

~~TOP SECRET~~

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By: 1/2/88 NAL: Dots 2116:75

MAY 1 1945

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Subject: Palestine



On April 18 Secretary Stettinius sent you a personal and confidential letter in which he pointed out that efforts would undoubtedly be made by the Zionists to obtain commitments from you in favor of their program for Palestine, and that while we were making every effort to relieve the suffering of the Jews in Europe we felt that the question of Palestine was a highly complex one which should be handled with the greatest care.

In this connection I thought that you would like to know that although President Roosevelt at times gave expression to views sympathetic to certain Zionist aims, he also gave certain assurances to the Arabs which they regard as definite commitments on our part. On a number of occasions within the past few years, he authorized the Department to assure the heads of the different Near Eastern Governments in his behalf that "in the view of this Government there should be no decision altering the basic situation in Palestine without full consultation with both Arabs and Jews". In his meeting with King Ibn Saud early this year, moreover, Mr. Roosevelt promised the King that as regards Palestine he would make no move hostile to the Arab people and would not assist the Jews as against the Arabs.

I am attaching a copy of a memorandum summarizing the conversation between Ibn Saud and Mr. Roosevelt, of which the original is presumably with Mr. Roosevelt's papers. After the meeting, this memorandum was approved by both the President and the King, so that it may be regarded as completely authentic. On April 8, only a week before his death, the President signed a letter to Ibn Saud in which he repeated the assurances which he had made to the King during the meeting. A copy of this letter is also attached.

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The Arabs, not only in Palestine but throughout the whole Near East, have made no secret of their hostility to Zionism and their Governments say that it would be impossible to restrain them from rallying with arms, in defense of what they consider to be an Arab country. We know that President Roosevelt understood this clearly, for as recently as March 3, after his trip to the Near East, he told an officer of the Department that, in his opinion, a Jewish state in Palestine (the ultimate Zionist aim) could be established and maintained only by military force.

I should be glad at any time to furnish you with any additional background material which you may desire bearing upon the entire Palestine problem.



JOSEPH C. GREW

Acting Secretary

Enclosures:

- (1) Copy of memorandum of conversation between King Ibn Saud and President Roosevelt.
- (2) Copy of letter from President Roosevelt to King Ibn Saud.