

President's Secretary's File

Departmental File

State: Steffius, Edward R. Dec 1944

Box 75

S. C. Form No. 7
(Revised Aug. 1942)

Signal Corps, United States Army

Stets

Received at

[REDACTED]

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. letter, 1-11-78

By *[Signature]* Date MAR 6 1972

MR-OUT-583

DECEMBER 2, 1944

FOR THE PRESIDENT FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE.

YOU WILL RECALL OUR CONVERSATION SEVERAL WEEKS AGO RELATIVE TO THE PALESTINE RESOLUTION. YOU WILL REMEMBER WISE HAD ASKED ME WHETHER YOU THOUGHT HE SHOULD PRESS AT THIS TIME AND YOU TOLD ME YOU FELT I SHOULD QUIETLY PASS THE WORD TO WISE AND CONNALLY AND BLOOM, IF NECESSARY, THAT YOU FELT IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE TO STIR THIS UP AND THAT YOU SHOULD BE GIVEN A CHANCE TO WORK MATTERS OUT ON A CERTAIN TRIP TO BE TAKEN IN THE FUTURE. CONNALLY ADVISES ME NOW THAT CERTAIN MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE HAVE GOTTEN OUT OF HAND AND ARE PRESSING TO HAVE THE RESOLUTION REPORTED OUT, WAGNER BEING VERY ACTIVE. CONNALLY SAYS THE MATTER IS TOO HOT FOR HIM TO HANDLE AND REQUESTS THAT I COME UP WEDNESDAY TO TESTIFY ON THE WHOLE JEWISH-ARAB-PALESTINE QUESTION.

WOULD IT NOT BE WISE FOR ME TO SAY TO CONNALLY THAT I HAVE CONSULTED YOU AND THAT YOU STILL FEEL STRONGLY IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE TO STIR THE MATTER UP NOW AND THAT IT SHOULD BE LEFT IN

[REDACTED]

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IN YOUR HANDS UNTIL YOU WERE GIVEN A CHANCE TO WORK THINGS OUT AND THAT IT WOULD BE YOUR FEELINGS THAT IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE TO HAVE ME OR ANYBODY ELSE TESTIFY EXHAUSTIVELY AT THIS TIME.

NO SIG.

RECEIVED



DEC 2 1944 PM

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

TELEGRAPHIC

December 3, 1944

MEMORANDUM FOR

HON. E. R. STETTINIUS, JR.

I have written Wagner and sent you a copy telling him I want him to do nothing at this time which would stir up the possibility of riots or war in the Near East.

F.D.R.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

December 3, 1944.

MEMORANDUM FOR SENATOR WAGNER:

Dear Bob:

As you know, I am away for a few more days. Here is the only trouble about additional action by either House in regard to Palestine at this time. There are about half a million Jews there. Perhaps another million want to go. They are of all shades -- good, bad and indifferent.

On the other side of the picture there are approximately seventy million Mohammadans who want to cut their throats the day they land. The one thing I want to avoid is a massacre or a situation which cannot be resolved by talking things over.

Anything said or done over here just now would add fuel to the flames and I hope that at this juncture no branch of the Government will act. Everybody knows what American hopes are. If we talk about them too much we will hurt fulfillment.

F.D.R.

Copies sent to the Secretary of State and Senator Wagner by messenger 12/4/44.

Envelope confidential

ROBERT F. WAGNER
NEW YORK

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D. C.

December 2, 1944

The Honorable Franklin D. Roosevelt,
The White House,
Washington D. C.

Dear Mr. President:

The Foreign Relations Committee reluctantly and only after long discussion deferred action on the Palestine Resolution until next Wednesday. Frankly, the majority of the Committee felt that there was no reason why the Senate should be prevented from declaring itself in sympathy for the Jewish Commonwealth, which you yourself recently endorsed in your letter to me which was made public at the Zionist Convention in Atlantic City.

The Committee has asked that Secretary Stettinius appear next Wednesday and state the reason for his reported objection. I am fearful that his intervention against the resolution coming so soon after the Party Platform Declaration and your own Declaration may create a bad impression, not only among the Jewish people, but among non-Jewish people as well, and which will do the cause which you and I favor, serious hurt.

It was stated at the Committee on Foreign Relations that Secretary Stettinius is not acting on his own behalf but is taking orders from the President.

