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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE TWENTY-SECOND MEETING OF THE UNITED NATIONS PALESTINE COMMISSION

Lake Success, New York,
Tuesday, 27 January 1948, at 3.00 p.m.

Present:

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| Chairman: | Mr. LISICKY | (Czechoslovakia) |
| Members: | Mr. Medina | (Bolivia) |
| | Mr. Federspiel | (Denmark) |
| | Mr. Morgan | (Panama) |
| | Mr. Francisco | (Philippines) |
| Secretariat: | Mr. Bunche | (Secretary) |

CONSULTATION WITH THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE JEWISH AGENCY FOR PALESTINE

On the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Moshe Shertok and Mr. David Horowitz, representatives of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, took seats at the table. Mr. Shertok's statement, the questions put by Members on points arising from his statement, and the answers by Mr. Shertok and Mr. Horowitz are reproduced *in extenso* as follows:

The CHAIRMAN: The meeting this afternoon is in connection with your [letter of 21 January 1948](#), Mr. Shertok. On behalf of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, you have requested an opportunity to submit to this Commission views and proposals on matters of security and defense involving the implementation of the [Resolution](#) of the General Assembly. More especially you referred to the points which were listed as subjects in the enclosure to your preceding letter of 19 January 1948.

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): That is right.

The CHAIRMAN: Will you proceed, Mr. Shertok.

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): The question of security and defence is naturally, uppermost in our minds. We regard it as the crux of the whole problem of the implementation of the [resolution](#) passed the General Assembly. It is not merely that the parts dealing with the problem of security and defence, as enunciated in the [Resolution](#) of the General Assembly, are very essential parts of the whole project, but it is in that particular sphere - in the sphere of security and defence - that a very determined attempt is being made to defeat the whole scheme, and, therefore, the problem acquires an even greater importance and urgency. I cannot refrain, in treating the problem, from starting with the position as it is now and the immediate and most pressing needs with which we are today confronted. We are today engaged in a day-to-day struggle for the defence of the lives and the property of our community in Palestine; and for reasons which I explained in some detail on the previous occasion at which I had the honour of appearing before this Commission, we cannot rely on the present Mandatory Administration to provide adequate defence. Perhaps the word "reasons" is not quite apt.

It is not that we regard the present Mandatory Administration as organically or inherently incapable of assuring the maintenance of law and order and the defence of life and property, but the facts of the situation are such as to make it impossible for us to place reliance on them because the patent fact of the situation is that they have not taken the necessary measures. Today, it is our own rather inadequate and improperly-organised defence forces that stand between the Jewish Community; and the danger of its complete annihilation, and the plunging of the country into a state of irremediable anarchy and chaos. Faced as we are with this urgent and immediate task, we find ourselves extremely and very gravely handicapped by the lack of proper instruments of defence, particularly in view of the fact that the other side is continually being supplied with arms from the outside. It is being supplied with arms by the governments of the neighbouring countries, or by the machinery set up by those governments for the supply of arms. Those governments, being governments of independent states, enjoy incomparably greater facilities in regard to the purchase of arms in the world markets. Moreover, they already have stocks of arms at their disposal, from which it is easy for them to divert certain quantities in order to place them at the disposal of the bands operating in Palestine.

As a matter of fact, they have established training centres in certain places where volunteers, both from Palestine and from some of the neighbouring countries, are training openly. There already have been instances of armed incursions by organized groups of such volunteers from beyond the border, to which I may yet have to refer in the course of my remarks when I deal more specifically with the subject of armed Arab aggression from the outside.

What I am trying to stress in the present context of my submissions to the Commission is that we have to cope with and provide against arms being supplied to our adversaries through governmental channels, and that confronts us with a problem which, if left to ourselves, shall not be able to resolve, or shall be able to solve only very inadequately. Therefore our first and most urgent submission to the Commission is that ways and means must be found to place the necessary quantities and necessary kinds of arms at our disposal for purposes of immediate defence.

This position is aggravated by the fact to which I drew attention at a previous meeting, namely, that not only does the present administration of Palestine not recognize the defence organization which is operative today, except in respect of very small parts, but also that it actually, at various opportunities, pursues the line of taking away arms from the Jews and thereby depleting our most inadequate stocks. This position must be regularized; the way must be found to prevail upon the

British administration to discontinue its most disastrous policy in that regard, and there must be a further constructive remedy provided by insuring to us the necessary supplies of additional arms.

I fully realize the difficulty with which this Commission may find itself confronted if, in its wisdom, it tried to satisfy our request. The question of the proper authority to take charge of that and to supervise any action along those lines will immediately arise. The question is what is the body which should be considered as being authorized to act as the recipient of these arms?

It is, of course, primarily for the Commission to lay down the proper procedure in this regard, possibly to receive the sanction of the Security Council for it, and I should not presume to express an opinion on the question as to whether some authority set up by the Commission should, in the first instance, obtain the arms and then turn them over, or whether the Commission simply should recommend that a certain Jewish authority should be given the necessary arms for defensive purposes. Whichever course is taken the question of the Jewish authority, which in the last resort must be responsible for those arms and for their proper use, will arise.

The scheme provides for the early establishment of two Provisional Councils of Government, one for the Jewish area and one for the Arab area. As we read the [Resolution](#) of the General Assembly - and if we interpret it correctly - the establishment of the two Councils need not be simultaneous, but as and when one part of the country is ready for appointment of its Provisional Council of Government, this procedure should be carried out without waiting for the consummation of that process in the other area.

That being the case, I should submit that the necessity of supplying arms for the defence the Jewish population of Palestine should be an added reason why the setting up of the Provisional Council of Government should be proceeded with without further delay. Even if that Provisional Council of Government could not fully enter upon the discharge of its functions, so long as the British Mandatory Administration still is in operation, it should at least be recognized as the proper receptacle for the arms that have to be supplied.

