

Memorandum on the De Jure Recognition of Israel

On Saturday evening, June 5, I learned that the State Department had indicated that de jure recognition of Israel would not be granted unless territorial concessions were made by the Jewish state. This coincided closely with the reports published in The Nation of the British intention, and resolved all doubts, if any existed, that the State Department and the British Foreign Office were in collusion. It also illuminated the purpose behind the remark made to me on June 3 by Chester Williams, a member of the staff of the American delegation, in the course of a conversation at Lake Success. I had asked him what the attitude of the United States was going to be during the truce period and what they hoped to accomplish. His answer was: "Get an agreement." "On what?" I asked. "Oh, on a Vatican city to begin with, let us say," was his answer. "What?" I asked. "Oh, from there we'll go on," he said.

Upon hearing this I decided to go to Washington to secure more facts concerning the situation with respect to the Palestine question, and to establish contact with a number of personalities known to be close to the President.

Prior to this, however, I again communicated with Mr. Sherman, told him the story and asked him to please get in touch with Ewing and Flynn. Mr. Sherman communicated with Ewing on Monday and discussed the matter twice with Flynn on Tuesday. He was utterly aghast and insisted that this situation need not have been allowed to develop and that the President should have issued the instructions with respect to the embargo, the Haganah, and the loan when he saw Dr. Weizmann. He promised to try to do something about it. The information was transmitted to Ewing by letter because the latter prefers not to discuss matters of this nature on the telephone and remains to be heard from.



On Tuesday, June 8, I went to Washington. There I saw the file on the most recent State Department attitude toward Israel and learned that:

(1) The State Department no longer considered itself bound to recognize de jure the Jewish state "because of the present situation."



(2) It no longer considered itself bound to recognize the Jewish state within the boundaries established by the U.N. resolution of November 29 indicating that its recognition of the provisional government of Israel was a de facto recognition based on a de facto situation and having no reference to the November 29 resolution.



Armed with this information I went to see Senator Howard McGrath, who is the Chairman of the Democratic National Committee; Senator Harley Kilgore, one of the most liberal members of the Senate, who has the added distinction of being on very good personal terms with the President and having conducted for some months an effort to secure the replacement of Secretary Forrestal as one of the chief authors of the policy of betrayal; and Leslie Biffle, secretary to the minority leader of the Senate, who is regarded as the person having the closest personal relations with the President and being privy to all his thinking.

I saw Senator McGrath first. He came off the floor of the Senate to have a talk with me. I began by telling him that I thought it was imperative that he should know that the President was being double-crossed by his own State Department, and that the double-cross would have the effect both of destroying all his decent acts with respect to Israel, and of destroying the newly-revived prestige of the President himself. I then proceeded to tell him the story of the newest step of the State Department, placing responsibility at the door of Loy Henderson. I told him that there was a remarkable coincidence in the fact that Loy Henderson should be asking for territorial restrictions at the same time that the British had dropped their mask and, through newspaper stories which appeared a week ago in the London Times and the Manchester Guardian, were suggesting that recognition of Israel would be forthcoming if territorial concessions were made.

I also gave him a telescopic picture of the machinations in the Security Council. I told him that the fact that the President had allowed the execution of his policies to remain in the hands of the State Department resulted in no effort to secure sufficient votes for United States proposals, and that this was particularly true with respect to the proposal on declaring the situation a threat to peace and security. I indicated to him that what was involved here was British determination to maintain sole control of the Middle East, to push the United States out of the picture, and to accomplish this purpose they were prepared to allow, if this were possible, every Jew in Palestine to be killed and the United States to be made a mockery. In this policy, I told him, Loy Henderson and his clique were willing accomplices. I asked him why Loy Henderson was being kept. His answer was that it was intended that he should be kicked out a long time ago. "Why hasn't it been done?" I asked. He shrugged his shoulders. I emphasized to him that the policy of double-cross would continue as long as the President had nobody in the State Department who would carry out his policies explicitly. He asked me what had happened to Hilldring. I told him the story that while Hilldring's illness was genuine in the beginning and prevented him from taking up the post at the time he accepted it, at the end it was Marshall who told Hilldring he didn't want him to come. McGrath said he couldn't believe it. I told him that the source of the story was such that he would not challenge it if he knew, and perhaps some day I could reveal the name. (The source is Leslie Biffle, the President's friend.)

