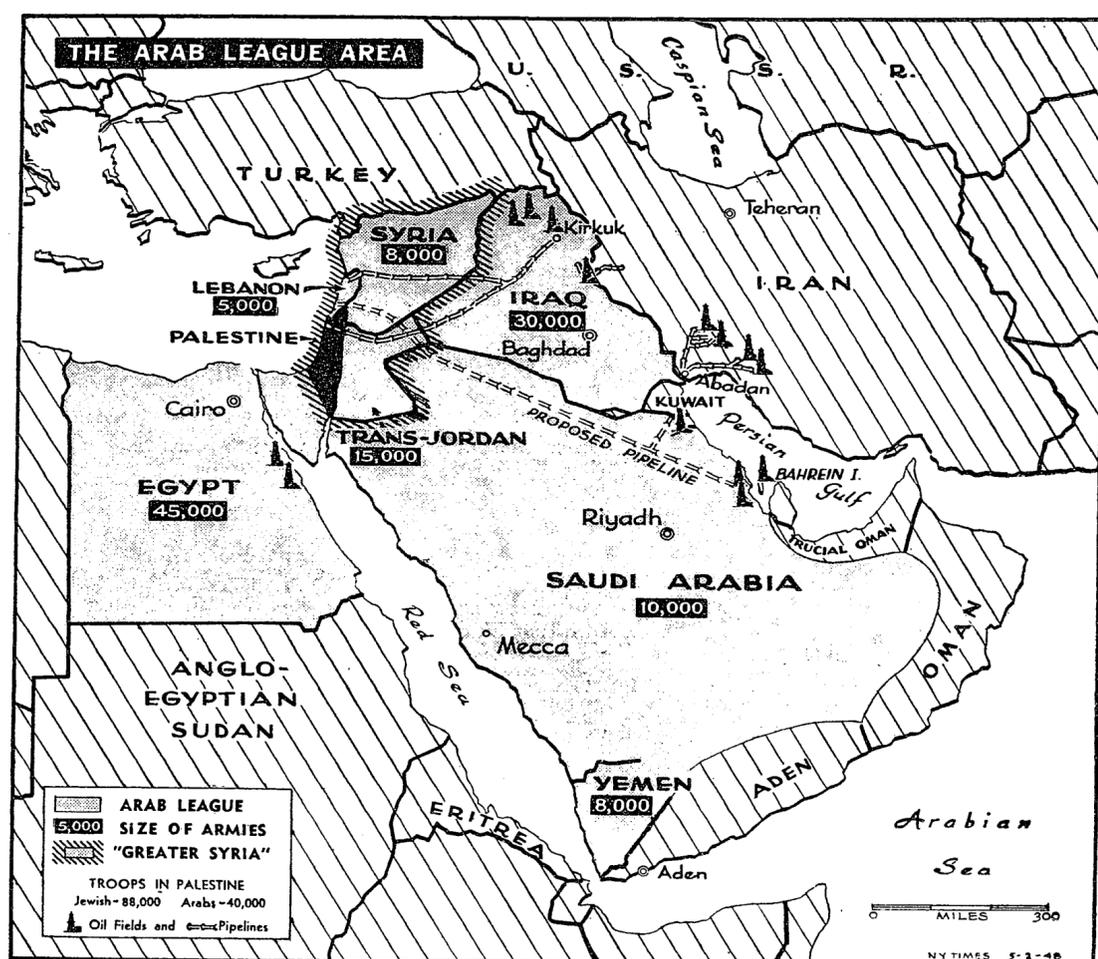
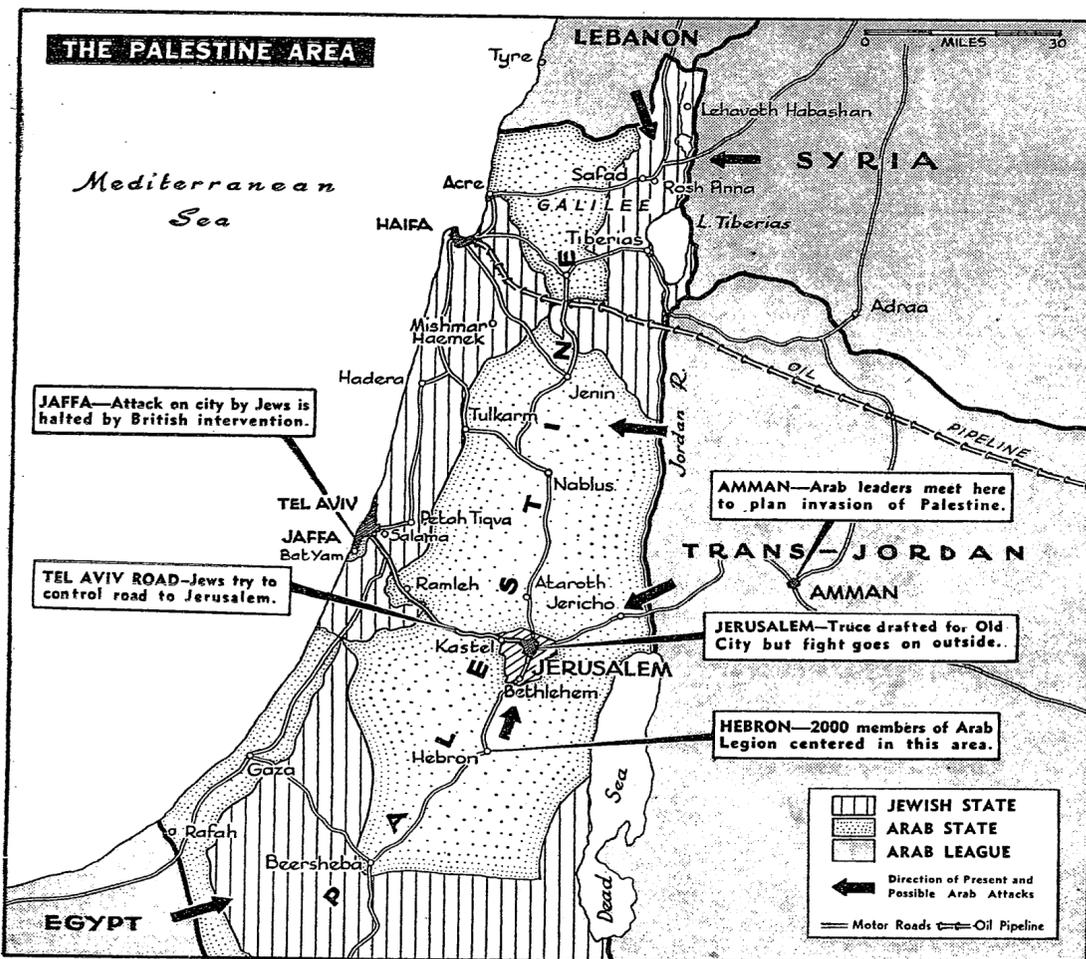


