

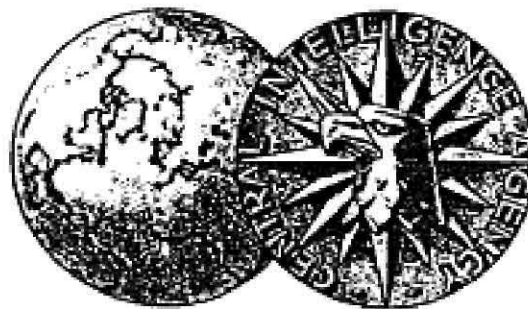
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# POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENTS FROM THE PALESTINE TRUCE

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

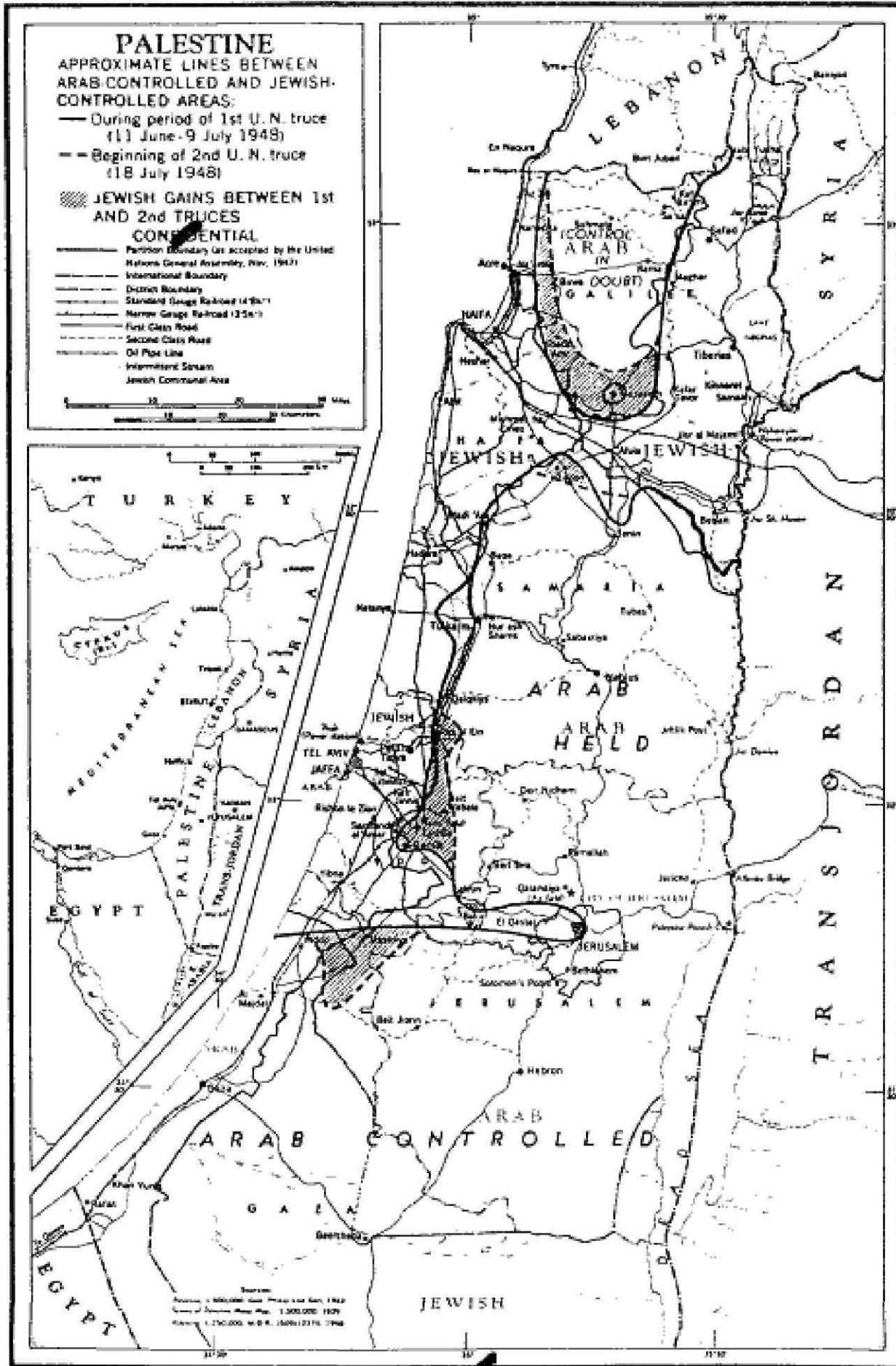
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# MILITARY SITUATION - 18 JULY 1948

