

COMMITTEE ON JERUSALEM

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Police Force for the City of Jerusalem

(Working Paper prepared by the Secretariat)

1. The resolution of the General Assembly of 29 November 1947 provided for the organization, by the Governor of the City of Jerusalem, of a "special police force of adequate strength" whose task would be to assist in the maintenance of international law and order and to protect the Holy Places, religious buildings and sites in the City. The resolution stated that the members of this special force were to be recruited outside of Palestine, and the Draft Statute for the City of Jerusalem drawn up by the Trusteeship Council further specified that they were to be selected without distinction as to nationality, provided that they were not recruited from among residents of the City, the Arab State or the Jewish State. The size of the force was to be determined by the Governor.

2. The responsibilities of the United Nations Palestine Commission, the organ charged by the General Assembly with the implementation of the Partition Plan, were confined as regards Jerusalem to an interim period of indefinite duration, lasting from the date of the termination of the Mandate (15 May 1948) until the date of the entry into force of the Statute for Jerusalem, which according to the Assembly's resolution was to be not later than 1 October 1948.

3. On 30 January 1948, the Mandatory Power informed the

Palestine Commission that the Palestine Police Force would cease to exist on 15 May*. The Commission had also been told that the progressive withdrawal of British troops from Palestine would be completed by August 1 and would be well under way by 15 May. The Commission was therefore faced with the problem of filling a security vacuum which would in every likelihood be created in Jerusalem from that date. It accordingly considered the possibility of forming an emergency police force to maintain law and order in the Jerusalem area until such time as the special police force provided for in the resolution came into being.

4. The Palestine Commission approached the Mandatory Power on the subject and was told that the latter hoped, as part of its general policy as the end of the Mandate drew near of handing over governmental responsibilities wherever possible to municipal authorities, to set up a municipal police force for Jerusalem, to consist of 300 Arabs and 300 Jews.* This force would not be dissolved on the termination of the Mandate and was being formed to ensure at least a measure of local security during the interim period after 15 May. Experience of conditions in Jerusalem convinced the Government of Palestine, however, that in addition to this municipal police force of 600, a force of 1000 non-Jewish, non-Arab personnel was the minimum required for the preservation of law and order in the Jerusalem area. *

5. The Government of Palestine informed the Palestine Commission that it estimated that the cost of maintaining the 600 local police would be about £P 12,000, most of which sum could be contributed by the Jerusalem Municipality.

* A/532, pp. 17 - 18.

The additional force of 1,000 men would cost over £P 40,000 per month, excluding arms, ammunition and the capital cost of transport.

6. It should be emphasized that the figure of 1,600 police was suggested by the Mandatory Power as a minimum figure and for an emergency period only. It may be assumed that a larger force would be needed for the permanent maintenance of law and order in the Jerusalem area and for the protection of the Holy Places.