I also indicated to Senator McGrath that the repercussions, politically speaking, were obvious. Senator McGrath said that of course the situation would have to be handled, but could only be handled by the President and would therefore have to await his return. He asked me to





prepare a memorandum for him recapitulating the facts already told to him and bringing the situation up-to-date to be available to him upon the President's return. The President, he said, should be back in Washington some time around June 17, when he would take the whole matter up with him again. I agreed to do this.

I then saw Senator Kilgore and told him the same story, adding only that we were opening the doors to the very thing that we said we wanted to avoid -- the possibility of Russian penetration of the Middle East. I asked Senator Kilgore whether he would think that the Jewish state, if it were to continue to be double-crossed by the United States and the Western powers, should refuse Soviet aid if that aid should be offered at a crucial moment. He said that of course the Jewish state should accept aid if the circumstances were allowed to continue. He too berated the lack of continuity in policy and said that part of the reason that certain people were not fired was due to the fact that the President had difficulty in getting Senate confirmation for decent replacements. What he was talking about was Secretary Forrestal to whom the President seems now to be opposed but can't fire because he can't get any nomination through, according to Senator Kilgore. I pointed out that where Loy Henderson was concerned that was not the case. I indicated to him that what the President could and should do is to immediately give de jure recognition, announce the loan, and indicate that when the truce is ended we would arm the Haganah just as if it were Paraguay or any other so-called friendly state. Senator Kilgore promised to do what he could, stating that his principal advantage is that he is on first-name terms with the President and can have his ear. I agreed with him that this was a very important advantage and should be utilized.

I then went to see Leslie Biffle. I discussed the matter a little bit differently with Mr. Biffle in the light of his great personal friendship



with the President, pointing out that it was the President who was responsible for every decent act, and that it was the State Department which had consistently undermined his policy and seemed bent on a determined effort to discredit Mr. Truman. I gave him the particulars to show the coincidence of direct ^{retrogression} aggression on Palestine policy with Mr. Truman's absences from Washington.

I told him that unfortunately the public at large, not privy to the details of such a double-cross, would not distinguish between the President and his State Department, and that it was the President who would get it in the neck. Mr. Biffle agreed completely that the repercussions would be felt by the President and also that he was being double-crossed. In the course of our discussions he received a message from Senator McGrath to come to the floor of the Senate. I arose and wanted to leave. He insisted, however, that having this discussion with me was more important than anything else he could do at the moment. "You are the first person," he said, "who has come to me with the complete facts. I want to listen to you." I told him also that the policy of discrediting the President had penetrated to the American delegation which receives its instructions from the State Department, and without mentioning the name, I told him of my discussion with a member of the American delegation staff, *who* he laughed and said, in response to my question as to what the next steps of the U.S. were, "That depends on the President's next non-political speech."

Mr. Biffle told me that he considered the matter so important that he would relay the information to the President at once -- meaning that night when he expected to telephone him. That terminated the conversation. When I arose to go Biffle thanked me again for having come, asked me to be in touch with him and to be sure to call on him when in Washington. I told

him I was leaving that night but was prepared to be of service at any time and would, if he deemed it necessary, come to Washington with very short notice.



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My net impression of these discussions is:

(1) That the three people I talked to were genuinely disturbed and will try to take some action.

(2) That obviously there is no one person or persons in the President's confidence who has continuous information concerning the Palestine developments and can report back to the President, and that this is where the fault largely lies. In the absence of such a person, obviously the President is fed by the State Department whose information can hardly be trusted.

(3) That there seems to be no person officially representing the Zionist movement in this country who has the ear of key people in the Administration.

(4) That a disinterested party, such as ourselves, can put across very important ideas because of our disinterest and our general repute.

(5) That the situation is by no means lost if a coordinated effort on a selective basis were undertaken to keep primed, warned, and moving half a dozen key personalities in the Democratic Party who in turn could buttress the President and bring the whole issue to a decent conclusion. That is to say that a continuous, instead of a sporadic, effort on a full-time basis is more imperative than it ever was before.

