May 14, 1948

The President
The White House
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. President:

I have the honor to notify you that the state of Israel has been proclaimed as an independent republic within frontiers approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations in its Resolution of November 29, 1947, and that a provisional government has been charged to assume the rights and duties of government for preserving law and order within the boundaries of Israel, for defending the state against external aggression, and for discharging the obligations of Israel to the other nations of the world in accordance with international law. The Act of Independence will become effective at one minute after six o'clock on the evening of 14 May 1948, Washington time.

With full knowledge of the deep bond of sympathy which has existed and has been strengthened over the past thirty years between the Government of the United States and the Jewish people of Palestine, I have been authorized by the provisional government of the new state to tender this message and to express the hope that your government will recognize and will welcome Israel into the community of nations.

Very respectfully yours,

Elihu Epstein, Agent
Provisional Government of Israel

ce/mf
January 12, 1949

My dear Mr. Connelly:

I have the honor to convey to the President the enclosed message from Dr. Chaim Weizmann, President of the State Council of the Provisional Government of Israel.

Sincerely yours,

[Signature]

Special Representative

Mr. Matthew J. Connelly
The White House
Washington, D.C.
MESSAGE TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
FROM DR. CHAIM WEIZMANN, PRESIDENT OF THE STATE COUNCIL
OF THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL

"We are deeply perturbed by reports and indications that
Britain is using pressure on Egypt with a view to preventing her
from entering into armistice and peace negotiations with Israel,
in order to assure that peace between the Arab states and Israel
is made on Britain's terms or not at all. By taking this line,
Mr. Bevin again assumes direct responsibility for maintaining the
Middle East in turmoil and wrecking the efforts of the United
States of America and ourselves to achieve peace.

"In deference to United States representations and because
of our sincere desire to facilitate a peace settlement, we gave
up important strategic positions which we had occupied while
driving out the invaders before the cease-fire became effective,
and withdrew all our forces without exception to the Palestine
side of the Egyptian border without insisting on a similar
Egyptian withdrawal from the Palestine territory which they had
occupied as aggressors.

"We should urgently suggest that the United States Govern-
ment at this crucial juncture use its good offices with the United
Kingdom Government, prevailing upon it to desist from its present
course which can only lead to the perpetuation of strife, further
misery, and even worse.

Chaim Weizmann"

Tel Aviv, Israel
January 11, 1949
Honourable Harry S. Truman,
President of the United States of America,
White House,
Washington.

Dear Mr. President,

Permit me to extend to you most hearty congratulations and good wishes on your re-election. We in this country have been watching the progress of the Presidential contest with bated breath and I am sure that I am speaking the mind of the bulk of my people when I say that we feel deeply thankful that the people of the United States have given you the opportunity of shaping the policies of your country and the affairs of humanity at large during the next critical four years. We interpret their vote as an emphatic endorsement of the policy of peace, security and ordered progress in world affairs for which you have stood since you assumed your high office and for the continued prosecution of which men and women in every part of the globe pray with all their hearts. May you be granted health and strength to carry out your noble purpose.

We have special cause to be gratified at your re-election because we are mindful of the enlightened help which you gave to our cause in these years of our struggle. We particularly remember your unflinching advocacy of the admission of Jewish refugees to Palestine, your determined stand against the attempts to deflect you from your course, your staunch support of our admission to statehood at Lake Success, and your recognition of the fact of its establishment within an hour of our proclamation of independence. We pray that your assistance and guidance may be extended to us also in the coming years. We have succeeded in the past twelve months in defending our independence against enemies from every quarter - north, south and east, as in Biblical times - and in setting up the framework of our State. Enemy armies are still on the borders of our country, maintained there, I regret to say, by the vacillating attitude of the United Nations which have imposed a truce that is becoming ever more, not a forerunner of peace, but an instrument of war. Our essential aim is peace and reconstruction.

While the eyes of the world have been turned on to the battlefields in the south and the north, we have succeeded in liquidating one refugee camp after another in Europe and bringing the chance of a new life to thousands of ruined men and women whom the world has all but forgotten. We have brought over 62,000 since we attained independence. To develop this great effort at human rehabilitation we need, above all, three things: first peace; second recognition; and third financial and economic support for the execution of those large projects of agricultural
and industrial development which are essential for the absorption of newcomers and the economic progress of the country.

The most important requirement at this moment is that this unreal and untenable truce be brought to an end and be supplanted by a speedy and enduring peace. Over two months ago we asked the Mediator to call both sides to the conference table, but the other side rejected our offer. We have no aggressive designs against anyone and we are at any moment ready to negotiate a peace settlement. Our enemies have failed in their efforts to beat us by brute force although they outnumbered us by 20 to 1. They are now endeavouring through the medium of the Security Council to undermine the decision taken by the General Assembly last November and to deprive us of the undeveloped areas of the Negev which offer space for new homes for many thousands of our uprooted people, and which will remain a desert land if they are annexed by the neighbouring Arab States, as is evidently intended. This is the real purpose behind the Security Council’s Resolution introduced by Great Britain which to my deep regret was supported by the American Delegation. We have no choice but to oppose this design which would destroy last November’s decision of the General Assembly and would reduce us to a state of permanent insecurity and vulnerability.

