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UNITED NATIONS PALESTINE COMMISSION

Communication Received from United Kingdom  
Delegation Concerning Food Supply Position  
in Palestine

The following communication, concerning the food supply position in Palestine with particular reference to the issue of import licences, has been received from Mr. Fletcher-Cooke of the United Kingdom Delegation.

URGENT

3rd March, 1948.

My dear Bunche,

May I refer you to the correspondence relating to the Food Supply Position in Palestine, ending with my letter of 28th February.

I have just received a telegram from London referring to the fact that the question of essential food imports has been discussed with Reedman there and that it has been made clear to him that the next step is for the Commission to decide as soon as possible on the policy which they propose to apply as from 15th May.

The telegram goes on to say that in the meanwhile and because of the urgency of the matter, it is proposed to authorise the High Commissioner at his discretion to issue import licences as from 7th March to traders in Palestine for the procurement of sufficient food stuffs to cover the period of about three months after the 15th May next. The telegram points out that the International Emergency Food Council recommendations in respect of cereals have not yet been made beyond 30th June 1948. The procedure proposed would, therefore, mean that any imports into Palestine additional to the current recommendations would have to be offset against the allocation for the period starting 1st July 1948.

As a condition of the issue of these import licences, any hard currency commitments incurred would have to be met out of Palestine's own resources and it is presumed that private importers would in many cases be able to make their own currency arrangements under the Gift Dollar Scheme.

I have been asked to ascertain as a matter of urgency whether the Commission have any objection to these proposals and I should therefore be grateful if you would inform me as soon as possible of the Commission's views in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Sd) J. Fletcher-Cooke

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