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Jewish War Veterans, 1946.

CONFIDENTIAL

REPORT OF MEETING WITH UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE DEAN ACHESON SUBMITTED BY DELEGATION OF
JEWISH WAR VETERANS

Monday, July 16, 1946 - 4:00 P. M.

The interview began at approximately 4:00 P. M. Mr. Loy Henderson was present throughout the entire meeting.

After introducing all the members of the delegation to Under-Secretary Acheson, Mr. Henderson introduced himself to Captain Kapelman, spokesman of the group. Mr. Henderson stated that there are many friends of the 100,000 now in Washington, because he had just come from another meeting on the matter (in the State Department).

Captain Kapelman then read the prepared statement to the Under-Secretary. When he finished, Mr. Acheson said: "Captain, I am a little surprised, because I did not think this would be that kind of a conference. I thought we were here to discuss the merits of the case, and I am surprised to hear statements that there are individuals in the State Department who are scuttling the bringing in of the 100,000 into Palestine. As you may realize, I am a political appointee. I do not know how long I am to be here, but there is a permanent staff under me. The job of the permanent staff is to carry out the policy as enunciated by the President to this Department.

"But I am practically in charge of this Department. As you remember, in the difficulty with General Hurley and the Secretary of State, the criticism was leveled that the career men make the policy. As a matter of fact, that is not the truth. My only objection to some of the career men is that they do not speak out often enough - some do but most do not. If any criticism is to be leveled against the Department of State, it is to be leveled against me, for the reason that Mr. Byrnes is often away, and it is I who speak with the President when he is away. I do not know to which persons you are making reference as being individuals who scuttle the policy of the Department, but let me assure you that I have always been in favor of bringing the 100,000 into Palestine and bringing them in quickly. So far as I know there is no one in the Department who wishes to scuttle the work and who is unsympathetic to the idea.

"You realize, of course, that we cannot force the British to send these 100,000 into Palestine. We cannot send them notes on the subject demanding that they do it, but we must talk with them and point out the urgency of the situation - of which they are fully cognizant."

Captain Kapelman then told Mr. Acheson about his visit to Palestine last year. He described the great joy among the Jews of that country when it was announced that President Truman had requested 100,000 immigration certificates for displaced Jews of Europe. He described the enthusiasm for President Truman - here was a man who was willing to stand up for those who had suffered so much, and demand that there be an end to their misery.

Captain Kapelman then pointed out that almost a full year had passed, and now - on July 16, 1946 - the 100,000 were still languishing in the DP Camps. Captain Kapelman said that as a staff officer in the war, it was his job to advise his commanding officer of the intelligence of the enemy situation, and

Meeting with Under-Secretary of State (continued)

that his Colonel was not interested in getting the information a month or a year later. He wanted to know now where he was likely to meet the Hun and meet flak.

Inasmuch as, the President - the Commander in Chief - had stated that the United States' policy was to bring the 100,000 into Palestine now, we cannot understand how the staff of the State Department can engage in further consultations and delays for so many months, Captain Kapelman declared.

After reviewing in some detail the tragic plight of the Jewish remnants and pointing out that there is only one place for them and that is Palestine, Captain Kapelman emphasized that another winter is approaching and that the Jews must be moved quickly, or else there will be further misery and death.

Mr. Acheson replied, "We cannot force the British in this situation."

Captain Kapelman said, "I am aware of the fact that Foreign Secretary Bevin made a statement that any unanimous recommendations of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry would be implemented immediately. Why then are the 100,000 not being moved? What is holding it up now?"

Mr. Acheson, evidently surprised to find that the spokesman of the delegation was so informed on the situation, merely smiled but did not answer. "We are now engaged in discussions to move these 100,000," he said.

Captain Kapelman continued to press his point. He said, "It appears that these discussions had not assured the fait accompli - that the 100,000 will go, but are still on the question of whether the 100,000 should go."

Mr. Acheson replied, "Our policy is that the 100,000 do go, and we are trying to convince Britain of it. We cannot discuss this question without dealing with a number of other matters pertinent to the question. The British speak of a military division from America. There is also the question of finance - and the question of logistics. We believe it will take years to work these points out, but we cannot wait so long. We are rather working on the policy of getting the 100,000 definitely established. On the other things we can work out a general rule, details can be worked out later. We will allocate what money and other assistance we will contribute, and they (The British) will contribute, and we will move them." (There were some difference of opinion in the delegation as to some of Acheson's comments on United States military aid in the situation. Some members of the group report that Mr. Acheson said quite clearly that there will be no United States troops. Others maintain that Mr. Acheson first listed the British demands - military aid, financial aid, technical aid - and then spoke of the assistance which the United States is prepared to offer - financial aid and technical aid - without including the sending of troops among these).