I do not think that it should be quite impossible to secure the agreement, or at least the acquiescence, of the British Administration, in such an arrangement, in view of the fact that the British Mandatory Administration definitely accepts the fact of the existence of arms in the hands of the Jewish population used for purposes of defence, and it even takes that fact actively into account in devising its present security arrangements. Witness the fact that it was one of the conditions put forward by the British Administration in authorizing the setting up of a certain guard force in the Tel-Aviv area, that that force should receive its equipment, in terms of arms, from Jewish sources hitherto considered illegal.

It is an integral and most essential element of the whole scheme that 500 rifles should be provided. An argument is still in progress as to whether these should be rifles or whether they might not be light machine guns or sub-machine guns, because, as I have explained to the Commission already, we are rather short of rifles and we need those rifles for defence in more open areas than in the area of Tel-Aviv. Therefore, this fact is accepted, noted, and integrated in the scheme of things with which the Administration is dealing, which the Administration acknowledges fully, and a certain essential addition to that stock of arms should not be a point of principle presenting an insuperable difficulty.

On the other hand, if it is not considered practicable to proceed forthwith with the formation of a Provisional Council of Government, then I would submit that the Jewish Agency be recognized as an interim body for taking charge of these arms, and again I should point to the fact that the Jewish Agency is in fact enjoying today that recognition on the part of the Palestine Administration. I should perhaps emphasize the words "in fact". I do not here claim any *de jure* recognition expressed in any official document. There is, no doubt, correspondence on this subject. But whatever arrangements are made for the security of the Jewish population, it calls for co-operation on the part of the Jewish Community as an organized body, and it should take place between the Government and the Jewish Agency. There is official liaison machinery operative in that regard.

It is with the Jewish Agency that the establishment of the Jewish settlement police was negotiated at a certain stage in the past. It was in consultation with the Jewish Agency, and largely through the instrumentality of its security department, that certain changes were effected in the establishment of the Jewish settlement police from time to time, and it is with the Jewish Agency that the Government has negotiated and is still negotiating this arrangement with regard to the Tel-Aviv area; and it is from the Jewish Agency that the Government expects the 500 rifles to be forthcoming for the arming of that small Guard force.

Again, I do not see here any sharp transition from one stage to another if the Jewish Agency were to be recognized by the Commission as the body authorized to receive the arms that may be provided. The question of the provision of arms for the immediate needs of the Jewish population necessarily cannot be separated, in the long run, from the larger question of building up a militia of the Jewish State. We do not suggest that it should be separated; it should rather form perhaps the first instalment of that larger scheme and it should be integrated into that larger scheme.

At the same time the adoption, the working out, and the approval of the larger scheme should not hold up progress in regard to matters that are most urgent. Therefore we are setting it forth as the first instalment of the Jewish State Militia Project.

Approaching the problem from another angle, this step which we are urging - of providing arms for the immediate needs of the defence of the Jewish population - should, in our submission, form part of a more comprehensive arms policy in regard to Palestine and the neighbouring countries.

That brings me to the second point of my agenda today - the question of an arms policy - of which the provision of arms to us appears to us to be one item. There is today the question of what the nations of the world, organized as they are in the United Nations, are going to do about the problem of arms with reference to the Middle East. As I have explained already, in most parts of the world the Arab States enjoy formal freedom with regard to the purchase of arms, and I am not suggesting that all the arms that they may be acquiring today are destined solely for the purpose of arming the Palestinian Arabs in their fight against the Jews, and in their attempt to defeat the policy of the United Nations. They, no doubt, are trying to take care of their own military needs, which may be perfectly legitimate, but it is obvious and it is known beyond any shred of doubt that a certain part of these arms definitely is intended for Palestine and that the Palestinian situation is now regarded by some of the Arab Governments, at least, if not by all; as a reason for speeding up their programme of purchasing arms. Various deals in that regard have been, are being, and are about to be concluded in various European countries, and perhaps also in other parts of the world.

We regard this as a state of anarchy in the international sense, though each transaction in itself may be a perfectly lawful and legitimate transaction from the point of view of the laws of the two contracting parties to it. However in the wider international sense, to us it is nothing more than a state of anarchy because on the one hand the international world has given its endorsement to a certain policy, whereas on the other hand component parts of that same world are becoming involved as parties to transactions the ultimate result of which would be the subversion and defeat of that policy.

Only one country; the United States of America - and this is the only published fact that we know of in this regard - has imposed an embargo on the sale of arms to the Middle East, but that embargo cuts both ways. It does not only make it impossible - or perhaps more difficult - for the aggressor party to acquire arms, but it also makes it impossible for the attached party to acquire its arms. We should not regard that as a solution. The solution that would commend itself to us and, in our estimation, to the international world is the only one which would be in consonance with the spirit of the [Resolution](#) of the United Nations, and that would be to institute a discriminatory, but not a wholesale, embargo; namely, to withhold arms from these parties which are, according to their declared policy, out to defeat the policy of the United Nations by force of arms and to attach those co-operating in its implementation. On the other hand it should leave the way open or even help those engaged in implementing the [decision](#) of the United Nations so that they may acquire the arms that are necessary for the achievement of that objective.

We should submit that this might form a subject of special representations by the Commission to the Security Council with the aim of securing a resolution which would call upon all Member States to comply with a certain universal policy brought into full harmony with the need of implementing the [decision](#) of the United Nations. I say that we should regard the immediate supply of arms for the defence of the Jewish population as but the first instalment in the project of setting up a Jewish State Militia.

