ANGLO-AMERICAN RELATIONS AND THE
PROBLEMS OF A JEWISH STATE, 1945-1948

THESIS

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This thesis is concerned with determining the effect of the establishment of a Jewish state on Anglo-American relations and the policies of their governments. This work covers the period from the awarding of the Palestine Mandate to Great Britain, through World War II, and concentrates on the post-war events up to the foundation of the state of Israel. It uses major governmental documents, as well as those of the United Nations, the archival materials at the Harry S. Truman Library, and the memoirs of the major participants in the Palestine drama. This study concludes that, while the Palestine problem presented ample opportunities for disunity, the Anglo-American relationship suffered no permanently damaging effects.
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"For lo the days come, saith the Lord, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the Lord; and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave their fathers, and they shall possess it."\(^1\) Whatever the Biblical prophesy, the creation of the new nation of Israel came from the secular desire and efforts of the Zionists. Their struggles were alternately aided and frustrated by the policies of the two great powers with the primary interests and responsibilities in Palestine, Great Britain and the United States. Inconsistency marked the most consistent feature of British and, especially, American policy in this area.

American decision-making regarding Palestine after World War II was a combination of disunity among officials and confusion over policy-making. During this period, a split developed between the White House and the State Department. Independent action on both sides sabotaged any thought of a consistent policy by America in Palestine, and very nearly cost the United States the support and friendship of both the Jews and the Arabs.

\(^1\)Jeremiah 30:3.
The position of Great Britain was more complicated. Both the Balfour Declaration and the League of Nations Mandate bound the British to the creation of a "Jewish National Home"-- a term never fully defined-- in Palestine. Strategic and economic interests tied Great Britain more closely to the Arabs than to the Jews. With the issuance of the White Paper of 1939, which basically forbade Jewish immigration to Palestine after 1944, Britain made her choice: security interests over vague historical promises. This choice led them into conflict not only with the Zionists, but also with American public opinion and, ultimately, with President Harry S. Truman, who may have been acting more out of concern for this public opinion, and its political implications, than for any other reason. Fortunately for the future of Anglo-American friendship the problems in Palestine, while causing the exchange of angry words between the allies, did not affect the Anglo-American relationship in other areas.²

This conflict, however, was not reflected in relations between the British government and its Foreign Office, on the one hand, and the American Department of State on the other. The groups found the claims of the Arabs, with their vast supplies of oil, much more compelling than

the national aspirations of the Jews. They also agreed that Anglo-American discord would only benefit the Soviet Union. Thus, the Jewish demands must be denied. The question has been raised as to whether anti-Semitism was a factor in the lack of support these officials gave to Zionist aims. There seems to be more evidence to support a charge of anti-Zionism, rather than anti-Semitism, as a basis for the attitudes of and the policies these two groups enacted. As one State Department official described it:

If by anti-Zionist it is meant that the officers of the Near East Division [of the Department of State] were opposed to the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine on the grounds that this would have serious effects on our interests in the area, then I think it can be said that this was indeed the attitude of most of us.

Of course, this does not mean that there were no American or British policy-makers who were not anti-Semitic, but rather, that it was not the prevalent emotion.

This thesis will focus on the effects of the Palestinian problem on Anglo-American relations and on the policies, sometimes joint, but more often not, that were followed in handling the situation. At times, the paper will be forced to look solely at the efforts of one power or the other, because there were periods when only one was actively involved in decision-making and policy.

implementation in Palestine. For instance, the opening chapter, covering the years up through World War II, will deal almost exclusively with British policy, while the final chapter, discussing the period of the trusteeship proposal and the final decision to recognize Israel, will primarily follow American policy.

Sources for a study on this topic are numerous. The major sources used include *Foreign Relations of the United States*, from 1943 to 1948, the British Parliamentary Debates, the *Public Papers* of Harry S. Truman, the *Political and Diplomatic Documents* of Israel and the debates and reports of the United Nations. The memoirs of several key figures, both major officials, such as Harry S. Truman, Clement Attlee, and Chaim Weizmann, and lesser-known figures, including Evan Wilson, Richard H.S. Crossman, and David Horowitz, proved invaluable, as did newspaper reports, especially those of the *Times* (London). Finally, it would be impossible to overlook the wealth of information to be found at the Harry S. Truman Library in Independence, Missouri. The sources there include the Palestine Subject File, the President's Secretary's File, and the papers of Clark M. Clifford and David K. Niles, as well as oral history interviews with several of the key actors in the Palestine drama.

Through these varied sources, this thesis will follow
the intricate twistings and turnings of events and policy associated with the founding of the state of Israel. It will show that Palestine was a divisive issue in Anglo-American relations, and one with no real solution. This problem could have done great damage to the alliance but, in the end, had no lasting effect. The importance of other issues, which demanded Anglo-American cooperation, and the growing tensions between East and West exerted a greater influence on the alliance than the Palestine situation. The Anglo-American alliance emerged from the controversies surrounding Palestine intact, but not for the lack of opportunities for disunity.
CHAPTER II

ORIGINS OF THE PROBLEM: THE BALFOUR DECLARATION TO THE END OF WORLD WAR II, 1917-1945

One author described the Palestinian situation in the years 1945-1948 as "... an Arab-Zionist contest within an Anglo-American controversy about to be drawn into the Soviet-American 'cold war.'"\(^1\) To discover how the situation deteriorated to this degree, it is necessary to trace its background, specifically the period from the beginning of the British Mandate in Palestine to the end of World War II.

The history of Palestine is one of conquest and domination. The passing of Palestine under Roman control in B.C. 63 marked the beginning of centuries of foreign rule in Palestine. From this time on, the country was variously controlled by the Romans, the Persians, the Crusaders, and the Arabs. In 1516, the Ottoman Turks, led by Sultan Selim I, defeated the Mameluke Sultans of Egypt at the battle of Marj-Dabik, and this victory brought Palestine and Syria into the Ottoman Empire, where both remained until the end of World War I.

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\(^{1}\) Jacob C. Hurewitz, The Struggle for Palestine (New York: W.W. Norton, 1950), 301.
Though the Roman conquerers had dispersed the Jews, a small remnant of Jewry remained in Palestine, centered in Tiberias, Safed, and the Eastern Galilee. They were treated humanely after the Moslem Turks took over, and the Turks did allow some Jewish immigration. These few Palestinian Jews were the living embodiment of the dream of an eventual return to the Holy Land by the Jews of the Diaspora. Yet the turning point and political beginning of the fight for the Jews to return to Eretz Israel (literally, "the land of Israel," the term being used to denote the territorial ambitions of the Zionists)\(^2\), came not in the Holy Land, but in Paris, and not from a Palestinian but, rather, from a Hungarian Jew.

The event that began Zionism was the court-martial of Captain Alfred Dreyfus on charges of selling military secrets to the Germans, and the man who began it was a Viennese journalist, Theodore Herzl. The resulting wave of anti-Semitism brought Herzl to the realization that Jewish assimilation into European society had failed and that something else was necessary. That something was enunciated later in 1895 in a pamphlet entitled "Der Judenstaat" (the Jewish state)—Zionism. The political structure of Zionism appeared at the First Zionist Congress held in Basle, Switzerland, in 1897. The World Zionist Organization, Amos Purlmutter, Israel: The Partitioned State (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1985), 388.
headed by Herzl, was created as the official voice of world Zionism. After his death in 1904, Herzl's place was filled by a British Jew, Dr. Chaim Weizmann. With Zionism, the Jews staked their claim to Palestine, based on past historical association and rule and also on the need for a homeland where Jews would never again have to be the victims of anti-Semitism.

The claim of the Palestinian Arabs was more direct. They constituted the overwhelming majority of the population; in 1920, the Arabs outnumbered the Jews by a margin of more than three to one. They were in direct possession of the land, and they feared that the dream of the Zionists might cause them to lose it. There was, however, one stumbling block to the claim by these Arabs to Palestine as their own independent state—history. Palestine had never been ruled by the native Arab population. The problems and conflicting claims which would plague Britain during the Mandate period were, therefore, already present long before it took responsibility for Palestine.

Great Britain became involved in this area as a result

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3 John Snetsinger, *Truman, the Jewish Vote, and the Creation of Israel* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1974), 1.


of the political alliances and strategic considerations of World War I. Britain entered the war against Germany and Austria-Hungary on 4 August 1914, after the German invasion of neutral Belgium. Both sides were extremely interested in the intentions of Turkey with regard to the war. If Turkey joined with the Allied Powers (Britain, France, and Russia), a solid circle of enemy forces could be formed around the Central Powers (Germany and Austria-Hungary). A Turkish alliance with the Central Powers, however, could cut lines of supply from the West to Russia via the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. On 2 November 1914, under pressure economically and militarily, Turkey entered the war on the side of Germany, which extended the war to the Middle East and threatened British colonies and outposts in the area.

After fighting on the Western Front settled into trench warfare by 1915, British offensive planning shifted to this new front. From bases in Egypt, Britain could launch attacks northward toward Turkey, through Palestine, the Lebanon and Syria. The unknown factor in this planning was the reaction of the Arab populations in these Turkish colonies. If they fully supported the Ottoman Empire, the British could not hope to succeed. If, on the other hand, the British could somehow convince these Arabs that their future lay in a British victory, specifically aided
by an Arab revolt against the Turks, the British endeavors would be greatly facilitated. This, then, was the reasoning behind the so-called McMahon Correspondence.

The McMahon Correspondence consisted of a series of letters, dated July 1915 to March 1916, between the British High Commissioner at Cairo, Sir Henry McMahon, and Sherif Hussein of Mecca. These letters, which became the basis for the Arab claim of a British promise of an independent Arab Palestine, said that in exchange for an Arab revolt against the Turks, Britain would recognize and support Arab independence in certain areas. A problem arose over the precise definition of the areas which were to become independent Arab states. In his letter of 14 July 1915, the Sherif laid out his ideas:

England to acknowledge the independence of the Arab countries, bounded on the north by Mersina and Adana up to the 37° of latitude, on which degree fall Birijik, Urfa, Mardin, Midiat, Jezirat (Ibn 'Umar), Amadia, up to the border of Persia; on the east by the borders of Persia up to the Gulf of Basra; on the south by the Indian Ocean, with the exception of the position of Aden to remain as it is; on the west by the Red Sea, the Mediterranean Sea up to Mersina...

The western boundaries of this Arab kingdom included Palestine.

In his letter of 24 October 1915, McMahon informed

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the Sherif of the British government's acceptance of these boundaries, with a few modifications. "The two districts of Mersina and Alexandretta," wrote McMahon, "and portions of Syria lying to the west of the districts of Damascus, Homs, Hama and Aleppo cannot be said to be purely Arab, and should be excluded from the limits demanded." To the British mind, the area of Palestine had been excluded; indeed, in the White Paper of 1922 (also known as the Churchill White Paper, after its author, the then-Colonial Secretary Winston Churchill), this omission was clearly defined. This distinction, however, apparently escaped the Arabs, who would continue to pressure the British for an Arab Palestine on this basis. The correspondence did produce the desired result, from the British point of view: the Arabs revolted in 1916, and the British were able to mount their attacks, culminating in the capture of Jerusalem on 8 December 1917.

The difference between the British and Arab interpretations of the correspondence was exposed by another British attempt to gain the support of another specific group for the allied war cause. The document was the Balfour Declaration, and the group was the Jews, especially

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7 Letter from Sir Henry McMahon to the Sherif of Mecca, 24 October 1915, as published in Royal Institute, Great Britain and Palestine, 114 (emphasis added).

8 The Churchill Memorandum of 3 June 1922, as published in Royal Institute, Great Britain and Palestine, 125.
those of Russia and the United States. The events in Russia triggered, at least partially, the issuance of the Balfour Declaration. The first revolution of March 1917, which toppled Czar Nicholas II, destabilized Russia and further weakened her ability to assist her western allies against Germany. The weakness of the provisional government also contributed to the growth of influence of the Bolsheviks, led by Vladimir Lenin. Many in the West feared that if the Communists came to power, Russia would leave the war entirely. Thus the Jews of Russia, who made up a large portion of the politically active population, began to take on the role, at least in western eyes, of a group which could affect the outcome of this political situation. The British Zionist leaders began to pressure the British Foreign Office, saying that a declaration supporting the creation of a Jewish national home in Palestine would win the support of the Russian Jews for the allied cause and "keep them from joining forces with the Bolsheviks."  

This reasoning appealed to the British government. It was not, however, willing to undertake such a promise without the support of her allies, and especially the support of the newest adherent to the Allied cause, the United States. The British actively sought American governmental support for a proposed statement on a Jewish National Home.

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9 Thomas A. Bryson, American Diplomatic Relations with the Middle East (Mutuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1977), 63-4.
They thought of this support not only in terms of keeping Great Britain from having to bear the burden of such a promise alone, but also as a way to induce more active, and perhaps more generous support from American Jews for the Allied war effort, which the United States had joined only a few months before. The first approach to the United States came in September 1917, and it was not accepted. The British were unsure as to whether they should proceed with the statement. As hopes began to dim, the British made a second approach to the Americans a few weeks later, and this time the answer was positive. American support for the statement was important to the British. The negative response to the first approach had almost precluded any British announcement. If Wilson had responded likewise to the second request, it seems likely that there would have been no pro-Zionist statement made by the British. 10

Apparently it was pressure from American Zionists that changed Woodrow Wilson's mind. Specifically, Louis Brandeis had met with the president on 23 September. 11 On 13 October Wilson sent a note to his adviser Colonel Edward House, which said, in part, "I find in my pocket the memorandum you gave me about the Zionist movement. I am afraid I did

10 Snetsinger, *Truman, the Jewish Vote.* ..., 3.
11 Ibid., 2.
not say to you that I concurred in the formula suggested from the other side [Britain]. I do, and would be obliged if you would let them know."  

In this off-hand fashion, Wilson gave his support to a statement favoring a Jewish National Home, probably not realizing its exact intent and certainly not realizing the effect this policy would later have.

It can also be argued that the British did not know what they were becoming involved with either. Nevertheless, Britain went forward with the statement, which took the form of a letter from Foreign Secretary Arthur J. Balfour to Lord James Rothschild, the head of the British branch of the famous Jewish banking family, dated 2 November 1917. The critical part of the statement, which would become known as the Balfour Declaration, read

His Majesty's Government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of that objective, it being understood that nothing should be done that may prejudice the rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.

The Jews now had their promise from the British for some sort of control over Palestine, to go along with the promise the Arabs felt they had to the same area. And

the British had dug themselves into a hole from which they were never able to emerge, although it took them thirty years, millions of pounds, and thousands of lives to realize it.

The next step for Great Britain and Palestine came after World War I. Since Turkey had ended up on the wrong side, it was up to the victorious allies to decide what to do with her possessions. The Paris Peace Conference, which began its sessions in January 1919, became the center of this decision-making process. Britain and France disputed who would control certain areas of the Ottoman Empire. In an earlier agreement (the Sykes-Picot agreement of 1916), they had agreed to the division of the Middle East, with the exception of Syria, the Lebanon, and Palestine, which both sides coveted. This disagreement was apparent at Paris, and President Wilson offered a suggestion. He proposed the establishment of a joint committee of the Big Three to investigate the situation in the area and to recommend a solution. The two parties to the disagreement refused to participate, but in the spirit of Wilsonianism, American delegates were nominated and sent into the tangle of Middle Eastern affairs.

This group was known as the King-Crane Commission, named for delegates Henry C. King and Charles R. Crane. The primary purpose of the Commission was to judge which of the Western powers should take the mandate for the area,
and specifically the mandate for Palestine. After investigating the situation in the Middle East, the King-Crane Commission issued its report on 28 August 1919. The recommendations, however, went beyond simply determining the identity of a mandatory power for Palestine. The report called for the maintenance of the territorial integrity of Syria, which meant that the Lebanon and Palestine should remain within the Syrian state (this had been the administrative structure under the Turks). This greater Syria would be ruled by Emir Feisal, under the supervision of the mandatory power. The Commission specifically stated that this supervision should not be thought of as "colonization", and therefore proposed that the mandate carry a definite time limit. They determined, through consultations with political leaders in the area, that the mandate be awarded to the United States, with Great Britain as a second choice. 13

Their final recommendation concerned Zionism, and specifically the question of the Jewish National Home. They called for a "serious modification" in the Zionist program. After stating that they began their investigation with "minds predisposed in its [Zionism's] favor", their minds had been changed by "the actual facts in Palestine."

The actual facts in Palestine, in their opinion, precluded the establishment of a Jewish state; indeed, the King-Crane Commission was the first of many bodies to draw the distinction between a Jewish state and a Jewish National Home in Palestine. Because of the Wilsonian doctrine of self-determination, and the Commissioner's belief that the Zionist program could only be carried out by force, the report concluded:

In view of all these considerations, and with a deep sense of sympathy for the Jewish cause, the Commissioners feel bound to recognize that only a greatly reduced Zionist program be attempted by the Peace Conference and even that, only very gradually initiated. This would have to mean that Jewish immigration should be definitely limited, and that the project for making Palestine a distinctly Jewish commonwealth be given up.

