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UNITED NATIONS PALESTINE COMMISSION
Information furnished by Mr. Fletcher-Cooke
of the United Kingdom Delegation requesting
the "Association of Government War Time Departments Officers"
as requested by the Commission at its meeting on 2 Feb. 2, 1948

There are three associations of officers of the Palestine Government. Two of these organizations are composed of permanent officers, that is, occupants of established posts. The third one - the Association of War Time Departments Officers - is composed of non-permanent officers, that is, those who are serving under contract with the Palestine Government.

During the War a number of new departments were established for various War Time controls and Palestinian and British personnel were employed by contract in these departments. The number of officers so hired was some 3,000 to 4,000. These officers formed their own association. Mr. Fletcher-Cooke did not know whether all of the officers were members of the Association, but thought that nearly all of them would be. The officers concerned are chiefly Palestinian, but include some British. The numbers of Arabs and Jews would be almost equal, with the Arabs, perhaps, in the majority.

The Association is officially recognized by the Palestine Government in the sense that the Government communicates with the Association on matters involving its members, and hears representations from the Association.

RESTRICTED
3 February 1948

UNITED NATIONS PALESTINE COMMISSION
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."

I am to inform you that is the considered view of the Commission that this 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's conclusion in this regard is based on a number of considerations.

In the first place, under this proposed limitation on its arrival in Palestine, the Commission would be quite unable to discharge the responsibilities entrusted to it by the resolution of the General Assembly. The Commission has been informed that the Mandatory Power proposed 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 already reported to the Security Council, in its first Monthly Report, that:

"the full implementation of the Assembly's recommendations requires the presence of the Commission in Palestine considerably in advance of the transfer of authority from the Mandatory Power to the Commission. The delimitation of boundaries,... preparations to ensure continuity in the maintenance of essential public services; the selection of Provisional Councils of Government and their activation; the creation of armed militia; and negotiations with regard to Economic Union, can be effectively undertaken only when the Commission is present in Palestine."

The Commission would also call to your attention certain relevant provisions of the Assembly resolution which, in the view of the Commission, are of especial significance to this matter.

Paragraph 2, Section B, Part I of the resolution states, in part that:

"The Mandatory Power shall to the fullest possible extent co-ordinate its plans for withdrawal with the plans of the Commission to take over and administer

areas which have been evacuated....

“The Mandatory Power shall not take any action to prevent, obstruct or delay the implementation by the Commission of the measures recommended by the General Assembly,”

Again, paragraph 12, Section B, Part I, provides that:

“During the period between the adoption of the recommendations on the question of Palestine by the General Assembly and the termination of the Mandate, the Mandatory Power in Palestine shall maintain full responsibility for administration in areas from which it has not withdrawn its armed forces. The Commission shall assist the Mandatory Power in the carrying out of these functions. Similarly the Mandatory Power shall co-operate with the Commission in the execution of its functions.”

The Commission recognizes the validity of the position taken by the Mandatory Power that there must not be two concurrent overlapping authorities in Palestine prior to the termination of the Mandate, and does not, therefore, seek to exercise any governmental functions before that date. On the other hand, the Commission is acutely aware that there is a vast amount of work preparatory to the transfer of authority which will require its presence in Palestine well in advance of the Mandate's termination.

The Commission concludes, therefore, that as an agent of the General Assembly of the United Nations it should be entitled to proceed to Palestine at such time as it may deem appropriate in the light of the progress of its indispensable work at Lake Success, subject, of course, to reasonable advance notice to the Mandatory Power, which is responsible for law and order in Palestine until the Mandate is terminated.

For these reasons, the Commission is impelled to ask you to convey to your Government this request for reconsideration of its policy on 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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