

President's Secretary's File  
Diplomatic Correspondence Botu  
Palestine

Your Majesty:

I have received the letter of Your Majesty of November 20, 1938, which was delivered by the Saudi Arabian Chargé d'Affaires in Cairo on December 6 to the American Chargé d'Affaires there, with regard to the Arab cause in Palestine.

As Your Majesty is no doubt aware, the Palestine situation is one which has engaged for long the attention of the American people. It is therefore with particular interest that I have read Your letter devoted to that subject.

The interest of the American people in Palestine is based on a number of considerations. They include both those of a spiritual character as well as those flowing from the rights derived by the United States in Palestine through the American-British Mandate Convention of December 3, 1924.

The position of the United States with respect to Palestine has been set forth in a public statement issued by the Department of State on October 4, 1938, of which it gives me pleasure to transmit to Your Majesty a copy. I may add that this Government has never taken any position different from that which it has maintained from the beginning toward this question.

Your Good Friend,

His Majesty  
Abdul Aziz ibn Saud,  
King of Saudi Arabia.

Published in

Foreign Relations of the United States

1939 Vol. 1V The Far East, The Near  
East, Africa.

Page 696

Note: The published letter is a draft prepared by Sumner Welles. The letter sent to Abdul Aziz ibn Saud has a minor change in the first line.

CLS  
7-11-64

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The Near East  
Africa

Pages 694-696

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

January 9, 1939

CLS  
7-11-66

My dear Mr. President:

I transmit the original of a communication addressed to you by His Majesty Abdul Aziz ibn Saud, King of Saudi Arabia, regarding the Palestine situation and the attitude of this Government with respect thereto. The original letter, of which a translation prepared by the American Legation in Cairo is also enclosed, was handed to the American Chargé d'Affaires in that city by the Saudi Arabian Chargé d'Affaires there, and transmitted by the former to the Department.

With regard to King ibn Saud's remarks concerning the position of President Wilson in respect of self-determination and the sending of a "Commission of Investigation" to the Near East in 1919, it may be helpful, for convenient reference, to set forth briefly the chronology of events. It will be recalled that President Wilson, in the twelfth of his Fourteen Points, urged that "the other nationalities which are now under Turkish

The President,

The White House.

Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development". In line with the foregoing principle Article XXII of the Covenant of the League of Nations accorded provisional recognition as independent nations to certain communities in the former Ottoman Empire, and stipulated that in selecting mandatories for such nations the "wishes of these communities must be a principal consideration".

With a view to carrying out that stipulation it was agreed at Paris that commissions should be sent to the Near East to inquire into the situation and to submit a report thereon. It will be recalled that the other governments concerned refrained from sending such commissions but an American section, headed by Mr. Charles R. Crane and Dr. Henry Churchill King, did visit the Near East during the summer of 1919 and submitted a report, dated August 28, 1919. It is to this report that King Ibn Saud refers in the fourth from the last paragraph of his letter. For convenience of reference I quote those of the Commission's recommendations regarding Palestine which King Ibn Saud apparently had in mind:

"If that principle (self-determination) is to rule, and so the wishes of Palestine's population are to be decisive as to what is to be done with Palestine, then it is to be remembered that the non-Jewish population of Palestine - nearly nine-tenths of the whole - are emphatically against the entire Zionist program. The tables show that there was no

one thing upon which the population of Palestine were more agreed than upon this. To subject a people so minded to unlimited Jewish immigration, and to steady financial and social pressure to surrender the land, would be a gross violation of the principle just quoted, and of the people's rights, though it kept within the form of law."

The conclusions of the Commission on the question of Palestine read as follows:

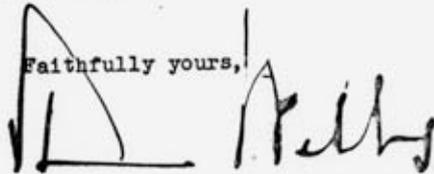
"In view of all these considerations, and with a deep sense of sympathy for the Jewish cause, the Commissioners feel bound to recommend that only a greatly reduced Zionist program be attempted by the Peace Conference, and even that, only very gradually initiated. This would have to mean that Jewish immigration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

Although we have had numerous communications from Arab notables and organizations protesting that the attitude of this Government favored the Zionist cause and was consequently anti-Arab, this is the first letter which we have had from an Arab Chief of State. As you are aware, the special position of the Arab States neighboring Palestine with reference to that country has been recognized by the British Government on several occasions, the most recent of which was in connection with the forthcoming London Conference called by the British Government to effect a settlement of the Palestine question, to which the Governments of Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Transjordan, Egypt and Yemen have been invited to send official delegates. In view of the special position of the Arab States in respect of the Palestine question, and

in view of the position of King ibn Saud as the outstanding Arab ruler and as the person most qualified to speak on behalf of the Arab people, it would seem that something more than a perfunctory acknowledgment should be made of his present communication.

I enclose for your consideration and your signature, if you approve, a reply to His Majesty which has been drafted with the foregoing considerations in mind. If you have some particular views which you desire to have incorporated in this communication, I shall be grateful if you will indicate their nature.

Faithfully yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'A. Kelly', written over the typed name 'A. Kelly'.

Enclosures:

1. From King ibn Saud,  
with translation thereof.
2. Letter to King ibn Saud.

Enclosure No. 1 to Despatch No. 1474 of December 17,  
1938, from the American Legation at Cairo.

Translation

IN THE NAME OF GOD, THE MERCIFUL, THE COMPASSIONATE

From: Abdul Aziz Ibn Abdur Rahman El Faisal, King of the  
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia,

To : President Franklin Roosevelt of the Republic of the  
United States of America.

Mr. President:

We have been informed of what has been published regarding the position of the Government of the United States of America concerning support of the Jews in Palestine. In view of our confidence in your love of right and justice, and the attachment of the free American People to the fundamental democratic traditions based upon the maintenance of right and justice and succor for defeated peoples, and in view of the friendly relations existing between our Kingdom and the Government of the United States, we wish to draw your attention, Mr. President, to the cause of the Arabs in Palestine and their legitimate rights, and we have full confidence that our statement will make clear to you and the American People the just cause of the Arabs in those Holy Lands.