(At beginning of second U. N. Truce)

31522



## POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENTS FROM THE PALESTINE TRUCE

1. In response to a request from the Office of the Secretary of Defense regarding the probable duration of the 18 July truce in Palestine and developments that may arise as a result of it, CIA presents the following estimates:

a. The current continuation of the truce is for the most part nominal, and sporadic fighting continues. Israel benefited greatly from the previous truce period in improving its military potential. A continuation of the truce on the conditions of the previous one would be to Israel's advantage, and the Arabs probably would not long respect it. On the other hand, a really effective and adequately enforced truce would have a reasonable chance of being prolonged. Therefore, the Mediator's success in prolonging the truce is in direct proportion to the support he is given in establishing effective means of enforcement.

b. It is unlikely that the Mediator himself will be able to effect a settlement of the basic controversy. Provided, however, that effective means of observation and enforcement are made available and utilized, it is probable that an unstable truce can be maintained until the problem can be referred back to the United Nations General Assembly in September or to the International Court of Justice.

c. The present intentions of the USSR are to promote instability and insecurity throughout the Middle East and to undermine the positions of the US and the UK therein. To do so the USSR has given, and presumably will continue to give, support in varying degrees to both Israel and the Arab countries. The collapse of the truce and the intensification of hostilities would afford the USSR increased opportunities to pursue its aims. Conversely, any measures which might prolong the truce would be detrimental to Soviet aims.

d. A critical factor in the continuance of the truce will be the ability of the Israeli government to control the activities of its extremist elements (Irgun Zvai Leumi and the Stern Gang) and of the Arab governments to control popular outbreaks directed against the maintenance of the truce. It is not believed that complete control by their governments of either Jewish or Arab extremists will be possible, but the conditions for such control will be much more favorable under a fair truce, rigorously enforced, than under an inadequate truce, half-heartedly supported.

2. Further discussion concerning the possible outcome of the truce is in Enclosure A; of the current military situation in Palestine in Enclosure B; of Soviet intentions in the area in Enclosure C.

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Note: The information in this report is as of July 21 July.

The intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, Army, Navy, and the Air Force have concurred in this report.

## ENCLOSURE A

## POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENTS FROM THE PALESTINE TRUCE

## 1. GENERAL.

The UN Mediator has two objectives: an effective truce of indefinite duration; and a final compromise solution, between Jews and Arabs, of the Palestine problem. The present truce was agreed to on 18 July and has been violated repeatedly by both Arabs and Jews. The violations have resulted from the absence in Palestine of UN observers and machinery for preventing infractions, and from the determination of various Arab and Jewish groups to gain last-minute advantages which they feel to be of vital importance. The Mediator's success in establishing an effective truce will depend on the effectiveness of the machinery which is given him, the ability of Israel to control its extremist groups (the Irgun Zvai Leumi and the Stern Gang), and the reaction of the Arab peoples against the acceptance of the truce by their leaders.

## 2. POSSIBILITY OF AN EFFECTIVE TRUCE.

*a. Observer Teams.*

Current efforts to organize UN observer teams include plans for 300 observers—three times as many as were sent to Palestine during the previous truce. The effectiveness of the current truce will depend largely on the incisiveness with which these observers carry out their duties and the forcefulness with which the Mediator deals with violations. If violations are ignored to the same extent as during the previous truce, the success of the current truce will be doubtful. The Jews will, as before, bring in men, aircraft, and heavy military equipment; present Arab opposition to the truce will then become intensified, and the Arabs will probably reopen hostilities.

