

## UNITED NATIONS PALESTINE COMMISSION

Considerations Affecting Certain of the Provisions of the General Assembly Resolution on the "Future Government of Palestine": Establishment by the Commission of the Frontiers of the Arab and Jewish States and the City of Jerusalem.

(Working Paper Prepared by the Secretariat)

1. The plan adopted by the Assembly contains, besides a detailed description of the boundaries of the Arab and the Jewish States, the following provision respecting the boundaries (Paragraph A-3 of Part I):

"On its arrival in Palestine the Commission shall proceed to carry out measures for the establishment of the frontiers of the Arab and Jewish States and the City of Jerusalem in accordance with the general lines of the recommendations of the General Assembly on the partition of Palestine. Nevertheless, the boundaries as described in Part II of this Plan are to be modified in such a way that village areas as a rule will not be divided by State boundaries unless pressing reasons make that necessary."

2. The demarcation on the spot of the boundaries between the Arab and Jewish States will be one of the most important and most difficult tasks entrusted to the Commission. The boundaries between the two States have a length of nearly 700 kilometres. In principle, the frontier runs along village boundaries, but in more than 50 cases it cuts across Arab village land, generally leaving the built-up area in the Arab State and

some of the land in the Jewish State. In all these cases the recommendation of the General Assembly to the effect that "village areas as a whole will not be divided by State boundaries unless pressing reasons make that necessary" will have to be kept in mind.

3. Under normal circumstances a boundary between two States is delimited by a Boundary Commission, composed of representatives of the two parties concerned with an impartial chairman as arbiter. In respect to Palestine the situation will be different. It seems unlikely that the Arabs will take an active part in dividing the country in two States. Under such circumstances the United Nations Commission, which obviously cannot be expected to perform the delimitation itself, will have to consider the appointment of a Special Boundary Commission, composed of at least 3 non-Palestinian members, if possible taken from different countries. The most suitable people will probably be found in army topographical departments or similar services. They will have to be assisted by a technical staff, which can be recruited on the spot. The British-organized Survey of Palestine has an experienced personnel, including some Greeks and Armenians, that possibly could be made available for this task. The Boundary Commission will need technical equipment, which probably can be obtained on the spot. It has to be borne in mind, however, that the delimitation of boundaries must partly be carried out in areas, as for example the Negev, which are completely deprived of water and food supplies. In such desertic regions the Boundary Commission will have to organize itself as a self-supporting expedition. It seems furthermore advisable to attach a physician to it.

4. In areas where the boundaries are clearly indicated by the description given in the Assembly resolution and no dispute is to be expected, the Commission might split up in two or three groups to expedite its work. In areas, on the other hand, where the Commission will have

to use its own judgment in the application of the specific recommendations of the Assembly resolution in respect to village boundaries it would seem desirable that it operate as one unit.

5. If no international police force is envisaged, it has to be assumed, at least theoretically, that local militia will move into the areas evacuated by the British forces. It is highly desirable, especially if the British withdraw in successive stages, that the Boundary Commission should move in simultaneously with the local militia to determine the final boundaries as quickly as possible. As the British evacuation, however, will probably take place in a short space of time, it has to be foreseen that the Boundary Commission, which in many places will have to undertake a detailed examination of local conditions before passing final judgment on the best boundary line, will be lagging behind in the performance of its duties. In other words, it will prove difficult to synchronize the delimitation of boundaries with the evacuation of British troops and the occupation of the freed areas by local militia. To succeed herein the Boundary Commission would have to be considerably enlarged.

6. All things considered, it is suggested that local militia should be instructed not to move in to disputed areas until the boundary has been delimited. According to this suggestion, for example, the Jewish militia would have to halt at the boundary of an Arab village, a part of which might later on be assigned to the Jewish State by the Boundary Commission. The formal taking over of the respectively allotted areas of a divided village should in other terms not be allowed, as a rule, before the Boundary Commission had carried out its job. In the case of special circumstances exceptions from this rule would, of course, have to be granted.

7. A special problem arises from the fact that the Jewish State will

have several hundred kilometres of common frontiers with the neighbouring States of Lebanon, Syria, Transjordan and Egypt. The boundaries between present Palestine and those countries are known to be determined, but they are not of the same relevance now as they will be in the future. It therefore seems not unlikely that for one reason or the other it was felt that these external border lines should be "looked over". This could easily have some international implications. In any case, the occupation of border areas by local militia should take place only under direct supervision of the United Nations Commission.

8. The Boundary Commission will have a special responsibility in the establishment of the two so-called points of intersection, connecting the three parts of the Jewish State and the three parts of the Arab State. A system of free communications will have to be divided.

9. The delimitation of the enclave of Jaffa will require careful consideration. According to the Assembly resolution "the question of Karton quarter will be decided by the Boundary Commission, bearing in mind among other considerations the desirability of including the smallest possible number of its Arab inhabitants and the largest possible number of its Jewish inhabitants in the Jewish State". The problem of drawing a State boundary through a big city is a very difficult one, for which several solutions have been proposed. During the discussions, it was suggested to perform a clean-cut separation of the towns of Jaffa and Tel-Aviv by clearing a stretch of 100 meters width of built-on land at their common boundary from all buildings in order to create an open space between them. The area involved is now largely occupied by slum quarters. Such a solution could be carried out in successive stages so as not to upset unnecessarily the living conditions of the population involved.

10. In the absence of an international police force the protection of

the Boundary Commission will constitute a difficult problem. The activities of this Commission will be considered as the most significant in the carrying out of partition. Arabs who wish actively to oppose partition will be tempted to consider the Boundary Commission as a target for their attacks. The risks may be particularly pronounced in purely Arab areas, where the partition of village units has to be performed. It is questionable if the use of, for example, Jewish militia in such areas would be appropriate or expedient. Protection can hardly be expected from the Arab side. If an international police force were to be envisaged for this particular task, it would have to be strong enough to ward off attacks even from organized bands, which may have their bases of operation on the other side of the border. The use of an insufficient force would merely constitute a provocation.

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