations Commission for Palestine, United Nations,
Lake Success, L.I.

MEMORANDUM FOR PALESTINE COMMISSION

1. The High Commissioner for Palestine reported on 27th January that the security position had become more serious during the preceding week with the entry into Palestine of large parties of trained guerrillas from adjacent territory. A band of some 300 men had established itself in the Safad area of Galilee, and it was probably this band or part of it which carried out an intensive attack during that week on Yechiam settlement, using mortars and heavy automatics as well as rifles.
2. On the same date, the High Commissioner further reported that a second large band of some 700 Syrians had entered Palestine via Transjordan during the night of 20 - 21 January. This band had its own mechanised transport, its members were well equipped and provisioned, and wore battle-dress. The party appears to have entered Transjordan from Syria and then crossed into Palestine at a point at which the entry of Syrians was not expected. The Syrian and Lebanese frontiers are manned on the Palestine side by both troops and police, although the nature of the border country makes it extremely difficult to secure the entire frontier against illegal entry, especially at night. On arrival in Palestine, this band appears to have dispersed, and it is thus now impracticable to deal with it by military action. So far as is known, its numbers have not engaged in illegal activity beyond the possession of arms.
3. Up to the present, no information has been received of any engagement between these two bands and the security forces. A clash at Kfar Szold is believed to have been with other marauders from outside Palestine.
4. Arab morale is considered to have risen steadily as a result of these re-enforcements, of the spectacular success of the Hebron Arabs in liquidating a Hagana column near Surif, and of the capture and successful dismantling by the Arab National Guard of a Jewish van filled with explosives which was to have been detonated in an Arab locality. Even the relatively serious loss of life and damage to property caused by Jewish reprisals, have, in the High Commissioner's view, failed to check the revival of confidence in the fellaheen and urban proletariat. Panic continues to increase, however, throughout the Arab middle classes, and there is a steady exodus of those who can afford to leave the country.
5. Subsequent reports dated 2nd February indicate that a further party of troops belonging to the "Arab Liberation Army" arrived in Palestine via the Jiar Djamiyeh Bridge during the night of 29/30 January. The party, numbering some 950 men transported in 19 vehicles, consisted largely of non-Palestinian Arabs, all in uniform and well armed. It is now dispersed in small groups throughout villages of the Nablus, Jenin and Tulkam sub-districts. The security forces have taken action to prevent further incursions across the Jisr Djamiyeh and the Sheikh Hussein Bridges.

UNITED KINGDOM DELEGATION
4th February, 1948

