

UNITED NATIONS PALESTINE COMMISSION

DAILY NEWS SUMMARY-17

17 February 1948

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

Lake Success, Feb. 16 NY TIMES and NY HERALD TRIBUNE feature the release of the Palestine Commission's Special Report to the Security Council; the NY TIMES gives it a 3-column, front-page headline, carries an editorial on the subject, and prints the text of the report in full.

Washington, Feb. 16 President Truman has made direct, personal appeals to a number of Arab leaders to use "restraint" in dealing with the Palestine controversy, the White House disclosed today. It was not specified to whom the appeals were made.

A White House statement said: "In an effort to prevent the spread of disorder in the Middle East, this Government has, during recent months, addressed appeals to certain interested Governments stressing the importance, in the interest of Middle East security and world peace, of the exercise of restraint in dealing with the Palestine situation. Some of these appeals were made directly by the President." (NY HERALD TRIBUNE)

Jerusalem, Feb. 16 Jewish colonists beat off today a five-hour attack by a strong force of Arabs on Tirat Tevi, a settlement in the Jordan River Valley five miles southeast of Beisan. The settlement is famous for its defense against an Arab attack in 1937. Police reported that 30 Arabs and one Jew were killed and three Arabs wounded. [An A.P. dispatch, NY HERALD TRIBUNE, reports that a Haganah spokesman claimed that at least 60 Arabs had been killed in the attack.]

A clash between the Arab Legion and Jews occurred in Haifa, in which one Arab and three Jews were killed. (NEW YORK TIMES)

Jerusalem, Feb. 16 Today's casualties in Palestine brought the total fatalities since November 29 to 1,243. (AP NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE)

Cairo, Feb. 16 The military committee of the Arab League has recommended to the League's Council that any United Nations troops sent into Palestine to implement partition be opposed by force. The Council will meet tomorrow in probably its last session of the current meeting to consider the proposal. (NY TIMES)

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London, Feb. 16 A Foreign Office spokesman said today that under no conditions would Britain keep her military forces in Palestine after 1 August, or provide troops for the protection of the proposed international regime in Jerusalem.

An editorial in the MANCHESTER GUARDIAN said today that while it is probably too late for the British Government to change its mind on the question of any international force, it would be of great assistance if Britain should offer troops to guard Jerusalem and give the Palestine Commission a refuge in which to work.

The editorial said that it was the duty of every member of the Security Council to enforce the authority of the United Nations and that this applies especially to the United States but also to Britain, "which has an interest in the success of the United Nations outweighing its interest in the goodwill of the Arab States". (NEW YORK TIMES)

[The attached Note on Recent Developments in Palestine was submitted to the United Nations by the United Kingdom Delegation on 16 February 1948]

27 February 1948

NOTE ON RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN PALESTINE

During the week ending 15th February, there was a steady influx of armed Arab volunteers into Palestine. The largest single incursion so far reported forded the Jordan south of Jisr Djamiyeh and is said to have numbered between one and two thousand, principally Syrians and Lebanese. It is reported that these volunteers have moved to the Jerusalem area and that Arab guards in the Old City are now largely Syrians.

2. While the situation in Samaria remains quiet, it has deteriorated elsewhere. In Samaria, the Arab "Liberation Army" is exercising strict control over Arab areas and has so far refrained from attacking Jewish settlements. The Hagana in this district has also refrained from provocative action so far, and in consequence this usually troublesome district provides a refreshing contrast to the rest of the country.

3. In Haifa, clashes between Jews and Arabs have been continuous.

4. In Jerusalem, the position in the Old City remains unchanged and negotiations for a truce are in abeyance owing to the refusal of the Supreme Moslem Council to commit themselves without the approval, so far withheld, of the Mufti. It is reported that both sides are increasing their armaments and intensifying their organizations and everything points to the fact that clashes in Jerusalem will become increasingly severe. As an instance of the situation in Jerusalem reference may be made to an engagement between Arabs attempting to occupy Yemin Moashi and its Hagana defenders. This action, which took place within two hundred yards of Government and Military Headquarters, lasted for five hours and was only brought to an end when the Security Forces occupied the disputed area.

5. A more or less static front has developed around Jaffa, where shooting proceeds day and night.

6. In Galilee there have been numerous attacks on traffic by both sides, and on several occasions the Army has had to engage Arab irregular forces.

7. Hagana is intensifying its policy of reprisals and now scarcely troubles to conceal its indifference to casualties thereby caused to non-combatants.

8. The Jews are finding it increasingly difficult to maintain supplies for their urban centres and scarcity of several commodities (particularly meat and eggs) is already acute.

J. Fletcher-Cooke (signed)
16th February, 1948.