I should like now to deal with that point which is the third point on my agenda today. We have submitted a memorandum to the Commission with regard to that particular subject, in which an effort was made on our part to deal with the subject in as detailed a manner as we thought practicable at the present preliminary stage. I do not intend to recapitulate all the detailed explanation offered in that memorandum, but I should like briefly to summarize them, and I should also like to offer a suggestion with regard to the implementation; that is to say, by what stages we should envisage the carrying out of that programme.

In my submission I take the liberty of partly covering the ground already covered in writing, because it is possible that not all the members of the Commission have yet had the time fully to acquaint themselves with the contents of that document. We envisage the Jewish militia as a force permanent footing of the strength of 30,000 to 35,000. We envisage the militia as a force intended for the protection of the whole area of the Jewish State, with particular reference to its outlying parts and to its borders. Militarily and geographically we regard the area of the Jewish State as falling into four parts; first, Galilee, that being the northern part; second, the

region of Haifa, which covers the western part of Galilee and the northern part of Samaria; third, the main, central part of the coastal plain, with Tel-Aviv as the centre, not exactly a geographical centre but more or less in a central point and extending to the southern points of intersection; and fourth, the Negev area.

We envisage the militia as consisting in the first instance, of four large units, each of which would be responsible for the maintenance of security in one of those four parts. The unit which we have in mind is a Jewish Brigade group; that to say, it is a unit smaller than a Division in numbers, in total size, but I would say it is functionally wider and more comprehensive, although not necessarily in numbers, than an ordinary brigade. An ordinary brigade consists usually of infantry, with small auxiliary arms, whereas we envisage the brigade group in the sense in which it was used in the British Army during the war. We ourselves had such a Brigade Group under British Command in the war. The distinctive feature of it is that it is a self-contained unit, able to tame the field as at independent self-contained formation; it has its own artillery; it has its own engineering units; it has its own medical corps. The size of such a unit, in numbers, is about 5,500, so the four brigades would come up to approximately 22,000. We would add to this a fifth brigade as a reserve, a mobile reserve to the whole [word missed] which could reinforce any single brigade that may be too heavily [word missed] at any given moment, and generally to serve as a reserve unit. To [word missed] we should have to add certain troops which are directly attached to [word missed] headquarters of the whole militia.

The CHAIRMAN: To the High Command?

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): Yes, to the High Command of the Militia and that would make up the total of approximately 30,000. The question which faces us in putting forward our plans to the Commission, and which we will face the Commission or the experts whom the Commission chooses to consult, is not only the static character of this force but also the dynamic process by which it will come into being, by what stages it will come into being.

It has not been given to us to formulate our plans either in a state of a complete vacuum or in a state of complete calm. We are already in action and we are calling upon our people to take up arms in their defence. There is no such thing as conscription in Palestine. All the people who are now responding to the call and taking up arms in self-defence are volunteers, and we do not envisage any change in that process, at any rate until the Jewish State is a full-fledged State, and we hope that even then we shall not need to resort to conscription.

On the other hand, it is not an entirely spontaneous process. We tried to organize the volunteering process. We did it during the war. We faced national collective responsibilities in regard to our part in the war effort. We could not leave it to the complete personal freedom of any individual either to volunteer or not to volunteer. Very often we had to restrain people from volunteering because we regarded them as being essential for war production at home. For instance, we had to institute a system of quotas in the settlements, making it impossible or at any rate trying to prevail upon the settlements not to give up too many of their people for armed service outside Palestine. Otherwise, this would have depleted the personnel engaged in agricultural production. Very often we had to tell a man who was in a key position in a certain factory and who was extremely anxious to join the colours and have a share in real fighting not to do so, because his volunteering might have caused dislocation in that factory.

It was only at a fairly late stage in the war that the Palestine Administration introduced certain manpower regulations along those lines, but their manpower regulations were of a purely negative character. They only restrained people from joining the army. They were not of the affirmative character in the military sense; they did not urge or prevail upon people to go to the army.

We were first in the field with our self-imposed and improvised system of regulations, and our system of regulations was aimed at being of a comprehensive kind; that is, to make sure that production was not impaired by the volunteering process, and also to make sure that the community placed the requisite number of people at the disposal of the army authorities that aid the recruiting.

Therefore we have a basis on which we can operate and we have a stock of experience to guide us. We are first calling upon certain age groups to register; and of the age groups that we are now registering we are calling upon certain more limited categories actually to come forward for active service.

The CHAIRMAN: That means that the problem of recruiting people would in practice present no problem at all?

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): I do not regard that as a problem. I shall not conceal from the Commission that it might strain our manpower resources from the point of view of production, but we shall have to husband our resources as best we can.

It goes without saying that we cannot today take people away from their previous defence duties in order that we should get a proper and systematic trainee for the Jewish Militia. They must carry on with their tasks and they must get such training as they can in the interim. On the other hand we are rather anxious to put our future militia on a proper basis from the start to lay a good ground work for that military force.

The suggestion that we have is that we should set aside a certain contingent of people - something in the neighbourhood of 8,000. That is the figure with which we operate, but it is all subject to review in the light of such military advice as you will be able to give us, or you would want to rely upon. It is an initial figure that I am throwing out tentatively, and it is not an arbitrary figure. We have in mind one brigade group and certain essential reinforcements in terms of special arms, such as artillery, aircraft, armour, and so forth. That also would include all the headquarters units; that is to say, all headquarters plus one brigade group, but a brigade group which may have to be reinforced in certain respects in view of the fact that it would be the only brigade group properly formed for the time being. That brings us to a rough: total of 8,000 men.

The CHAIRMAN: You have in mind this reserve brigade group?