Perhaps the outstanding conclusion which I carried away with me is that the approach has to be friendly; the distinction must be made



between the President and the State Department, and can be made only by those people who have not been parties to attacks on the President, lumping him with every American double-cross. This is of the first strategic importance.

On Thursday, May 27, I called Carl Sherman to express my anxiety about what seemed to me an impending new reversal by the United States on the Palestine question. Indications of such a reversal were the President's press conference, the failure of the United States to reintroduce its own resolution with respect to invoking Article 39, leaving Russia to do so, and the introduction of a British resolution which coupled the Jews with the Arabs as aggressors and called for an arms embargo directed against the Jews as well as the Arabs. It also would have halted Jewish immigration into Palestine.



I asked him to look into the matter and to get hold of Jack Ewing and Ed Flynn. I pointed out also that I was afraid that with the impending departure on June 3rd of the President for a ~~xxx~~ tour, a lot of skullduggery would take place unless the matter were sewed up promptly. He promised to get in touch with Ewing and with Flynn.

On Friday he told me that he had discovered that Ewing left Washington on Thursday and would not be returning until next Tuesday. But he undertook to try to discover his whereabouts. Flynn also could not be reached until Tuesday.

On Sunday, after the vote of the Security Council on the amended British resolution, I called Mr. Sherman at his country house, told him the facts, that the general impression was that a new Anglo-American collusion had been arranged, and what the outlook was. He told me that he had been unable to discover the whereabouts of Ewing and asked me to call him again early Tuesday morning and brief him again as he would surely get hold of Ewing on Tuesday.

On Tuesday morning I telephoned Mr. Sherman and had a long talk with him, calling attention in detail to the evidence of collusion, the intention of the British to soften up the Jews to negotiate a peace which would shrink their territory, and the utter injustice of American support of the British act, particularly in the light of the recognition of the Jewish state by the United States. I urged him to suggest to Mr. Ewing that if the President wanted to maintain a newly-gained prestige, he would have to take effective action on the Palestine situation, and I suggested the following:



(1) Dismissal of Loy Henderson.

(2) Appointment of a special adviser to the State Department to replace Hilldring, suggesting two names, Sumner Welles, former Under Secretary of State, and Dr. Frank P. Graham, President of the University of North Carolina, who is already a special adviser to the State Department.

(3) The immediate announcement of a loan to the Jewish state and a declaration that the United States would help to arm the Haganah once the truce period is over.

(4) A public declaration that the United States would not support Mr. Bevin's policies on Palestine.

On Tuesday evening Mr. Sherman told me that he had finally reached Mr. Ewing and had a long talk with him. Ewing promised to do what he could and asked Carl Sherman to call him back in two days, which means Thursday morning. Sherman told him that he thought some of the things that had happened had been due to Ewing's absence from Washington. Ewing was aware of some of the State Department's action but insisted that so was Truman and that it was absolutely wrong to anticipate that the worst was going to happen. He insisted that it was not the intention of the United States to

recognize the state of Israel and then let it die. He also intimated that the embargo would be lifted and that the important thing for the United States was to get a resolution leveling the embargo against the Arab states.



Mr. Sherman passed on to Mr. Ewing the suggestions which we had made and the latter promised to put them to the President before his departure on his speaking tour. Mr. Sherman also reached Ed Flynn and told him the situation. Flynn was very much disgusted and indicated to Sherman that he would do something in his own way and at the proper moment.

On Friday morning there was a meeting in New York between Mr. Ewing, Paul Fitzpatrick, chairman of the New York State Democratic Committee, and Flynn, in which the Palestine situation was gone over in full detail. Mr. Ewing again indicated that something would be done. He intimated that the President intended to name an ambassador to Israel and also that the President had indicated to Bernadotte that the United States favored Jewish immigration into Palestine during the truce period. In the opinion of Ewing it was this which on June 3 brought about Bernadotte's initial interpretation of the May 29 resolution of the Security Council as indicating that it did not affect Jewish immigration into Palestine.