In view of the action taken on Wednesday, by the House Foreign Affairs Committee, which has favorably reported a similar House Resolution and in view of the fact also that nearly four hundred Senators and Representatives are directly quoted in a House Document as favoring this Resolution it will be most unfortunate in my opinion, if this legislation is defeated in the Senate on the basis of the alleged opposition by you.

I hope therefore, Mr. President that you will take immediate steps to advise Senator Connolly, that you have no objection to the legislation but that as a matter of fact you favor it as you already indicated in your splendid

ROBERT F. WAGNER
NEW YORK

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D. C.

communication to the Zionist Convention at Atlantic City on October 15th.

May I also suggest that you advise Mr. Stattinius, so that there will be no misunderstanding whatsoever as to your attitude.

If agreeable to you I would like to talk to you on this matter by telephone as I really feel it is very important.

With my very best wishes,

Cordially Your Friend,

Bob

P.S. I am enclosing House Report on the Palestine Resolution.

78TH CONGRESS } HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES } REPORT
2d Session } } No. 1997

THE JEWISH NATIONAL HOME IN PALESTINE

NOVEMBER 30, 1944.—Referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed

Mr. BLOOM, from the Committee on Foreign Affairs, submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany H. Res. 418]

The Committee on Foreign Affairs, to whom was referred the resolution (H. Res. 418) relative to the Jewish national home in Palestine, having considered the same, report favorably thereon with amendments and recommend that the resolution, as amended, do pass.

The amendments are as follows:

On page 1, line 2, after the word "offices" strike out the words "and take appropriate measures".

On page 2, line 4, after the word "democratic" strike out the word "Jewish".

Taking cognizance of the ruthless persecution of the Jewish people of Europe by Nazi barbarians and their satellites, and the desperate need of a haven of refuge for those able to escape from their almost unbelievably inhuman atrocities, Representatives James A. Wright, of Pennsylvania, and Ranulf Compton, of Connecticut, on January 27, 1944, introduced House Resolutions 418 and 419, which resolved that the United States use its good offices to have Palestine opened for free entry of Jews, and to provide full opportunity for colonization by Jews so that Palestine may ultimately be reconstituted as a free and democratic commonwealth.

Public hearings were held by the Committee on Foreign Affairs on these resolutions, on February 8, 9, 15, and 16, 1944. Most careful study and consideration was given to the questions involved, the testimony, and supplemental documents of the hearings numbering 641 pages.

At an executive meeting of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, on March 17, 1944, it was decided, because of military considerations only, and at the suggestion of the Secretary of War, to postpone

action on the resolution. On that date, the committee issued the following explanatory statement:

Advice and information given to us by those responsible for the conduct of the war have convinced the committee that action upon the resolutions at this time would be unwise.

(Letter from the Secretary of War.)

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington, D. C., March 17, 1944.

HON. SOL BLOOM,
Chairman, Foreign Affairs Committee,
House of Representatives, Washington, D. C.

DEAR MR. BLOOM: Concerning our conversation with respect to House Resolutions 418 and 419, it is the considered judgment of the War Department that without reference to the merits of these resolutions, further action on them at this time would be prejudicial to the successful prosecution of the war.

Faithfully yours,

HENRY L. STIMSON,
Secretary of War.

Since that time, the military situation in the Mediterranean area has so improved that the military objections which prompted the Secretary of War to write his letter of March 17, 1944, to Chairman Bloom, no longer prevail. Accordingly, Secretary of War Stimson, on October 10, 1944, wrote the following letter to Senator Robert A. Taft, the senior Senator from Ohio, who has sponsored a similar resolution in the Senate:

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington, October 10, 1944.

HON. ROBERT A. TAFT,
United States Senate, Washington, D. C.

MY DEAR SENATOR: I refer to your letter of September 12, 1944, regarding Senate Resolution 247, introduced by Senator Wagner and yourself on the subject of opening the doors of Palestine to the free entry of Jews into that country.

At the time your resolution was being considered by the Foreign Relations Committee the endorsement of such a proposal by the Congress had grave implications which would seriously have interfered with the progress of the war. In response to your inquiry I have reviewed the considerations which applied at that time. I find that there is still strong feeling on the part of many officers in my Department that the passage of such a resolution would interfere with our military effort. However, I do feel that the military considerations which led to my previous action in opposing the passage of this resolution are not as strong a factor now as they were then.