It has appeared to us from the account which has been published of the American position that the case of Palestine has been considered from a single point of view: the point of view of the Zionist Jews; and the Arab points of view have been neglected. We have observed as one of the effects of the widespread Jewish propaganda that the democratic American People has been grossly misled, and it has resulted in considering support for the Jews in crushing the Arabs in Palestine a human act, while such an act is a flagrant injustice directed against a peaceful people in its own country that has not ceased to have confidence in the fairness of general democratic opinion in the world at large and in America particularly. I am confident that if the rights of the Arabs in Palestine were made clear to you, Mr. President, and to the American People, you would give them full support.

The argument on which the Jews depend in their claims regarding Palestine is that they settled there for a time in the olden days and that they have wandered in various countries of the world, and that they wish to create a gathering-place for themselves in Palestine where they may live freely. And for their action they rely upon a promise they received from the British Government, namely: the Balfour Declaration.

As for the historical claim of the Jews, there is nothing to justify it, because Palestine was and has not

ceased

ceased to be occupied by the Arabs through all the periods and progression of history, and its sovereign was their sovereign. If we except the interval when the Jews were established there, and a second period when the Roman Empire ruled there, the sovereignty of the Arabs has been theirs in Palestine from the oldest times to our own day. The Arabs, through the entire course of their existence, have been the keepers of the Holy Places, the magnifiers of their situation, the respecters of their sanctity, maintaining their affairs with all faithfulness and devotion. When the Otoman Government extended over Palestine, Arab influence was dominant, and the Arabs never felt that the Turks were a colonizing power in their country, owing to:

1. The oneness of the religious bond;
2. The feeling of the Arabs that they were partners of the Turks in government;
3. The local administration of government being in the hands of the sons of the land itself.

From the foregoing it is seen that the Jewish claim of rights in Palestine in so far as it rests upon history has no reality, for if the Jews dwelt in Palestine for a certain period as possessors, surely the Arabs have dwelt there for a far longer time, and it is impossible to consider the occupation of a country by a people as a natural right justifying their claim thereto. If this principle be now held in esteem, then it is the right of every people to reclaim the country it formerly occupied by force for a certain time. This would bring about astonishing changes in the map of the world, and would be irreconcilable with right, with justice, or with equity.

Now regarding the other claim of the Jews, whereby they take unto themselves the sympathy of the world only because they are scattered and persecuted in various countries, and they would like to find a place in which to take shelter in order to be safe from the injustice they encounter in many countries, the important thing in this matter is to discriminate between the causes of Judaism or anti-Semitism in the world and the cause of political Zionism. If the intent was sympathy for scattered Jews, Palestine is a small country. It has already received such a great number of them as to exceed comparison with any country in the world, taking account of the limited area of Palestine as compared with the lands of the earth where the Jews dwell. A country with narrow limits such as Palestine cannot make room for all the Jews of the world, even supposing it were emptied of its inhabitants, the Arabs (as Mr. Malcolm MacDonald said in a speech which he delivered recently in the British House of Commons). If the principle be accepted that the Jews now in Palestine are to remain there, then that little country has already performed a greater human justice than any other. You will see, Mr. President, that it is not just that the governments of the world -- including the United States -- have closed their doors against the immigration of the Jews and impose on Palestine, a small Arab country, the task of sustaining them.

But

But if we look at the matter from the standpoint of political Zionism, this point of view represents a wrong and unjust way. Its aim is to ruin a peaceable and tranquil people and to drive them from their country by various means, and to feed the political greed and personal ambition of a few Zionists. As to the reliance of the Jews upon the Balfour Declaration, surely that Declaration has brought the limit of oppression and iniquity to a peaceful and tranquil country. It was given by a government which at the time of the gift did not possess the right to impose it upon Palestine. Similarly, the opinion of the Arabs of Palestine was not taken in this regard nor with regard to the arrangement of the Mandate which was imposed upon them, as has been made clear also by Malcolm MacDonald, British Minister of Colonies, and this in spite of promises given by the Allies, including America, that they would have the right of self-determination. It is important for us to mention that Balfour's promise was preceded by another promise from the British Government with the knowledge of the Allies regarding the rights of the Arabs in Palestine and in other Arab countries.

From this it will be clear to you, Mr. President, that the historical pretext of the Jews is unjust and it is impossible to consider it. Their plea from the standpoint of humanity has been fulfilled more by Palestine than any other country, and Balfour's promise on which they depend is contrary to right and justice and inconsistent with the principle of self-determination. The ambition of the Zionists renders the Arabs in all countries apprehensive, and causes them to resist it.

The rights of the Arabs in Palestine do not admit of discussion because Palestine has been their country since the oldest times, and they did not leave it nor did others drive them out of it. Places flourished there, Arab in civilization, to an extent calling for admiration, for the reason that they were Arab in origin, in language, in situation, in culture; and of this there is no uncertainty or doubt. The history of the Arabs is full of just laws and useful works.

When the World War broke out, the Arabs sided with the Allies hoping to obtain their independence, and they were wholly confident that they would achieve it after the World War for the following reasons:

1. Because they participated in the War by action, and sacrificed their lives and their property;
2. Because it was promised them by the British Government through notes exchanged between its representative at the time, Sir Henry MacMahon, and the Sherif Hussein;
3. Because of your predecessor, the Great President Wilson who decided upon the participation of the United States of America in the War on the side of the

Allies

Allies in support of high human principles, of which the most important was the right of self-determination;

4. Because the Allies declared in November 1918, following their occupation of the countries, that they entered them in order to free them and to give the people their liberty and independence.

Mr. President, if you will refer to the report submitted by the Commission of Investigation which your predecessor, President Wilson, sent to the Near East in 1919, you will find the demands which the Arabs in Palestine and Syria made when they were questioned as to what future they asked for themselves.

But unfortunately the Arabs found after the War that they were abandoned, and the assurances given did not materialize. Their lands have been divided and distributed unjustly. Artificial frontiers resulted from these divisions which are not justified by the facts of geography, nationality, or religion. In addition to this, they found themselves facing a very great danger: the incursion upon them of the Zionists, who became the possessors of their best lands.