I pray with all my heart that you, Mr. President, may use your high authority to put an end to these hostile manoeuvres. We have successfully withstood the onslaught of the Arab States, who were sent against us by the British, almost like a pack of hired assassins. I am saying this with deep pain because I have throughout my life been deeply attached to Great Britain and have suffered for that attachment. But the evidence unfortunately all points in this direction, and even as I write we are receiving constant reports of Great Britain rearming the Arabs to enable them to re-start hostilities against us. Having failed in her efforts to wipe out our young commonwealth, she now appears bent on detaching the Negev from our State. I feel emboldened to ask for your intervention in this matter, remembering the deep sympathy and understanding which you displayed when I had the privilege of stating to you our case on the Negev and displaying to you maps showing its potentialities for settlement. It was with a deep feeling of elation that I left you on that day and it is this which now encourages me to plead for your intervention to prevent this part of the country, which was allotted to us last November, from being detached from our State. Sheer necessity compels us to cling to the Negev. Our pioneers have done yeoman work in opening up this semi-arid country; they have built pipe lines through the desert, set up agricultural settlements, planted gardens and orchards
in what was for many centuries a barren land. They will not give up this land unless they are bodily removed from it.

I venture to hope that clear and firm instructions be issued on this vital matter to the American Delegation in Paris which has of late, apparently, not received directives corresponding to the views which, I know, you hold on the subject. I would further plead that you may find it possible to direct the competent authorities to enable us to secure that long-term financial assistance which is urgently needed for the execution of the great scheme of reconstruction which I had the privilege of submitting to you in the Summer.

With every good wish,

Sincerely yours,

[Signature]
The British and Mr. Bevin

May 25, 1948

Bevin's stand on Palestine is being criticized in England from many quarters and in growing volume.

The Manchester Guardian today says editorially that the foreign office arguments are "childish" and that on Palestine Mr. Bevin suffers from "obsessions".

Attached are three issues of the London Times published within the last few days — May 21, 21 and 22.

Two of the issues have letters from Members of Parliament and one has a letter from an Englishman who was in Palestine within the week prior to May 15.

1. Letter from Major Lyall Wilkes of the House of Commons:

   Major Wilkes quotes General Glubb Pasha, writing in 1944, that all the Arabs trained by the British deserted during World War II. Major Wilkes states that British G.H.Q. recognized during the war that Haganah was the only reliable support of the Allies in the Middle East.

2. Letter from John Connell condemns the use of an English General to direct the bombardment of the Holy City, as "this ultimate dishonor."

3. Letter from Robert Boothby of the House of Commons demands the recall of all British officers from the Arab Army.

4. There have been previous condemnations of British policy, e.g., the letter to the London Times from Amery of the House of Commons holds Bevin responsible for the destruction in Palestine.
4. The confidential report by the Economist may throw light on the financial moves by the British which strengthen the Jewish State, as well as on their currying of favor with the Jewish Army. It is possible that the British see eye to eye with Dr. Weizmann in the view that he has privately expressed that a strong Jewish State is going to be the only true bastion against the Bolsheviks in the Middle East.

Mr. Hopkins:

These are all for the files. We have 1 copy in our office and I thought you might like to dispose of these.

mlh
Foreign Report

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Middle East Morass

If the Russians are checked in Europe during the next few months, they are likely to redouble their efforts in the Middle East. We have just received the following candid account of the state of that area from one of our correspondents there.

The whole belt of countries along the underbelly of Russia, our correspondent writes, is in a political mess that beggars description. Their leaders will not heave themselves out of it because (a) they do not think beyond the popular yell of the moment, and (b) there is no impulse to pull up their socks and resist Communism. On the one hand, the pashas are blinded by avarice to the evils of privilege, and on the other the poor could not be worse off than they are. The position in all the Middle East countries—most marked in Egypt and least in Iraq—is as follows.

A. The government in power consists of rich and elderly men who cannot keep in unless they produce circuses. The best rallying cry is “Down with the foreigner.”

B. The Russians do not need to combat this cry because they are so largely invisible. They are in fact fomenting nationalism, because it helps to cut the countries’ established links with the West. They do not do much of this themselves; the spadework falls to the Yugoslav legations (which are chiefly staffed with Moslems).

C. The men in power have no other means of attracting popular support than by lambasting the foreigner because, although they talk a lot about attractive social programmes, they do little since:

1. They are entirely taken up with outbidding one another in the fanaticism that pleases the crowd, in order to keep office—a money-making affair.
2. They are wholly unwilling to lose popularity with their friends and relations by imposing the first requisite of social reform, which is some curtailment of the endless privileges of the rich.
3. They are sunk in corruption which has grown much worse with the war, when enormous sums were there for the making. Saudi Arabia, always imagined to be so pure, is no exception. A site for a new port
or refinery has but to be mentioned, and the land around it falls over-night into the hands of highly placed speculators who are in a position to "see the telegrams." Huge blocks of new flats, called by the names of their politician owners, break the skyline.