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): Possibly, I do not know. By the time the second brigade group is formed, it may be the first brigade group that has been formed which will go into action, and the second group will act as a reserve. We envisage all the five as more or less identical in establishment and in their arms, although, when the whole scheme is completed perhaps the reserve brigade group will have to have something in addition in order to be more mobile than the others. We consider that as a proper start, as a nucleus of the militia, but we definitely envisage an eventual integration of the defence forces which are already in the field within the structure of the future militia.

This may call, in the course of time, for some supplementary training for various other adjustments. While a starting point will be a parallel process of people already engaged in their defence on the present basis and on the present footing, at the same time a nucleus of the Jewish militia will be training and will not be engaged in any defence duties, but in perspective the two are to merge into one framework.

This proposal which we are making may help also to obviate a certain political difficulty as to the responsibility for the nucleus the Jewish militia, for its arms and for its use.

It is quite conceivable that if the question of responsibility arose right away for our defence tactics, all sorts of difficult and intricate problem might arise, but it is not our intention to raise this question. If the Commission has anything to ask with regard to this matter, I am here to assist the Commission by submitting all the information which is at my disposal, but we thought it would make the problem of starting action with the formation of the Jewish militias easier if the approach we have in mind could be adopted, because we consider that it would be absolutely vital for this start to precede, by as long a period as possible, the termination of the Mandate. If the Mandate were to terminate today, we should quite definitely find ourselves in a most precarious position, not that we would not face up to it. That is a different matter; there is nothing to which we would not face up in that country of Palestine. It is our country; we are there to live, and if necessary to die, but we hope that we shall live in it.

The question is whether any contingency with which we would be expected to cope is a fair contingency and whether the risks, the burdens, the dangers, and the sacrifices could not be minimized. Therefore we consider it as absolutely vital for this start to be made ahead of the termination of the Mandate, so that on the termination of the Mandate we shall be prepared to take over with at least a nucleus of the force properly organized, reinforced by our guerrilla forces, which will then be able to be integrated more quickly into the regular framework.

If a start is made early enough, then we might again, before the termination of the Mandate, proceed to the formation of the second brigade group, which of course would make our position still easier. Under no circumstances do we expect an easy position. It is only a question of relativity as to whether it will be easier or more difficult. That is a very essential point.

I have already stated - I believe on a previous occasion - that it is impossible to expect us to give birth to something without going through a certain preparatory period. That is normal in biology, and it is also normal in human affairs generally. It is very difficult to conceive the British Mandatory Power reconciling the position which it took up, namely, of not obstructing the [plan](#) of the United Nations with regard to Palestine, with an attitude of opposing any action by way of preparing a Jewish militia ahead of the termination of the Mandate. If that would not be obstructing the [plan](#) of the United Nations, then I really do not know what would. Digressing from ascertain point to which have already alluded is the question of the attitude that has been taken by neighbouring Arab States. I have alluded to that problem in connection with the subject of arms for Jewish defence; but that problem arises, I think, on a higher plane, both a military plane and a political plane.

To us it is clear that what we are now facing is a state of aggression on the part of the neighbouring States. Actually I think I ought to use the term "aggression" in

the particular sense in which it appears in the United Nations [Resolution](#) on Palestine. There is a very clear text on that; there is a provision which says that any attempt to alter, by force, the present settlement will, or should - and I do not remember exactly which word is used - be regarded as a threat to the peace, as a breach of the peace, and as an act of aggression.

The Jewish Agency wishes to state that we now find ourselves in that condition, that the contingency has already arisen, that an attempt is being made to alter, by force, the present settlement, and that, therefore, the situation which arises from that attempt must be regarded as a threat to peace, as a breach of the peace, and as an act of aggression.

Aggression has on the one hand its roots in the tactics adopted by a certain Arab political group, as well as its followers, in Palestine. It may be said that they are not a party to any responsibility that devolves on the United Nations and on the Member States of the United Nations, and that the treatment they call for is perhaps a separate problem; but aggression also has its roots - its main roots - in the attitude taken up by the neighboring Arab States.

We are now engaged in the preparation of a memorandum to the Commission with regard to that particular subject. Just as we have dealt in detail with one aspect of the security problem in the memorandum which we have submitted already, so we propose to deal in detail with another aspect of the problem in the next memorandum, which will probably be submitted tomorrow, which will contain all the material in our possession, extensive material which is common property and has been published widely, material in regard to the present line of conduct of the Arab States concerning Palestine.

Just by way of one or two illustrations, I should like to mention that after the last incursion into Palestine from the North, the defence Minister -

The CHAIRMAN: You mean Dan and Kefar Szold?

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): The settlements of Dan and Kefar Szold, yes.

It was an organized, well-equipped and well armed force; it was uniformed, etc. It sustained losses and it was beaten off, in the first instance by the Jewish settlers and the Hagana. Towards the final stages of that battle, the force was beaten off with the help of British arms. I singled that out.

I thought that incident showed that on certain occasions, the British forces were doing their duty. However, they were doing it a little late because they were not going into action until the position became really serious. But it is not only that. After the event the Defence Minister of the Lebanon made a report on the whole operation to the Lebanese Chamber. This report was widely published in the press. From the report it appeared that he himself was not far from the scene of action, and was able to watch the course of the operations.

The Minister of Defence of Syria also made a public statement with regard to that incident. He said: "This is only the beginning. The next time we shall be ready with a much larger and better equipped force; and we shall play for higher stakes," or words to that effect.

I now have a report in my possession dated 27 January which I might read:

"Seven hundred and fifty well-armed Arabs - the largest single concentration to invade Palestine - massed at Tubas, northeast of Nablus..."

They arrived on Saturday last.