The report was sent to Washington at the beginning of September 1919 for President Wilson's approval.

Several events, however, transpired to preclude the acceptance of the recommendations in the King-Crane Report. The most important factor in the demise of the report was its timing. The White House received the document on 24 September, while Wilson was in the midst of his speaking tour for the League of Nations. After his stroke and return to Washington, the report was never brought to his attention. This gave the two major critics of the report, the Jews and the French (who

14 Ibid., 792-5.
opposed it because it gave them no control in the area), the opportunity to prevent its implementation. Their combined pressure forced the shelving of the report and the renewal of attempts to find a suitable solution for Palestine and the rest of the area.

After the demise of the King-Crane Report and the growing lack of interest of Washington in the Middle East, which foreshadowed American interwar isolationism, Britain emerged as the leading candidate to receive the mandate for Palestine. At the San Remo Conference in April of 1920, Britain and France finally agreed on the division of the area. France would control Syria and the Lebanon, while Britain would control Palestine. Each would have to be named by the League of Nations as a mandate, of course, but because there seemed no other powers inclined or able to challenge this division, the mandates seemed secure. Britain, which had governed Palestine militarily since the end of the war, established a civilian government, under High Commissioner Sir Herbert Samuel, on 1 July 1920. The original territory set aside for the Palestine mandate included Palestine and all of present day Jordan. In June of 1922, however, in its first major policy statement on the proposed mandate area, Britain partitioned the Palestine territory into two

15 Bryson, American Diplomatic Relations, 68.
segments. The first, called Trans-Jordan, made up of the mandated land east of the Jordan River, was to be an Arab state, ruled by the Emir Abdullah, of the Royal House of Hussein. This area would be exempt from the promises of the Balfour Declaration.¹⁶

This statement, known as the Churchill memorandum or White Paper, also discussed policy for the remainder of Palestine and, especially, for the future of the Jewish National Home. The White Paper took the same view as the King-Crane Commissioners that Palestine was not to become a Jewish state. Indeed, wrote Colonial Secretary Winston Churchill, "His Majesty's Government regard such an expectation as impracticable and have no such aim in view."¹⁷

What, then, did the British have in mind for a Jewish National Home? "... Not the imposition of a Jewish nationality upon the inhabitants of Palestine as a whole, but rather the further development of the existing Jewish community... in order that it may become a centre in which the Jewish people as a whole may take, on the grounds of religion and race, an interest and a pride."¹⁸

This further development would be facilitated by continued

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¹⁷ The Churchill Memorandum of 3 June 1922, as published in Royal Institute, Great Britain and Palestine, 123.

¹⁸ Ibid., 124.
Jewish immigration, limited only by economic absorptive capacity. But with the statement, which governed British conduct in Palestine until 1939, Britain began its policy of "whittling down" the mandate, even before it formally began.

The League mandate officially came into operation on 29 September 1923, although its text had been published a year earlier. The preamble restated the Balfour Declaration, and Article 2 charged Great Britain with the responsibility "for placing the country under such political, administrative and economic conditions as will secure the establishment of the Jewish National Home. . . ." 19 To this end, the text also called for the recognition of the Zionist Organization as a public body "for the purpose of advising and cooperating with the Administration. . . as may affect the establishment of the Jewish national home and the interests of the Jewish people in Palestine. . . .", 20 and for the British to facilitate Jewish immigration and encourage their settlement on state lands and waste lands not required for public purposes. 21 This was the obligation Great Britain accepted in 1923 and proceeded to defy for the next several years, a process which culminated in the MacDonald White Paper of 1939.

20 Ibid., 35.
21 Ibid., 36.
The attitude of American policy during the interwar period was one of slightly curious indifference. The United States, of course, had not been consulted by the League of Nations when it awarded the Palestine mandate to Great Britain. In 1924 an Anglo-American treaty was signed which protected the rights and property of American citizens in Palestine, and, indirectly, the United States recognized British control in the country. As for the idea of the Jewish National Home, aside from certain public statements, America remained neutral. Zionism and the Balfour Declaration were popular in Congress and were viewed sympathetically by a large portion of American public opinion, but this sympathy did not translate into the United States taking concrete action to assure the establishment of the Jewish Homeland. Indeed, the State Department repeatedly stated that the United States was not responsible for administering the mandate or implementing the Balfour Declaration. These attitudes did not substantially change until 1943.

British policy, however, could not remain this detached or this consistent. "From 1922 onward, the British veered first in one direction and then in another, in a desperate effort to reconcile their own contradictory

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22 John A. DeNovo, American Interests and Policies in the Middle East, 1900-1939 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1963), 344.
promises and the inherent contradictions of the mandate."²³

The contradictions seemed to stem from balancing the first part of the Balfour Declaration, to establish the National Home, with the second, to safeguard the rights of the non-Jews in Palestine. The British tended to support the Arabs for this reason. One British Mandate official has suggested another reason: latent (or, in some cases, overt) anti-Semitism. "The Jews were a new element in the record of British Overseas Administration; a people who regarded themselves as at least the equal of the ruling class."²⁴ But with the limited number of Jews in Palestine, Great Britain might have been able to find a compromise between the two sides had it not been for the rise to power of Adolph Hitler in Germany.

The advent of Hitler and his systematic persecution of Jews led to an immense increase of Jewish immigration to Palestine, reaching a high of 60,000 in 1935-36.²⁵ The Arab population of Palestine viewed this influx unfavorably. They saw the Jews as usurpers, taking over their lands and jobs and, perhaps eventually, their country. One man who felt that something must be done was the Mufti


of Jerusalem, Mohammed Said Haj Amin el-Husseini. With the support of the Arab Higher Committee, the Mufti called for a National General Strike on 25 April 1936. The Arabs hoped to gain three things through the strike: an immediate end to Jewish immigration, a ban on land sales to Jews, and the establishment of an independent Arab Palestine. Violence against Jews and the British Administration were regular features of the Arab rebellion. In the first phase of the violence, from late April to September, eighty Jews were killed and four hundred more were injured.26

British reaction to this disorder was tentative. The government feared the possible repercussions in the neighboring Arab states if they reacted forcefully against the rebellion. They compromised by sending a Royal Commission, headed by Lord Peel, in November 1936. Its Report, submitted to the Cabinet in June 1937, made several recommendations, including giving the High Commissioner the power to prohibit the transfer of land in any stated area to Jews and limiting Jewish immigration to no more than 12,000 per year. But, according to the Commission, "the above recommendations for dealing with Arab and Jewish grievances under the Mandate will not 'remove' them or 'prevent their recurrence.' They are the best palliatives

the Commission can devise, but they will not solve the problem."\textsuperscript{27}

The Commission did have a permanent solution to offer. After decided that it was impossible to solve the Palestine problem within the framework of the Mandate, the Commission recommended that it be ended and replaced with partition, and put forward a scheme which they defined as "practicable, honourable and just."\textsuperscript{28} Palestine would be divided into two states, one Jewish and one Arab, the latter being united with Trans-Jordan. The report also stated that there should be free trade between the two states, the Jewish state should pay a subsidy to help develop the Arab state and Jewish land purchases and immigration in the proposed Arab state should cease.\textsuperscript{29} The report concluded that both sides at first would oppose the plan, but eventually they would see that there were advantages to it; most importantly, the prospect of peace.\textsuperscript{30} The merit of the plan was only one element; equally important, both sides must accept it, and for the British to get agreement from both Arabs and Jews on any subject at all would require diligence and good fortune.

\textsuperscript{27} Findings and Recommendations of the Royal Commission, 1937, as published in Royal Institute, Great Britain and Palestine, 132.

\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., 129.

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., 129-30.

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., 131.
The Jews accepted the idea of partition, although at the Twentieth Zionist Congress in August 1937, they rejected the area set aside for them by the Peel Report. The Arabs were not at all pleased, and they answered with renewed violence. The British response, in 1938, was to send another Royal Commission, known as the Partition or Woodhead Commission, to work out the practical details of the Peel Report. The Woodhead Report rejected partition as a solution in Palestine.\(^{31}\) It studied three different plans of division and, for different reasons, found all three to be unenforceable. In conclusion, the Commission reported that "any plan of partition which could be devised would have the following objections:---

1) The Arab state would be far from self-supporting. . . .

2) The Mandatory Power, in addition to defence expenditure, would have to provide financial assistance to the Mandated Territories. . . .

4) Any frontiers which could be drawn for a Jewish State would be inadequate for purpose of defence."\(^{32}\) Instead, it proposed that some sort of "economic federalism" be substituted, although they did not define exactly how such a system would work. The Partition Commission, instead of finding a way out of the troubles in Palestine, basically

\(^{31}\) Summary of the Findings of the Partition Commission, 1938, as published in Royal Institute, Great Britain and Palestine, 132.

\(^{32}\) Ibid., 133-4.
returned Great Britain to the position it had been in before the Peel Commission Report: it still had no definite policies for ending the unrest in Palestine.

The vacillations of the British government must be viewed in light of events outside of Palestine. Europe was faced with the prospect of a new war, owing to Adolph Hitler's aggressive threats. The Western powers were not prepared to fight a war, and their policy of appeasement showed this clearly. The Munich Conference occurred almost at the same time as the issuance of the Woodhead Report. Some were quick to note the connection between the two. "The subject was discussed in October 1938, between Dr. Weizmann and the Czechoslovak Minister in London, Jan Masaryk, who told him: 'But don't think, Dr. Weizmann, that we are the only victims. The British have built a house of three stories. On the first floor they put Haile Selassie. The second floor has now been allocated to us. But the third floor is reserved for you.'"\textsuperscript{33} It is, then, against these events that the White Paper of 1939 must be seen.

The British needed peace in the Middle East, and since the Arabs made up the vast majority of the population in the area, it followed logically that the Arabs must be appeased. The British government felt that it was imperative

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to appease the Arabs, because they could cause much more trouble than the Jews, a smaller group, persecuted by Hitler and trapped in the Soviet Union. The British did attempt a compromise by holding a conference between the Arabs and the Jews in London in February and March of 1939, but this failed. Unable to find a solution both sides would agree to, Britain expediently chose a policy which favored the Arabs. The White Paper of 1939, also called the MacDonald White Paper (for Colonial Secretary Malcolm MacDonald), was issued on 17 May 1939. After reviewing the obligations of the Mandate, the Paper discussed the failure of the Peel and Woodhead Commissions. Because of these failures, Britain had to devise a new policy, the proposals being divided into three categories: the Constitution, Immigration, and Land.

In its consideration of the constitution, the White Paper discussed the Jewish National Home.

... His Majesty's Government believe that the framers of the Mandate in which the Balfour Declaration was embodied could not have intended that Palestine should be converted into a Jewish State against the will of the Arab population of the country... His Majesty's Government therefore now declare unequivocally that it is not part of their policy that Palestine should become a Jewish State. They


35 As quoted in Laqueur and Rubin, eds., The Israeli-Arab Reader, 62.
would regard it as contrary to their obligations to the Arabs under the Mandate. . . .

Instead, in ten years, the British proposed to establish an independent Palestinian state in which the Arabs and the Jews would share power "in such a way as to ensure that the essential interests of each community are safeguarded." The government did not say, however, why they believed that ten years in the future the Arabs and the Jews would be more willing to cooperate than they had been during the last twenty.

The second part of the White Paper discussed immigration. It recognized that British policy toward immigration had previously been based on the standard of economic absorptive capacity, but now a new factor had to be considered: the political effect of this immigration.

But it cannot be denied that fear of indefinite Jewish immigration is widespread amongst the Arab population and that this fear has made possible disturbances which have given a serious setback to economic progress, depleted the Palestine exchequer, rendered life and property insecure, and produced a bitterness between the Arab and Jewish populations which is deplorable between citizens of the same country.

Since the Arabs had not become reconciled to continued Jewish immigration, as Britain had hoped they would, it was now necessary, for the protection of both Arabs and

36 Ibid., 66.
37 Ibid., 69.
38 Ibid., 72.
The White Paper did not include the new policy of restricting Jewish immigration. The limit was a total of 75,000 over the next five years, with no further immigration afterwards unless the Arabs agreed. The government would be satisfied, the White Paper concluded, "when the immigration over five years which is now contemplated has taken place. . . ." After it had occurred, the British government "... will not be justified in facilitating, nor will they be under any obligation to facilitate, the further development of the Jewish National Home by immigration regardless of the wishes of the Arab population." At the end of this period, the Jewish population would be approximately one-third of the total population of Palestine, hardly what the Zionist leadership viewed as the fulfillment of the promises of the Balfour Declaration or the League of Nations Mandate.

The final section of the White Paper dealt with land purchases. The new policy would end Jewish purchases of Arab lands completely in certain areas, while limiting purchases in others. It would be done "to maintain their [the Arabs] existing standard of life" and to prevent the creation of "a considerable landless Arab population." The only areas to remain open to free Jewish purchase were those which already possessed a Jewish majority, such as the land around Tel Aviv and in the Eastern Galilee.

39 Ibid., 74.
40 Ibid., 75.
The MacDonald White Paper received very little support. The Arabs, of course, were jubilant—they had achieved all their goals from the rebellion of 1936. The Jews were appalled, but outside of limited reprisals by terrorists, they could do little to reverse the policy. The British proposals were submitted to the League of Nations Permanent Mandates Commission for approval, where they were heartily disapproved of as violations of both the Balfour Declaration and the League of Nations Mandate. Regardless, they sent the proposals on for consideration by the League Council at its next regular session, scheduled for September 1939, and which never took place. The "proposals" of the White Paper, therefore, never received League approval and technically they had no legal validity.41

Even the British House of Commons was not deeply impressed with the new government policy. The Labour Party earnestly denounced the White Paper during the debate on the policy on 23 May 1939. Herbert Morrison accused the government of having "run away" from the violence in Palestine, of "a cynical breach of pledges to the Jews," and of lowering the image of Great Britain in the eyes of the world and especially in the eyes of the United States. "If we do this thing to-day," he concluded, "we shall have done a thing which is dishonourable to our

41 Joseph, British Rule in Palestine, 143.
good name, which is discreditable to our capacity to
govern and which is dangerous to British security, to
peace and to the economic interest of the world in general
and of our own country. Moreover, it will not work." It is interesting to note Morrison's doubts about the
practicality of the policy, when it is realized how, only
a few years later, he would play a large role in continuing
its implementation.

The government was not even safe from attacks from
its own benches. Winston Churchill, the author of the
1922 White Paper, called the new policy "the abandonment
of the Balfour Declaration," and told the House, "What
they [the government] are not entitled to do... is to
bring the immigration to an end..." These pleas,
and others, were not enough to halt the approval by the
House of the policy, but the vote, 281-181, was one of the
smallest majorities for the government since its formation
in 1931; instead of the usual two hundred and fifty vote
majority, it received only one hundred.

The outbreak of World War II turned attention away
from Palestine, for the most part. In Palestine, the
Jews, vowing to "fight the war as if there were no White

42Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Debates (Commons), 5th Series, 347:2138-42 (emphasis added).
43Ibid., 2173-4.
44Gilbert, Exile and Return, 232.
Paper, and the White Paper as if there were no war", volunteered in large numbers to fight in the British Army. The Arabs felt no such desire. Many of the Arabs passively awaited the expected German victory, while others, including the Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin, went further. During a visit to Berlin in April of 1941, he publicly announced the sympathy of the "Arab nation" for Germany, and pledged to Hitler its active support to bring about the fall of what he called the "English-Jewish coalition." The Mufti also made propaganda broadcasts for the Germans for most of the war. The position of the Mufti, of course, was not universal in the Arab world; indeed, most Arab states ended up in the war against Germany. Even the Mufti's stance can be seen as more anti-British and anti-Jewish than avidly pro-German, a feeling which was shared by many Arabs.

