

UNITED NATIONS PALESTINE COMMISSION

DAILY NEWS SUMMARY - 15

13 February 1948

(Sources: NEW YORK TIMES and NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE)

Jerusalem, February 12 - A Jewish source in Safad reported that British troops tonight were fighting superior forces of Arab raiders from Syria near Jisr Banat Yakub, a bridge site along the upper reaches of the Jordan, after day-long skirmishes in the same region.

Palestine had one of its bloodiest days in some time, with casualties confirmed by the police put at 10 Arabs, 7 Jews and 1 British soldier killed, and 14 Arabs, 7 Jews and 1 British soldier wounded (NEW YORK TIMES).

[An AP despatch in the NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE says that "at least 23 persons" were killed during the day and puts the total death toll since 29 November at 1,151.]

Washington, February 12 - President Truman said today at a press conference that the United States government was supporting the United Nations' settlement of the Palestine issue, but declined to elaborate his assertion, declaring that it was as far as he could go.

In a reply made public today to a letter from Representative Frank Buchanan, the President stated:

"Palestine has been a matter of considerable disturbance to me ever since the Japanese surrender and I've been endeavoring to get the matter worked out. It's now in the hands of the United Nations and this Government is backing the United Nations in the settlement they have suggested."

(NEW YORK TIMES)

London, February 12 - A Foreign Office spokesman said today that although British forces are seeking to check the flow of volunteers into Palestine, measures to eject Arab bands after their entry would require considerable forces that might be needed in more vulnerable parts of the country.

The spokesman stated that the British Government was continuously making representations to the Arab States surrounding Palestine against allowing Arab volunteers to enter. (NEW YORK TIMES)

London, February 12 - According to a Colonial Office spokesman, Great Britain is prepared to permit a "small advance guard" of the Palestine Commission to enter Palestine immediately, but its movements must be restricted for security reasons.

"Inasmuch as we would be responsible for their safety," the spokesman said, "it is doubtful whether it would be wise to permit them to enter areas where snipers were active or into zones, such as Samaria, where Arab guerillas are in virtual control." (UP, NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE)

Damascus, Syria, February 12 - Fawzi el-Kawukji, commander of the Arab volunteer army in Palestine, predicted tonight that "big events" would begin in Palestine soon after February 15. He said that he had ordered his men to avoid fighting against the British, which at this stage "would be a useless waste of force."

Groups of Turkish and Afghan volunteers had recently gone into Palestine, he reported. He then added that next summer he expected more Afghans, some groups from Iran and from Java and a completely equipped unit from Pakistan. (NEW YORK TIMES)