CHAIRMAN: Is Tubas on Palestine soil?

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): Tubas is on Palestine territory. It is within the Arab State area. It is due south from Tirat Tsevi, which is at the southern tip of the Beisan triangle. It is a very large village, and is well-known in Palestine.

This force arrived "on Saturday led by Iraqians, the force consisted mainly of Syrians and returning Palestinians."

"Reported to have come by way of Trans-Jordan, the Arab troops entered forded points below the Beisan Valley to avoid Jewish settlements and Hagana spotters.

Previous bands have infiltrated through the northern frontiers.

"The Arabs were well armed with rifles, mortars, machine guns and grenades and wore uniforms purchased in the Middle East from United States government surplus stocks. A spokesman for the group's commander, denying a report that they had brought in Bren carriers, stated: 'We don't need them'.

"Although the Palestine Government has refused to reply to questions from newspapermen" - it may have replied since. I do not know. That was the date on which the report was sent to us - "it is known that the British Colonial Office was informed about this latest move into Palestine." That is to say, that our people know that the High Commissioner made a report to the Colonial Office, as he should have done. "Unconfirmed reports state that after the infiltration units of the Sixth Airborne moved into the Nablus area to check any further progress of the Arab force." There has been no action taken yet against that concentration.

"Tubas has long been described as the mobilization point of Arab volunteer forces. A Palcor news agency correspondent reports seeing a photograph taken in Nablus of a young Iraqi officer in a GI uniform who supposedly was a member of the group which invaded Saturday." The officer is reported to have spoken to a member of the Associated Press at Nablus."

That is the position we are facing. Further, I should like to say that, formally speaking, the United Kingdom Government was correct in its attitude in regard to such attempts to erupt into Palestine from outside. I say "formally speaking" because they addressed notes of protest to the Syrian and Trans-Jordan Governments respectively in connection with these two incidents - the incursion to which I referred a short while ago, and this new massing of troops from outside. This in itself is proof that the United Kingdom Government, at any rate, is satisfied in its mind that this is an act of aggression. Otherwise, it would not have deemed this to be a proper occasion for a Note of protest.

We submit that this is a contingency with which the United Nations must deal. We submit that in all probability and according to our reports, the incursion from Syria had mainly the objective of serving as a kind of trial balloon in order to obtain the reaction of the United Nations as an Organization and of its individual members.

We know the kind of propaganda which is being used in Palestine and throughout the Middle East. People generally are extremely hesitant about joining in this adventure, and, people generally were very, very strongly impressed by the United Nations decision especially with the majority which voted for it. In trying to counteract that decision, nationalistic passions have been inflamed, together with religious fervour and lust for loot. All this has been made cumulative, and has been made to prevail against the natural fear of engaging in too hazardous an adventure, and against the natural desire that the masses of common people throughout the world have of not disturbing the peace. It is not that the Arabs are professional law breakers, although they are Arabs. We should not be too romantic about it and we should not envisage the Arab as a professional looter who is always ready to jump up and get his rifle in order to go out and raid. That is by no means the case: The vast majority are hardworking, perfectly peaceful people. However, in order to prevail against that fear and inertia, people are being told that the Security Council and the major powers concerned, the United Nations generally, do not mean their decision seriously. It was merely lip-service. They owed it to world opinion, which is something very elusive and redefined; they owed it to their Jews, so to speak; they owed the international game to each other in view of a certain situation which they had to face. But they do not mean to back it up. They do not intend to back it up by force.

If the United States Government has protested, and if tomorrow the United States Government will protest, well, quite naturally they have to protest; but they do not need to carry it beyond the point of lodging a mere protest. That is that the people are being told.

Now the people are else being told: "Lo and behold: Here we broke into Palestine from Syria. Naturally the British had to take a hand in the situation, but they did so only towards the very end, and maybe not strong enough. But the United Nations has not done anything. The Security Council has not convened a meeting immediately to consider the situation. If we do it again and again, you will see that we shall get away with it."

That is the position which we believe and submit that the United Nations has to face. In our submission, the time has come. It has not come only just now. We have been in that state for weeks past; namely, where the Security Council might appropriately take cognizance of this situation and take action, as it does whenever such a contingency arises. That is what I have to say with regard to Arab aggression.

Finally - and this is my fifth and last point - I come to the question of an international force. This is ground on which, quite naturally, I must tread very warily. We know that the problem bristles with potential difficulties and complications.

I should like to make our attitude on this very important issue perfectly clear to the Commission. In doing so, I shall be doing no more than repeating, perhaps amplifying, what we have already had the opportunity of telling the Working Group of Four Powers which was charged with the working out of the implementation scheme during the regular session of the General Assembly, and also the various Governments, more primarily concerned, in private conversations that we have had with their representatives in New York and in Washington.

We definitely regard the international force as being most necessary, most highly desirable - even more than that, we regard it as essential. We regard it as essential, not because we are afraid of the fighting. I do not think that question even arises in the minds of the Commission. It is not because we are anxious to evade such fighting as maybe unavoidable or such sacrifice. Even if an international force is formed and takes the field, we take it for granted that if there is fighting to be done, we shall have to bear the brunt of it. We shall certainly claim that privilege. On the other hand, we also believe that the mere presence of an effective international force, properly equipped, properly led, on the soil of Palestine would be a very powerful deterrent to the forces of defiance. Therefore, there would be much less fighting for us to bear the brunt of, much as we are ready to do so. However, there would be much less fighting.

Why do we regard an international force as essential? First, because it will help to reduce our sacrifices, and we do not see why our sacrifices should not be reduced if they can be. Second, because militarily, we believe that only an international force can provide such force of effective defence which are absolutely necessary, and

of which we may not be quite capable, particularly at the start; such as a proper air force, heavy armour, heavy artillery and such things.