The Arabs protested strongly when they learned of the Balfour Declaration, and they protested against the organization of the Mandate. They announced their rejection and their non-acceptance thereof from the first day. The stream of Jewish immigration from various countries to Palestine has caused the Arabs to fear for their lives and their destiny; consequently numerous outbreaks and disturbances in Palestine took place in 1920, 1921, and 1929, but the most important outbreak was that of 1936, and its fire has not ceased to blaze to this hour.

Mr. President, the Arabs of Palestine and behind them the rest of the Arabs -- or rather, the rest of the Islamic World -- demand their rights, and they defend their lands against those who intrude upon them and their territories. It is impossible to establish peace in Palestine unless the Arabs obtain their rights, and unless they are sure that their countries will not be given to an alien people whose principles, aims and customs differ from theirs in every way. Therefore we beseech and adjure you, Mr. President, in the name of Justice and Freedom and help for weak peoples for which the noble American People is celebrated, to have the goodness to consider the cause of the Arabs of Palestine, and to support those who live in peace and quiet despite attack from these homeless groups from all parts of the world. For it is not just that the Jews be sent away from all the various countries of the world and that weak, conquered Palestine should, against its will, suffer this whole people. We do not doubt that the high principles to which the American People adhere, will cause them to yield to right and grant support for justice and fair play.

Written

-5-

Written in our Palace at Ar Riad on the seventh day  
of the month of Shawal, in the year 1357 of the Hejira,  
corresponding to November 29, 1938, A. D.

(Signed) Abdul Aziz Es Saud

Translation: GPM/MN/SS  
Copied by: icg

ADDRESS OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS TO  
THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
WASHINGTON, D. C.



DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

*PSF: Palestine*

February 10, 1939

My dear Mr. President:

There is enclosed a copy of a telegram which was sent yesterday to Mr. Myron Taylor and Mr. George Rublee with regard to the program of emigration which the German Government has indicated its willingness to carry out.

*from Hull*

Believe me,

Faithfully yours,

Enclosure:

Copy of telegram sent  
to Mr. Taylor and Mr. Rublee,  
February 8, 1939.

The President,

The White House.

REB

TELEGRAM SENT

This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (C)

February 8, 1939.  
4 p. m.

AMEMBASSY

LONDON (ENGLAND)

104

FOR MYRON TAYLOR AND RUBLEE. —

Your 167, February 6, 4 p. m.

Before commenting specifically upon Rublee's memorandum to Wohlthat, we wish to emphasize certain general considerations.

One. The program outlined relates exclusively to Jews. You should emphasize to the Committee that its task also covers the emigration and resettlement of Catholics, Protestants and others. As a practical matter, however, there appears to be no objection to admitting frankly that Jewish emigration and resettlement constitutes by far the greatest and most difficult part of the Committee's task.

Two. The condition that the program will be put into effect only when Germany "is satisfied that the countries of immigration are disposed to receive

currently

REB

2-#104, To London, Feb. 8, 4p.m.

currently Jews from Germany in conformity with this program" is a serious one. It gives Germany the final say as to what must be done or what assurances must be given by other governments before the program will be put into effect and would permit Germany to drop or change the program at any time on the excuse that other governments were not acting in accordance with it.

Three. We feel strongly that the program outlined must be carried out unilaterally by the German Government. We agree that the program represents the maximum obtainable from the German Government at this time, that it represents a new and more favorable attitude toward the problem of Jewish emigration, and that it will, if carried out, provide a notable improvement over present conditions in Germany. On the other hand, even this maximum contains objectionable features which this Government would not wish to condone by participating in an agreement between the Committee and <sup>the</sup> German Government or by an active acceptance. In this connection the German position that they are acting independently on their own initiative is helpful. As a unilateral program it presumably

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3-#104, To London, Feb. 8, 4p.m.

presumably represents the best that could be expected. As a basis for an agreement it would be definitely unacceptable.

Four. We consider that the program outlined would, if carried out, represent a sufficient improvement over present conditions (aside from the repercussions in Germany which could be expected if the Committee did not take cognizance of the program) to warrant the Committee taking cognizance of it. We do not, however, favor a reply by the Committee to the Germans which could be construed either as an acceptance or as initiating a negotiation between the Committee and the German Government which would saddle the former with responsibility. The distinction between raising no objection to, and actively accepting, a project may seem a fine one, but it is none the less real. The Committee, having taken cognizance of what Germany is prepared to do, should make clear that it is disposed, also unilaterally, to deal to the fullest extent of its ability and within the limits of the immigration laws and practices of its member Governments with the problem of developing opportunities for settlement.

The

REB

4-#104, To London, Feb. 8, 4p.m.

The following are more specific considerations:

(1) In so far as our immigration laws are concerned, it is unthinkable that we could admit the right of another government to say whom we should or should not admit and there is, of course, no way in which preference can be granted to persons in the wage-earning category as such as far as we are concerned. The only way in which the percentage of persons of that category coming to this country could be increased would be by the purely voluntary action of persons in other categories giving up their places when their turn is reached under the quota. Obviously no assurances of any kind could be given in this connection and no pressure could be exerted by us.

(2) The emigration of 150,000 persons of the wage-earning category from Germany over a period of five years should not, however, be impossible or even excessively difficult without departure from existing immigration laws and practices. If our estimate that refugees are currently being admitted into other countries at a rate of 80,000 a year is correct, and we are confident that it is conservative, and if the German estimate that three-

eighths

REB

5-#104, To London, Feb. 8, 4p.m.

eighths of the persons to be emigrated are wage-earners, it seems probable that wage-earners are already emigrating at a rate approximating 30,000 a year. On the one hand, current emigration includes a certain percentage, perhaps ten to fifteen per cent, of non-Jews and a further percentage of Jews over 45; on the other, the current estimated rate of emigration takes no account of mass settlement possibilities. It would not seem improbable that a five year period would be sufficient not only for the emigration of 150,000 wage-earners but for the emigration of most of their dependents as well.