*b. Israeli Extremists.*

It is probable that any concessions that the PGI might make to obtain Arab agreement to permanent peace would be met by open and violent action by the Jerusalem extremists. If, however, the Mediator attempts to establish a special UN regime over Jerusalem before a final settlement is achieved or to revise the territorial boundaries to what they consider detrimental to Israel, the extremist groups will almost certainly resume fighting. At the present time it is believed that the PGI can control extremist elements within the partition boundaries, but it may not be able to control them in other parts of Palestine, especially in Jerusalem.

*c. Reaction of Arab Peoples.*

The Arab people were confident of victory and were assured by their leaders that the truce would not be extended. Their bitterness may well erupt into violence against their governments or the Western powers or both. If their wrath is turned against their leaders, some of the Arab governments in an attempt to survive may

well resume the Palestine war. Arab leaders, however, will first make every effort to turn the anger of their people against the UN, the US, and the UK, or even against one another.

The timing of such developments cannot be predicted because they depend partly on spontaneous eruptions of popular feelings, which are subject to violent change, and partly on organized agitation. Rioting, however, has already developed in Cairo. Serious Jewish violations of the truce (particularly the bombing of Arab cities) would further inflame Arab public opinion and would make it more difficult for the Arab governments to continue the truce. Communist agents in the Arab countries will probably exert themselves to stir up the people against their governments in order to bring about the downfall of the present regime as well as to destroy the truce. The rapidity with which the observer teams are mobilized and their effectiveness will obviously have great bearing on this problem.

### 3. POSSIBILITY OF A COMPROMISE SOLUTION BETWEEN ARABS AND JEWS.

It is extremely unlikely that the Mediator himself will be able to persuade Arabs and Jews to agree to a compromise solution for Palestine. The Jews, with a *de facto* government and because of their military strength and the political support of the US and the USSR, are in an extremely strong position. The provisions of the UN partition scheme constitute for the moment their minimum demands. The Arabs, in spite of their weakness, have given no official indication that they are prepared to recognize Israel as defined in the UN partition plan. At the present time no Arab government feels it could survive if it consented to negotiate with Israeli representatives. Israel and the Arab governments might accept some sort of international status for Jerusalem or its de-militarization, but such a development might well be resisted by the Israeli extremist groups.

If, after repeated attempts, the Mediator is unable to make any progress toward a solution, he may recommend some further course of action to the Security Council. Should the truce prove reasonably effective, he might as an alternate move recommend the advisability of securing an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice. If, on the other hand, the truce collapses, he undoubtedly will recommend sanctions against Arabs, or Jews, or both. One difficulty in the way of getting negotiations started is the firm statement of the Arabs, frequently repeated, that under no circumstances will they recognize an Israeli state, which they would appear to do if they sat at a council table with Israeli delegates. Encouragement must therefore be given to the present Arab governments as well as an excuse furnished to them to give to their own people. This might well be secured through an advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice; e.g. as to whether a government of Israel exists with which the Arabs can negotiate.

### 4. CONCLUSIONS.

Unless strongly backed by the Security Council and efficiently enforced, it is unlikely that the truce will be effective. Even with an effective truce it is unlikely that

a compromise agreement will be reached between Arabs and Jews for a considerable period of time. Judging from present events in Palestine and should the effectiveness of the observer machinery be no better than during the first truce, it is probable that sporadic fighting will continue and that the Jews will greatly increase their military potential under the cloak of the truce. Thus the state of Israel would be further consolidated, and the Arabs would be further weakened and isolated. If, however, the truce is effectively enforced and the present comparatively moderate Arab governments can stay in power, the truce may be prolonged by the Arabs in the hope that a revision of the UN partition resolution may be secured at the September meeting of the General Assembly or that the issue will be submitted to the International Court of Justice. If, on the other hand, these governments are overthrown, the Arabs will resume the fight, be seriously defeated, break all contact with the US and the UK, and almost certainly (in one way or another) eventually find themselves open to Soviet exploitation.\*

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\* If, however, a settlement is imposed upon the Arabs by force, it should be pointed out that guerrilla warfare may be expected to continue for an indefinite period. Furthermore, resistance to authority through well proved nuisance techniques, boycotts, and other political devices may defeat ultimately the goal of permanent peace and security in Palestine and the Middle East.

