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UNITED NATIONS PALESTINE COMMISSION

Draft of Letter to the Mandatory Power Concerning
Urgent Outstanding Matters

Dear Fletcher-Cooke:

In view of the short period of time remaining until the Special Session of the General Assembly convenes, and in the light of your telephone conversations with me concerning the views of the Mandatory Power on the subject, the Commission has decided for the time being to defer action on the proposal that it proceed to London for the purpose of carrying on negotiations with His Majesty's Government there.

Irrespective of the ultimate decision of the United Nations on the future government of Palestine, there are a number of matters of considerable urgency, which should be disposed of in order to preserve the greatest possible measure of order and essential services in Palestine. The uncertainty of the situation created by the convocation of the General Assembly at this advanced stage before 15 May increases the urgency of the need for arrangements to be made to prevent a complete breakdown of administration in Palestine.

Among the matters requiring immediate attention are the following:

A. Security

1. Consultations respecting the terms of the proposed directive to the General Officer Commanding regarding the functions and responsibilities of British troops remaining in Palestine after 15 May.
2. Details of the transfer of the arms, stores, equipment, depots, etc. of the Palestine Police Force.
3. Matters relating to the security of Jerusalem and the Holy Places, and the recruitment of a non-Palestinian police force for Jerusalem.

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4. The preservation of the physical property and assets of the Government of Palestine.

B. Administration

1. Arrangements to ensure some measure of continuity in essential transportation and communications services such as airports, railways, posts, telegraph, telephone and radio.
2. Arrangements to ensure some measure of continuity in the health and prison administration, and in the judiciary.
3. Preservation and transfer of the files of the various departments of Government.
4. Access to Haifa after 15 May 1948.

C. Economic and Financial

1. Maintenance of the importation and distribution of food supplies.
2. Representation of Palestine before the IEPF.
3. The release after 15 May 1948 of sterling balances blocked by the Treasury Order of 22 February 1948.
4. The future of the Palestine Currency Board.
5. Maintenance of import and exchange controls.
6. The continuity of essential fiscal arrangements, including customs and budgetary matters.
7. Matters relating to the assets and liabilities of Palestine.
8. Payments for services which will be provided to British Forces after 15 May in such matters as railway, road and harbor facilities.

The Mandatory Power has recognized the Commission as the successor authority in Palestine. The Commission is of the opinion that its legal status and its duties remain substantially unaltered until changed by action of the General Assembly. In view of the short period of time remaining until 15 May, the prospect that the General Assembly might make provision for

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advance arrangements in regard to the above matters seems remote. Accordingly the Commission, believing that the Mandatory Power does not intend to abandon Palestine to complete chaos after 15 May, is prepared to hold itself at the disposal of the Mandatory Power to discuss the necessary arrangements that should be made immediately with respect to the above matters. The Commission would appreciate receiving the views of the Mandatory Power in this regard.

Sincerely yours,