The war was to mark the beginning of a new American interest in Palestine. During Franklin Roosevelt's first two terms and half of his third, Palestine was not an important issue for the United States. But as President Roosevelt began to turn his thoughts to the post-war settlement, Palestine began to play a noticeable role. In a conversation with Harold B. Hoskins on 27 September 1943, Roosevelt showed that, while he had given Palestine

45 Ibid., 246.
46 Ibid., 259.
some thought, he had not yet decided on a definite policy. Roosevelt variously proposed the settling of European Jewish refugees in Columbia, the placing of Palestine under a religious trusteeship, and the encouraging of Palestinian Jews to purchase arable land in other Arab countries and financially aiding the Arabs of Palestine to move to these lands.\footnote{Memorandum of Conversation by Lieutenant Colonel Harold B. Hoskins, 27 September 1943, \textit{FRUS 1943}, 4 (Washington: USGPO, 1964), 811-4.} In another meeting, State Department official Herbert Feis came away with his own impressions:

Still... there is reason to believe that Roosevelt cherished the illusion that he, and he alone, as head of the United States, could bring about a settlement—if not a reconciliation—between Arabs and Jews. I remember muttering to myself as I left the White House after hearing the President discourse in rambling fashion about Middle Eastern affairs, "I've read of men who thought they might be King of the Jews and other men who thought they might be King of the Arabs, but this is the first time I've listened to a man who dreamt of being King of both the Jews and the Arabs."\footnote{Herbert Feis, \textit{The Birth of Israel} (New York: Norton, 1969), 16-7.}

Whatever dreams or vague ideas he may have held during the war, the heart of Roosevelt's approach was to avoid the long-range question of Palestine's political future.\footnote{Dan Tschirgi, \textit{The Politics of Indecision: Origins and Implications of American Involvement with the Palestine Problem} (New York: Praeger, 1983), 118.}
The State Department was also at work on its own ideas for the future of Palestine. In a memorandum of 15 October 1943, the Assistant Chief of the Near Eastern Division also pressed for trusteeship, either on the basis of the President's religious plan or under continued British authority.\(^{50}\) In 1944, however, in a summary report on Palestine, Evan M. Wilson declared that the religious trusteeship "would be a failure." He instead proposed that Palestine be declared an International Territory under a British Trusteeship. He also stated for the first time what was to become the cornerstone of State Department policy on Palestine: "no decision affecting the basic situation in Palestine will be taken without full and prior consultation with all concerned, including both Arabs and Jews. . . ."\(^{51}\)

Roosevelt, during the last years of his life, played both sides of the fence on the issue. During the election campaign of 1944, in a letter to Senator Robert Wagner, who was chairman of a pro-Zionist organization, Roosevelt endorsed the idea of a Jewish state. "This was the

\(^{50}\) Memorandum by the Assistant Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs (Gordon Merriam), 15 October 1943, \textit{FRUS 1943}, 4, 816-21.

first such endorsement by an American president. . . .”

But only a few months later, on his way home from the Yalta Conference, Roosevelt met with King Ibn Saud of Saudi Arabia. The King discussed the difficulties of continued Jewish immigration into Palestine and Roosevelt agreed that the United States would do nothing that might be considered hostile by the Arab people. With these two actions, Roosevelt set himself, his successor, and the American government up for charges of bad faith whichever way American policy would finally go.

The wartime British coalition government took little action on Palestine during the war. Prime Minister Winston Churchill, who was a moderate Zionist, had opposed the 1939 White Paper when it was published. There were indications that Churchill intended to change this policy after the war. For instance, Blanche Dugdale, the niece of Arthur Balfour, reported in her diary on 11 May 1943, "the PM [Churchill] has told [Colonial Secretary] Oliver Stanley that the White Paper of 1939 is not to be the basis of the post-war settlement.” During 1944, a

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53 Memorandum of Conversation, 14 February 1945; FRUS 1945, 8 (Washington: USGPO, 1967), 2.

partition plan was developed within the Cabinet. Whether this plan would have actually been implemented cannot be known, for two reason. The first, obviously, was the electoral defeat of the Churchill Government in July of 1945. But even without this defeat, there is reason to suspect a loss of support by Churchill for the Zionist cause after the death of Lord Moyne. Moyne, Minister of State Resident in Cairo (Cabinet rank), was assassinated by members of the Stern Gang, a Jewish terrorist organization, in Cairo on 6 November 1944. "Lord Moyne was a personal friend of Winston Churchill," wrote a government official, "and his murder estranged for a time Churchill's active sympathy. That was a grave loss. Before that incident Churchill had affirmed to President Roosevelt and also to the Colonial Secretary of his Government, his unshakeable support for the Jewish National Home."

The loss of Churchill's support did not really matter. Events began moving ahead more rapidly than the various attempts by the British and American governments to plan for the future of Palestine. The two events which would have perhaps the greatest effect on the Palestinian situation did not occur in Palestine. One was the death, on 12 April 1945, of Franklin Roosevelt.

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55 Bentwich, Mandate Memories, 168.
The other was the ascension to power of the Labour Party, the supposed champions of Zionism, in the British General election of 26 July 1945.
CHAPTER III

THE LABOUR GOVERNMENT AND THE MANDATE:

ATTEMPTS AT ANGLO-AMERICAN COOPERATION, 1945-1947

The death of Franklin Roosevelt left the United States without a definite policy towards Palestine on the executive level. Roosevelt tended to play both sides during his years in office, although in his last days he seemed to be turning more to the Arab side. Indeed, one of his aides, David K. Niles, who would go on to advise Roosevelt's successor on the Zionist issue, once remarked, "There are serious doubts in my mind that Israel would have come into being if Roosevelt had lived."\(^1\) Thus it was left to the former Senator from Missouri to attempt to sort out the problems of the Palestine situation and direct American policy to find a just and lasting solution.

Harry S. Truman had little experience with Palestine. The knowledge he did possess came from his reading and interpretations of the Bible. With the horrors of Hitler's extermination of the Jews finally revealed, Truman also felt that something should be done to aid the surviving Jews. He knew even less of the Arabs of the region, and

they did not figure into his early calculations of a settlement for Palestine. His concept of morality led him to sympathize with Jews desiring to immigrate to Palestine. Their rights outweighed those of the Arabs. He believed that the lack of Arab support for the Allies and, in some cases, their open support for Germany during World War II, had weakened their claims for consideration.\(^2\)

Truman also assumed that by sympathizing with Jewish aspirations he was carrying on the policy bequeathed to him by previous occupants of the White House, going back to Woodrow Wilson.

Truman's early steps seemed to show a definite pro-Zionist slant. On 20 April 1945, only eight days after Roosevelt's death, the new president met with Rabbi Stephen Wise, the chairman of the American Zionists. After their conference, Wise declared that the president favored unlimited Jewish immigration to Palestine.\(^3\)

While Wise may have exaggerated Truman's commitment to the Zionist cause, the plight of the Jews in the European Displaced Persons camps greatly concerned him. Truman was also concerned about the burden these displaced persons placed on the American army and supplies in

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liberated Europe. These two factors figured prominently in Truman's decision to send Earl Harrison, Dean of the University of Pennsylvania Law School, to investigate the situation.

Harrison departed for Europe on 22 June 1945 and sent his report to Truman on 24 August. After describing the terrible conditions of the DP camps, he called for the immediate admission of 100,000 Jews from the camps into Palestine. This recommendation, fully supported by Truman, became what he called "the cornerstone of our Palestine policy"\(^4\), and on 31 August, Truman wrote a letter, with the Harrison report enclosed, to the new British Prime Minister, Clement Attlee, asking for his support.

When Truman wrote, Attlee and the Labour Party had been in office for barely a month. The Labour Party swept into office on 26 July, replacing the wartime coalition government, headed by Winston Churchill, and faced with changing or accepting its uncertain policy on Palestine. The White Paper of 1939 was technically still in effect when Labour took power, although the coalition government had, in November 1943, announced the extension of the immigration quotas, since the 75,000

person limit had not yet been filled. In late August 1945, the new government announced the fulfillment of the White Paper limits, and set up a temporary policy which would allow 1500 Jews per month to enter Palestine, pending a full discussion of the matter.

This policy came as a surprise to most Zionists. The Labour Party, before its election, had been a fervent supporter of the Zionist cause. At the 1943 Labour Party Conference, the party came out in support of "building Palestine as the Jewish National Home." In 1944, the party was more explicit. In a policy statement to be presented at the Party Conference, Labour called for allowing "Jews to enter Palestine in such numbers as to become a majority." At the conference itself, the party platform endorsed not only the Balfour Declaration, but also a proposal that Jewish refugees be sent to Palestine and the displaced Palestinian Arabs be sent to Iraq. And at the Conference in 1945, less than two months before Labour took office, Hugh Dalton, who would become Chancellor of the Exchequer, stated, "It is morally wrong and politically indefensible to impose obstacles

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6 Times (London), 24 April 1944, 2a.

7 Baram, The Department of State and the Middle East, 258.
to the entry into Palestine of any Jews who desire to go there. . . ."8 Thus, when the Labour Government did not enact their promises immediately upon taking office, many began to believe that they were acting in bad faith.

The problem facing the new government was trying to reconcile their promises with the situation at hand. The Labour Cabinet boasted several Zionist supporters, but not one authority on the Middle East or the military situation there. As they began their study of the Palestine problem, often being briefed by the same experts who had served the conservative and coalition governments, the attitudes of some members began to change. They were surprised to find that there was another side to the situation in Palestine. Many began to believe that they had been "taken in" by the Zionists. "They were indignant; they had been misled by Zionist propaganda into pretending that no Arab question existed in the Middle East."9 This caused many government officials to revise their views on Palestine and re-evaluate their support for Zionism. This shift in opinion, especially in contrast to President Truman's ideas, marked the beginning of the conflict in Anglo-American relations over Palestine.

8 As quoted in Crossman, Palestine Mission, 54.
9 Jon Kimche, Seven Fallen Pillars (London: Secker and Warburg, 1953), 142.
With this shift going on, the British were not pleased by Truman's initiative, or by his letter to Attlee at the end of August. The American State Department was quick to discern British anger at this interference in what was viewed as purely British policy-making.

... The present handling of our Palestine policy at the highest level has already seriously irritated the British. ... [Their objection is] the Harrison Report on refugees. ... The British, however, had decided that in present circumstances it would be impossible to allow any large number to go to Palestine. In view of the responsibility which the British bear as the Mandatory Power, we [are] not in a position to take issue with their decision. 10

This memorandum not only shows the beginning of British anger and resentment towards President Truman, but also the agreement that would later be seen between the British government and the American State Department.

The man who was charged with setting British policy in Palestine was Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin. Bevin, a former trade union leader, was ill-equipped to deal with foreign affairs and, especially, Palestine. He believed, at first, that negotiation could settle any problem, and in the case of Palestine, if the Jews and the Arabs could be made to understand each other's positions,

10 Memorandum by the Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs (Merriam) to the Director of the Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs (Loy Henderson), FRUS 1945, 8, 745-8.
they would participate in finding a reasonable and just solution. If this approach failed, "if necessary he would bang together a few heads to reach agreement."\textsuperscript{11} Since these tactics had worked for Bevin in dealing with the trade unions, it was difficult for him to believe that they would not be equally effective in dealing with foreign affairs.

His approach would not work with Palestine. He apparently could not understand the emotions on both sides of the issue, nor did he comprehend the meaning of political Zionism and the deep desire of refugee Jews to go to the Holy Land. The principle of national self-determination did not apply to the Jews, Bevin told Richard Crossman, a Labour MP, because "there is only a Jewish religion not a Jewish nation..."\textsuperscript{12} This belief, along with the political and strategic considerations of the Middle East, led Bevin to conclude that the Zionist program could not be met. Others claimed that Bevin's anti-Zionist policies were more personal. One contemporary stated that after 1945, "Ernest Bevin's dislike of Jews began dangerously to influence his policy," and that the refusal of the Palestinian Jewish community


to support his plans "finally tipped Ernest Bevin into overt anti-Semitism." That judgement is probably too strong; Bevin's actual policy was based on protection of British interests, which he saw as in conflict with Zionist aims. It was more likely that it was his commitment to British policy which led him to act as he did, rather than a personal hatred of the Jews.

Bevin realized that Anglo-American cooperation would be important in securing a solution to the Palestinian problem. He believed, perhaps naively, that if London and Washington could find a common policy for Palestine, the problem would be resolved quickly.

Bevin hoped that Truman's pro-Zionist stand was in response to pressure from public opinion and upcoming local and national elections, rather than a new line of American policy. He assumed that "the President would eventually act on the obvious merit of the case and the need to align British and American policies in the Middle East." Bevin thus recommended to his Prime Minister that he seek to involve the United States in any solution for Palestine.

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13 Ibid., 78-80.
15 Hathaway, Ambiguous Partnership, 223.
16 Louis, The British Empire in the Middle East, 391.
Attlee was prepared to do just that. "Attlee... was by now determined that if the Americans wanted to press Zionist claims and lecture Britain on what she should do they must be made to realise that it was up to them to help foot the bill..." 17 On 19 October 1945, the British Ambassador to the United States, Lord Halifax, delivered a message from Attlee to the American Secretary of State, James Byrnes in response to Truman's letter of late August. While acknowledging the findings of the Harrison Report, the letter denied that the Jews were living under worse conditions than any other refugees. It did admit, however, that the question of the Jews did call for a separate examination. The British suggested the establishment of a joint Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, with terms of reference that included:

1) examining the position of the Jews in the British and American zones of occupation in Europe;

2) estimating the number of Jews which could not be resettled in their countries of origin;

3) examining the countries which might be able to accept these non-repatriatable Jews;

4) considering other ways of meeting the needs of the present situation.

The message concluded by reiterating that the British policy regarding Jewish immigration to Palestine would remain unchanged until after the Committee made its report, and asking for an American reply by 25 October, when the plan would be announced in the House of Commons.18

The Americans, while interested in such a proposal, did not completely accept the terms of reference for the Committee. In a meeting between Byrnes and Halifax on 22 October, the Secretary singled out the major American complaint: the omission of Palestine. "In the terms of reference," remarked Byrnes, "he [Attlee] seems to divert the mind of the commission from the Palestine question to finding places in other countries." Halifax replied that he knew what the Prime Minister meant by his omission of Palestine. "I know exactly what he had in mind... Europe or the United States or to Palestine, but, for heaven's sake, stop saying that Palestine is the only solution." Halifax did believe that it would be possible to include a reference to Palestine in a revised set of terms, and Byrnes added that if this were included, he believed that the American government would accept the British invitation.19

18 The British Ambassador (Lord Halifax) to the Secretary of State (James Byrnes), 19 October 1945, FRUS 1945, 8, 771-5.

19 Memorandum of Conversation Between the Secretary of State (Byrnes) and the British Ambassador (Halifax), 22 October 1945, FRUS 1945, 8, 779-83.
With time running short, the British agreed to alter the terms of reference. The new terms called for:

1) the examination of the political, economic and social conditions in Palestine as they related to Jewish immigration and the well-being of those persons currently living there;

2) the examination of the position of the Jews in Europe and the estimation of how many wished to immigrate to Palestine or other countries;

3) hearing the views of "competent witnesses" on the problems of Palestine, including Arabs and Jews, and making recommendations to the British and American governments for interim and permanent solutions of these problems;

4) the proposal of any other recommendations to the two governments as might be necessary to meet the immediate needs arising from the conditions examined in paragraph 2.  

The United States accepted these terms on 24 October, and thus, took its first positive step in attempting to find a solution for the problems in Palestine.

20 Secretary of State (Byrnes) to the British Ambassador (Halifax), 24 October 1945, FRUS 1945, 8, 785-6.
The public announcement of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry was delayed until 13 November, after the New York mayoral election, for fear of the effect the announcement of yet another committee of inquiry would have on the Jewish voters of the city. By early December, both sides had selected their delegates. The British team included Sir John Singleton (chairman), Wilfrid Crick, Richard H.S. Crossman, Sir Frederick Leggett, Major Reginald Manningham-Buller, and Lord Robert Morrison. The Americans selected Judge Joseph Hutcheson (chairman), Frank Aydelotte, Frank Buxton, Bartley Crum, James G. McDonald, and William Phillips. The Committee was a mixed bag: liberals and conservatives, government and elected officials, and private businessmen. They did, however, all have one thing in common: their complete ignorance of the problems of Palestine.

What, then, did each side hope to accomplish with this committee of novices? Truman probably assumed that the committee would at least endorse his call for allowing the immigration of the 100,000 Jewish DPs, and perhaps the committee would even devise a settlement for the area. But a long-term settlement was not Truman's major objective.

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He was primarily concerned with aiding Hitler's victims in Europe. The British, however, had very specific goals in mind for the Anglo-American Committee. The first was to teach the Americans about Palestine and to force them to "act responsibly" both on Palestine and the refugee issue. The British also wanted to get American support and backing for some sort of a compromise solution in Palestine. Finally, according to Committee member Richard Crossman, Bevin was trying to buy time. 

"...The main function of our Commission was to postpone... the very awkward decision that faced him."

The Committee began its work on 4 January 1946. Faced with a deadline of only four months, the task ahead seemed almost impossible to some members. "I... knew that Palestine from time immemorial had been a chronic source of unrest in the Middle East. How could twelve outsiders be expected to come up with a solution within a few months which would please all parties?"

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24 Louis, The British Empire in the Middle East, 392.

25 Crossman, A Nation Reborn, 3.

When the hearings began in Washington, contrary to what was later charged, the Committee was not favorably disposed towards Zionist goals.

We have a feeling that the whole idea of a Jewish national home is a dead end out of which Britain must be extricated; that, whereas it is obvious that Arab independence in the end must be granted, we've not a similar obligation to permit Jews in Palestine the fulfillment of Zionism. So the tendency is to define the problem as one of finding homes somewhere for the surplus Jews in Europe in order to cut away the Zionist case for an impossible immigration to Palestine.  