## ENCLOSURE B

THE MILITARY SITUATION IN PALESTINE AT THE BEGINNING  
OF THE SECOND TRUCE—18 JULY 1948

The military situation on 18 July, the beginning of the second truce in Palestine, shows that the Jews have made substantial gains during the nine-day period of fighting between 9 July and 18 July. (See map.) During that period the Jews captured Lydda, Ramle, and Ras el Zin, thereby removing the danger of an Arab thrust on Tel-Aviv. In the north they took the strategic Arab-Christian town of Nazareth and consolidated their positions along the Lebanese border into which units had been moved during the truce. In the south the Jews thrust southeast into the Egyptian-occupied area near Isdud and widened and strengthened the strip of Jewish-controlled territory along the roads between Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv. The only successful Arab action during that period, the Iraqi advance north from Jenin toward Afule, was halted by the truce before any significant gain was made.

During the period of the truce the Jews gained considerably from a military point of view. They strengthened and improved their existing fortifications and built new ones in the areas recently taken over from the Arabs. They improved the by-pass road to Jerusalem, which skirts Arab-held Latrun and Bab el Wad on the main road from Jerusalem to Tel-Aviv. They recruited and trained troops both abroad and in Palestine, and reinforcements were flown in from abroad. They increased their supply of tanks, aeroplanes, and artillery. The Jews brought heavy artillery into the Jerusalem area and are reported to have acquired at least 13 German ME-109 fighter planes—which can be converted into light bombers—and 3 B-17's. (They are now reported to possess a total of 60 ME-109's, of which 24 are operational.) The food situation in Jerusalem was greatly improved during the truce.

The Arabs made certain gains during the truce, but these were insignificant compared to the Jewish gains. The Arabs received some Italian and Belgian arms and brought more arms and ammunition to the front.

The truce resulted in so great an improvement in the Jewish capabilities that the Jews may now be strong enough to launch a full-scale offensive and drive the Arab forces out of Palestine. Events during the truce, and the enormous increase in Jewish strength resulting from them, considerably change the previously held estimate of the probable course of the war in Palestine. The Arabs' logistical position generally is very bad and their ammunition supply is exceedingly low. It is estimated that they could not continue to fight, even on the previous moderate scale, for more than two to three months.

The Military Forces involved are estimated as:

Arab Forces in or near Palestine

ARMY	IN PALESTINE	NEAR PALESTINE	TOTAL
Transjordan	6,000	4,000	10,000
Iraq	9,000	1,000	10,000
Egypt	5,000	8,000	13,000
Syria	1,000	1,500	2,500
Lebanon		1,800	1,800
Saudi Arabia	3,000 (?)		3,000
Irregulars	3,000 (?)	3,500	6,500
Totals	<u>27,000</u>	<u>19,800</u>	<u>46,800</u>

Israeli Forces

*Haganah*

Mobile Striking Force	17,000
Semi-Mobile (Local operation)	18,000
Garrison or Defense (settlers-urban militia)	50,000

*Irgun Zvai Leumi*

The Irgun has gradually increased from 7,000 to 12,000 during the past 4 to 6 months.

*Stern Gang*

A similar rise in Stern Gang numbers from 400-800 has been recently confirmed.

Total	97,800
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## ENCLOSURE C

## SOVIET POLICY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

## 1. SOVIET OBJECTIVES.

a. The ultimate objective of Soviet policy vis-à-vis the Middle East is the assumption of the dominant role in the area.

b. To implement this main objective, Soviet policy is directed toward the accomplishment of four secondary objectives:

- (1) Instability in the Arab world.
- (2) A complete break between the US and the Arab states.
- (3) Strained relations between the US and the UK concerning Middle East policy.
- (4) A complete break between the UK and the Arab states.

## 2. APPLICATION AND RESULTS OF SOVIET POLICY (29 November 1947-18 July 1948).

With the above objectives in mind, the USSR voted for the UN partition of Palestine. From November to May it consistently supported partition but took no initiative in urging effective action to implement partition. Officially the Soviet position was unimpeachable; unofficially, the Kremlin was content to sit back and watch matters go from bad to worse in Palestine. The Soviet delegation loudly denounced and obstructed the US proposals for a temporary trusteeship over Palestine, the *one* possibility which might have prevented an Arab-Jewish war after 15 May. Since 15 May the delegation has been lukewarm on truce attempts and has obstructed mediation efforts. On 7 July it abstained in the Security Council from voting on the resolution to extend the four weeks' truce. Although it voted for the resolution on 15 July ordering the belligerents to cease hostilities, it abstained from voting on the proposal to give the UN Mediator authority to negotiate a settlement between Jews and Arabs.