Let me again emphasize that the international force would serve as a deterrent in the first instance. It would not necessarily go into action. We hope to God that it will not need to be brought into action. However, we cannot even hope to have such a deterrent at our disposal. We want some aircraft, but we cannot hope to have heavy bombers and proper fighter squadrons, at any rate not very quickly.

The third reason is because we believe that what is going on is not merely a fight against the Jews but a defiance of the authority of the United Nations, and it must be the business of the United Nations to meet the challenge and to take action against open aggression.

I would not presume to lay down a complete programme as to how strong the international force should be, of what arms it should consist, how the problem of its command should be solved, and of what constituent parts it should consist, militarily and internationally. I would not presume to solve the difficult problem whether it should consist only of the major powers or only of the small powers, or of both, and to what extent it should be mixed. I appreciate that all these are extremely thorny questions. However, happily there is a machinery which can at least attempt to solve them. It would merely be a matter of plain common sense. Therefore, it may be a platitude if I say that a force with the participation of the big powers is preferable to a force without their participation. It would also be a statement of elementary fact if I were to add that it is questionable whether a force without the participation of the great powers will be practical at all. On the other hand, I know the difficulties involved in the creation of a force including the big powers, so there, too, the question of practicability arises.

If the United Nations comes to the conclusion that the whole project is not practicable, we shall not retreat from our position. We shall not give up the defence not only of the lives and the property that is immediately and directly threatened; but also the defence of the political rights which we believe have been conferred upon us by the decision of the United Nations; that is, the defence of the territory and of the Jewish State machinery and of the State itself when it is formed.

However, we shall then consider that we have been placed under an unduly heavy burden, and that certain risks which we must face have been unwarrantably increased beyond the point which we can reasonably be expected to cope with the situation. We shall, however, make a very determined effort to cope with it under any circumstances.

That completes my statement.

CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Shertok, for your statement. I think it will be very useful to myself and to the members of the Commission. I must emphasize that your practical suggestion as to how to start with the matter of a militia was very useful. It was not included in your [letter](#). If understood you correctly, you think that the first thing to do is to form and equip one brigade which should be completely armed according to the scheme in the appendix to your letter?

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): Yes.

CHAIRMAN: And under the cover of this first brigade, the other formations which are now in the field and which are trained and armed, such as the Hagana, could be perfected and armed under the scheme you propose?

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): Yes,

CHAIRMAN: There is one subject with which you did not treat today. It may be useful if you could add some practical suggestion about the financing of the scheme. How do you envisage that aspect? What are your minimum suggestions, for example, for the financing of the first brigade?

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): We are in the following predicament with regard to the question of finance. Again, it is not that we are anxious to lighten our burden and pass it on to other shoulders, willing or otherwise.

We envisage the formation of a force similar to a militia, as shown in the scheme. The equipment and maintenance of such a force is in the nature of a state enterprise. It is not a matter for a private fund to undertake. If we project ourselves into the future, we see ourselves constituted as a state and shouldering all responsibilities devolving upon a state, but also enjoying all the facilities which a state has at its command; that is, a state which will be able effectively to tax its citizens and residents. On the other hand, it will be state which will have to expend its revenue on the maintenance of essential services and institutions. In that case, the maintenance and re-equipment of the militia, etc. will naturally be a charge on state resources.

Our trouble today arises from the fact that we are not yet a state. We do not have the sources of governmental revenue at our disposal. Today, when goods arrive at Tel-Aviv, we pay customs duties on the goods that arrive. That revenue goes into the till of the British Administration at Jerusalem. We do not touch one piastre of it. In addition, we pay our income taxes and we pay a variety of other taxes. You know what they are. All this revenue goes into the till of the Government of Palestine, and we now are already saddled with considerable extraordinary security expenditure. It is primarily the Jews of Palestine who are footing the bill. We are also helped to some extent by Jews outside of Palestine. They help us because they consider that what we are defending is not only the lives and the property of the Palestinian Jew but the hope of the Jewish people. Therefore, they think it is right and proper to contribute.

However, when it comes to forming the future Jewish State's militia, we are faced with additional expenditure which must be pieced on a proper footing. We cannot have members go the militia barefoot occasionally. I mean the defenders, Hagana at present. I hope they do not go barefoot now. They are certainly without uniforms. In some places they are without winter overcoats although the nights are very cold. They just shift for themselves as best they can. We know that there are people who perhaps fought under more difficult conditions; as shown by the partisan literature of the recent war. This was also evident in the Boer War.

If a proper militia is to be formed, it must be placed on a proper footing. The amount to be expended must be fixed. Therefore, we believe we are entitled to international assistance in that regard. That amount will have to be forthcoming, we assume, through the medium of such governments as are in a position to lend us money. The loan may be a charge on the future Jewish State to be repaid in reasonable instalments at a reasonable rate of interest. We would welcome this help. The amount of the help is a matter which can be resolved by people who understand military expenditure and figures generally. We gave a very general idea of the amount needed based, of course, on a certain calculation. They were not arbitrary figures or haphazard estimates, but they remain to be adjusted. If the start is made only with one brigade plus, day, one and one half brigades, then the estimate for maintenance may be reduced accordingly. On the other hand, there is a certain initial capital expenditure which will be less reducible.

There is then the question of the equipment. How and under what conditions will it be acquired? Will we have to pay for it, or will it be forthcoming without payment? If we have to pay for it, how much will it be and under what conditions will it have to be paid for.

CHAIRMAN: You have put a paragraph before us which concerns financial assistance. This paragraph contains four different alternatives. It would be useful to the Commission if you would state what your real hopes are in regard to the realization of these alternatives.