While in Washington, the Committee heard testimony from representatives of the American Zionists, the Jewish Agency for Palestine, the Arab-American Society, and other concerned groups. The Committee moved next to London. During their stay, the members were invited to a luncheon hosted by Ernest Bevin. At this meeting, Bevin promised that if their report were unanimous, he would accept it. This pledge would have a very serious impact on the Committee members. Indeed, it would be the major factor in the many compromises made which eventually achieved a unanimous report. After additional hearings, the Committee departed for Palestine.

While in Palestine, the Committee was able to hear from representatives of the British government in Palestine  

\[27\] Crossman, *Palestine Mission*, 17 (emphasis in the original).  

\[28\] Louis, *The British Empire in the Middle East*, 407.
and from the Jewish Agency Executive, which ran day-to-day affairs for the Jewish community in Palestine (the Yishuv). During one hearing, High Commissioner General Sir Alan Cunningham was asked by American member Bartley Crum if American troops would be necessary if 100,000 Jews were admitted to Palestine. "No, sir," he replied. This seemed to ease the minds of the Americans, who had little desire to see American troops sent to Palestine.

The Executive representatives, which included its head Daivd Ben-Gurion and trade union leader Golda Meyerson (later Meier), placed before the Committee their demands for Palestine. They included the transformation of Palestine into a Jewish nation when a majority of the population was Jewish, that 100,000 Jewish DPs be allowed to enter Palestine at once, that the control of immigration be taken from the British and given to the Jewish Agency, and, finally, that the restrictions on land purchases by Jews be ended. After this and other testimony, the Committee divided up, some members going to visit the surrounding Arab countries, while the others went to investigate the situation in the DP camps in Europe.

It was here that the attitudes of several members changed. They conducted interviews with many Jewish DPs.

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30 Phillips, Ventures in Diplomacy, 433.
and found that the overwhelming majority of them wished to go to Palestine.

If they were told that they might have to fight the Arabs in Palestine, they replied—not unreasonably—that they were willing to take the risk. Better to die fighting as members of a Hebrew nation than to rot away month after month in assembly centers in Germany, run by British and Americans who talked of humanity but shut their doors to human suffering.31

These Committee members, now believing that the Jews must be helped, still faced the task of persuading their colleagues to come to the same views.

The Committee reassembled in Switzerland on 28 March to write its report. It faced the problem of assimilating the mass of testimony and evidence they had collected in over two months of hearings, filtering it all through the prism of their own beliefs and prejudices, and condensing it into a report, complete with recommendations for a solution, by the end of April. Not only was the job physically demanding, but it also put a moral strain on the Committee members as well. "The choice was between two injustices, and we had to decide which injustice was the lesser."32 Compromises were necessary, and difficult to make. For instance, several of the British members favored the disbanding of the Haganah (the semi-

31 Crossman, Palestine Mission, 79.
32 Ibid., 167.
secret Jewish military organization) and the withdrawal of British recognition of the Jewish Agency. Partially because of Bevin's promise to accept a unanimous report, these recommendations, and others like them, which could not garner universal support, were rejected. All of these problems were eventually overcome, and on 20 April the Committee completed its report.

The Report was delivered to the British and American governments on 24 April 1946. The major recommendations included:

1) while no other country offered a haven for the Jews, Palestine alone could not meet Jewish immigration needs;

2) 100,000 Jewish DPs should be admitted into Palestine at once;

3) Palestine was not to become exclusively a Jewish or Arab state nor should one dominate the other politically whatever the final settlement;

4) the Palestine government should continue under the Mandate, then under a UN trusteeship until hostility between the Jews and the Arabs disappeared;

5) pending the trusteeship arrangement, the

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33 Crum, _Behind the Silken Curtain_, 278.
British should facilitate Jewish immigration;

6) land transfer regulations should be changed to allow free sale to anyone, regardless of "race, community, creed."\(^{34}\)

The British were not pleased with the Report. In a meeting with Secretary of State Byrnes on 27 April in Paris, Foreign Secretary Bevin asked for a delay in the publication of the Report. He was, he said, prepared to allow the 100,000 into Palestine, but not immediately. He feared the growth of Jewish armed strength if immigration occurred too rapidly, and hinted that Britain might be forced to pull out of Palestine if the military cost was too great. If the British did this, the Russians might be able to penetrate the area. His solution was the introduction of American troops into Palestine.\(^{35}\) The British position was noted, but not acted upon by the Americans.

The Report was released as scheduled on the night of 30 April-1 May. President Truman's statement upon the issuance of the Report did little to encourage the British. In it, Truman expressed pleasure that the

\(^{34}\)The Acting Secretary of State (Dean Acheson) to Certain American Diplomatic and Consular Officers, 25 April 1946, FRUS 1946, 7 (Washington: USGPO, 1969), 585-6.

\(^{35}\)Memorandum of Conversation by the Director of the Office of European Affairs (H. Freeman Matthews), 27 April 1946, FRUS 1946, 7, 587-8.
Committee had endorsed his call for the admission of the 100,000 DPs. He also noted favorably that the Report had called for the abrogation of the 1939 White Paper. He concluded by saying that since the Report dealt with questions of long-range policy and international law, it would require careful study.\textsuperscript{36} It seemed to many that the President was highlighting only those recommendations which suited him and ignoring the rest.

One person who felt that way was Prime Minister Attlee. During a session of the House of Commons on 1 May, Attlee expressed his displeasure. He called for the Report to be considered in its entirety and for American military aid to implement its recommendations. Attlee also added a new condition for the admission of the 100,000 Jewish DPs. "It is clear, from facts presented in the Report regarding the illegal armies maintained in Palestine and their recent activities," stated Attlee, "that it would not be possible for the [British Colonial] Government of Palestine to admit so large a body unless and until these formations have been disbanded and their arms surrendered."\textsuperscript{37} This point had been considered and rejected

\textsuperscript{36} Harry S. Truman, Public Papers of the President of the United States, January 1-December 31, 1946 (Washington: USGPO, 1962), 218-9.

\textsuperscript{37} Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Debates (Commons), 5th Series, 422:197.
by the Committee, and many saw Attlee's demand as proof that the British would not carry out the recommendations of the Report.

The reactions of the Jews and the Arabs were mixed. The Jewish Agency Executive approved of the recommendations concerning immigration, but bitterly opposed the suppression of Zionist political aims. The Arabs reacted even more negatively. The Arab High Committee called for a general strike for 3 May, and "sporadic disturbances" were expected. They especially opposed the clauses on immigration and felt that the Report was made under pressure from the United States. Thus the Report was off to a bad start, and it would take a great deal of effort to salvage it.

The Report received a poor reception because it offered no clear-cut solution for the problems in Palestine. Richard Crossman was one who realized that the work of the Committee was imperfect. He believed that the Report had laid out "the guiding principles" for a settlement, but "the details must be worked out later." The weakness of the Report lay in the numerous compromises that had to be made to produce a unanimous report.

Specific solutions could not be reached because among

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38 The Consul General at Jerusalem (Lowell Pinkerton) to the Secretary of State (Byrnes), 2 May 1946, FRUS 1946, 7, 590-1.

the twelve committee members, there were several different solutions. Unity promoted vagueness, and vagueness forbade proposing a concrete solution. The Committee failed on a higher level, as well. It failed to create a united Anglo-American policy toward Palestine, one of its major goals.40

An attempt was made to salvage the Anglo-American Committee's Report. In mid-May, Attlee wrote Truman, suggesting the appointment of "expert officials" to study the implications of the Report and also that a conference of Jewish and Arab representatives be convened, either simultaneously or after the Anglo-American talks.41 Truman agreed to this, and on 11 June the Cabinet Committee on Palestine and Related Problems was formed. It was made up of the Secretaries of State, War, and Treasury, who appointed alternates to carry out the actual negotiations. The chairman was Henry F. Grady, and he was joined by Goldthwaithe H. Dorr of the War Department and Herbert E. Gaston of Treasury. They left for London on 11 July to consult with their British counterparts, who would be headed by Sir Norman Brook, and they

40 Hathaway, Ambiguous Partnership, 280.
41 The British Prime Minister (Attlee) to President Truman, undated, FRUS 1946, 7, 606.
left with Truman's assurance that he now supported all
the recommendations of the Report.

The group met from 12 to 24 July. On 24 July Grady
cabled to Washington the text of what would become known
as the Grady-Morrison Plan (for Grady and Deputy Prime
Minister Herbert Morrison, the overall chairman of the
committee). The major provisions of the plan included:

1) the division of Palestine into four parts,
one Jewish, one Arab, and two districts to
remain under British control, Jerusalem,
and the Negev (the southern desert region);
2) the Arab and Jewish areas would have provin-
cial autonomy, with Great Britain retaining
central governmental authority;
3) 100,000 Jewish DPs would be allowed into
the Jewish area of Palestine within a year;
4) consumation of the plan depended upon
acceptance by both the Arabs and the Jews,
and a conference with both sides should
be initiated quickly.\textsuperscript{43}

The final point, in effect, gave the Arabs veto power
over Jewish immigration, for if the Arabs did not agree
to the plan, Jewish immigration could not begin.

\textsuperscript{42}Miriam J. Haron, "Palestine and the Anglo-American

\textsuperscript{43}The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (W. Averill
Harriman) to the Secretary of State (Byrnes), 24 July
Word of the Grady-Morrison Plan leaked out almost immediately. Jewish groups firmly opposed the plan, and put severe pressure on President Truman to reject it. On 7 August Truman convened a meeting between the American members of the Anglo-American Committee and the Grady Commission to discuss the differences in their plans. Truman was probably hoping that the Anglo-American Committee members would endorse the Grady Plan. He was to be disappointed. The chairman for this meeting was Assistant Secretary of State Dean Acheson, who was not pleased with his role. "The Archangel Gabriel would have declined the assignment, but he had more latitude than undersecretaries of state."\textsuperscript{44} It was obvious from the beginning that the meeting would accomplish little, for when the meeting opened, Bartley Crum greeted Henry Grady by saying, "Hello, sucker!"\textsuperscript{45} The other members of the Anglo-American Committee were equally sympathetic.

The Grady Plan was viewed by the Anglo-American Committee members as a radical departure from their own plan. Judge Joseph Hutcheson outlined for the President the group's objections to the Grady Plan:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{44}Dean Acheson, Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1969), 175.
  \item \textsuperscript{45}As quoted in Zvi Ganin, Truman, American Jewry, and Israel, 1945-1948 (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, Inc., 1979), 92.
\end{itemize}
1) that the Grady Plan violated the mission the group had been sent on, by agreeing to the nullification of the Anglo-American Report;

2) that the plan for federation violated the terms of the League of Nations Mandate;

3) that the President could not approve the plan, as that would be a violation of the 1924 Anglo-American treaty, which forbade the alteration of the Mandate without consultation with the United States Senate;

4) that there was nothing new in the Grady plan, and it had, in fact, been presented to and rejected by the Committee. 46

With the failure to get the backing of the Anglo-American Committee members, and the domestic pressure from American Jewish groups, Truman was forced to cable his rejection of the plan to Attlee on 12 August 1946.

The British attempted to enact the Grady-Morrison plan on their own. On 9 September, the British convened the Palestine Conference, an attempt at a round-table meeting between all interested parties in the Palestine situation. 47 There was, however, a problem: almost no

46 Schechtman, The United States and the Jewish State Movement, 168-9.

one attended. "Without the presence of the United States, the Palestinian Arabs, and the Jewish Agency, there was little chance of accomplishing anything meaningful." This quickly became apparent, and the Conference was suspended on 2 October, to be reconvened on 16 December (later postponed until 27 January 1947).

During this period, Truman did not remain silent. On 5 October, not coincidently the eve of Yom Kippur and only one month before the mid-term Congressional elections, he issued a statement reiterating his call for the admission of Jewish DPs into Palestine. Truman sent a copy of his statement to Attlee on 3 October, and Attlee asked for a delay in its issuance. Truman sent his refusal the next day, and that same evening, Attlee wired back his dismay at the failure of Truman to allow him even a few hours to "acquaint you with the actual situation and the probable results of your action." Truman ignored Attlee's request and, thus, drove a further wedge between the Americans and the British. Truman's statement did not have the effect he had hoped it would; in November, the Republicans took control of Congress. But Truman's action marked the beginning of

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49 Correspondence Between Attlee and Truman, 3-4 October 1946, FRUS 1946, 7, 701-5.
the British belief that domestic politics would be the deciding factor in American Palestinian policy.

The Palestine Conference reconvened in late January 1947. It was apparent from the beginning that these talks were producing nothing. British Palestinian policy was in shambles; even within the Cabinet, division ran rampant. The chief option being discussed was partition. The Cabinet was split, with Colonial Secretary Arthur Creech-Jones, Hugh Dalton, Aneurin Bevan, Emmanuel Shinwell and John Strachy (as well as High Commissioner General Sir Alan Cunningham) favoring partition, and Bevin, Attlee, Defense Minister A.V. Alexander, and the Chiefs of Staff opposed. Partition was not a reasonable alternative, according to this latter group, for four reasons:

1) the impossibility of creating two viable, states in an area as small as Palestine;
2) the fear that the Jews would not be satisfied with their limited state and eventually would try to take over the rest of Palestine;
3) the fear of the reaction not only of the Palestinian Arabs but also of those in the surrounding Arab states; 
4) the likelihood that partition would fail to

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50 Bullock, Ernest Bevin, 364.
accepted by a two-thirds majority in the United Nations General Assembly, where it had to go for final approval. Thus, partition seemed only an unlikely dream to the opposition.

These facts persuaded Creech-Jones to change his stance, and on 7 February he joined Bevin in placing a new plan, called the Bevin Plan, before the Cabinet. It called for a five year trusteeship under the United Nations Trusteeship Council to prepare Palestine for independence. The new state would be binational, with Jews and Arab sharing in the government. Finally, four thousand Jews per month would be allowed to immigrate to Palestine for two years, and after that, the Arabs would have the commanding voice in immigration policy. It was approved by the Cabinet, but both the Jews and the Arabs rejected it upon presentation. With the failure of the Bevin Plan, it became clear that a more drastic step would be necessary. That step was provided on 18 February, when Bevin went before the House of Commons to announce that Great Britain would turn the Palestinian Mandate over to the United Nations for disposal.

51 Ibid., 365.

52 Ibid., 366.
The Palestine issue had now come full circle. In 1922, the League of Nations decreed that the solution for Palestine lay in a Mandate, administered by Great Britain, which would eventually lead to Palestinian independence. After twenty-five years, however, the British admitted that this solution was impracticable, and returned the Mandate to the League's successor, the United Nations. It would be up to the United Nations to find what had eluded all others involved in the Palestine situation—a just, lasting, and, above all, enforceable solution.

The British did not turn to the UN simply out of desperation for a solution to the Palestinian problem. Ernest Bevin may in fact have been following a convoluted policy. Certainly he and others confidently assumed that the United Nations would have a difficult time finding a solution. As early as November 1946, Lord Inverchapel, in a meeting with Dean Acheson, confirmed this high-level British belief.¹ What Britain apparently

¹Acheson, Present at the Creation, 178.
counted on was a conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union. In the year and a half since the inauguration of the United Nations, the two superpowers had not voted together on a single issue; Bevin believed that the Palestine issue would be no different. Simple arithmetic ruled the rest; without the support from both parties, and their allies, there was no way the two-thirds majority necessary for the passage of a General Assembly resolution could be obtained. A solution in the Security Council, thanks to the veto power, would also be impossible.

Britain hoped to gain an aura of legitimacy for their Palestinian policy by returning the Mandate to the United Nations. They believed that by putting the case of the Arabs before the UN, Zionist public influence and propaganda could be counteracted, and British policy endorsed. From there, it was only a single step to what was probably in the minds of these British officials: continued British control of Palestine. Bevin believed that even if the United Nations could find a solution for the Palestine problem (which he regarded as unlikely), it would be forced to ask Britain to remain and enforce it.

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2 Horowitz, State in the Making, 143.


It was, therefore, the considered opinion of most high British officials that Bevin's policy of returning the Mandate to the UN was a temporary move, one designed to justify British policy in Palestine and, ultimately, to keep the country under British rule.

Bevin set out his new policy in a statement before the House of Commons on 18 February 1947. After outlining previous attempts and failures to solve the problem, Bevin came to the heart of his statement. "His Majesty's Government have thus been faced with an irreconcilable conflict of principles. . . . If the conflict has to be resolved by arbitrary decision, that is not a decision which His Majesty's Government are empowered as Mandatory to take." Since the Mandate did not give them the power to award Palestine to either the Arabs or the Jews or to partition the country between them, the British government had no choice, Bevin claimed, but to return the Mandate to the United Nations, and to return it without a recommendation for solution.  

