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American Zionist Emergency Council, London negotiations,
undated.

C O N F I D E N T I A L

SUMMARY OF THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE LONDON NEGOTIATIONS ¹¹⁶

Within recent weeks, the British proposed to the United States Government to open negotiations in London on June 13th regarding the admission of 100,000 Jews and the other points covered in the Anglo-American Committee Report. They specified a long list of questions on which they wanted to have the American attitude.

Upon receipt of this, there followed a series of conferences in the Department of State. At first, a group of officials whose spokesman was Loy Henderson suggested that we would not be ready to start negotiations on June 13th since we had not yet received all replies from consulted parties and since we had not yet made up our own mind on the various points involved. The opposition (mainly General Hilldring) emphasized that now, when the British are ready to open negotiations, it is inconceivable that any suggestions for postponement should be made by us. Secretary Byrnes decided this issue against Henderson.

The next point concerned the scope of the negotiations. The Henderson group favored the inclusion of all recommendations of the Report in the London talks. The opposition insisted that, in line with the distinction made by the President, the London talks should be confined to the question of admitting 100,000 Jews only. On this question, too, Secretary Byrnes ruled against Henderson.

A decision was taken that our Government would take over the responsibility for transporting the 100,000 Jews to Palestine and would share in the burden of their resettlement.

A cable was sent to the British Government informing them of the above decisions. (Though it is fine that the British were notified in advance that we limit the discussions to the question of 100,000, it is too bad that we have told them in advance what we are prepared to do to facilitate this movement. We should have kept our willingness to help financially and by transportation until after the negotiations had started, using it as bargaining points to overcome British objections. Now that the British have been forewarned, they will take our concessions for granted and will have time to prepare some new ~~excess~~ demands).

The next question to be decided concerned the choice of personnel to be sent to London. Here, the State Department officials won a victory. It would have been logical to appoint representatives who were both in full sympathy with the President's policy and sufficiently familiar with all the details of the Palestine question to be able to cope speedily and well with the usual British arguments. It was suggested that people like Messrs. Crum or MacDonald, or Senators Thomas or Murray would fill the bill. But the State Department insisted on the appointment of a relatively new and inexperienced representative. Probably Secretary Byrnes didn't realize that this would place our representative at a disadvantage with the experienced British representatives and would also make him unable to cope with the officials of the State Department who, under the guise of technical assistance, would try to influence him along the lines of their well-known bias. Mr. Henry Grady, a former Assistant Secretary of State in charge of trade matters, now out of the Department, and Mr. John Lord O'Brien were considered as representatives. Mr. Grady accepted, but, at last reports, it was decided not to send him to London but to keep him in Washington

where he will coordinate the work of the delegates and will report to Secretary Byrnes. Mr. Grady thus becomes another cog in the machinery, thus probably making for more rather than less confusion. In effect, his will be one more voice in the Department of State in addition to the voices of the Secretary of State, Mr. Acheson, General Hildring, and Messrs. Henderson and Merriam. To this role he may bring all the good will in the world, but no specialized knowledge of the subject. It cannot be expected, therefore, that his could be any decisive influence to the good.

The delegation is to consist of Mr. Lawrence Cramer, one of General Hildring's assistants in the State Department, Colonel Lewis of the Civil Affairs Division of the War Department, and (perhaps) a representative of the Treasury who has not yet been decided upon. The delegation will be accompanied by Mr. Wilson, who holds the Palestine desk in the Near Eastern Division of the Department of State and whose pro-Arab attitude is notorious.

At last reports, the President has either appointed or is about to appoint a Cabinet committee consisting of the Secretaries of State, the Treasury, and War, which would advise him on major policies in connection with Palestine.