4. There is a complete sense of frustration which has turned civil servants, whose profession was in any case always overcrowded and bad, into coffee house frequenters. This is not quite true of Iraq, where British example still affects the methods of men at the top levels; but in Egypt, the Lebanon and Syria no work is done at all.

D. The Egyptian budget, which is nicely balanced and shows a good little surplus of £10 million to be spent on the Ministry of Social Services for the "campaign against poverty and disease," looks wonderful. In fact, owing to the unwillingness even of the white-collared unemployed to work in the provinces, the only outlet for people with a social conscience is not through the government but through charity. This habit (Ladies' Red Crescent, etc.) has greatly increased, which shows that there is some good feeling somewhere. The official effort consists of about 40 social centres built in Egypt's 4,000 villages. Our correspondent went there; it was shut and had never been opened as "no staff was available." In Syria and the Lebanon it is impossible to understand what happens to the money voted for social services.

E. Again, in Egypt, the schools and universities, having been allowed to enter the political swim, do too little work. Sons are ignorant compared with their fathers. Every reasonable parent in Egypt's upper class pays heavy fees for private tuition as nothing is learnt at school. The masters, even in State schools, are given no authority to countermand orders issued by the student secretaries of political parties. This does not happen, however, in Syria or the Lebanon, where French or American traditions of scholarship prevail; but it could happen in Iraq.

**TREATIES MEAN NOTHING**

The British treaty mania is out of touch with realities. Far more important than signed documents with red seals "done in good and due form and in duplicate" is goodwill. The British have gained nothing by their two recent efforts:

1. It was a grave mistake to announce, when the abortive Iraq treaty was signed at Portsmouth, that this was a model for more treaties (see FOREIGN REPORT of January 22nd, 1948). This created an impression, even among enemies of the Russians, that the British were only waiting to pop unsuspecting countries in the bag.

2. The treaty with Transjordan was brought off only because Transjordan needs the British annual £2 million to balance its budget.

The Iraqis are now likely to be caught again. And the Egyptians, hoping for neutrality as the Belgians once did, will not sign in any circumstances except the actual appearance of a Russian force in Palestine.

Goodwill leads to help from all sorts of people who are still well disposed towards the British—though not to the sight of British uniforms in their streets. Yet until some way is found of avoiding the appearance of being friends only with the rich and elderly who want to guard their millions, those who want to help the British cannot afford to tie themselves up beyond all hope of neutrality. They are afraid
of the Russians, and would be turning themselves into targets for them. The only young people to whom the British appeal successfully are the tiny minority who have been sent to England by the British Council.

Force is always needed to back goodwill in the East. And friends of the West are clear that this must be maintained, if only by the less obvious means, such as visitors in mufti, employees engaged by local armies and so on. It has been pointed out that a good example of the local respect for force is that newspapers, xenophobes and student crowds revile and cheek the West, but never Stalin. It is the devil you placate. Hitler was not taunted either, till after 1943.

CROSSROADS OF THE WORLD

The Middle East presents a vast belt of people open to invasion without effort—except at any point in or near Turkey (see the last issue of FOREIGN REPORT). Having pillowed their heads on Allah for 1,300 years, these people have lost the power of thinking in any terms other than those of the moment. Yet they sit on a crossroads of the world, and an oilfield to which the West cannot afford to be denied.

Were Turkey to collapse, or American help there to be too little or too late, the whole rotten structure to the south would crumble. And the people would kowtow to a new and determined master with a knout.
Memorandum submitted by Mr. Fahy to Mr. Lovett May 4, 1948

PALESTINE

1. The United States should recognize the fact that the Jewish State will be proclaimed May 15th or 16th. No position should be taken between now and then which commits the United States to oppose such a State or which would encourage the Arab States to seek to overthrow it. In other words we must be very careful not to substitute ourselves for the British as opponents of Jewish aspirations for independence.

2. It is probable that the Arabs will also proclaim an Arab State for all of Palestine on May 15 or 16.

3. Since trusteeship will not be accepted by the General Assembly, the United States should guard against committing itself to any new plan which is inconsistent with the actual existence of a Jewish State on May 16th. This situation will not only include the proclamation of the Jewish State but the reality of the partition of Palestine, as the British statement yesterday in the Political Committee seemed to recognize.

4. The United States should make known publicly before the Security Council and otherwise that the use of force by the Arab States against the November 29th Resolution constitutes a violation of the Charter and threatens world peace. Our failure to do this contributes to the continuation of such threats. Clarification of our position in this respect is needed. This would not be a commitment by the United States to use armed force to prevent aggression. Other means would be available to the United Nations.