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UNITED NATIONS PALESTINE COMMISSION

Communication Received from United Kingdom
Delegation Concerning Postal Services in
Palestine

The following communication, setting forth the views of the United Kingdom Government on the agreement between the Commission and the Haifa Chamber of Shipping concerning postal services in Palestine, has been received from Mr. Fletcher-Cooke of the United Kingdom Delegation.

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

URGENT

9th May, 1948.

My dear Bunche,

May I refer you to your letter of the 6th May with which you enclosed a copy of an agreement concerning Postal Services in Palestine which has been entered into between the Palestine Commission and Haifa Chamber of Shipping subject to the approval of the Bureau of the Universal Postal Union.

2. I am now in a position to furnish the Commission with the views of His Majesty's Government in this matter, but as it has not yet been possible to obtain the views of the Government of Palestine, I must make it clear that the observations set out in this letter are subject to correction in the light of any views which the Government of Palestine may express. Having regard, however, to your request that the Commission would be grateful for our views not later than Monday the 10th May, I am sending you now this interim report.

(a) His Majesty's Government welcomes the proposal for the restoration of Postal Service to, from and in Palestine, even in a very restricted form;

(b) It must, however, be realised that the Government of Palestine are not in a position to accept any financial obligations in respect of mail contracts and it is presumed that the Commission will make suitable arrangements with the Haifa Chamber of Shipping;

(c) It is suggested that when members of the Universal Postal Union are circularised by the Bureau, restrictions should be clearly set out so that all postal administrations are in a position to advise the public in their respective countries of the precise conditions under which the proposed service will operate;

Dr. Ralph J. Bunche,
Principal Secretary to the United Nations
Commission on Palestine,
United Nations, Lake Success,
Long Island, New York.

(d) It is presumed that there can be no question of restoring full services, and in considering the question of restrictions the point arises as to whether there should not be initially some drastic limitation on weights and categories of correspondence. From experience of restoring services in Europe under conditions no less favourable, it is suggested that only post cards and un-registered letters of not more than two ounces in weight should be included. His Majesty's Government are very doubtful whether parcels should be included initially even at sender's risk;

(e) The precise localities to which the proposed organisation can give services should also be stated. Unless these conditions are clearly defined there is a danger of chaos and vast accumulations of mail at Haifa;

(f) It is considered, therefore, that very early and precise announcements to all postal administrations are essential and presumably these will be made by the Bureau;

(g) If possible full particulars of shipping at present arriving at Haifa, including the ports of departure in Egypt and elsewhere, should be given. This is particularly important, in the view of His Majesty's Government, as it seems likely that many countries will otherwise simply forward their mail for Palestine to the United Kingdom.

3. I will communicate to you any additional observations which the Government of Palestine may wish to make as soon as they are received.

4. I am sending a copy of this letter to Mr. Finn Moe, Rapporteur of the Sub-Committee of the First Committee of the General Assembly.

Yours sincerely,

(signed)

(J. Fletcher-Cooke)