(3) There will presumably be a considerable residue of wage-earners who for one reason or another will not be admissible into any country in the normal course of events and these must be provided for in mass settlement projects. This will not be easy as mass settlement under pioneering conditions will require a particularly capable type of emigrant, but it is believed that large scale mass settlement should be able to provide for this residue as well.

(4) The provisions for organizing emigration within  
Germany

REB

6-#104, To London, Feb. 8, 4p.m.

Germany, with foreign participation, should have distinct value. It must be borne in mind, however, that our immigration laws would not permit the intervention of any agency between applicant and consul.

(5) The release of all, or nearly all, Jews from concentration camps would be a considerable achievement.

(6) The arrangements for the care of persons who are not to be emigrated are not definite and far short of what might be desired but are definitely better than present conditions.

(7) The setting up of a trust fund from existing Jewish property in Germany is something which, as indicated in our 802, December 21, 6 p. m., would be most difficult for us to recognize in view of the implied sanction of the principle of confiscation. This difficulty might be overcome, however, if the individual were to retain title to the amount he had contributed to the fund, such title to cover his pro-rata share in such amounts as may eventually be transferred, if any are. The limitations on the use of the trust fund do not appear objectionable.

(8) We assume that the words "traditional sphere" of the Haavarah system refers solely to Palestine.

(9) The

REB

7-#104, To London, Feb.8,4p.m.

(9) The permission for emigrants to leave without payment of their flight or personal effects taxes would be a further worthwhile achievement.

(10) The relationship of the Committee to the proposed outside purchasing agency, which may be very useful, will have to be worked out in London, but care should be taken in this connection to avoid active acceptance of the German program.

(11) The appointment of the third trustee would also involve active acceptance. We should not desire to see an American serve in this capacity even if individual contributors to the trust fund are permitted to retain title.

Rublee appears to have accomplished more in Berlin than we had reason to expect, and we wish to congratulate him and to express appreciation for the energy and determination with which he carried out his mission in Berlin.

HULL  
(SW)

Copy of letter from Myron C. Taylor  
left with Bill Bullitt  
For rest of memo not dealing with  
the Committee-See: Taylor Gen corres-Drawer 2-1939

PSF: *Palmer*

Paris Mar 11, 1939

The Intergovernmental meeting concluded its sessions on February 13, 1939. Thereafter I brought to the attention of the Jewish societies and to a group of leaders, including Anthony Rothchild, Lord Bearstead and others, the importance of promptly acting, first, on the suggestion of the third trustee for the internal German Trust, and second, the formation of a plan to create an outside corporation or foundation to carry out in both instances the terms of the German unilateral proposals first proposed by Schacht, later modified by Wohlthat. I believe it best for many reasons to characterize as German proposals the memorandum which, while it contains many of the points that the committee had evolved at and since Evian, is not of course, an Inter-Governmental Committee proposal. Embarrassment might ultimately flow from it if it were so styled.

On arrival in Paris on February 16th, I conferred with Ambassador Bullitt and gave him in detail all events and memoranda affecting refugees, so that he would be able intelligently to discuss the matter when and as occasion required. I then left for Florence.

From Florence I telephoned Ambassador Phillips that I would come to Rome Thursday, February 23rd, to discuss the refugee situation with him, and suggested that if he thought well of it, it might be advisable first to visit Mussolini together and to acquaint him with preliminaries of the present German situation, and, if the opportunity occurred, to express to him the hope that in view of the progress made with Germany, he might find it possible to postpone the date of exodus in Italy from March 12th for a period of six months or a year, giving those affected a better opportunity to locate elsewhere and the avoiding of a revival of a general world discussion on the subject, with its possible injurious effect on the German refugee situation, which, in its present early stages under the memorandum, might be seriously impaired if the subject were renewed in a world-wide sense.

For his further information, I submitted to him, first, a copy of Sir Andrew MacFadden's report on the Italian situation; second, a copy of a memorandum which had been prepared by the Jewish leaders in London and Paris; third, a copy of Sir Herbert Emerson's memorandum regarding settlement projects; and fourth, minutes of the Inter-Governmental Committee which contained the German memorandum, of which memorandum he kept a copy. This will be helpful to

him in the discussions which may take place with Italian officials.

Mussolini was not in Rome when I was there, but was understood to be in the Italian Alps on vacation. Ciano left Rome about the time I arrived. The Ambassador had inquired if I should be received by Mussolini a week later when he returned. The answer was, I believe, that it was not then convenient. My Italian friends in London and Paris had suggested contact with Mussolini and not Ciano, who reported as violently anti-Jewish and not fully friendly toward America. I suggested to the Ambassador that I should not create an issue over the question of a visit to Mussolini.

I returned to Florence the following day, February 24th. The Ambassador to Rome, as I believe, asked your instructions whether he should proceed through the usual channel, Ciano, to discuss the subject along the lines indicated. I am not aware of your reply.

I left Florence for Monte Carlo on Saturday last, to visit a few friends who were there ill. It is likely that Mr. Bullitt will in another telegram recite other incidents which may be of interest.

*file  
private*

*ESF: Palestine*

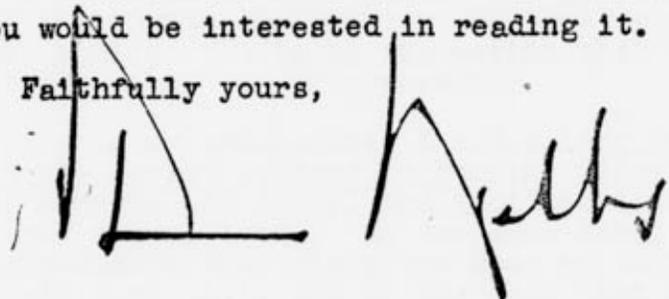
DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

March 21, 1939

My dear Mr. President:

It is not often that I send you a copy of a personal letter as long as the enclosed letter from Mr. Pell to Pierrepont Moffat. This letter, however, gives so vivid a picture of the difficulties under which the Intergovernmental Committee is working and of the uncooperative attitude of several countries, - despite their protestations of interest, - that I feel you would be interested in reading it.

Faithfully yours,



Enclosure:

Copy of letter from  
Mr. Robert Pell.

The President,

The White House.