I may say quite openly that the first three alternatives do not seem as realistic as the last one.

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): I agree that the last is more realistic than the first three alternatives.

CHAIRMAN: Have you any concrete reasons to Submit in connection with these alternatives? The first alternative reads: "Obtaining free supplies on a Security Council recommendation". Have you any reason to believe that you may obtain free supplies?

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): I ask Mr. Horowitz to deal with it.

Mr. HOROWITZ (Jewish Agency for Palestine): There are surplus supplies from the recent war which are of no use to the armies which are in the process of being re-equipped for a future war. We know of many cases where arms have been discarded because more advanced techniques are being resorted to.

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): May I cite an example? According to our information, fighter aircraft which have just been completed in the United States are being completely discarded because all future fighter aircraft are going to be based on the principle of jet propulsion. These are being left in the crates and the United States does not know what it is going to do with them. It will probably sell those fighter aircraft to somebody.

Mr. HOROWITZ (Jewish Agency for Palestine): These fighter aircraft are usually offered at a very cheap price. It would be reasonable to assume that governments which support the decision of the United Nations would forego that small income which would accrue from such sale, if it takes place at all. It is very difficult to sell these supplies to states. For the purposes of defence in Palestine under the conditions of warfare which exist there, these fighter aircraft would be quite adequate. Therefore, it should not be out of the question for us to obtain, on the recommendation of the United Nations, such discarded supplies which have little value to the states concerned, and which may be quite effective for warfare in Palestine.

I should also like to comment on the financial position. The Jewish population of Palestine amounts to seven hundred thousand people. We, of course, do not request the United Nations for help in the active defence at the present moment. However, that defence is a very heavy burden on the population when it is considered in relation to the very heavy taxation of the United Kingdom Government. The amount of additional taxation this year will be over three million pounds. This taxation will have to be borne by these seven hundred thousand people in addition to the tax in respect of customs and duty. It would be very difficult to impose upon these people an additional burden without seriously dislocating their economic life.

The burden at defence will be borne by the Jews of Palestine until the establishment of the Jewish State. However, the establishment of the Jewish militia, which is a kind of organ of the United Nations, with the view of enforcing its decision, really would not be completely charged to their account.

There is another problem which I would like to mention, the problem of immigration. You know that the Cyprus camps are going to be evacuated, and these camps contain some thirty-two thousand people. Therefore, immigration will proceed on a large scale.

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): We do not know that definitely.

Mr. HOROWITZ (Jewish Agency for Palestine): It is in prospect. Anyway, that will occur after 15 May. We are speaking of the period in which the Jewish State will be established.

There is the problem of refugees, the security of which will be a backbreaking job. We shall have to strain all our resources in Palestine and abroad to effect the removal of the defences to Palestine.

If we speak of immigration on the scale envisaged by UNSCOP, 70,000 people a year, that would mean an immigration of about ten per cent of the population. That would be equivalent to an immigration into the United States in one year of 14,000,000 destitute people. However, they would come into a country which is highly developed, which has machinery and equipment available for a much larger economy. The small economy in Palestine, which is in formation, will have to do that job. Under these conditions, it will be very difficult for the Palestine Jews to assume any additional responsibility.

It would also seem fair that the United Nations should be as helpful as they can and assist in implementing their [decision](#) by taking some measures to establish this international force. This force will not be used for our defence, but will be used to implement the decision of the United Nations.

CHAIRMAN: In your opinion, the cost of the establishment of the international force should be shared by the members of the United Nations?

Mr. HOROWITZ (Jewish Agency for Palestine): We would stick to that idea of getting supplies, first of all, from the United Nations, either in the form of a loan, or, if possible, in the form of a grant.

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): At any rate, we do not consider that we stand much of a chance today of getting supplies unless it becomes the policy of the United Nations.

CHAIRMAN: I think it is in your interest to investigate the prospects in this respect, and perhaps then to concentrate eventually on more chances for realization.

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): Is that your advice to us?

CHAIRMAN: I am just thinking aloud for myself.

I remember that in the late League of Nations the only practical way of helping a state was to guarantee its loans. The guarantee was not given by the League of Nations as a whole, but by some members of it. For instance, there were some loans made to the Austrian Government. I suggest you consider the matter from this angle.

Mr. HOROWITZ (Jewish Agency for Palestine): We made some advances since that time. There is a system now of direct grants and help to states in need of assistance. This is not being done by the United Nations at present.

CHAIRMAN: Do any members of the Commission wish to ask any questions about the factual statement of Mr. Shertok? All the legal problems will be discussed later and the matter will be put before the competent bodies in the appropriate way. At the present stage, I request the Members to ask only supplementary questions with regard to Mr. Shertok's statement.

Mr. MORGAN (Panama): How long a period of time would the Jewish Agency require to organize the Provisional Council of Government of the Jewish State?

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): It can be done within a very short period. If I were faced with the task today, we can do it within a matter of a few weeks.

Mr. MORGAN (Panama): Can you assure the Commission that legal order would continue functioning under the Provisional Council of Government.

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): What do you mean by "local order"?

Mr. MORGAN (Panama): The functioning of the administration of the civil service, etc.

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): I would say yes, subject to certain reservations. There may be some dislocation involved in the transition process. But essentially the answer would be yes.

Mr. MORGAN (Panama): Can you assure the Commission that there will be unity of action within the militia to be created, and that there will be no interference on the part of other forces which exist in Palestine.

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): Most definitely.

Mr. MORGAN (Panama): Would Irgun be automatically incorporated into that militia?

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): I hope not as an organized group. If its members came forward to serve, took the necessary oath, and submitted to discipline, they would be eligible.

