

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON



204-13

December 11, 1945

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. CONNELLY

Referring to our telephone conversation, I am sending you herewith some suggestions as to what the President might say to the American members of the joint Palestine Committee, who will be in Washington later this week, beginning Friday. We believe it to be most important that he speak very frankly to them about the serious responsibilities which they have undertaken.

Some of the persons appointed by the President to the Committee have expressed a desire to defer entering on their duties and have suggested, for example, that they might stay at home until after Christmas. In view of this feeling on their part it is believed that it would be most helpful for the President in conferring with the group to impress upon them the importance and urgency of their task. The American and British Governments attach the greatest importance to this inquiry and the members should be left in no doubt as to the fact that they have a full-time job before them which will be a real challenge to their energies. They have undertaken serious responsibilities involving the welfare of possibly millions of persons, lives of many thousands, the prestige of the United States and peace and stability in Europe and the Near East.

Both aspects of the inquiry are of the greatest importance. The continued indecision with regard to the future of Palestine is a contributing factor to the prevailing tension in Palestine as well as in the Near East as a whole and it is no exaggeration to say that no lasting peace can be expected in the area until an equitable solution is found to the Palestine problem.

The situation of the displaced Jews in Europe is no less a cause of the gravest concern, although some improvement has taken place since the Harrison report. The existing uncertainty as to the fact of these unfortunate victims of Nazi and Fascist persecution is most unfortunate and must be resolved as soon as possible.


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There have been a number of commissions in the past which have gone to Palestine. They have not found a lasting solution, but this fact only serves to emphasize the importance of the inquiry which the present group is undertaking.

The Committee will undoubtedly receive a flood of petitions and material on the various aspects of its terms of reference and there will be many persons desiring to make their views known to the American group. While the Committee will have to draw up its own rules of procedure it is hoped that the members will take care not to receive petitioners except when sitting as a committee.

The members will pay particular attention to the request of the two Governments that they submit their report within 120 days. The problems with which they will be dealing are so urgent in character that it is to be hoped that the Committee will be able to complete its work well within that time limit.

The President may care to add that the terms of reference of the Committee have been worked out carefully between the British and American Governments. He had no reason to believe that the British Government was giving any private instructions to the British members of the Committee of Inquiry with regard to the interpretation of these terms. He had no comment to make with regard to these terms other than that they constituted all instructions which he had to give them with regard to the purpose of the inquiry.


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