Captain Kapelman then took up once again the matter of individuals in the State Department who are "scuttling" plans to move the 100,000. He declared, that the delegation is prepared to document its charges and that for the present he will mention one individual who has been particularly active in this regard, Habib Kurani. Mr. Acheson said that he had never heard of the gentleman. He turned to Mr. Henderson and asked, "who is he?" Mr. Henderson replied that he is one of the men taken over ~~from~~ the State Department from the OWI and that he comes from Lebanon. Mr. Henderson added that he was formerly an instructor at the University of Beirut, but he has nothing to do with the formulation of

Meeting with Under-Secretary of State (Continued)

policy in the State Department.

Captain Kapelman then said, "My Colonel flew his missions on the basis of the information I gave him - I told him where there ~~was~~^{was} flak, and it was on the basis of the information I supplied that he determined or altered his course. Now, if Habib Kurani is in a position to filter the information which he receives to you, Mr. Henderson, and to you, Mr. Under-Secretary - and that information is passed on to the President - he is in a position to determine policy."

Mr. Henderson replied that Mr. Kurani's job was not to filter information. He worked at establishing cultural relations with the Near East; he made the arrangements for the exchange of students, etc.

Captain Kapelman insisted that Mr. Kurani is in a position to harm the 100,000, whereupon Mr. Henderson said that he would investigate to determine whether or not he uses his position to work against the interests of the displaced Jews.

Captain Kapelman emphasized that Mr. Kurani was "anti-Jewish Palestine" at his post in Beirut and subsequently in the United States.

Mr. Acheson instructed Mr. Henderson to look into this matter and said that he would be very pleased to receive a documented statement on this subject from the Jewish War Veterans.

Mr. Acheson then volunteered the following information, "The State Department has already made plans for the transfer of the 100,000. After the Grady Committee comes back and says that a given number of Jews should enter Palestine - if it is 10,000 a month, then the State Department ~~should~~^{should} so many ships and so many homes will be needed. If it is 5,000 a month, we have still another plan for that ~~it~~ - though we will like it less."

Captain Kapelman again emphasized that winter is approaching and that the displaced Jews must be moved immediately.

Mr. Acheson said, "We believe that within a very short time substantial progress will be made, judging from the telegrams being received from Mr. Grady." Mr. Acheson turned to Mr. Henderson for confirmation of this and Mr. Henderson agreed.

Mr. Henderson then turned to Captain Kapelman and said, "I believe that I am considered to be one of the scuttlers. I assure you that I am not."

Captain Kapelman then assured both Mr. Acheson and Mr. Henderson that the delegation had not come to the State Department to accuse them of opposing the entry of the 100,000. He then turned to Mr. Acheson and said, "We believe that you, Mr. Under-Secretary, are our friend."

Both Mr. Acheson and Mr. Henderson then emphasized that the State Department's problems are now more difficult than they were at any time during the war. There are the problems of China, Argentina, Spain, etc. Mr. Acheson assured the delegation that more consideration is being given this (the Palestine problem) than to any of the others. Mr. Henderson agreed that hardly a day goes by but that

Meeting with Under-Secretary of State Department (Continued)

"three or four Zionist groups do not come in to discuss the problem."

Mr. Acheson was most friendly to the group and said, "Please feel free to call on me any time," as the meeting ended.



CONFIDENTIAL

REPORT OF MEETING WITH BRITISH AMBASSADOR TO THE U.S., LORD INVERCHAPEL, SUBMITTED BY DELEGATION OF JEWISH WAR VETERANS.

Monday, July 15, 1946 - 3:00 P.M.

(The report was submitted by Captain Clarence Firstenberg, of Long Island.)

The delegation, headed by Mr. Archie Greenberg, was ushered in by Lord Inverchapel himself. He welcomed the group and said, "If I am to be scolded, better be seated where you can get at me."

Mr. Greenberg read the statement which had been prepared for submission to the Ambassador. Lord Inverchapel appeared to wince when Mr. Greenberg read that Britain will continue to lose the friendship of Americans and that his government is being held in scorn.

The Ambassador said "You may be sure that I will forward this statement to my government immediately. Of course you realize that I cannot make any statement. My situation here would prevent that."

Mr. Greenberg replied that veterans throughout the country, whether they were Jews or non-Jews, are incensed over the present situation and insist that something be done about it now.

Lord Inverchapel remarked "England has been the Jews' best friend in the long run."

Mr. Greenberg answered, "Your Excellency, people are dying in the D.P. camps and there is another winter coming on."

Lord Inverchapel said, "Well, perhaps the long run is too long." He then repeated that he would forward the statement to his government and that he himself could not make any statement at this time.

The interview lasted 18 minutes.