The response of the House was to question why this policy was being announced at this time. The member for Woodford, Winston Churchill, asked Bevin, "If this policy is right today. . . . why could it not have been announced 12 months ago?" Bevin replied that the government first

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wanted to exhaust all possible solutions before admitting defeat. As for the matter of lost time, "if in the end the problem of the Jews and Arabs can, in some way be settled after 2,000 years of conflict, 12 months will not be a long delay."\textsuperscript{6} Bevin promised that a full debate on the new policy would be held within a week.

It was expected to be an acrimonious debate. A few members of the government opposed the policy or, at least, its delay. As Chancellor of the Exchequer Hugh Dalton confided in his diary on 24 February,

It is impossible to deny that Bevin has now wasted more than a year... by waiting till now to send this wretched problem to the UN. ... He has now discovered, he solemnly tells us, as a result of these long-drawn-out conferences with Arabs and Jews, who have never met face-to-face, that the Arabs want an Arab state and the Jews want a Jewish state. And that these two desires are irremediably in conflict. Surely Partition then? No, that is too simple.\textsuperscript{7}

If there were members of the Cabinet who felt this way, it could be expected that the criticism in the House would be as bad, if not worse.

Discussion of the impending policy change resumed on 25 February. Again Bevin opened the proceedings with a general statement, justifying Labour policy, criticizing American interference, and questioning the role of the

\textsuperscript{6}Ibid., 991. 

\textsuperscript{7}Hugh Dalton, \textit{High Tide and After} (London: Frederick Muller, LTD, 1962), 190-1.
Zionists in Palestine. "From the Zionist point of view, the 100,000 [immigrants] is only a beginning. . . . Why should an external agency, largely financed from America, determine how many people should come into Palestine, and interfere with the economy of the Arabs, who have been there for 2,000 years?" He concluded by saying that the provisions for the Jewish National Home, giving the Jews a land where they "should have their liberty and freedom—no pogroms, no persecution—and be equal citizens of the State," had now been established. The floor was then opened to the members for questions and statements.

The discussion centered on the question of how effective the United Nations could be in this situation. The prognosis was not good, according to most members. It was not a decision, stated Oliver Stanley, but rather a postponement. "It means that next winter we shall all be sitting here discussing, once again, just the problems we are discussing now, and which were discussed last August; having to face, once again, just the decisions which we are refusing to face today." Criticism came also from the two former members of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, Richard Crossman and Major Reginald

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8Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Debates (Commons), 5th Series, 433:1901-11.

9Ibid., 1932.
Manningham-Buller. Crossman stated that only two options remained open for a settlement in Palestine: continued enforcement of the 1939 White Paper or partition. He pointed out that, while this decision was supposedly being taken to avoid imposing a solution on Palestine, in fact, "we are imposing a solution in Palestine. With enormous force, we are imposing the White Paper." He also warned the members not to count on the United Nations for a solution. "I am alarmed at the very easy way in which some people believe that reference to the UNO will settle the matter. I remember the days when a reference to the Anglo-American Committee was going to solve the problem."\textsuperscript{10}

Manningham-Buller agreed, and stressed that Britain should not send the problem to the United Nations without a recommendation for solution. He believed it was impracticable to hope that without one, an acceptable solution could be found. He was also afraid of what the consequences could be for Great Britain if the government did not recommend something. "I hope that we shall get some assurance that by going to the United Nations we are not getting ourselves into the position of undertaking an obligation to fulfil anything which the United Nations, in their wisdom, may determine to be right for the future of Palestine."\textsuperscript{11} Manningham-Buller was reassured by

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid., 1979-84 (emphasis added).
\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., 1997-2000.
Colonial Secretary Arthur Creech-Jones, whose statement concluded the discussion. "We are not going to the United Nations to surrender the Mandate. We are going to the United Nations setting out the problem and asking for their advice as to how the Mandate can be administered." With government policy clearly stated, the British moved on to the request for a special session of the United Nations General Assembly to consider Palestine.

They did so against the advice and wishes of the United States. On 17 February, Truman's new Secretary of State, General George C. Marshall, expressed American "regret" at the new British policy. Loy Henderson, Director of the Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs of the State Department was more explicit. "We were appalled at the idea. . . . It seemed to us that the British should at least work out what they considered to be the best solution and then present their plan to the United Nations on approval." Despite this opposition from the United States, the British stayed with their plan, further expanding the record of Anglo-American non-cooperation on the issue of Palestine.

12 Ibid., 2007.


Bevin formally requested a special session on 2 April 1947. The motion was approved on 13 April, and meetings of the first special session of the General Assembly of the United Nations began on 29 April. A crucial factor in any decision made by the General Assembly would be the position of the Soviet Union. In a message to Secretary of State Marshall on 10 May, the American chargé in the Soviet Union, Elbridge Durbrow, confided, "We should... expect Soviet representatives during UN handling of issue cautiously but consistently to support Arab side, while leaving enough uncertainty to avoid alienating world Jewish support."15 Durbrow's assessment would later prove to be at least partially correct.

While all sides were formulating their respective positions, the General Assembly moved to establish a Special Committee to investigate the situation in Palestine and report its findings and a possible solution. In meetings from 29 April to 12 May the General Assembly heard testimony from Arabs and Jews, in an attempt to gather their input on the composition and terms of reference for such a committee. By 13 May, the General Assembly was prepared to make a decision.

One of the greatest points of contention dealt with

the composition of the committee. A Soviet plan called for the membership to consist of the five permanent members of the Security Council. This plan was defeated by a vote of 6 in favor, 26 opposed, 21 abstaining, and 2 absent. Two similar plans, one proposed by the Soviets and one by the Poles, were also defeated by like margins. A fourth plan, submitted by Australia, was adopted by a vote of 13 in favor, 11 opposed, 29 abstaining, and 2 absent. While a majority of the members had not approved this proposal, Rule 108 of the General Assembly Charter stated that a resolution was approved if it were passed by "... a majority of the membership present and voting." The Australian plan called for an eleven member committee which would exclude the permanent members of the Security Council. It was decided to elect members on a regional basis, and the final composition of the committee included: Australia, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Guatemala, India, Iran, the Netherlands, Peru, Sweden, Uruguay, and Yugoslavia. The men who were charged with finding a solution for the Palestine problem were, respectively, John L.D. Hood, Ivan Rand, Karel Lisicky,


\[17\] Ibid., 348-56.
Jorge Garcia-Granados, Abdur Rahman, Nasrollah Entezam, Nicholas Blom, Arthur Garcia Salazar, Emil Sandstrom (chairman), Enrique Rodriguez Fabregat, and Vladimir Simic. They were formally approved by the General Assembly on 15 May and charged with preparing a report to be considered at the second regular session of the General Assembly in September, less than four months away.

Before the Special Session of the General Assembly could recess, the Soviet representative to the United Nations, Andrei Gromyko, made a statement which came as a surprise to many observers. He called upon the newly formed committee to be prepared to "consider... the partition of Palestine into independent autonomous States, one Jewish and one Arab."\(^{18}\) The Soviets, thus, became the first of the great powers to officially endorse the possibility of partitioning Palestine. Both the Americans and the British believed that they understood the reasoning behind the Soviet position. Dean Rusk, the Director of the Office of Special Political Affairs, believed that the Soviets were leaving themselves in "an excellent tactical position" to gain support from the Jews and the Arabs in Palestine whatever the outcome.

of events in Palestine. The British, on the other hand, assumed that the Russians had a darker motive. In a letter to a colleague at the Foreign Office, Foreign Secretary Bevin stated his belief that the Soviets supported partition in the belief that they could, through the immigration of "indoctrinated Jews", turn Palestine into a Communist state. Whatever the Soviet motive, the Western allies now had to consider how to respond to this new challenge.

With these undercurrents swirling around it, the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) began its work in June 1947. The Committee spent five weeks in Palestine, taking testimony from the involved parties. In testimony before the Committee on 4 July, Jewish Agency Executive leader David Ben-Gurion stated that, while the Jews claimed the right to settle in all of Palestine, they were willing to consider the establishment of a Jewish state in "an adequate area of the country." The Committee was receptive to this idea, and on 7 July, a subcommittee was appointed to study the question of partition.

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19 Memorandum by the Director of the Office of Special Political Affairs (Dean Rusk) to the Under Secretary of State (Acheson), 27 May 1947, FRUS 1947, 5, 1088-9.

20 Louis, The British Empire in the Middle East, 43.

21 Cohen, Palestine and the Great Powers, 264-5.
Later in July, the members of the Committee traveled to Beirut to discuss the situation with Arab leaders. These leaders preferred the establishment of Palestine as an independent unitary state with an Arab majority. They further declared that continued Jewish immigration would be "incompatible with Arab interests." All immigration and land questions, therefore would be dealt with by legislation (passed by the Arab majority), Arabic would become the compulsory national language, and Jewish development would be given no preference. After these discussions, the Committee retired to Geneva to prepare its report.

The Committee completed its report on 31 August. It issued several unanimous recommendations, the first of which called for the end of the British Mandate in Palestine. "The atmosphere in Palestine today is one of profound tension. In many respects the country is living under a semi-military regime." Their second proposal, therefore, was for Palestine to become an independent country. The other unanimous recommendations included:

1) the implementation of a transitional period from the Mandate to independence, during

22 Ibid., 266.

which time the United Nations would take responsibility;

2) the preservation of the Holy Places and the religious interests of all groups;

3) action by the General Assembly to alleviate the suffering of the Jewish DPs in the European camps;

4) a statement calling for the protection of minorities in the new state;

5) a statement calling for peaceful relations and economic cooperation between Arabs and Jews;

6) an appeal for an end to the acts of violence occurring in Palestine.24

Beyond these generalities, however, the Committee could find no unity, most importantly on the political framework for an independent Palestine.

On the issue of a political settlement, the Committee was divided. The majority of the Committee supported partition. This report was signed by Canada, Czechoslovakia, Guatemala, the Netherlands, Peru, Sweden, and Uruguay. As the Guatemalan representative to the Committee, Jorge Garcia-Granados, explained it, the Committee "found many advantages to this solution. It did not demand close cooperation between Jew and Arab; it called

24 Ibid., 140-55.
for fewer constitutional devices than binationalism; it possessed a finality of settlement. It was this
finality of settlement that appealed most to the members that supported partition. There was, however, a definite
problem with partition: drawing boundaries for the two new states. Not only was Palestine a very small country
but, as one American State Department official described it, "... even though the Jews are concentrated in
certain areas, mainly the coastal plain, it was hard to
devise a Jewish state that made any sense without incor-
porating large numbers of Arabs in it." The majority
of the Committee felt that partition was the best possible
solution, and forwarded their report to the Second General
Session of the General Assembly.

All members had agreed that "a single independent
state of Palestine under either Arab or Jewish domation"
was impossible. A minority of the Committee made up
of India, Iran, and Yugoslavia (Australia chose to support
neither plan), supported a binational federal state of
Palestine with Jerusalem as its capital. Under this
plan, the Jews and the Arabs would share control of the
government. The federal scheme did not, however, please

25 Jorge Garcia-Granados, The Birth of Israel (New York:
Alfred A. Knopf, 1948), 239.
26 Wilson, Decision on Palestine, 112.
all Committee members: "I think most of us agreed that the binational state had all the inconveniences of partition without its finality." Nonetheless, this report was also forwarded to the UN for consideration with partition.

The Second General Session opened in Lake Success, New York on 16 September 1947. The major question centered around the positions which would be taken by the United States, the Soviet Union, and Great Britain. Without the support of these countries and their allies, the necessary two-thirds majority for the passage of partition could not be obtained.

The American position was discussed at a meeting between Secretary of State Marshall and the members of the American delegation to the General Assembly on 15 September. Marshall opposed active American support of the majority report for three reasons. First, he felt that adoption of the report would cause a "very violent Arab reaction." This fear led to the second of the Secretary's concerns, which dealt with the Russians. If the United States supported partition, and angered the Arabs, it would offer "a fine opportunity for the Soviets to carry out their ends regarding the Arabs...," namely, to gain support for the Soviet Union in these Arab states. Finally, Marshall believed that acceptance

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28Garcia-Granados, The Birth of Israel, 143.
of partition would obligate the United States to take part in the implementation of partition, to the extent of sending American troops to Palestine.  

Marshall was unwilling to commit the United States to this degree. In his statement before the General Assembly on 17 September, therefore, the Secretary was intentionally vague.

The government of the United States intends to do everything within its power at this session of the General Assembly to assist in finding a solution. . . . The solution will require of each of us courage and resolution. It will also require restraint. We realize that whatever the solution recommended by the General Assembly, it cannot be ideally satisfactory to either of the two great peoples primarily concerned. While the final decision of this Assembly must properly await the detailed consideration of the report, the Government of the United States gives great weight not only to the recommendations which have met with the unanimous approval of the Special Committee, but also to those which have been approved by the majority of that Committee.

The American position gave a qualified endorsement of the majority report, while at the same time leaving room for the United States to maneuver.

The Soviet position cannot be defined so easily. The perception of Soviet policy in the West was that

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30 Statement by the Secretary of State (Marshall) before the General Assembly, 17 September 1947, FRUS 1947, 5, 1151.
of Soviet support for the minority report in an attempt to gain influence in the various Arab countries. Despite Andrei Gromyko's speech to the Special Session of the General Assembly on 14 May, very few people expected the Russians to support partition. It came as something of a surprise when, on 13 October, the Soviet Union announced its support for the majority report. The most likely reasoning for this move, beyond gaining the goodwill of world Jewry, was twofold. First, the Russians hoped to widen the rift between the United States and Great Britain over this issue. The United States had finally come out in favor of partition on 11 October, while the British had continued to oppose it. Secondly, the Soviets probably saw support for partition as a way to embarrass Great Britain and, at the same time, show their support for decolonization.

The British were left in an awkward position by the majority decision for partition. While the British had returned the Mandate to the United Nations without a recommendation for a solution, partition was probably not the outcome which the Labour government had expected. Britain had gambled with the Mandate and lost. The only recourse that seemed open was to pull out of Palestine, as soon as possible.31

It was with this line of reasoning in mind that the British announced on 17 October that they would not enforce partition. Bevin outlined the British position in a meeting with American Ambassador Lewis W. Douglas on 28 October. The Foreign Secretary stated that the British government would support "within reason" any proposal which was supported by both the Jews and the Arabs of Palestine. At the same time, however, Britain did not want to become involved in any situation which might lead to disturbances or violence and bloodshed, which Bevin considered to be "certain" if partition were implemented. He concluded by stating that the British government did not plan to announce at this time a date for the removal of British troops from Palestine or for the termination of the Mandate.32 British non-cooperation would later prove to be one of the greatest stumbling blocks to the final implementation of the General Assembly's decisions for Palestine.

With the decision to support partition on 11 October, the United States now faced the question of whether to use American influence to gain the support of other delegations for the majority report. This issue was discussed as early as 22 October in a memorandum from

Secretary of State Marshall to Herschel Johnson, a member of the American delegation to the United Nations. The early decision seemed to be against the use of American pressure. The lack of American action was countered by British pressure on "friendly" delegations to vote against partition. At the same time, the Labour government continued to state that it would not cooperate with partition if it were accepted.

The Zionists lobbied against these policies, at first in vain. As the date for the final vote in the General Assembly grew closer, it appeared less and less likely that partition would gain the necessary votes. On 25 November, the Ad Hoc Committee on Palestine voted in favor of the majority report, but it failed by one vote to gain the two-thirds majority it would need in the General Assembly. It was at this point that something, perhaps Zionist pressure or perhaps personal reasons, caused President Truman to reassess the American position.

While one close observer has stated that American


pressure did not cause a favorable vote for partition, \[36\], "there is no doubt that American representatives at the United Nations... strongly urged other delegations to support partition..."\[37\] This decision was not a popular one with some administration officials, most notably Loy Henderson, Director of the Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs. He cited several examples of the use of American pressure to gain support for partition.

We were not to try to coerce other delegations to follow our lead... [Later] I found that two members of the Supreme Court sent a telegram to the President of the Philippines requesting him for the good of relations between the Philippines and the United States to instruct his delegation to vote in favor of the Majority Report. Both the Firestone Rubber Company, which had large rubber plantations in Liberia, and the Liberian Minister were concerned about Zionist threats of the boycotting of Liberian rubber if the Liberian delegate did not vote for the Plan. The Greek Minister... said that both the Zionists and representatives of our Government in New York were stating that unless the Greeks voted for the Majority Plan, Greek aid would be seriously affected... 38

There was also pressure on France. Presidential advisor Bernard Baruch apparently threatened France's Alexandre Parodi with a cut in American aid to France if France

\[36\] Garcia-Granados, *The Birth of Israel*, 269.


\[38\] Oral History Interview with Loy Henderson, 136-7.
did not support partition.\textsuperscript{39} American pressure seemed to yield some results: of these countries, only Greece later voted against partition.

