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20th April, 1950

CABINET**THE ARAB STATES AND ISRAEL****MEMORANDUM BY THE FOREIGN SECRETARY***Introductory*

It has been our constant desire to promote not merely peace but friendly relations between Israel and the Arab States, with the object of contributing towards the stability and prosperity of the Middle East.

2. In C.P. (49) 10 of 15th January, 1949, I stated that efforts were already being made behind the scenes to encourage the Arab States principally concerned to negotiate with Israel, but that no major initiative on our part would probably be required if the discussions then being carried on continued and were eventually taken over by the Conciliation Commission.

3. During the period which has elapsed since that paper was prepared, some progress has been made towards a settlement in Palestine. The principal developments that have taken place are described in the appendix to this memorandum. The Conciliation Commission has, however, been unable to make much progress towards an actual settlement. Particularly, the problems of territorial agreements, Arab refugees and Jerusalem are still unsolved.

4. The only Arab ruler who has so far shown realism and willingness to come to terms with Israel is King Abdullah of Jordan. For this, however, he was severely criticised at a recent meeting of the Arab League Council, which finally passed a resolution (in which his representative acquiesced) to the effect that any member of the League signing a separate peace with Israel would be expelled and liable to sanctions.

5. Meanwhile the Law Officers have confirmed the opinion of the Foreign Office Legal Adviser, of which I informed the Defence Committee on 15th March (D.O. (50) 4th Meeting, Minute 6), that the Anglo-Jordan and Anglo-Egyptian Treaties have, since the signature of the armistice agreements between Israel and Jordan and Egypt, applied automatically to the portions of Arab Palestine now in the occupation and control of Jordan and Egypt respectively. We have so far refrained from informing or admitting to the Governments concerned that this conclusion has been reached, though Jordan has independently reached a similar conclusion.

6. I consider that the time has now come when an effort should be made both to encourage King Abdullah to continue in the attitude which he has hitherto adopted, to make a contribution towards the stability of the area, and at the same time to make a gesture towards Israel. The measures which I propose are described below.

Union of Jordan and Arab Palestine

7. Elections in Jordan and the part of Arab Palestine controlled by Jordan for a new Assembly to represent both countries have recently been held, and the Assembly is expected to meet on or about 24th April. According to present information, the new Assembly is likely to vote a "union" between the Kingdom of Jordan and the part of Arab Palestine controlled by Jordan, despite the fact

that the Arab League Council at its recent meeting passed a resolution declaring Arab Palestine to be a "trust territory," to be held by the occupying Arab Powers until a final settlement and then handed back to its inhabitants to determine their own future status.

8. The incorporation of this part of Arab Palestine in Jordan is undoubtedly the only logical solution and the one best calculated to ensure the welfare of its inhabitants.

9. Moreover, His Majesty's Minister to Israel has advised that the union with Jordan of those parts of Arab Palestine which Jordan now administers, where a large proportion of the Arab refugees are now concentrated, together with the knowledge that the Anglo-Jordan Treaty applies to that territory, would be an important contribution towards the stability of that area. He considers that it would strengthen the Israel Government against expansionist opposition groups, and encourage them to seek a settlement with Jordan on the basis of the present provisional frontier. His Majesty's Representatives at Amman and Jerusalem have similarly urged the advantages of the incorporation of Arab Palestine in Jordan.

10. For the above reasons, I am of the opinion that the Jordan Government should be encouraged to proclaim the union of Arab Palestine with Jordan as they have hitherto intended to do, and that if and when this union is proclaimed, His Majesty's Government should recognise it and announce that in their view the Anglo-Jordan Treaty automatically applies to that part of Arab Palestine now united with Jordan.

11. In making such an announcement, it would be necessary to make two reservations:—

- (1) in regard to the portion of Jerusalem at present occupied by Jordan, since this forms part of the area which, under the terms of the United Nations Assembly resolution of 9th December, 1949, was scheduled for internationalisation;
- (2) in regard to the frontier between Arab Palestine and Israel, which was provisionally laid down under the armistice agreement signed between the two countries on 3rd April, 1949, but which, pending a final settlement between them, is subject to modification by free negotiation. This reservation could be to the effect that His Majesty's Government regard the territory of Jordan to which the Anglo-Jordan Treaty of 1948 is applicable as being bounded by the armistice line laid down in the Armistice Agreement signed between Israel and Jordan on 3rd April, 1949, or any modification thereof which shall be agreed upon by the two States under the terms of that Agreement, until such time as the frontier between Israel and Jordan is determined by a final settlement between them.