{ COPY ENCL:ONS }  
{ COMP. HLW }

## INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE

1, Central Buildings,  
Westminster,  
London, S.W.1.

March 8, 1939

Dear Pierrepont:

I enclose a copy of a confidential memorandum of my conversation with Wohlthat in Berlin. I think that it gives you the full picture. My impression is that Goering wishes to go ahead with his program, but desires ammunition with which to justify his activities to Hitler. This ammunition in the first instance is to take the form of the memorandum on settlement projects which I am to take back to Berlin in a fortnight's time. Goering's other preoccupation is that the financing machinery on the inside of Germany and on the outside shall come into being simultaneously, that is, that the private corporation shall be set up at the same time. In studying the situation it seems to me that the clue to the timing lies with the appointment of the third or foreign trustee. When he has been approved by both sides, his appointment can be held off until both corporation and trust can be announced to the public. It is my impression that Wohlthat is in agreement with this way of proceeding.

As I indicate in my memorandum, I had a long secret conference with the Jewish leaders in Berlin. They are, of course, very nervous and jumpy, and inclined to discount much of what we are doing. At the same time, they are ready to acknowledge that there has been an easing of the situation, and that it is all to the good that Goering is centralizing the administration of the emigration. They were quite frank about the ship loads of their co-religionists which they are heading in various directions such as Shanghai, the Mediterranean and the Caribbean. They said that they had to get their people out, whether there was an easing of the tension or not. At any moment an incident might occur which would endanger the very lives of their people. They could not afford to take chances, with the consequence that they were very ready to yield to the pressure of the secret police and the enticement of the shipping companies and to emigrate their people without papers and without a fixed destination. They said that no opportunities for infiltration existed any

-2-

longer, with the exception of the American quota and the refuge opportunities offered in England. The rest of the world had dried up. They had, therefore, to fall back upon force majeure, and reveal to the world in this dramatic fashion what was their plight. I pleaded with them that they were doing more harm than good by this way of proceeding, that they were defeating our efforts to open up places in Latin America, but they laughed in my face. After six years of dealing with this problem they are very hard. They do not believe in promises. Too many promises have been broken. They want action and are in a state of mind where they will force action.

Following my return from Berlin, I conferred at length with Lord Winterton and Sir Herbert Emerson, also Monicy of the French Embassy. It was agreed that I should make a draft memorandum which would then be submitted to the American, British and French Governments in the first instance, and by way of courtesy to the other officers of the Committee. When the text had been approved I would be authorized to take it back to Berlin. As a first setback in the preparation of this draft, the Foreign Office informed me this morning that I could say nothing about Palestine. They also warned me that I would have to be most cautious in my references to British Guiana and to Northern Rhodesia. Just by way of further encouragement, the Dominican Charge d'Affaires, for whom I gave a luncheon yesterday, said that the statement with regard to his country would have to be most general.

With regard to Northern Rhodesia, a terrific row has been going on here throughout the last two weeks. The basis was that the Rothschild emigration committee was authorized by the Government to assemble a Commission which would be sent to Rhodesia for the purpose of surveying possibilities of "small scale settlement". The Rothschilds replied that they could not send out a mission at great expense unless its terms of reference were agreed upon with the Government in advance. They also asked that an official of the Government should be assigned to accompany the mission. The Government, in answer, said that no official either from this end or from the local government in Rhodesia could have any connection with the mission. They then produced terms of reference which were so poor that Lord Hailey, the Chairman of the Co-Ordinating Committee, threatened to resign. Sir Herbert Emerson, who is magnificent, rushed into the breach and saved the situation temporarily. The Colonial Office is now reconsidering terms of reference, but so far has not given any indication that they will be very satisfactory. The battle continues.

Sir Herbert returned from his visit of inspection in France, Belgium and Holland about the same time that I got back from Berlin. He has given me a very confidential indication of what he discovered in these countries. The conditions in France are appalling. The government is doing little or nothing to cope with the situation, and is treating the people who have escaped across the borders as criminals, housing them in abandoned jails, depriving them of proper medical attention, and generally behaving badly. Sir Herbert was given very little cooperation by the French in his investigation; in fact it might be said that they did everything to hamper his efforts. In Belgium he found that there were between 8,000 and 9,000 adult refugees, and about 500 children. The number of adults is continually increasing, since although the Belgian Government has formally closed the frontier, no serious attempt is being made to carry out the closure, and both private organizations and government services told him that it was in fact impracticable to close the frontiers. While, therefore, the Government is still at liberty to expel those who have entered the country illegally, there is no immediate prospect of it exercising that right, although it might be compelled to do so if the numbers continue to increase at the present rate. The rate of irregular entry into Belgium is about 400 a week, and there is at present little evidence that the rate is declining. The excess of entries over departures constitutes the main problem in Belgium, both for the Government and the private organizations which are hard put financially. There is practically no anti-semitic feeling in the country at present, although there is some evidence that there is a trend in this direction. Private organizations have been very generous in supplying funds, but they are rapidly reaching the point where they cannot afford to make further large contributions, so that without external support the situation may very quickly get out of hand. Most of the refugees at present are being supported in Brussels or in Antwerp. The cost of board and lodging of a refugee is approximately 3 Belgian francs a day and this is very near the subsistence limit and cannot be cut down any further. It allows a man to live but little more. Other refugees are in a camp, or rather settlement, at Merxplas, about 45 miles from Brussels. This village is the headquarters of the State Workhouse for Vagrants, and the Government has placed at the disposal of the private associations some of the buildings. There are facilities for sports and there are work shops with adequate rooms for training purposes. Between 600 and 1,000 refugees are in this settlement. Most of them are between eighteen and thirty-five and belong to the shop-keeper, salesman, clerk

and petty merchant class. There are virtually no skilled mechanics or agriculturalists. The Superintendent is a refugee doctor and he is assisted by two Government officials. The conduct of the persons in the camp is excellent and the morale is high. The Belgian Government is now planning to set up a second camp at Marneffe, about 60 miles from Brussels. There is a large government building there which was originally a castle, later a Jesuit College and was recently used for the accommodation of Spanish children. It has large out-buildings which might easily be converted into excellent work shops. The surroundings are beautiful and healthy and there are about 100 acres of land available for agricultural training. At least 1,000 refugees can be accommodated there. The Government is prepared to stand the expense of conditioning this settlement if its maintenance will be taken over by the private organizations. Special facilities are being organized for children. The Germans have recently adopted the practice of placing children from three to ten years old on trains with a tag pinned on their chest stating "I am so and so, going to join my mother in Brussels". Of course, there is no mother at Brussels, and the children have to be taken care of upon arrival by the Red Cross and other agencies. Many of these children are so young that they only know their first names. They carry no papers or other indications of who they are or where they have come from. These children are coming across the frontier at such a rate that Belgium will soon have well over 1,000 children on its hands. On the Belgian side they are being very well and efficiently treated, and are being placed in private homes as soon as this can be arranged. Facilities are rapidly being exhausted, however, and the Belgians will soon be in need of outside help.

