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UNITED NATIONS PALESTINE COMMISSION

Communication Received from the Secretariat Advance
Party in Jerusalem Concerning Public Information Services

The following communication, concerning public information and
communication facilities, has been received from Mr. Azcarate of the
Secretariat Advance Party in Jerusalem.

16 March 1948

Dear Barnes:

I am afraid I must send to you these answers by Mr. Stubbs to your memorandum. At first sight they seem to me far from satisfactory and I will try to go a little further with him about certain points.

Present conditions in Palestine prevent anything like the transfer of the transmitter of the Palestine Broadcasting Commission (located in Arab area) either to the Jewish territory or the international zone of Jerusalem (point 4).

I would appreciate any suggestions from you regarding further conversations here about these points.

Yours sincerely,

P. de Azcarate (signed)
United Nations Advance GroupMr. G. Barnes
United Nations
Lake Success, N.Y.

Encs

government of ps
GOVERNMENT OF PALESTINE, PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE
Jerusalem

13th March, 1948

Dr. Pablo Azcarate,
United Nations Secretariat,
JERUSALEMNotes on Public Information Services
and Facilities for Mr. BarnesPara. 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.

The details called for have already been forwarded to the United Nations delegation, for the information of the Commission, and no doubt by now Mr. Barnes will have been informed.

Para. 6 and 7.

Cable and Wireless at present hold the concession for transmissions out of Palestine, and I understand from their local Manager that plans are being made to continue the complete world service at the end of the Mandate. I suggest an early meeting with Mr. C. Furnston-Evans.

Para. 8.

A survey of the Public Information Office staff reveals that all but a few of the Jewish employees wish to remain in employment with the United Nations, and whilst all the Arab staff wish to remain as well, they are awaiting a reply to their request to the Arab Higher Executive for permission to do so.

Para. 9

Reuters, U.P. and A.P. incoming services are subscribed to by the PIO and the FES between them. All three agencies have branch offices in Jerusalem, and through whom arrangements for continuation of the services can quickly be made.

Richard Stubbs (signed)
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER.

[NOTE: paragraphs referred to by Mr. Stubbs are in the attached list of questions given to Mr. Azcarate by Mr. Barnes]

NOTES ON PUBLIC INFORMATION SERVICES AND FACILITIES

1. The only high frequency radio transmitter capable of sending a signal abroad is located at Bit Jala. The station is known as Sharq-el-Adna. This equipment is the property of the British forces. Our information is that it is being dismantled and removed. This will leave the Commission with no means of communicating by radio with Lake Success or the world outside Palestine. The matter should be discussed as soon as possible with British officials with a view to making some arrangement for leaving these transmitters in place. It is possible that the British would consider selling the equipment to the successor government; or perhaps they would agree to leave the equipment in place until the Commission can make a replacement. Another possibility would be for the British to leave the present equipment intact and permit the Commission to make a replacement in kind to be shipped to whatever point the British might designate.
2. It would be extremely useful to know whether there are in Palestine, either in the employ of the Palestine Administration or of commercial concerns, competent and experienced communications engineers who would be capable of making such installations and revisions in communications facilities as might be necessary after the withdrawal of the Mandatory Power.
3. We have already asked the Mandatory Power to supply us with circuit and traffic diagrams showing the inside and outside plant of Palestine communications. This includes radio, telephone, telegraph, teleprinter, broadcasting, repeater stations, primary power supply equipment, auxiliary power supply equipment and all other telecommunications equipment now in operation in Palestine. In addition to the diagrams, it would be most helpful to know what specific equipment the Mandatory Power is removing.

4. The transmitters of the Palestine Broadcasting Commission, which is the main radio outlet for Palestine, are located in the Arab State. Would it be reasonable to undertake the removal of these transmitters to some point in the Jewish State or in the international zone of Jerusalem? If so, how soon could the operation be started and is there competent personnel to handle the transfer?
5. It would be most helpful to have descriptive information regarding governmental printing facilities; what kind of presses and their capacity, etc.
6. We are informed that Mr. Meola, European Representative of RCA (Radio Corporation of America, one of the largest communications companies) is asking authority for an immediate entry into Palestine. This is by arrangement with the Jewish Agency, which is now negotiating for the procurement and installation of radio transmitters and other equipment which will be required by the Jewish State. It would be most helpful to us if Mr. Meola is permitted to enter the country and make the survey which he is qualified to undertake. In other words, while he is traveling to Jerusalem at the instance of the Jewish Agency, his services would be of immense incidental benefit to us. If there is anything you can do to assist him, it would be most useful.
7. In order to provide for direct cable communication between Palestine and Lake Success, the Mackay Radio Company has been authorized to negotiate with Cable and Wireless, the British Company which controls terminal facilities at the Palestine end. At the present time all communications out of Palestine are routed via London. It would be useful to ascertain the status of the negotiations between Mackay and the Cable Wireless, and if necessary, to facilitate an agreement which would assure direct traffic between New York and Palestine.

8. As part of the general administrative survey, the Advance Party will no doubt ascertain how many employees of the various departments of civil administration are prepared to remain in the employ of the Commission or a successor regime. From the standpoint of public information, it would be most useful to have this information as soon as possible with respect to the Public Information Office, Palestine Broadcasting Service, Printing and Stationery Office and the Department of Posts and Telegraph.

9. Presumably the Public Information Office and/or the Broadcasting Commission now receive incoming world news files from Reuters. Is there any intention to discontinue this file? Obviously it is important to retain the arrangement. Also it would be useful to know whether the Public Information and/or the Broadcasting Service has an incoming wire of any other world news agency, such as, for example, the United Press or the Associated Press.