12. I should also wish to take this opportunity of stating that we have no intention of establishing British military bases in peace-time in the portion of Arab Palestine now to be united to Jordan. The Israel Government, who attach importance to this point, were informed in this sense in December 1949, but have asked for the fact to be made public for reasons of internal politics. The Jordan Government are already aware of the position.

De Jure Recognition of Israel

13. I have for some time past been considering *de jure* recognition of the State of Israel. I am of the opinion that a recognition of the union of Arab Palestine with Jordan might be a suitable moment to announce this.

14. *De jure* recognition of Israel would require to be accompanied by reservations similar to those indicated in paragraph 11 above, in regard to—

- (1) The portion of Jerusalem at present occupied by Israel and forming part of the area scheduled under the Assembly resolution for internationalisation; and
- (2) Israel's frontiers with her Arab neighbours, which have been provisionally laid down under the armistice agreement signed with the four Arab countries concerned and all of which are subject to modification by free negotiation.

The latter reservation would be in the form indicated in paragraph 11 (2) above *mutatis mutandis*. It would be particularly important in the case of the frontier between Israel and Egypt. His Majesty's Ambassador at Cairo has pointed out that the Egyptians still attach great store to rectifying their frontier with Israel in the Negev, in view of the fact that Israel occupied this area in the winter of 1948-49, subsequent to the cease-fire ordered in the Security Council resolution of 18th July, 1948. He has suggested that *de jure* recognition of Israel by the United Kingdom, by seeming to endorse these Israeli acquisitions of territory, might be badly received in Egypt. I consider that reservation (2) above should suffice to meet this point.

15. His Majesty's Ambassador at Cairo has also suggested that *de jure* recognition might stiffen the attitude of the Israel Government in regard to future negotiations with Egypt. On the other hand, His Majesty's Minister at Amman has pointed out that the present Israel attitude renders the chances of successful Israel-Egypt negotiations remote, and that, for many cogent reasons, a settlement between Israel and Jordan should not be delayed.

16. I am of the opinion that the balance of advantage lies in proceeding as proposed.

General Statement of Policy in the Middle East

17. Finally, these two acts of recognition by His Majesty's Government might afford a suitable occasion to reaffirm that our policy in the Middle East aims at the establishment of peace and security in that area, and in particular a settlement between Israel and the Arab States; and that we are determined to use all our influence both within and outside the United Nations to prevent the use of force or threat of force by any State in the Middle East against any other such State, in a manner inconsistent with the Charter of the United Nations. The United States Government have already made a statement on these general lines.

Recommendation

18. To sum up, the action which I propose, and to which I ask my colleagues to agree, is as follows:—

- (1) If and when a union of Arab Palestine with Jordan is proclaimed by King Abdullah, to announce His Majesty's Government's recognition of this union and their view that the provisions of the Anglo-Jordan Treaty apply to the areas united to Jordan, with reservations as regards the frontier between Arab Palestine and Israel and as regards Jerusalem, and a reference to our intention not to establish bases in these areas.
- (2) Simultaneously to announce His Majesty's Government's *de jure* recognition of Israel, with similar provisos in regard to Jerusalem and the frontiers of Israel with her Arab neighbours.
- (3) To make a statement reaffirming His Majesty's Government's desire for peace in the Middle East and their opposition to the use of force between Middle Eastern States.

E. B.

20th April, 1950.

APPENDIX

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN REGARD TO PALESTINE

Since the preparation of C.P. (49) 10 of 15th January, 1949, the following developments have occurred regarding the Palestine problem :—

- (a) Armistice Agreements were signed in 1949 between Israel and Egypt, the Lebanon, Jordan and Syria :
- (b) Following the signature of these Agreements, the Security Council lifted the arms embargo on 11th August, 1949 :
- (c) On 9th December, 1949, the General Assembly passed a resolution regarding the internationalisation of Jerusalem which, however, both Israel and Jordan have categorically rejected :
- (d) Jordan has been negotiating with Israel for a final settlement of all outstanding problems. These negotiations were suspended at the end of February pending the results of the elections in Arab Palestine and Jordan :
- (e) The elections in Arab Palestine and Jordan have taken place and it is clear that they are intended as a preliminary to the union of the two countries. This is dealt with in greater detail in paragraph 5 of the main paper :
- (f) The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees, established by the General Assembly resolution of 9th December, 1949, is about to start work.



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