In Holland Sir Herbert found that there were approximately 22,000 refugees. The great majority of these are old or middle-aged persons, some sufficiently financed to carry them along for a short time. Many of these are living outside Government control, but are obliged to report at regular intervals to the authorities. The Dutch Government is using military forces to seal the frontier, and there are few irregular entries into the country at this time. Briefly, the Government's policy appears to be to allow the earlier legal entries to melt into the population, but to make things very difficult for the recent illegal entries. Sir Herbert was not

-5-

permitted to visit the camp where illegal entrants are maintained, but he understands that these places are more in the nature of concentration camps than settlements. Camps are under the command of officers of the Army Reserve who, he is informed, are very sympathetic towards the refugees. The food is said to be good and there are certain facilities for outdoor exercise. A certain amount of teaching in English and other languages is being given and a small beginning is being made in instructing these people in the crafts. Generally speaking, facilities for retraining are very meagre. Most of the refugees are said to be too pleased to be out of Germany to worry about their present disabilities. The Government is said to have plans now for setting up one central camp where from three to four thousand refugees will be housed, where there will be facilities for retraining and recreation and where less rigorous methods will be adopted than are now the rule. The Government will pay a part of the cost which is estimated to be around £125,000. The private organizations will have to defer the remainder of the expenses. There are approximately 1,500 refugee children in Holland and in accordance with its general policy, the Government does not allow these children to be placed with private families. They are accommodated in homes, and Sir Herbert found that the administration of the homes was efficient and the character of the children excellent. Unfortunately, the Government is not prepared at present to allow the children to attend ordinary schools, and the associations are finding it difficult to make arrangements to teach children of varying ages. The cost of living in Holland is high. There is very little, if any, anti-semitic feeling in the country. At the same time, unemployment is high, and if refugees were seriously to compete with domestic labor, public opinion might rapidly change. Private charity has been very generous and the resources of private organizations for this purpose do not seem to be exhausted.

Of course, all these Governments, together with the British Government, are insistent that the refugees should be moved on to places of final settlement within a year, and both Sir Herbert and I are very much worried about the situation on the settlement side. It is quite clear, no matter what may be said, that Latin America is sealed at the present time. The two projects in the British Empire, that is British Guiana and Northern Rhodesia, are of a long range nature, with the accent on the "long".

-6-

The British are not even sure they will be permitting anybody to go to Rhodesia. What does this leave? The Dominican Republic and the Philippines for settlement and the United States for infiltration, with 3,000 a year to Australia. It is understood, however, that this 3,000 will be drawn from the refugees now in England.

Sir Herbert and I had a confidential talk with Home Office experts here this week, and we asked them frankly how many people they were prepared to retain permanently after the end of this year. They said that they could not permit more than 3,000 to remain in England. Outlets would have to be found for the others. The people while here are not allowed to work. They have to be supported by private charity, and conditions are not made easy for them. The condition, in almost every case, for temporary entry into England has been evidence that these people were included on the American quota. Now that the British have discovered that application for the quota does not necessarily mean that the applicant could obtain a visa, entry of persons on a temporary basis here has virtually been stopped. So we are pretty close to rock bottom.

The Godman affair is boiling briskly. (1) Godman's solicitors have notified us that he is suing the Committee and/or its responsible representative to collect the sum of £2,500 for services rendered. (2) The legal advisers of the British Government have decided (a) that Lord Winterton is Chairman of the British Delegation and, as such, Chairman of the Intergovernmental Committee without executive authority or responsibility; (b) that Sir Herbert Emerson as an official of the League of Nations, enjoys under the covenant of the League, full diplomatic immunity and cannot be sued in the British Courts; (c) that other officials of the Committee (meaning me) who are not at the same time officials of the League of Nations, do not enjoy diplomatic or any other immunity or any special status, and are regarded as private citizens, subject to be sued and taxed. Parenthetically, this is flatly contrary to what I have been given to understand from the outset of our establishment here. I have been repeatedly told, although I can find no record in writing, that the Director and the Assistant or Vice-Director of the Intergovernmental Committee should have the same status as officials of the League of Nations on duty in London. The Foreign Office now says that there is no precedent for this and that it cannot be granted.

-7-

This, I believe, covers the week's developments.

With best regards to you and to Ted Achilles,

Yours ever,

R.T.P.

Pierrepoint Moffat, Esq.,  
Department of State,  
Washington, D.C.



*File  
Journal of Conflicts*

*PSF  
Palestine  
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DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

June 28, 1939

My dear Mr. President:

After my last talk with you on the refugee question, I communicated to Myron Taylor the wishes you had expressed to me and in particular the expression of your desire that a meeting be held here in Washington next September under your personal direction of the representatives of the present Executive Committee of the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, namely, representatives of Great Britain, France, the Netherlands, Brazil, Argentina, and this Government. I indicated to Mr. Taylor that it was my thought that this invitation from you might most appropriately be made known by him at the next meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee which will be held in London on July 18 next. I asked Mr. Taylor if he would send me his reaction to the general plan which I indicated to him.

The President,

The White House.

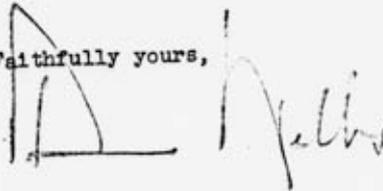
-2-

I have this morning received a letter from him in reply to my letter and I am enclosing a copy of his letter for your information.

