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3 February 1948

UNITED NATIONS PALESTINE COMMISSION

Alternative Draft of Letter to be Sent to Sir Alexander Cadogan

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that I have been directed by the United Nations Palestine Commission to communicate to you its views regarding the answer given by you on behalf of your Government at the twenty-seventh meeting of the Commission on 30 January 1948, to one of the questions which the Commission had presented to you on 19 January.

You will recall that the second of the questions relating to the Commission's discharge of its administrative responsibilities was as follows:

"Is it to be understood from Sir Alexander's statement to the Commission at its sixth meeting on 14 January, that his Government would be 'prepared to agree to the Commission's arrival in Palestine shortly before the Mandate is terminated, in order that there may be an overlap of say, a fortnight during which the Commission can take up its responsibilities', that the Government of the United Kingdom would not regard favourably a decision of the Commission to come to Palestine at an earlier date if the Commission should consider this necessary for the discharge of its functions?"

Your formal reply to this question stated that:

"His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom would not regard favourably any proposal by the Commission to proceed to Palestine earlier than two weeks before the date of the termination of the Mandate."

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I am to inform you that it is the considered view of the Commission that the proposal of your Government that the Commission should not proceed to Palestine earlier than two weeks before the date on which the Mandate is to be terminated is entirely unacceptable.

The Commission is convinced that this limitation on its arrival in Palestine would make it impossible for the Commission to discharge the responsibilities entrusted to it by the resolution of the General Assembly. The Commission has been informed that the Mandatory Power proposes to relinquish its responsibility for the Government of Palestine as a whole and not piecemeal. In consequence, the Commission, in two short weeks in Palestine, would be required to prepare itself to assume responsibility, under most difficult circumstances, for the full burden of a complex administrative structure and for maintaining law and order in the country.

The Commission has decided, therefore, to ask you to be so kind as to convey to your Government this request for reconsideration of its policy in this matter.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

His Excellency
The Right Honourable Sir Alexander Cadogan, G.C.M.G., K.C.B.,
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Permanent United Kingdom Delegation to the United Nations,
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