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24 February 1948

UNITED NATIONS PALESTINE COMMISSION

Communication Received from the United Kingdom
Delegation Concerning Jewish Illegal Immigrants

The following communication, concerning the position of Jewish
illegal immigrants held in camps in Cyprus, has been received from
Mr. Trafford Smith of the United Kingdom Delegation.

24 February 1948

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

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23rd February, 1948

My dear Bunche,

When he called on Sir Alexander Cadogan on February 5th, Mr. Morgan asked for information on three points connected with the position of the Jewish illegal immigrants held in camps in Cyprus and the problem of their transfer to Palestine. This information has now been received, and I should be grateful if you would communicate it to Mr. Morgan.

The first point related to the numbers of illegal immigrants eligible for transfer to Palestine as compassionate cases outside the quota. The number of these cases (comprising infants, their parents and other minor children including orphans and unaccompanied children) now awaiting transfer to Palestine is estimated to be 5,800. To this figure can be added not more than about 100 aged and infirm, who may also be regarded as truly compassionate cases.

Mr. Morgan also desired information as to the camp accommodation available for the reception in Palestine of the immigrants from Cyprus. The High Commissioner reports that the Jewish Agency has in being the following camps suitable for the reception of immigrants when they come to be transferred after May 15th. The figure following the name of the camp gives its maximum accommodation:

Hadera	1,200
Kiray Shmuel	1,000
Raanana	1,200
Kafr Azar	600
Rosenbaum	600
Rel Aviv	500
Haifa	500

All of these camps are in the territory of the future Jewish State. In addition to them, a camp at Nathanya has just been acquired by the Jewish Agency from the Army, estimated to hold 10,000. Of the camps listed above, the first three and the last two are at present fully occupied by immigrants.

The third of Mr. Morgan's enquiries related to the progress of negotiations between the Palestine authorities and the Jewish Agency on the possibility of taking over additional camp accommodation from the military. The High Commissioner understands from the Agency that they do not at present wish to take over any further camp accommodation to house immigrants. The figures of accommodation quoted above show that they already have a reserve available which they consider sufficient as a reservoir through which they can feed immigrants quickly or slowly as pressure and circumstances dictate.

During his talk with Sir A. Cadogan, Mr. Morgan made clear that he understood the necessity for avoiding publicity in this matter of compassionate transfers of Jewish illegal immigrants from Cyprus to Palestine outside the quota. Their publication would only further exacerbate Arab resentment, and for this reason we should like it to be fully understood that the above information is given in strict confidence. The figures are, of course, approximate only.

Yours sincerely,
Trafford Smith (signed)

Dr. Ralph J. Bunche,
Principal Secretary to the United Nations
Commission on Palestine, United Nations,
Lake Success, N.Y.