At your convenience may I have an opportunity of talking with you again about this subject? Mr. Taylor is planning to sail on July 12 and before he leaves he should have final and definite instructions from you in this regard.

Believe me

Faithfully yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Myron Taylor". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Enclosure.  
From Mr. Myron Taylor,  
June 25, 1939.

COPY

KILLINGWORTH  
LOCUST VALLEY  
LONG ISLAND

June 25, 1939

The Honorable  
Sumner Welles,  
Under Secretary of State,  
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. Welles:

I am very happy to have your letter of June 22d, and to be able to say that I am at home and making daily improvement toward restoration to full vigor. I am pleased to have put behind me an unpleasant experience and glad to have removed an uncertainty that might some day have caused real difficulty--more real, in fact, than I had imagined. I have greatly appreciated the friendly interest and expressions of yourself and your associates in the Government.

In response to your letter I am glad to say that we are in accord upon the general interpretation of the situation in the realistic sense, and that our procedures thus far taken have proved constructive and sufficiently cautious to be safe, the attitude of our Government and those of us who have been working in its behalf considered.

I am planning to sail on the 12th of July. In the meantime I hope to have at least one thorough discussion with you, so that some of the minor questions can be determined definitely. I think it will not be possible for me to come to Washington until just prior to my departure. Perhaps in the interim you may find occasion to visit New York, in which case we could meet here.

Relative to the proposed September meeting of the executive officers of the Intergovernmental Committee, I am not quite clear as to the precise objective toward which its deliberations would be directed. I am wondering also if you have considered whether in all likelihood it would be imposing a new obligations on our Government in a field which, to say the least, is difficult. One of the chief difficulties in the present situation, as you know, so far as Jewish refugees are concerned, is three-fold:

First, it is not clear that there is available a suitable area for mass colonization that would be permanently acceptable to the Jewish refugees. (Their real objective

-2-

is to get into settled countries where they can set up their lives in existing communities and in professional, commercial and industrial activities).

Secondly, do the Jewish people really want a new "Palestine" in another part of the world sufficiently to contribute to and permanently develop and support in a large way such activity? (If so, the situs of such development should be easily accessible; it should have a climate, soil and general characteristics that would justify it as the basis for its permanent and costly development.)

Thirdly, is our own Government prepared to contribute or invest perhaps one hundred million dollars to such a development? (If so, would it be willing to use such a sum in development of a scheme in foreign lands; e.g., British Guiana?) We must bear in mind that certainly thus far on the question of finance the British and French Jewish committees have shown no disposition to finance large settlement projects. This has also been the attitude of the British and French governments. The suggestion has been bluntly made that American Jewry and the American Government should do it all.

It seems advisable to consider these questions before the final objective of the proposed September meeting is adopted.

In a day or two I hope to talk with you on the telephone on the whole matter, before you have taken the next step in formulating plans.

With kind regards, believe me,

Sincerely yours,

MYRON C. TAYLOR

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

7/5/39

I have a file something  
about Jewish refugees. Put this  
with it.

FDR

*Palastini*

ADDRESS OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS TO  
THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
WASHINGTON, D. C.



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confidential*

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

*psx  
Palestine  
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August 5, 1939

My dear Mr. President:

Myron Taylor has sent under date of July 28 a memorandum of a conversation which he had in London with Herr Wohlthat who was sent to London ostensibly as German delegate to the Whaling Conference. I believe you will be interested in this memorandum.

Believe me

Faithfully yours,

Enclosure:  
Memorandum of  
conversation.

The President,  
The White House.

Paris, July 28, 1939.

Memorandum of a conversation of the Honorable Myron C. Taylor with Mr. Wohltat, London, July 21, 1939. Mr. Pell was present.

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The meeting, which was requested by Mr. Taylor, took place in Mr. Wohltat's apartment at the Hotel Victoria. Mr. Wohltat had originally agreed to come to Mr. Taylor's rooms, but in view of the fact that appointments had been arranged for him with Sir Horace Wilson and other British officials, he asked Mr. Taylor to do him the kindness of coming to him.

Mr. Taylor, after the customary courtesies, said that he felt it to be a duty to say to Mr. Wohltat at the outset what an unfortunate impression had been created in the United States by the reception accorded by Chancellor Hitler to President Roosevelt's letter during the March crisis. The tendency to scoff at this letter had alienated many Americans who had a feeling of sympathy for the German people, and the insult to the Presidential office had done great harm. Mr. Taylor felt that it should be appreciated in Germany that American patience was running short. Untold danger would be done by a repetition of the insulting tactics of February.

Mr. Wohltat said that he was in thorough agreement with Mr. Taylor's views.

Mr. Taylor continued that in the present state of world economy every nation was faced with approximately the.....

- 2 -

the same problem and no nation and no leader would be able to survive a general collapse. Without a doubt this collapse would come if expenditure continued at the present pace. A time must come when further expenditure on war preparations would not be possible. The adjustment of national economies which would ensue would raise many problems, not the least of which would be the problem of progressive unemployment. Of course, if war came, it would mean ruin for all Europe, including Germany.

Mr. Wohltat said he agreed with Mr. Taylor, but observed that the beginning of a solution lay in a political and economic agreement of Germany with England.

Mr. Taylor then spoke of Marshal Goering; said that he was sorry that he had missed meeting him on the Riviera last winter, and observed that the Marshal was more respected in America than any other member of the National Socialist Party.

Mr. Wohltat said that he was pleased to hear this.

Mr. Taylor next mentioned the persecution of the Jews in Germany. He said that the despoliation of these people had filled the Western World with horror and had created difficulties for other countries which were almost insurmountable at a time when unemployment and anti-Semitism were rising. It was a breach of courtesy on the part of a nation to try to throw its undesirables on its neighbors after depriving them of their fortunes and their property. The remedy was to work with the Intergovernmental Committee in introducing orderly emigration and meanwhile to treat those who were obliged to remain behind humanely. Time would bring a cure. To impose pressure would be

to.....