Mr. FEDERSPIEL (Denmark): I do not think that was quite what the representative of Panama meant. The question was; would Irgun automatically disappear if the militia were formed?

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): It is very difficult for me to speak for that group. I know that they have declared that they will never defy a Jewish authority. At the beginning, they may not wish to dissolve. However, as the authority will be more and more concentrated in Jewish hands, there will be much less incentive for them to operate.

On the other hand, the Jewish authority will be better and better equipped to deal with them effectively in the event that they try to operate.

CHAIRMAN: Did they accept the decision of the United Nations on partition?

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): No, they did not accept the decision on partition. But they made two points clear in one and the same breath. They said that although they do not accept the partition programme they will never bear arms against a Jewish authority. They will oppose it ideologically.

CHAIRMAN: In the meanwhile, are they doing any harm to your cause?

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): They are definitely doing harm.

Mr. MORGAN (Panama): When you say that it would take a few weeks to establish the Provisional Council of Government, how much time do you actually mean?

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): I mean about four to six weeks from the time that definite notice is given.

CHAIRMAN: Does it mean the composition of the Council, the Government, and the necessary administrative organs?

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): It means the necessary administrative organs. It may be that all the posts down to the last one will not be filled at the outset, but there will be a skeleton administration for all departments ready.

Mr. FEDERSPIEL (Denmark): Was the number of Arab force which was concentrated near Tubas in the amount of seventeen thousand?

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): No, I said seven hundred.

Mr. MORGAN (Panama): Would the Commission be able to work and operate in Jerusalem where the situation, according to this report, is just as grave as elsewhere in Palestine?

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): In some respects, it is even graver in Jerusalem than in many other parts of the country. I do not think that this fact should mean that the Commission would be unable to operate in Jerusalem. There are parts of the City which are completely calm and secure internally. Jerusalem is a large city, and it is divided into quarters. Some quarters are separated from the rest of the City by empty spaces. Therefore, it is quite possible to make arrangements for the sojourn of the Commission in a calm and secure part of Jerusalem.

I would not suggest that the Commission take up residence on the walls of the Mosque of El Aqsa, for instance, which today serves as a nest for snipers. However, if it were left to me, I could offer quite a choice of quarters in Jerusalem where the Commission might reside and establish its offices - in the Rehavia Quarter, and even in the house where UNSCOP lived - KADIMA. Of course, it would mean taking certain precautionary measures, but it will not be an impossible task.

Then the expedition will arise as to the freedom of movement of members of the Commission about Palestine. I suppose the opposition which the Palestine Administration is offering now to the members of the Executive of the Va'ad Leumi travelling in a bulletproof car would not apply to the members of the Commission. The Administration confiscated their bullet-proof car and insisted that they travel in a car in which they would be exposed to bullets.

With regard to visiting some parts of the country, plans could easily be made.

Mr. MORGAN (Panama): The interest I have in this matter is not due to any fears on the part of any member of the Commission. My intention was solely to inquire about the facilities that will be available to the Commission to enable it to carry out its work.

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): I understand. May I say that some fears are wholesome fears. Nobody wants the members of the Commission to come to any grief in Palestine, certainly not we. It is reasonable to take the necessary precautions.

CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Shertok. for your statement. If at a later stage of our deliberations, it necessary to ask for any supplementary views, we shall let you know and arrange another meeting.

Mr. SHERTOK (Jewish Agency for Palestine): I shall be only too happy to be at your disposal. For my immediate guidance, may I inquire whether you will call upon me to appear tomorrow morning to appear. I am quite read to appear, but it would help me if I know.

CHAIRMAN: No, I do not think so.

At this point Mr. Shertok and Mr. Horowitz left the meeting.

CONTINUATION OF CONSIDERATION OF THE DRAFT OF THE [FIRST MONTHLY REPORT](#) TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Section 16: General Conclusions

Paragraph (a) was approved as drafted.

After a brief discussion it was agreed that paragraph (b) of this section should consist of the first sentence of draft paragraph (b), followed by the whole of draft paragraph (c).

It was further agreed that the remainder of draft paragraph (b), amended to read as follows, would be added at the end of new Section 8:

“The Commission is acutely conscious of the imminence of 1 April 1948; by which date the Provisional Councils of Government should be selected, established and functioning. In this regard, the Commission recognizes the dilemma which will be created if the Mandatory Power maintains the position that the Commission should not come to Palestine until approximately a fortnight before the termination of the Mandate, that is, 1 May 1948, if the Mandate is to be terminated on 15 May as presently indicated. The Commission is now engaged in discussions with the Mandatory Power concerning the necessity for the Commission’s arrival in Palestine sufficiently in advance of the termination of the Mandate to permit it to perform its tasks.”

After a brief discussion, it was agreed that draft paragraph (d), which would now become paragraph (c), would be amended as follows: the phrase “it goes without saying that” would be deleted, and the whole of the last sentence reading, “the co-operationauthority of the Commission” would likewise be deleted.

It was decided to delete draft paragraphs (e) and (f).

LETTER TO THE MANDATORY POWER ON REPORTED ARMED INVASION OF PALESTINE

There was some discussion concerning the report which Mr. Shertok had read to the Commission in the course of his statement to the effect that a force of Arabs had infiltrated into Palestine and was now massed at Tubas. It was pointed out that once the matter had been brought to the attention of the Commission, the Commission should act at once, and that, in the circumstances, the time factor was most important. It was decided that the Secretary should despatch immediately a communication to the Mandatory Power together with a copy of the above-mentioned report. The communication would request the Mandatory Power for any information or comments that the latter had regarding the information contained in the said report.

The meeting rose at 6.45 p.m.

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