The fact that the United States used pressure to gain support for partition can hardly be doubted. What is still in question is the role of President Harry S. Truman. Most evidence indicates that Truman ordered the use of American pressure, but there is no record of such an order in Truman's papers in Independence.\textsuperscript{40} Loy Henderson places the bulk of the blame on presidential advisor David K. Niles. "The President might then have authorized Niles to instruct our delegation without arm-twisting or the use of undue pressure to do some lobbying for the Majority Plan," claimed Henderson, "and Niles might have couched the President's instructions in much stronger language."\textsuperscript{41} While it cannot be known with complete certainty the exact role of Truman, it does appear to have been substantial. Whatever his final role, most of those who were involved at the time believed that the President was in direct control.\textsuperscript{42} Even more importantly, the American pressure was successful.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Collins and Lapierre, \textit{O Jerusalem!}, 16-7.
\item Snetsinger, \textit{Truman, the Jewish Vote} . . . , 68.
\item Oral History Interview with Loy Henderson, 138-9.
\item Cohen, "Truman and Palestine, 1945-1948", 11.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
The true measure of the success of American pressure was demonstrated on 29 November 1947. On that date, the General Assembly of the United Nations voted 33-13, with 10 abstentions, to accept the majority report and partition Palestine into two states. Of the thirteen negative votes, only two, those of Cuba and Greece, came from non-Moslem countries. Three of the four great powers voted in favor of partition; only Great Britain did not concur, choosing to abstain. Not only were the British abandoned by their closest ally, but many of the Commonwealth countries, including Australia and Canada, chose to support partition.

With this final repudiation of British policy in Palestine, the Labour government felt it had no other option but to remove itself from Palestine. The British had given hints of this throughout the General Assembly session. The General Secretary of the United Nations, Trygve Lie, was disappointed by the British stance. "Great Britain had placed the matter before the Assembly with the declared conviction that agreement between the Arabs and Jews was unattainable." He continued, "This did not deter the British... from informing the Assembly that Britain would give effect only to a plan accepted by the Arabs and the Jews." But it was not until after

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the decision for partition that the true meaning of the British position began to sink in. The British were willing to accept partition passively, but they would give no support to its implementation.44

This was not to be the only problem partition was to face. One of the greatest lay in the nature of the decision. Partition as voted on by the General Assembly may have had great moral and political value, but it was only a recommendation and, therefore, not legally binding.45 Beyond this, the General Assembly resolution had no provision for enforcement, and would thus be no more binding than the major powers were willing to make it.46 It soon became obvious that at least one of these powers, the United States, was beginning to doubt its commitment to partition and, indeed, within four months, would publicly change its position.

44Bethell, The Palestine Triangle, 350.


46Hurewitz, The Struggle for Palestine, 284.
CHAPTER V

RETREAT FROM PARTITION,
5 DECEMBER 1947-18 MARCH 1948

The United Nations decision to partition Palestine had, in reality, changed very little. While the Zionists now had the legal right to create a Jewish state in Palestine, they faced the violent opposition of the Arabs of the region as well as the passive non-cooperation of the British who, as Mandatory, still controlled Palestine. Even the United States, which had voted in favor of partition, was beginning to have second thoughts.

The first indication of changing American opinion came on 5 December 1947, when President Truman, in conjunction with the United Nations, declared an arms embargo for Palestine. The intent of the embargo was to limit excessive violence in Palestine.\(^1\) While the motive may have been good, the effect was to deny arms to the Jews more than to the Arabs. The Arabs, both inside and outside of Palestine, were already better armed, and the Arab states, which had pledged to invade Palestine if a Jewish state were established, were not

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affected by this embargo, and continued to receive arms shipments from Great Britain.\(^2\)

Great Britain, publicly rebuked by the United Nations for its administration of Palestine, now faced the decision of how to transfer control of the country from British authority to either the United Nations or the successor states. The British solution, decided upon in the Cabinet on 4 December, and announced to the House of Commons on 11 December 1947, was to withdraw. Before the House, Colonial Secretary Arthur Creech-Jones attempted to justify Labour policy. He reiterated that the British would not enforce a solution unfavorable to either the Jews or the Arabs, or that the government "would not carry sole or major responsibility for the administration of Palestine and for enforcing changes which the United Nations regarded as necessary." Instead, the British would end civil administration on 15 May and withdraw all troops from Palestine by 1 August 1948. He concluded that, in order that the British withdrawal might be conducted with the least disruption possible, the British had to retain "undivided" control in Palestine. "It will be appreciated that the mandatory responsibility for government in Palestine cannot be relinquished piece-meal," stated Creech-Jones. "The whole complex of

\(^2\)Schechtman, The United States and the Jewish State Movement, 318.
governmental responsibility must be relinquished by the Mandatory Government for the whole of Palestine on an appointed day."^{3} What Creech-Jones was insinuating was that the British government would not cooperate with any successor administrative bodies.

This interpretation was not accepted by several members of the House of Commons. Richard Crossman did not believe a successful transference of power could take place in Palestine without cooperation with the United Nations. "I beg the Colonial Secretary to see that in every way the presence of the U.N.O. is made real and effective in Palestine from the earliest possible date, and that the transfer of power takes place speedily and effectively."^{4} Others saw Creech-Jones' statement as British interference in the implementation of partition and as undermining the United Nations. The member for Sheffield Central, Lieutenant Colonel Harry Morris, was explicit:

But he [Creech-Jones] is not entitled to say, and Great Britain is not entitled to say: 'We will take no part in the enforcement of this decision. . . .' What is the point of having an organisation at all, if the minority refuse to accept it. We set it up, and we are part of it, and we are bound to accept its decisions. We are bound to do what we can to implement them. . . . . It is not

^{3}Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Debates (Commons), 5th Series, 455:1207-13.

^{4}Ibid., 1242.
sufficient for Great Britain to say that we are going to get out of Palestine as quickly as possible. That will not do. Great Britain cannot just walk out of Palestine. . . .

This was not to be the extent of the opposition.

The debate continued the following day. The member for Nelson and Colne, Sydney Silverman, continued the attack. He agreed that Great Britain should not have to implement partition alone, but he did not "think, however, that they [the government] are entitled to say that they will have no lot or part in it, but will merely give a formal, verbal acquiescence in the United Nations decision. They are called upon to do a little more than that."6 He was echoed by the former Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden. "It was, after all, His Majesty's Government who took the initiative in asking the United Nations to pronounce upon this matter. As members of that organisation, it really is not open to us to seek to repudiate their decision because we do not like their conclusion."7

The government, however, would not accept this line of thought. Foreign Secretary Bevin, while stating that the British government did not oppose the United Nations decision, continued, "we cannot ourselves undertake,

5Ibid., 1265.
6Ibid., 1339.
7Ibid., 1384.
either individually or collectively in association with others, to impose that decision by force." This statement drew an amazed reaction from W.N. Warbey, the member for Luton:

Do I understand from what the Foreign Secretary has just said that if the Security Council were to decide that collective enforcement action was necessary in Palestine, this country would not take its share as one of the members of the United Nations?

Mr. Bevin: That is what the hon. Member must understand.

The British government, therefore, had made its position clear: it would not oppose partition in theory, but it also would do nothing to facilitate its implementation.

The British position was probably based, to some extent, on the assumption that partition, in the end, could not be implemented. This belief was based, at least in part, on the knowledge that several members of the American State Department, in opposition to stated policy and the White House, also did not support partition. While cooperation between the British and American governments had virtually ended on the issue of Palestine, agreement between the Foreign Office and the State Department continued. The American opposition to partition varied in its composition, at times including even Sec-

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8 Ibid., 1396 (emphasis added).

retary of State Marshall and Secretary of Defense James Forrestal, but the consistent force within the group was the American Middle Eastern experts.

At the center of this group was the Director of the Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs (NEA), Loy W. Henderson. This is not to say that Henderson was responsible for all the opposition to partition but, rather, that he was the most vocal and visible critic. It is important to understand Henderson in order to understand the thinking of the opposition. He had very little training in Middle Eastern affairs; his only post in the area prior to taking over the NEA was a two year posting in Iraq. The vast majority of his experience, eighteen years, had been in Soviet and East European affairs. It was from this point of view that Henderson's thinking on the Middle East evolved. He felt that the Middle East provided great opportunities for Soviet expansionism and, therefore, had to be kept peaceful at all costs.10

The best way to keep the Middle East peaceful, according to Henderson, was to pacify the Arabs. He believed that there were five things which were important to the Arabs and, therefore, should be at the base of

American Middle Eastern policy:

1) the repudiation of the idea of a Jewish state;
2) the repudiation of the formation of a Jewish National Home in Palestine;
3) the ending of Jewish immigration to the country;
4) the ending of Jewish land purchases in Palestine;
5) the establishment of an independent Arab state in the whole of Palestine.11

Henderson's opposition to Zionist plans dated back to 1944, and it was his fear of the "Soviet menace" which led him to adopt "vigorous and uncompromising anti-Zionism."12 It must be made clear, however, that this does not mean that Henderson was necessarily an anti-Semite; he opposed the political desires of the Jews, not the Jews themselves.

Henderson, of course, was not the only administration official who opposed partition. Marshall, Robert Lovett, and Forrestal were among those who believed that a Jewish state was not worth the risks involved, including a possible war in the Middle East or the loss of Arab

11Ibid., 167.
12Ibid., 174.
friendship. Both Forrestal and Henderson took the view that the decision for partition was only a recommendation by the General Assembly and not a final decision of the United Nations as a whole. At a meeting on 29 January 1948, Forrestal met with Henderson, Dean Rusk, and other State Department figures to discuss the situation. Henderson's position was that American support for partition was based upon the assumption that it would be "just and workable." When questioned by Forrestal as to whether there was already "sufficient evidence" to show that partition was unworkable and, therefore, a re-examination of the question was justified, Henderson replied affirmatively. With such high-level support, the opposition group in the State Department was ready to move forward with its attempt to find an alternative to partition.

Fear of the Soviets was not the only reason for the State Department's opposition to partition. Arab oil played a major role in the Department's considerations. The major Arab countries, which controlled vast amounts of oil, opposed partition and threatened military intervention if it were implemented. American supplies of oil could be cut off, the Department reasoned if the Arabs perceived the United States as enforcing partition.

13 Donovan, Conflict and Crisis, 371.

Even more importantly, the flow of oil to Western European countries, many of whom had also supported partition, would also be threatened. This could cripple the European recovery which the Marshall Plan, established less than a year before, had attempted to aid. It was very unlikely that the United States could support Western Europe for very long without Arab oil supplies.

A final fear of the State Department involved the use of American troops to enforce partition in Palestine. In the opinion of many in the Department, the United States lacked sufficient manpower to send troops to Palestine, should such a solution become necessary. The State Department was joined in this assessment by Defense Secretary Forrestal. In a meeting with Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr. on 3 February 1948, Forrestal confided that a partial mobilization would be necessary for the United States to implement partition. In his diary, the Secretary was more explicit.

... many people were saying we should implement the recommendations of the General Assembly with vigor and promptness, who do not realize the fact that the deployable Army troops left in this country total less than 30,000, to which might be added 23,000 Marines, whereas the British had to employ 90,000 troops merely to police the Palestine area, without trying to impose any political partition or create a new state.

15 Snetsinger, *Truman, the Jewish Vote*. . . , 13.
17 Ibid., 386 (emphasis in the original).
The question was still academic at this point, however, as there had been no final decision taken concerning the enforcement of partition.

State Department fears were formalized in a report by the Policy Planning Staff, headed by George Kennan. This report, dated 19 January 1948, which had the support of Secretary of State Marshall, included:

1) the belief that the Soviet Union would exploit the Palestine situation;
2) the implication that the partition of Palestine was illegal;
3) the contention that support of partition by the United States would irreparably damage Arab-American relations;
4) the belief that the United States should not send armed forces to enforce partition;
5) the conclusion that a Jewish state could not survive in the face of combined Arab opposition;
6) the recommendation that the United States "take no further initiative in implementing or aiding partition;"
7) the assumption that the continuance of the arms embargo on Palestine was necessary;
8) the final position that partition "is
impracticable and undesirable" and the issue should be returned to the United Nations.

The report concluded with the recommendation that once the matter had been returned to the United Nations, the American position should be one of cooperation, as long as the new proposals encouraged a peaceful settlement between Arab and Jew, and did not require "outside armed force for implementation." Kennan's suggestions for solution included federalism or a trusteeship.

The solution the State Department favored was trusteeship. The first mention of this plan can be found in a memorandum from Loy Henderson, just after he was appointed as the director of NEA, to the then-Secretary of State, James Byrnes, dated 24 August 1945. Henderson outlined four possible solutions for Palestine: a single Jewish state, a single Arab state, partition, or trusteeship. Henderson went on record early in the report with his opposition to the first plan:

We feel, however, that we would be derelict in our responsibility if we should fail to inform you that in our considered opinion the active support by the Government of the United States of a policy of favoring the setting up of a Jewish State in Palestine would be contrary to the policy which the United States has always followed of res-

pecting the wishes of a large majority of the local inhabitants with respect to their form of government. Furthermore, it would have a strongly adverse effect upon American interests throughout the Near and Middle East.

The report also dismissed the ideas of a unitary Arab state and a partitioned Palestine as practical alternatives. Instead, concluded Henderson, the United States should consider some form of trusteeship. "... Our present opinion is that some kind of solution similar to this plan... would be preferable to the other plans suggested herein from an international point of view." He believed that moderate Arabs and Jews would regard such a plan "as being as equitable a solution as any that could be found in the circumstances."20

This position was resurrected in June of 1947, while the United Nations Special Committee was investigating the situation in Palestine. A memorandum prepared in the State Department reiterated the belief that Palestine should remain a single united state. It called for the General Assembly to approve a trusteeship agreement for Palestine, which would become effective on 1 January 1948. A detailed outline of the workings of

19 Memorandum by the Director of the Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs (Henderson) to the Secretary of State (Byrnes), 24 August 1945, FRUS 1945, 8, 728.

20 Ibid., 729.
such a plan was contained in the memorandum, including the provisions for the transference of power to a new government, the content and form of this government, its powers, and limitations on immigration and land purchases. The statement did include a provision that the "existence and development of the Jewish National Home in its spiritual and cultural aspects" should continue. 21

During the debates in the General Assembly on the Majority Report, the State Department continued its pressure for trusteeship. In a message to Secretary Marshall, NEA Director Henderson called for the United States to refrain from supporting partition. Instead, he thought the American delegation should concentrate its efforts on getting the "moderates in both camps" to acquiesce in the setting up of a trusteeship. 22

While the Department was unable to assure the passage of a trusteeship agreement by the United Nations in November 1947, trusteeship remained the primary alternative to partition in their thinking.

The State Department received additional support for its position from two new sources in February 1948. The first came from the National Security Council, in


a draft report of 17 February. After presenting an analysis of the Palestinian problem, the report came to several conclusions, including:

1) any solution which involved direct Soviet participation was a "danger to the United States";
2) the United States should seek another solution to the problem;
3) Great Britain should be urged to continue its mandate in Palestine until the problem could be reconsidered by the United Nations;
4) the United States should propose "the creation of a trusteeship in Palestine with the UN Trusteeship Council as the administering authority."  

Finding this report as direct corroboration of their views, the State Department quickly seized upon it as additional proof of the accuracy of their beliefs.

The second group to back the State Department was the newly-created Central Intelligence Agency. In a secret report dated 28 February, the Agency outlined the current situation in Palestine, and made several recommendations. Since partition "cannot be implemented," the report stated, it was necessary for the United Nations

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to reconsider the entire issue. If this were to occur, "partition could be considered abandoned." The report concluded that Arab opposition to partition had invalidated the General Assembly's recommendations, and that a new solution, possibly based on the Minority report, or federalism, had to be found.\textsuperscript{24} While this report did not directly support the State Department's trusteeship proposals, it did provide additional strength for the anti-partition forces.

Against this tide of anti-partition sentiment stood President Truman and several White House aides. Truman favored partition and probably had been responsible for the American pressure for votes at the United Nations in favor of the Majority Report. His support for a Jewish state was based on personal sympathy for the plight of the Jews, but perhaps also on the knowledge of the importance of the Jewish vote in several key states.\textsuperscript{25} Truman was apparently aware of the differences between his views and those of the State Department on Palestine: "The Department of State's specialists on the Near East were, almost without exception, unfriendly to the idea of a Jewish state. . . ."\textsuperscript{26} The president's

\textsuperscript{24}Report by the Central Intelligence Agency, 28 February 1948, \textit{FRUS 1948}, 5, 666-75.