In my judgment, political considerations now outweigh the military, and the issue should be determined upon the political rather than the military basis.

Sincerely,

HENRY L. STIMSON,
Secretary of War.

Although the military situation has greatly improved since the introduction of the Palestine resolutions last January 1944, the need for a Jewish homeland to rehabilitate and to restore to freedom and dignity those who have escaped Nazi tyranny and brutality has become even greater. These resolutions were widely regarded as a logical reaffirmation of the historic policy of the Congress, which, on June 30, 1922, unanimously resolved that the "United States of America favors the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people."

During the past few months, the Republican and Democratic National Conventions at Chicago unanimously approved strong platform declarations in behalf of the Jewish homeland, and the candidates of the two parties, President Roosevelt and Governor Dewey,

JEWISH NATIONAL HOME IN PALESTINE

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each issued strongly worded statements standing foursquare upon their respective platform declarations.

After quoting the Democratic platform, President Roosevelt wrote:

Efforts will be made to find appropriate ways and means of effectuating this policy as soon as practicable. I know how long and ardently the Jewish people have worked and prayed for the establishment of Palestine as a free and democratic Jewish commonwealth. I am convinced that the American people give their support to this aim and if reelected I shall help to bring about its realization.

During last summer, sympathetic Senators and Representatives, representing more than three-fourths of the membership of both branches of the Congress, went on record in favor of this legislation; 77 Senators and 318 Representatives, from 48 States, gave their approval to the Jewish homeland. Your committee has published their views in a supplement to the hearings.

For the information of the Congress, there follows herewith the letter of President Franklin D. Roosevelt to Senator Robert F. Wagner, of New York, conveying his message to the forty-seventh annual convention of the Zionist Organization of America, on October 15, 1944:

DEAR BOB: Knowing that you are to attend the forty-seventh annual convention of the Zionist Organization of America, I ask you to convey to the delegates assembled my cordial greetings.

Please express my satisfaction that, in accord with the traditional American policy and in keeping with the spirit of the "four freedoms," the Democratic Party at its July convention this year included the following plank in its platform:

"We favor the opening of Palestine to unrestricted Jewish immigration and colonization, and such a policy as to result in the establishment there of a free and democratic Jewish commonwealth."

Efforts will be made to find appropriate ways and means of effectuating this policy as soon as practicable. I know how long and ardently the Jewish people have worked and prayed for the establishment of Palestine as a free and democratic Jewish commonwealth. I am convinced that the American people give their support to this aim and if reelected I shall help to bring about its realization.

Governor Thomas E. Dewey, of New York, the Republican candidate for President, also strongly endorsed the proposal in the following statement on October 12, 1944:

I heartily endorse the Palestine plank in the Republican Party platform. Again I repeat what I previously stated to the great leader of the American Zionist movement and distinguished American, Dr. Abba Hillel Silver, that I am for the reconstitution of Palestine as a free and democratic Jewish commonwealth in accordance with the Balfour Declaration of 1917 and the resolution of the Republican Congress in 1922. I have also stated to Dr. Silver that in order to give refuge to millions of distressed Jews driven from their homes by tyranny I favor the opening of Palestine to their unlimited immigration and land ownership. The American people have time and again declared themselves in favor of these principles. The Republican Party has at all times been the traditional friend of the movement.

As President I would use my best offices to have our Government working together with Great Britain to achieve this great objective for a people that have suffered so much and deserve so much at the hands of mankind.

The free and democratic commonwealth in Palestine was heartily endorsed at the Republican and Democratic National Conventions

JEWISH NATIONAL HOME IN PALESTINE

last summer. The statement of the Republican platform unani-
mously adopted at Chicago on June 27, 1944, is as follows:

In order to give refuge to millions of distressed Jewish men, women, and children driven from their homes by tyranny, we call for the opening of Palestine to their unrestricted immigration and land ownership, so that in accordance with the full intent and purpose of the Balfour Declaration of 1917 and the resolution of a Republican Congress in 1922, Palestine may be constituted as a free and democratic commonwealth. We condemn the failure of the President to insist that the mandatory of Palestine carry out the provision of the Balfour Declaration and of the mandate while he pretends to support them.

The plank in the platform of the Democratic National Convention adopted at Chicago on July 24, follows:

We favor the opening of Palestine to unrestricted Jewish immigration and colonization, and such a policy as to result in the establishment there of a free and democratic Jewish commonwealth.

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