

May 18, 1948

Personal and Confidential

Dear Dean:

Harry Vaughan handed me your letter of the fifth and I read it with a lot of interest. It looks as if things have turned out as you anticipated in your letter.

The main difficulty with our friends, the Jews in this country, is that they are very emotional - they, the Irish and the Latin-Americans have something in common along that line. The President of the United States has to be very careful not to be emotional or to forget that he is working for one hundred and forty-five million people primarily and for peace in the world as his next objective.

I certainly appreciated the chance to read your letter very much. My soul objective in the Palestine procedure has been to prevent bloodshed. The way things look today we apparently have not been very successful. Nobody in the country has given the problem more time and thought than I have. In 1946 when the British-American Commission on Palestine was appointed and Mr. Bevin had made an agreement with me that he would accept the findings of that Commission I thought we had the problem solved but the emotional Jews of the United States and the equally emotional Arabs in Egypt and Syria prevented that settlement from taking place, principally because of the immigration clause in that settlement. We are faced with an entirely new problem now and I sincerely hope that sanity will come to both sides so that a peaceful approach can be made to a settlement which should have been worked out by the British some twenty odd years ago.

Sincerely yours,

HARRY S. TRUMAN

Honorable Dean Alfange
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PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

May 5, 1948

Major General Harry H. Vaughan
White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear General Vaughan:

I am sending you this confidential letter because I am interested in the President's political fortunes. Frankly, the President could not carry the State of New York in the present circumstances. The Jewish vote against him would be overwhelming.

Only a dramatic move on the President's part that would electrify the Jewish people could change the situation.

Such a move might well be the recognition of the Jewish State which will come into being on May 16, and the nomination of an American Minister to the new State. The President would be on firm legal ground in this respect because the UN decision which partitioned Palestine into Jewish and Arab states is still a legal fact. True, our government has proposed a temporary Trusteeship in place of immediate partition, presumably because the UN decision could not be carried out without bloodshed. However, recent events have knocked the props from under the Trusteeship proposal. The Trusteeship proposal is no longer tenable, not because neither side accepts it, but because the Jewish military forces have since demonstrated by their decisive victories over the Arabs, that they can implement partition singlehanded.

The President, therefore, can logically take the position that events and not he have reversed the Trusteeship plan and that the UN decision can be best carried out by recognizing the new Jewish State and according it the privileges of other states, including the fundamental right to defend itself. This

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would also place the President in the commendable position of strengthening the hand of the United Nations.

Should the President for any reason find this move ill advised, the next best step would be to appoint a personal Ambassador or special Emissary and send him to Palestine with authority to negotiate a settlement, on the basis of the UN decision, between the Jewish Agency and King Abdullah of Transjordan. This move would be timely and appropriate.

In the first place, the Arabs have been rudely awakened to the fact that they cannot dispose of the Jews as easily as they had thought. Abdullah is a realist and he knows right well that his vaunted Arab Legion, some ten thousand mercenaries trained by the British, would be no match for the Jewish forces which, I understand, number some seventy-five thousand excellently disciplined and zealously devoted young men and women.

As a matter of fact I have been saying right along, and events are proving me right, that the combined forces of the whole Arab League would be no match for this Jewish Army which, even when divided, succeeded in driving seven British divisions behind barbed wires.

I am not a military man, but I think you will agree with me that outside of Abdullah's Legion, there is no other well-equipped, well-trained Arab Army. Moreover, the Arab chieftains are divided by deep rooted feuds. The ex-Mufti, Haj Amin al Husseini detests Abdullah and Abdullah is not on speaking terms with Ibn Saud who drove Abdullah's father, King Hussein, the Caliph, from his throne in Mecca. These feuds preclude any real unity on the part of leaders of the Arab League.

For this reason, I suggest that negotiations be carried on between the Jewish Agency and Abdullah, who is the

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most practical and best situated of all the Arab leaders insofar as Palestine is concerned. He aspires to extend his authority and influence over the Arab portion of Palestine, and would readily recognize partition in exchange for some concessions in Arab Palestine that would enhance his prestige; the more so in view of the impending disaster that faces his Arab Legion in the event of a prolonged war with the Jews.

I am confident that if President Truman succeeded in procuring Abdullah's recognition of partition on the basis above indicated, this grave problem would be solved. To the President would then belong the credit for upholding the authority of the United Nations while doing justice to the Jewish people and all parties concerned.

I am coming to Washington soon at which time I will pay you a visit; but meanwhile, I wish you would relay the foregoing to the President for his consideration.

I shall not forget the pleasant evening I spent in Washington recently with you and the President.

With kind personal regards.

Sincerely,


DEAN ALFANGE

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