\textsuperscript{26}Truman, \textit{Memoirs}, 162.
advisers believed that the Department's feelings went far beyond undfriendliness to a Jewish state. They often accused the Department of anti-Semitism while, in turn, the president's aides were blamed for placing domestic politics ahead of national security.27

The most influential of these advisers were Special Counsel Clark M. Clifford and Administrative Assistant for Minority Affairs David K. Niles. While Niles, a hold-over from the Roosevelt administration, was the behind-the-scenes liaison between Truman and the Zionists,28 it was Clifford to whom the president turned for advice and support on the Palestine issue. Both Clifford and Niles were concerned with the effect of the Jewish vote on Truman's re-election chances in 1948. They also felt that support for a Jewish state would serve the national interest. Thus, they argued, Truman could gather the important Jewish vote at the same time that he furthered American interests.29

Clifford presented these arguments in a memorandum to Truman on 8 March 1948. Clifford began by stating that not only was partition in the national interest for the United States, but it was consistent with the

27Collins and Lapierre, O Jerusalem!, 49.
28Cohen, Palestine and the Great Powers, 49.
29Ibid., 47.
policy followed by previous American leaders. Partition, he continued, offered the best hope for a permanent solution for Palestine. Clifford also attempted to refute the three major arguments of the State Department against partition. He first attacked the belief that partition would involve American troops in Palestine. Delay of partition, he argued, would make "absolutely certain the very military involvements they profess to want to avoid." The United States was not required at this time to send troops to Palestine if partition were implemented.

From this, Clifford derived his second argument, regarding possible Soviet involvement in the Middle East. Only the enforcement of partition could prevent a war, and "there is no more certain way of having Russia move into the Arabian peninsula than for us to permit a war to develop between the Jews and the Arabs." He also argued that the Arab states had nothing to gain through an association with the Soviet Union. "... Their social and economic structure would be irreparably harmed by adopting a Soviet orientation," said Clifford, "and it would be suicide for their ruling classes to come within the Soviet sphere of influence." As much

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30 Memorandum by the President's Special Counsel (Clark Clifford) to President Truman, 8 March 1948, FRUS 1948, 5, 691 (emphasis in the original).

31 Ibid., 694-5.
as the Arabs feared and hated the establishment of a Jewish state, the alternative of Soviet involvement would be even more dangerous.

Finally, Clifford attacked the State Department's belief that support of partition would lead to the loss of Arab oil for the United States. The Arabs had to have oil royalties or go broke, argued Clifford. The only customer for Arabian oil was the United States. His figures showed that ninety per cent of Saudi Arabia's revenues, for example, came from oil sales to America. Therefore, he concluded, "their need of the United States is greater than our need of them."  

By the time Truman received this memorandum, however, it was too late to stop American policy on Palestine from taking an abrupt swerve, thanks to these disagreements within the American government.

After the vote in favor of partition, the General Assembly had appointed a Five Power Commission, consisting of Bolivia, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Panama, and the Philippines, to assist Great Britain in governing Palestine until the Mandate expired in May, and to assume responsibility for the country during the two month transition period. The Commission began its work on 9 January 1948. In its first report to the Security

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32 Ibid., 695.
Council on 2 February, the Commission said that carrying out partition would be almost impossible without the use of armed force. On 16 February the Commission referred the question of providing armed assistance to implement partition to the Security Council. It was here that the United States gave its first public indication of the dissension within the American government and of the impending change in the direction of its Palestinian policy.

The first step came on 24 February 1948 in a speech by the American delegate to the Security Council, Warren Austin. While admitting that, under certain circumstances, the Security Council did have the power to use armed force to "remove a threat to international peace," the United Nations Charter did not give the Security Council the power to enforce a political settlement on the recommendation of the General Assembly. "The Security Council's action," Austin stated, "in other words, is directed toward keeping the peace and not to enforcing partition." Austin concluded by calling for the establishment of a committee, consisting of the five permanent members of the Security Council, to look into the "questions of the possible threats to international peace arising in connexion [sic] with the Palestine situation. . . ." The

33 Cohen, Palestine and the Great Powers, 349.

speech had been approved in advance by Truman, with one exception: "I want it made clear," Truman had written to the Secretary of State two day earlier, "... that nothing should be presented to the Security Council that could be interpreted as a recession [sic] on our part from the position we took in the General Assembly." Apparently Truman did not completely comprehend the full implication of Austin's speech, but the State Department did, and began direct pressure on the president to get his support for their alternative to partition—namely, trusteeship.

In addition to the reports on Palestine Truman was receiving from his experts, events in other parts of the world influenced his decision-making. On 25 February 1948, the communist coup in Czechoslovakia occurred, deepening tensions in the Soviet-American Cold War. On 5 March, a cable from General Lucius B. Clay in Berlin was delivered to the director of Army Intelligence. In his message, Clay expressed his fear of a sudden outbreak of war with the Soviet Union. The "threat of communism" was becoming increasingly apparent to Truman, and may be a factor behind Truman changing his attitude towards Palestine.

The State Department wasted little time in exploiting

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35 President Truman to the Secretary of State (Marshall), 22 February 1948, FRUS 1948, 5, 645.
the president's changing position. Truman did agree, at a White House meeting in early March, that trusteeship might be necessary if partition did not work. Inspired by this possibly off-hand comment, the State Department began preparing a statement for presentation at the United Nations on this basis. A few days later, while traveling in his private train, Truman was presented with "the first draft" of a speech to be presented to the Security Council. It discussed the possibility of a trusteeship as a temporary solution in Palestine. It appeared to Truman, in this sketchy draft, to only be a contingency plan. He did not study the document closely, and remarked only, "It looks all right," probably not intending that his agreement be taken as final approval of such a speech. 36

The Department, however, took his comment to mean just that. On 8 March, therefore, Secretary of State Marshall informed United Nations delegate Warren Austin that Truman had approved a draft of a speech favoring trusteeship, which Austin was to present before the Security Council on or about 18 March. 37 The timing of this speech, as well as its content, was to prove highly embarrassing to the president.

36 Kurzman, Genesis 1948, 86.
37 Feis, The Birth of Israel, 53.
While this behind-the-scenes shift in American policy was occurring, the Zionists became aware of the drift of support in the United States for partition. As early as 7 January 1948, Elihu Epstein and Abba Eban reported to their colleagues on the Jewish Agency Executive a definite change in American attitudes. "Efforts to improve the Washington atmosphere are most seriously prejudiced by an unfavourable view of Jewish defence tactics... Our contention that Jews need arms for defence was actually challenged on the grounds that the Jews are the attackers."38 Later that month, Moshe Shertok wired to David Ben-Gurion that the position of the State Department was one of hostility, while the White House seemed confused and frustrated, and "only now beginning [to] realize [the] complexity [of the] situation."39 In an attempt to counter this shift in opinion, the Zionists attempted to see President Truman.

At first, these attempts failed. Truman felt the Zionists were trying to force the United States to support their goals, even at the cost of American national security. The president resented this pressure,

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39 Moshe Shertok to David Ben-Gurion, 29 January 1948, Israeli Documents, 261-2.
and refused to see any Zionist leader. Truman outlined his position to his former business partner, Edward Jacobson, in a letter.

The situation has been a headache for me for two and a half years. The Jews are so emotional, and the Arabs are so difficult to talk with that it is almost impossible to get anything done. . . . The Zionists, of course, have expected a big stick approach on our part, and naturally have been disappointed when we can't do that.

I hope it will work out all right, but I have about come to the conclusion that the situation is not solvable as presently set up; but I will continue to try to get the solution outlined in the United Nations resolution.

The final sentence alarmed the Zionists, and they decided that somehow a pro-Jewish voice had to reach the president.

The man the Zionists chose to deliver their message was Eddie Jacobson. Truman and Jacobson had been business partners in Kansas City many years before, and they had remained friendly since. Because he was a friend of the president, and because he was a Jew, the Zionists felt that Jacobson provided the best opportunity to convince Truman to see a Zionist leader. Jacobson agreed to undertake this mission and arrived in Washington, without an appointment, to see the president.

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41 Harry S. Truman to Edward Jacobson, 27 February 1948, Papers of Harry S. Truman, Official File 204 (Misc.), HSTL.
The 12 March meeting progressed well, until Jacobson introduced the subject of Palestine. Truman then became abrupt and spoke angrily with Jacobson. Surprised by the president's anger, Jacobson finally brought up the name of Chaim Weizmann, the elderly Zionist leader, whom Truman had met and personally admired. Jacobson told Truman that Weizmann had tried to see him earlier, but had been turned away on presidential orders. Jacobson, sensing a lessening of Truman's anger, continued:

... he has traveled thousands and thousands of miles just to see you and plead the cause of my people. Now you refuse to see him because you were insulted by some of our American Jewish leaders, even though you know that Weizmann had nothing to do with these insults. ... I wouldn't be here if I didn't know that if you do see him you will be properly and accurately informed on the situation as it exists in Palestine, and yet you refuse to see him. 42

The discussion had the desired effect, and Truman agreed to meet Weizmann.

The meeting occurred on 18 March 1948. Truman was moved by Weizmann's pleas on behalf of the Jews, and apparently forgot his earlier approval of the State Department's trusteeship proposal. By the end of the meeting, according to Weizmann, Truman "indicated

42 Truman, Harry S. Truman, 423-4; Kurzman, Genesis 1948, 97-8.
a firm resolve to press forward with partition." 43

Truman also seemed unaware that on this date Warren
Austin was planning to make a speech before the Security
Council, calling for the replacement of partition with
trusteeship.

Unfortunately for Truman, Austin made his speech
a day late. If it had been delivered as planned on
18 March, Truman might have been able to claim that
Austin's speech had not been stopped in time to conform
with Truman's rededication to partition. Instead, the
president faced the embarrassment of privately promising
Weizmann that the United States would continue to support
partition, while on the very next day American policy
publicly changed. Whatever the confusion, it did not
save the United States from outraged world opinion when,
on 19 March 1948, Warren Austin announced American
support for a trusteeship to replace partition as the
solution for Palestine.

43 Chaim Weizmann, Trial and Error (London: Hannish
Hamilton, 1949), 472.
American Palestinian policy had never been static: it had moved from non-intervention to cooperation with the British to find a solution for Palestine, and later from support for federalism to support for partition. The change from upholding partition to trusteeship, however, was perhaps the most dramatic, partially because it occurred publicly, with very little warning, and partially because it was not to be the final change in American policy.

The announcement of the new American policy, trusteeship, came in a speech by Warren Austin before the United Nations Security Council on 19 March 1948. Austin's statement went immediately to what was perceived to be the heart of the argument against partition.

The Security Council now has before it clear evidence that the Jews and Arabs of Palestine and the Mandatory Power cannot agree to implement the General Assembly plan of partition through peaceful means. The announced determination of the Mandatory Power to terminate the Mandate on 15 May 1948, if carried out by the United Kingdom, would result, in the light of information now available, in chaos, heavy fighting and much loss of life in Palestine. The United Nations cannot permit
such a result. The loss of life in the Holy Land must be brought to an immediate end. The maintenance of international peace is at stake."

The Security Council should do everything in its power to bring about an end to the violence in Palestine.

The best way to accomplish this objective, continued Austin, was through a trusteeship for Palestine, administered by the United Nations Trusteeship Council. Not only would this solution help to maintain peace, but it would also permit "the Jews and Arabs of Palestine, who must live together, further opportunity to reach an agreement regarding the future government of that country." He concluded by calling for a special session of the General Assembly to consider the establishment of a trusteeship, but pending the convening of such a session, "the Security Council should instruct the Palestine Commission to suspend its efforts to implement the proposed partition plan." 2 Austin did not outline the specifics of the American trusteeship proposal, but what he did say was enough to cause immediate and general outrage.

The outrage came from all quarters. There were protests from within the United Nations, among the

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1 Statement Made by the United States Representative at the United Nations (Austin) Before the Security Council (Extract), 19 March 1948, FRUS 1948, 5, 742.

2 Ibid., 743.
Zionists, and from the British. The United Nations Secretary General Trygve Lie later equated the possible implementation of trusteeship with "proposing that the United Nations take enforcement action against partition." He was also disappointed by the American action: "I had hoped for more from the United States." 3 Zionist leaders, with the exception of Chaim Weizmann, felt that they had been betrayed by the United States. Truman was called a liar, a traitor, and other uncomplimentary names by various Jewish leaders. 4

The British, while displeased by the American policy reversal, nonetheless stood by their decision to withdraw from Palestine in mid-May 1948. They felt that Washington was responsible for the partition decision of November 1947, and if the United States wanted to alter the settlement at this time, the Americans were liable for whatever consequences might result. All that Great Britain wanted was to get out of Palestine. 5

One of the most vehement reactions, however, apparently occurred at the White House. Truman read of Austin's speech in the morning papers on 20 March. In confusion,

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3 Lie, In the Cause of Peace, 172, 167 (emphasis in the original).
4 Truman, Harry S. Truman, 424.
5 Haron, "Palestine and the Anglo-American Connection", 204-5.
he called Clark Clifford and demanded, "How could this have happened?" In his diary, Truman noted, "The State Dept. pulled the rug from under me today. I didn't expect that it would happen." He ordered an immediate investigation to find out exactly who had authorized Austin's speech.

Clark Clifford was in charge of the investigation. On the afternoon of 20 March, Clifford discussed the situation with several leading State Department officials. The meeting came to an abrupt end, however, when the officials convinced Clifford that Austin's speech had been authorized by Secretary of State Marshall. The next step for Clifford's investigation was to find out why Marshall had approved this action.

What Clifford discovered was the 8 March draft speech that Truman had tentatively approved. Further searching led to two probable conclusions. First, it was possible that the State Department, after receiving Truman's initial approval of the draft, had simply not bothered to check back with the president for his final okay. The other possibility was that the State Depart-

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6 Kurzman, Genesis 1948, 98.
7 Truman, Harry S. Truman, 424.
8 Donovan, Conflict and Crisis, 377.
9 Divine, Foreign Policy and US Presidential Elections, 185.
ment officials had not realized that Truman's approval was only tentative, and did not constitute final permission to make the speech. When Under Secretary of State Robert Lovett returned the draft of Austin's speech to NEA Director Loy Henderson, with his own approval, it was understood by Henderson that the president had also approved the statement.10

This line of reasoning is supported by a memorandum from Carlisle Humelsine to Secretary of State Marshall. He outlined a meeting between Truman and Lovett on 8 March in which he claimed that the president had approved the speech. "The President said we were to go through and attempt to get approval of implementation of the GA resolution but if we did not get it we could take the alternative step. That was perfectly clear." The memorandum concluded by reiterating that Truman had confirmed this to both Lovett and Marshall. "There is absolutely no question but what the President approved it. There was a definite clearance there."11 Lovett wanted this made clear, since the president claimed no knowledge of having approved the speech.

The question remains, then, exactly how much did

10Feis, The Birth of Israel, 53.

11Memorandum by the Director of the Executive Secretariat (Carlisle Humelsine) to the Secretary of State (Marshall), 22 March 1948, FRUS 1948, 5, 749-50 (emphasis in the original).
Truman knew about the change to trusteeship? Truman, of course, never admitted to having approved the change, but this is generally discounted by many scholars of this period. Truman knew from the 8 March draft that the State Department contemplated the switch to trusteeship, and is blamed for not putting "his foot down" to stop the change.\textsuperscript{12} John Snetsinger claims that Truman "directly and knowingly" agreed to the change from partition to trusteeship.\textsuperscript{13}

The timing of the announcement of the change to trusteeship is central to the arguments of the other scholars. While agreeing that Truman had approved trusteeship, Warren Cohen argues that the president assumed that the plan would only be offered \textit{after} the Security Council had taken some sort of vote against partition, "so the record would be clear"; that is, that the United States would not be alone in its desire to change from partition.\textsuperscript{14} According to Michael J. Cohen, Truman did not object to the change in policy but, rather, "to the domestic repercussions" which would occur if the plan were announced without prior

\textsuperscript{12}Donovan, \textit{Conflict and Crisis}, 379.
\textsuperscript{13}Snetsinger, \textit{Truman, the Jewish Vote}, \ldots, 88.
\textsuperscript{14}Cohen, \textit{Dean Rusk}, 23.
public preparation. Without Truman's testimony, it can never be definitely ascertained what exactly he knew, but it can be said that he was at least aware of the possibility of a switch. It seems probable, considering Truman's denials, that while he had some knowledge of the trusteeship plan, he had assumed that the State Department would check back with him before the change from partition was actually made.

Whatever the reasoning behind the change to trusteeship, or who was to blame for the announcement, Truman bore the responsibility for it. He also faced the prospect of attempting to explain the turnabout to the public. It was obvious that the president could not repudiate Austin's speech. This shift in policy had shaken public confidence in his leadership. A second change could destroy it. At a press conference on 25 March, he justified trusteeship as a temporary measure, necessitated by the violent opposition in Palestine to partition. Trusteeship was not to be a replacement for partition, he continued, but an effort to fill the vacuum which would be created by the termination of the Mandate. During questioning by the press, Truman made his

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16Collins and Lapierre, O Jerusalem!, 230.
position as clear as he possibly could:

Q. You are still, sir, in favor of partition at some future date?
The President. That is what I am trying to say here as plainly as I can.17

Truman, thus, put the best face he could on this embarrassing situation.