- 3 -

to assure failure.

Mr. Wohltat's comment was that he was working out the details of the arrangement with Sir Herbert Emerson and he was hopeful that the plans inside and outside Germany would mature in the immediate future.

RTP/FP

*Palentine*  
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In re-conversation which Myron Taylor had with  
Mr. Wohltat in London on July 21, 1939 and during  
which Mr. Taylor mentioned the persecution of the Jews  
in Germany etc.

See: Myron Taylor-Gen corres-Drawer 2-1939--(July 28, 1939)

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Personal*

*PSF  
Palestine*

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
ASSISTANT SECRETARY

October 23, 1939

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT.

Myron Taylor is coming in to see you.

After your speech to the Inter-Governmental Committee on Refugees, the French and the British bucked all along the line. They took Myron Taylor into camp completely. Their view was that if they won the war there would be no refugee problem.

In committee we stood squarely on the theme of your speech, namely, that we ought to go on studying, surveying and doing the engineering for resettlement of refugees. We think there will be refugees, no matter how the war comes out. We are somewhat embarrassed by the fact that Taylor committed himself to the British and French thesis before the meeting.

If the British and French want to kill the idea, they ought to ~~do so~~ and take the responsibility, without hooking you in on it.

*aa*  
A.A.B., Jr.

ROBERT F. WAGNER  
NEW YORK

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

January 15, 1945

The President  
The White House  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. President:

I am grateful for the opportunity I had last Wednesday to discuss with you briefly the Palestine question. It was good to hear you express again your determination to do everything in your power to help bring about the early realization of the Zionist objectives set forth in your historic message of October 15th, which I was privileged to read to the last convention of the Zionist Organization of America. That the overwhelming majority of the American people -- Jews and Christians alike -- give their support to these aims admits of no doubt.

Your forthcoming discussions abroad may be of fateful significance for the Palestine issue and the future of the Jews as a people. I am writing these few paragraphs in the hope that you may find them of use in your consideration of this historic and far-reaching problem.

1. The Jews of Europe cannot remain where they are without inviting a perpetuation of the problem so fearfully dramatized by the Nazi massacres. There must be a place to which any Jew who so wishes shall be entitled to go as of right. You yourself were responsible for two Conferences, at Evian and Bermuda, which scoured the world for places of refuge, and produced nothing. Only Palestine, to which the Jews have clung through the centuries with an almost unbelievable tenacity, is finally and irrevocably bound up with the fate of the Jewish people.

2. The vision and statesmanship which at the end of the last war recognized the historic right of the Jewish people to Palestine and envisaged the establishment of Palestine as a Jewish Commonwealth, was not implemented in practice in a manner designed to achieve that result. The original conception was whittled down until finally all that remained was a White Paper which prohibits Jews from entering their own national home. Despite all obstacles however, the Jews have achieved in Palestine a miracle of modern colonization which has greatly benefited both the Jews and the Arabs. The idea of their restoration to nationhood in their old homeland after 2,000 years of dispersion has unleashed forces which in the end no discouragement has been able to check.

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*file confidential*

HART F. WAGNER  
NEW YORK

## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D. C.

The President . . .

page 2

January 15, 1945.

3. In the meantime for millions of Jews, Europe has become a charnel house. Civilization cannot in conscience refuse to the survivors the right to re-establish themselves amongst their own people. They, together with the Jews already in Palestine and such others as wish to go there, must be enabled to establish themselves as a majority in Palestine and set up a self-governing Jewish Commonwealth. In that Commonwealth all the inhabitants, while retaining the right to the maintenance of their own culture, language and religion, shall have equality before the law. It must be an undiminished and undivided Palestine. For apart from other consideration any partition which would exclude the Jews from access either to the water resources of the North or the undeveloped land areas of the South, would disrupt the country's economic frame and wreck the chances of large scale development.

4. The main obstacle is Arab opposition. Let it be said at once that if Arab consent is to be a prerequisite of any political settlement, there can be no hope of justice to the Jewish people. The Arab program necessarily denies to the Jews a place among the nations. It calls for a permanent Jewish minority in an Arab Palestine State which shall be one amongst many Arab states. To the Jews, Palestine would be the one place on earth in which they would be entitled to settle and to work out their own salvation by large scale settlement and the achievement of full nationhood.

5. The decisive element in the Palestine situation is that of time. The Arabs today accept as an accomplished fact the 550,000 Jews now in Palestine as against the 80,000 in 1920, even though they resisted, on occasion with violence, the increase to the present numbers. If the proposal for the establishment of a Jewish State were carried through with determination and speed, the Arabs would in the end likewise accept the accomplished fact of the existence of such a state. But it is vital to this end that the Jewish population in Palestine be increased by mass immigration from abroad within the briefest possible time. A long transition period would be disastrous.

6. This transfer must be initiated and as far as possible carried through in the coming months while the power and prestige of the United Nations are at their height and when the situation still permits of the execution of major changes which later may prove far more difficult. Nor can the broken Jews of Europe wait for some indefinite future for their salvation? Their very survival is dependent on their speedy resettlement in Palestine. At the same

J. F. WAGNER  
NEW YORK

**United States Senate**  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

The President ...

page 3

January 15, 1945

time adequate funds and technical facilities must be provided for this purpose by our own and other governments, just as such aid will in appropriate cases be extended to other peoples.

7. The Arab countries of the Middle East are for the most part sparsely populated and greatly underdeveloped. Their governments are unstable and the masses of their population live in backwardness and poverty. Within the framework of a general settlement at the end of this war it would be possible for the United States, working in conjunction with Great Britain, to make provision on broad and generous lines for the political and economic future of the Arab countries. The Jews in Palestine can serve as a creative and civilizing influence for the whole of that region. Any solution however can be premised only on a strong firmly rooted Jewish national entity in Palestine.

You once said in speaking of the post war world that we are now getting a second bite at the cherry. That bite must put an end once and for all to the homelessness of the Jewish people. To that end you and I and the great mass of our fellow Americans are pledged.

I'm just one of 130 million that are praying that your health will remain fine as it is now and that you will be very successful in your many arduous undertakings.

Very sincerely yours,

*Bob*