

March 6, 1948

Palentine

Dear Frank:

I appreciated your letter of March fourth very much.

I think it would be advisable for you to come in and see me off the record and I'll talk with you very frankly about the situation referred to in your letter.

I naturally am not happy over the implication that I might be ducking any issues - that is not my manner of meeting a situation, as you are well familiar with by this time. However, you come in and we'll discuss the matter from the beginning of the alphabet to the end.

Sincerely yours,

HARRY S. TRUMAN

Honorable Francis J. Myers
United States Senate
Washington, D. C.

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COMMITTEE ON
INTERSTATE AND FOREIGN COMMERCE

March 4, 1948

Honorable Harry S. Truman
The White House
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. President:

As one who has fought with you and behind you on all of those things which are important to us both as Democrats, but primarily as Americans, I must get this off my chest, and this seems the best way to do it -- in a personal letter which is not designed for public circulation as an indication to my constituents of my efforts at statesmanship, but is purely a heartfelt attempt to help our party and our country.

As you no doubt know, there has been a veritable uproar in this country over the American position in the United Nations on Palestine. The protest is vocal among Jewish citizens, of course; but it is also genuine among all non-Jews, I believe, who sincerely believe this United Nations must be made to work.

The news stories on Senator Austin's speech at the UN when the Palestine debate opened gave the impression, still current, that our country is "selling out" the Jewish people and undercutting the UN structure. A few Democratic party leaders in my state, in the lower political levels, have resigned in protest and have stated categorically they can no longer support our party because of what it has "done" in the Palestine case. Many Pennsylvanians of Jewish extraction seem to be as bitter against you and the party over this incident as some of our brethren from the South profess to be.

I have obtained a copy of Senator Austin's text at the opening session of the Security Council on Palestine and I have read it. It strikes me that the main trouble here is sloppy draftsmanship, perhaps purposely so. I could find nothing in the Austin text to bear out the charges that the United States has sold out. However, I found vague, weasel-worded passages so involved and so legalistic and confusing that it is hard to tell just exactly where we stand. Yet, a careful reading shows, I think, that fundamentally the United States has not retreated and is not "selling out."

Honorable Harry S. Truman

March 4, 1948

Why can't we come right out and say what we mean instead of hedging the thing around with such phraseology that even the trained newsmen and commentators can't seem to penetrate the fog?

If I'm wrong and if we are in truth ducking on this issue, then the American people should be told in simple and direct language what we are doing and why. The facts should be put on the table.

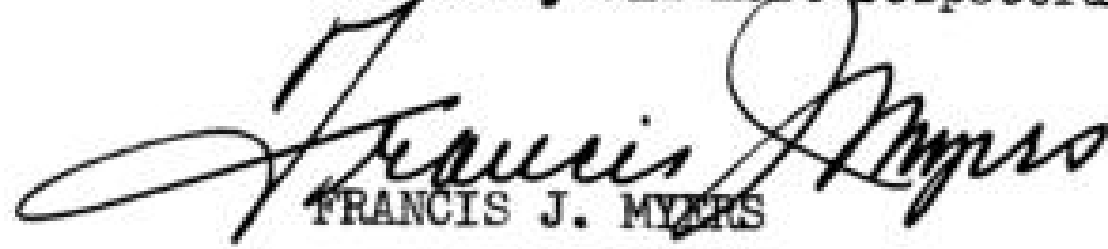
Those of us who support you and have supported you and who want to continue fighting in behalf of your program, are at a terrible disadvantage in this Palestine incident because we just can't put our finger on the facts. It isn't fair to you and it isn't fair to us for us to be in such a position of complete bafflement that we hesitate to open our mouths.

Foreign affairs and the United Nations are things which are now real and personal to nearly all Americans. We want them to stay that way. The quickest way to dissipate this interest and revive isolationism and unconcern is, I think, to feed the public vague generalities and legalistic double-talk which the public can't understand.

I don't think you could lend yourself to any "sell-out" such as has been charged in regard to Palestine. And yet, Mr. President, it is so terribly difficult to find solid facts and plain, understandable information on just where we do stand that I am most disturbed.

I do not ask that you answer my letter. I just thought I owed it to you to pass my thoughts along.

Sincerely and most respectfully yours,


FRANCIS J. MYERS

FJM:rz