He did attempt, however, to strike out at the State Department for causing him this embarrassment. His target was one of his most persistent critics and the author of Warren Austin's speech, Loy Henderson. "By special appointment of the President," Henderson received a new job--American minister to Katmandu.18 The appointment was technically a promotion, but it seems fairly obvious that the transfer was a convenient way to get rid of him.19

The full State Department trusteeship plan, promised by Austin, was presented to the Security Council on 2 April 1948. The document was extremely detailed. The United Nations, acting through the Trusteeship Council, would serve as the administrating authority, with "full powers of administration, legislation, and jurisdiction" over Palestine. Its administration was to be conducted

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18 Collins and Lapierre, O Jerusalem!, 230.
19 Podet, "Anti-Zionism in a Key U.S. Diplomat", 179.
"in such a manner as to encourage the maximum cooperation between the Jews and Arabs in Palestine. . . ."

Perhaps more important was paragraph 2 of Article 7, which allowed the Governor-General of Palestine to call on unspecified countries to "assist in the defense of Palestine or in the maintenance of law and order within Palestine." This seemed to contradict one of the major State Department objections to partition: namely, the possible introduction of American or Soviet troops into Palestine.

The plan also called for a bicameral legislature, elected from the population at large. Regarding immigration, for the first two years of trusteeship, Jewish immigration would be controlled by the International Refugee Organization, regulated by the Trusteeship Council and the Governor-General. No limit or quota was mentioned. "Thereafter, further immigration shall be without distinction between individuals as to religion or blood and shall be in accordance with the absorptive capacity of Palestine. . . ." This stipulation would probably satisfy neither side; the Arabs would be angry that they, as the majority would not control immigration,

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20 Memorandum Prepared in the Department of State: Draft Trusteeship Agreement for Palestine, 2 April 1948, FRUS 1948, 5, 780.

21 Ibid., 788.
while the Jews would be upset because there were no special provisions made for Jewish displaced persons.

The trusteeship draft concluded with a description of how the trusteeship would be terminated. The Governor-General was to "take all possible steps," working with Jewish and Arab leaders, to formulate a plan of government for Palestine. A plebiscite would then be held, and if the plan were approved by a majority of the registered members of both the Arab and Jewish communities in Palestine," the plan would be submitted to the General Assembly for its approval. With this approval, the trusteeship would be ended.\textsuperscript{22}

Despite the obvious amount of effort that the State Department had put into the trusteeship plan, a major problem still remained: trusteeship had to be accepted by a two-thirds majority of the members of the General Assembly of the United Nations. "It had been anticipated that the trusteeship plan would be adopted without difficulty. . . ."\textsuperscript{23} This was not, however, to be the case. At no time were member nations enthusiastic about trusteeship; indeed, only "three or four delegations" definitely favored the plan.\textsuperscript{24}

\textsuperscript{22}Ibid., 796 (emphasis added).

\textsuperscript{23}Weizmann, \textit{Trial and Error}, 475.

\textsuperscript{24}Snetsinger, \textit{Truman, the Jewish Vote}. . . , 92-3.
Trusteeship was discussed by Warren Austin and Chaim Weizmann on 14 April 1948. Weizmann told Austin that if a trusteeship plan would include three points deemed essential by the Jews, namely, immigration, land settlement, and economic development, he believed that trusteeship could be beneficial to the Jews. If, however, a two-thirds majority of the General Assembly did not support trusteeship, "the Jews would have the legal, and if not the legal certainly the moral right to go ahead with their plans to establish the Jewish state." Austin made it clear that, from his point of view, such an action would be "a mistake." In spite of the lack of support for trusteeship, the Security Council called for another special session of the General Assembly to consider the plan on 16 April.

As April ended and May began, despite the actions of the American State Department and the United Nations, the partition plan began to take shape. The Jews continued to prepare for imminent statehood, while the Arabs, both inside and outside of Palestine, prepared for war. The British began to implement their plans for withdrawal from Palestine. The State Department attempted, through American Ambassador to Great Britain

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25 The United States Representative to the United Nations (Austin) to the Secretary of State (Marshall), 15 April 1948, FRUS 1948, 5, 823-4.
Lewis Douglas, to get either British support for the trusteeship plan or a continued British presence in Palestine. The British were opposed to both ideas, although Foreign Secretary Bevin and Prime Minister Attlee wanted the United States to understand that their attitude was not based on unwillingness to cooperate but, rather, on their fears of what effect such cooperation would have on British interests in the Arab world.26

As these events continued to unfold, and a Jewish state became a relative certainty, the question became one of whether or, more probably, when the United States would recognize the new country. Truman seemed to favor immediate recognition, and was under pressure from several of his aides and also from the Zionists to do so. Clark Clifford and David Niles, of course, were leading the internal pressure. Truman received a letter from Chaim Weizmann on 13 May, asking for his support. He hoped that the United States, "which under your leadership has done so much to find a just solution," would quickly recognize the new Jewish state. "The world, I think," he concluded, "would regard it as especially appropriate

26Haron, "Palestine and the Anglo-American Connection", 207.
that the greatest living democracy should be the first to welcome the newest into the family of nations."

Truman, however, was still receiving contrary advice from the State and Defense Departments. In a memorandum of 19 April, Defense Secretary Forrestal expressed his fears of the possible use of American forces in Palestine. The use of such troops "is going to affect materially our ability to use military forces for any other purposes for a substantial time to come." He estimated that American involvement in Palestine would require approximately 50,000 men. "This number represents substantially our entire present ground reserve, both Marine and Army." He concluded by hinting that America's ability to continue its present commitments to Italy, Iran, Greece, China, Turkey, and even to "the Western Union" might suffer if the United States were to enforce partition or help protect a new Jewish state.

The question of recognizing the Jewish state was finally discussed at a 12 May White House meeting. Those present included Truman, Marshall, Under Secretary of State Lovett, Fraser Wilkins of the NEA, Robert

27 Chaim Weizmann to Harry S. Truman, 13 May 1948, David K. Niles Papers, HSTL.

28 The Secretary of Defense (Forrestal) to the Secretary of State (Marshall), 19 April 1948, FRUS 1948, 5, 832-3.
McClintock of the State Department, and Clifford, Niles, and Matthew Connelly, all of Truman's White House staff. After Lovett outlined the current situation in Palestine, Secretary Marshall presented his case against immediate recognition. He recalled a meeting with Moshe Shertok on 8 May, at which they had discussed the early Jewish military successes. "I told Mr. Shertok that they were taking a gamble," the Secretary recalled. "If the tide did turn adversely and they came running to us for help they should be placed clearly on notice now that there was no warrant to expect help from the United States, which had warned them of the grave risk they were running." Thus, the Secretary went on record early with his opposition to immediate recognition.

Lovett concluded his summary of events by reading a recently received telegram from New York. It indicated that Great Britain was now prepared to support the trusteeship proposal. If this would not work, the British advocated the formation of a new commission to deal with the administration of Palestine, which would consist of Belgium, France, and the United States. This late attempt at cooperation by the British was not appreciated by the Americans. "It was generally agreed" by those present that the British had "played

29 Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State (Marshall), 12 May 1948, FRUS 1948, 5, 973.
a lamentable, if not altogether duplicitous, role in the Palestine situation" and that these last minute approaches "could have no effect upon our policy."\textsuperscript{30}

The president then asked Clark Clifford to make a statement. Clifford had three suggestions to make, the most important of which was to strongly recommend to Truman that he recognize the Jewish state immediately upon the termination of the Mandate. He especially wanted to recognize the country before the Soviet Union did. There was another reason for prompt recognition: "It would have distinct value in restoring the President's position for support of the partitioning of Palestine."\textsuperscript{31}

This appeared to be the view the president favored, as it was unusual to have White House aides participate so directly in a meeting primarily concerned with diplomatic issues.

Lovett then presented a rebuttal to Clifford's position. He saw no particular reason why the United States needed to recognize the Jewish state before the Soviets did. He also opposed recognition at the same time that the General Assembly special session was considering the trusteeship plan. He concluded by saying that "premature recognition" could be dangerous to the

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., 974.

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., 974-5.
security of the United States. "How do we know what kind of Jewish State would be set up?" Lovett asked. He then read from intelligence reports regarding Soviet activities in sending Jewish Communist agents into Palestine.\(^3\) The implications were clear: early recognition of a Jewish state could cost the president immeasurably.

Secretary of State Marshall concluded the presentation of the State Department case against recognition. Marshall stated that "speaking objectively", he felt that Clifford's arguments were wrong. His arguments, the Secretary continued, were based solely on domestic political concerns, with the intent of gaining the president "a few votes." Not only did Marshall feel that this effort would have the opposite effect intended, but "the great dignity of the office of the President would be seriously diminished." Indeed, the Secretary continued, "if the President were to follow Mr. Clifford's advice and if in the election I were to vote, I would vote against the President."\(^3\)

Lovett and Marshall concluded by saying that "naturally" after the termination of the Mandate "we would take another look at the situation in Palestine\(^3\)

\(^3\)Ibid., 975.

\(^3\)Ibid., 975.
in light of the facts as they existed. Marshall's stance put Truman in a difficult position; while he personally favored immediate recognition, his Secretary of State did not. If Truman did not accept his advice, it could be seen as tantamount to calling for his resignation. Truman could not go this far. He chose, instead, to defer the decision on recognition to a later date. This was not, however, to be Truman's final position on this issue.

Recognition was a matter of executive discretion, and Truman chose to invoke it. The question remains, however, as to why Truman chose to do so after all that had gone on before. One argument is that by mid-May 1948, it appeared that a war in Palestine was beyond American control, and that any power vacuum there was an open invitation for Soviet intervention. Both the Jews and the Arabs had rejected trusteeship by this time; at least the Jews had accepted partition. Recognizing the realities of the situation, it made sense for the president to "cash in" on the domestic political front by recognizing the Jewish state.

Recognition came on 14 May 1948. The Mandate was

34 Ibid., 975-6.
35 Collins and Lapierre, O Jerusalem!, 364.
36 Cohen, "Truman and the State Department", 175.
terminated at 12:01 A.M. on 15 May local time, which was 6:01 P.M. Washington time. At 6:11 P.M., in response to a letter from Elihu Epstein, acting on behalf of the provisional government of Israel, the White House issued the following statement:

This government has been informed that a Jewish state has been proclaimed in Palestine, and recognition has been requested by the provisional government thereof. The United States recognizes the provisional government as the de facto authority of the new state of Israel.

This seemingly final statement, however, did not end the confusion of American policy toward Palestine.

At the time of the White House announcement, the Second Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly was meeting. Speaking before the Assembly was American representative Phillip Jessup. Under instructions from Secretary of State Marshall, Jessup was calling on the Assembly to approve a temporary trusteeship proposal.37 When word of Truman's recognition of Israel reached the chamber, no one at first believed it. The American delegation was certain that the rumor was false because they had not been informed of such a decision.38

The reason for their ignorance was that when Sec-

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37 Acheson, Present at the Creation, 258.
38 Donovan, Conflict and Crisis, 384.
Secretary Marshall had called Warren Austin prior to the announcement to inform him of the president's decision, Austin was appalled. He quickly decided not to inform his fellow American delegates, and left, to prove to other members of the General Assembly that the American delegation had dealt honestly with them, and that the decision on recognition was purely a presidential one. When the recognition decision was confirmed to the General Assembly, "the American delegation sat in their seats, as surprised as any of us." This surprise soon turned to anger; Dean Rusk had to be dispatched to New York to prevent the resignation of the entire American delegation.

The American delegation was not the only one upset by Truman's decision. Amidst the pandemonium of the General Assembly, the Cuban Ambassador, Guillermo Belt, let it be known that, as soon as he could reach the podium, he would withdraw Cuba from the United Nations. He refused, he said, to be part of an organization in which an important member practiced duplicity. The press officer of the United Nations, Porter McKeever, was forced to physically restrain Belt, to keep him from the podium. It was later revealed that he did

39 Garcia-Granados, The Birth of Israel, 287.
40 Cohen, "Truman and the State Department", 175.
so by sitting in the Ambassador's lap. Cuba was persuaded to remain in the United Nations, and order was eventually restored.

The ups and downs of American policy toward Palestine finally ended with the recognition of the state of Israel. In the process, however, Truman's sometimes vacillating policy had alienated almost everyone, from the British, the Jews, and the Arabs, to his own State Department. It was fortunate for the United States that these actions did not, in the long run, cost America too much, either politically or diplomatically. Whether the difficulties of this situation could have been avoided will never be known, but perhaps Truman's troubles with Palestine will serve as a lesson to future leaders of how not to handle diplomatic crises.

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41 Donovan, Conflict and Crisis, 385.
CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

British and American policy toward Palestine at the end of World War II was inconsistent at best. Their actions may or may not have contributed to the founding of the state of Israel in May 1948. All those involved with the Palestine question had definite opinions regarding the subject, whether pro-Jewish or pro-Arab. As one participant noted, "Palestine was not a subject that lent itself to adjustment of views."\(^1\) The rigidity of views on this subject were often at the base of the disagreements, whether between the United States and Great Britain, or between President Truman and the State Department, over Palestinian policy.

Great Britain and the United States attempted, at first, to work together to find a settlement for Palestine. This, however, was impossible for a number of reasons. As Anglo-American differences over Palestine became more acute, the issue of Palestine could possibly have damaged the Western alliance at a critical time. Facing the growth of Soviet power and influence, and

\(^1\) Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, 175.
the deterioration of the wartime alliance between East and West, Anglo-American solidarity became almost a necessity. It was fortunate that this disagreement over Palestine did not poison these relations.\textsuperscript{2}

This is not to say that the possibility of such a breakdown between the United States and Great Britain was not present. Neither country understood the position of the other or the reasons behind its stance. The British anti-Zionist position was based primarily on strategic issues. The Labour Government was nearly obsessed with retaining the friendship of the Arabs of the region, both for the oil they possessed and for the retention of British military bases in the area. They based their fears of antagonizing the Arabs on an exaggerated belief in Arab unity and fighting ability.\textsuperscript{3} Imperial concerns were probably an interconnected factor as well. Direct British colonial possessions were disappearing after World War II, and with these losses went British influence. Support for a Jewish state would further limit British importance in the region.

The American position was more complex. Not only was there a division between the American and British governments, but also one within the American government

\textsuperscript{2}Bullock, Ernest Bevin, 183.

\textsuperscript{3}Hathaway, Ambiguous Partnership, 293.
itself. On one side was the State Department, and on the other was President Truman. The State Department view basically paralleled that of Great Britain. The Department had three primary fears; the first, like the British, dealt with the Arabs. Loss of Arab friendship could mean the loss of their oil, which was deemed vital to the United States. Secondly, they feared the instability which the establishment of a Jewish state, and the war that was likely to result, would bring to this area. This instability would be an open invitation, in the Department's view, to Soviet involvement. Finally, the Department did not wish to involve American troops in Palestine, partially because of the limited number of forces available to the United States, and partially due to their fear of the Soviet Union becoming involved. All these factors led to an uncompromisingly anti-Zionist attitude in the State Department.

The opposite position was taken by President Truman and his White House staff. Truman's views on Palestine were divided between two principal concerns. The first of these was domestic political affairs. Support for a Jewish state was popular with American public opinion and, especially, with the Jewish community. This could translate into votes when Truman came up for re-election in 1948. Truman's position was also
influenced by humanitarianism. The revelation of the Nazi Holocaust, and the desperate situation of the few survivors, most of whom wished to go to Palestine, deeply affected the president. He saw support for a Jewish state as a way to gain political strength at the same time that he aided the remnants of world Jewry.

This disunity within the American government caused immense problems in policy-making toward Palestine. Above it all, however, was Harry S. Truman. The president had the final say in foreign policy questions, and it was his decision finally to recognize Israel. His route to this last statement was halting and disjointed at best, although it is difficult to see a different course he could have taken. Even Truman admitted that "his best was probably not good enough." Even Truman admitted that "his best was probably not good enough." Even Truman admitted that "his best was probably not good enough." Even Truman admitted that "his best was probably not good enough." Even Truman admitted that "his best was probably not good enough."

Truman is often criticized for basing his policy toward Palestine on domestic political concerns. If this was indeed the driving force behind his decisions regarding Palestine, it is interesting to note that it had very little effect on the election of 1948. Approximately 65 per cent of American Jews lived in New York, Pennsylvania, and Illinois in 1948. These

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4 Donovan, Conflict and Crisis, 386.
5 Truman, Harry S. Truman, 416.
three states had 110 electoral votes among them. In the 1948 election, Truman only carried one of these, Illinois, yet still managed to win the election.

What, then can be the verdict on Anglo-American relations and Palestine? Perhaps that the antagonism was unavoidable, but the outcome, both for the Jews and for the British-American relationship, was positive. As for the relationship between the president and the State Department, both sides pushed for the adoption of their point of view, but since Truman held the ultimate card, that of recognition, his views triumphed. Perhaps American policy toward Palestine can best be summed up by the following observation made by a participant in the events of 1945-1948: "In Palestine, we put our heads down, and hoped for a miracle."  

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6 Louis and Stooker, eds., The End of the Palestine Mandate, 56.

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