By pursuing the tactics outlined in the preceding paragraph, the USSR has increased its prestige among Zionist groups throughout the world. Moreover, its support of partition has done little to impair Soviet-Arab relations, which could hardly have been made worse in any case. (The retaliatory outlawing of the Communist parties in Syria and Lebanon merely sent the Communists underground and, in view of the ineffectiveness of Arab police and security measures, did not greatly impair the capabilities of the Communists in these countries.) Soviet tactics in the UN have also contributed directly to instability in the Middle East, the first secondary objective of Soviet policy.

The inability of the UN to formulate a compromise solution of the Palestine problem has contributed directly to the other three Soviet secondary objectives. US support of partition immediately drove a wedge into US-Arab relations. This breach in relations could never be mended unless a compromise was reached between Arabs

and Jews. By opposing a compromise solution, the USSR contributed directly to increasingly strained relations between Arabs and the US, its second objective. As the UK was compelled for strategic and economic reasons to support the Arabs, strained relations between the US and the UK, the third Soviet objective, inevitably followed. The Kremlin doubtless reasoned that UK dependence on ERP would compel the UK to bow to US pressure. This would in turn lead to the fourth Soviet objective, the rupture of UK-Arab relations. While the USSR was doubtless prepared to take positive steps toward the attainment of its objectives, it has been unnecessary for it to do anything beyond obstructing the possibility of a compromise solution between Arabs and Jews. US support of partition, UK support of the Arabs, and UK economic dependence on the US have combined to produce a situation favorable to the USSR and one which they can be expected to exploit in the future.

### 3. FUTURE POLICY (after 18 July 1948).

The future policy of the USSR vis-à-vis Palestine will aim at consolidating the objectives already partially attained. It will continue to be the Soviet plan to follow a line of opportunism and readiness to exploit what the USSR considers US and UK mistakes. While continuing to support the partition scheme, the USSR may be expected to abstain on or to block any UN action which is likely to bring Jewish-Arab hostilities to a permanent end. This trend is forecast by the USSR abstention on the 7 July Security Council resolution calling on both parties to agree to an extension of the four weeks' truce, and subsequently on the question of granting Bernadotte powers to mediate.

It may come about that the UK, as a result of US and UN pressure, would find it difficult to maintain all its ties with the Arab states, which would contribute to the fourth major objective of the USSR. In such an event it may be expected that the USSR will shift the emphasis of its progaganda from "Jewish independence" to "US imperialism in Israel" and under the latter slogan will woo the Arab governments with promises of military advisers and supplies. It can be expected to "encourage" its own candidates in the political turmoil which will follow Arab military defeats. By such methods it will continue its drive toward the attainment of its basic objective, the assumption of the dominant role in the Middle East.

### 4. SOVIET ARMS POLICY ON PALESTINE ISSUE.

There is a large body of evidence which indicates that arms shipments from the Communist-dominated countries have been made both to the Arab states and to Israel. The Israeli have received the bulk of these arms, which have included ammunition, small arms, automatic weapons, artillery and military planes.\*

The major source of arms supply for Israel has been Czechoslovakia. Other countries which have supplied arms are Yugoslavia and Poland, and possibly the USSR. The governments of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia have actively cooperated

\* There is no indication that any B-29 type aircraft are being used by either Arabs or Jews.

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in these shipments by furnishing protection, maintaining secrecy, or supplying government facilities, including airfields in the case of Czechoslovakia. Ports in Albania and Italy have been utilized for transshipment purposes to provide additional secrecy as to the countries of origin of these military supplies.

Some of the Arab League countries have purchased arms from Czechoslovakia; the largest shipments to the Arabs from that country have gone to Syria and Lebanon. Small shipments from the USSR or Balkan ports are also reported to have been landed on the Syrian and Lebanese coasts; also, petroleum products are now being shipped to Lebanon by Rumania.

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