PALESTINE, KEY TO THE MIDDLE EAST, WHERE FULL-SCALE WAR IS THREATENING



War in Palestine

As Mandate End Nears

There are just two weeks to go till the fateful day of May. On the fifteenth of this month Great Britain will surrender her League of Nations mandate over Palestine. She has held that mandate for a quarter of a century—twenty-five years that have seen terrible violence and struggle in the Holy Land. The country is split between warring Jews and Arabs. It is a time of crisis not only for Palestine but for the organization that is designed to keep the world peace—the United Nations.

As the critical date approaches, the state of affairs, for the Jews, the Arabs and the U. N., is this: The Jews have carved out their state in Palestine. They have taken control of a region roughly corresponding to the area allotted to them under the U. N. General Assembly's partition plan of last Nov. 29. They have achieved their objective, at least temporarily, by defeating the Arabs in bitter battles.

The Arabs in Palestine have been promised "deliverance" by the Arab countries of the Middle East. On the Palestinian borders regular armies of the Arab countries have been massing for a threatened full-scale invasion of the Holy Land—on or before May 15. Yesterday there were reports that the invasion had begun. Dispatches said that advance armored units of the Arab armies were driving into northern Palestine.

The United Nations General Assembly—called into special session to reconsider the partition plan at the behest of the United States—has got nowhere in the two weeks it has been meeting. Great power rivalries have seemingly paralyzed the U. N. The delegates have been able to do little more than watch, helplessly, the onrush of events in the Middle East.

The Fighting

In Palestine last week the stutter of Sten guns, the crack of rifle fire, the explosion of grenades were the common sounds in many places. There was little normal life anywhere. Everyone was affected by the war; those who did not actually take part in the fighting lived in a state of acute nervous tension. Business—except the selling of food—had generally collapsed. British control, as troops were withdrawn, slipped faster and faster. The courts had folded up. Only in "security zones"—still protected by the British Army—was the mandate power completely in control.

The over-all military situation at the moment seems to be this: the Haganah, the main Jewish defense force (85,000 troops, of which 25,000 to 30,000 are front-line fighters) consolidated the gains it had already made and pressed the offensive. Haganah forces "dug in" around the main Palestinian port of Haifa—which the Jews had captured from the Arabs ten days ago.

Last week the fighting focused on two cities outside the limits of the Jewish state under the U. N. parti-

tion plan. One, located in the central section of the country, was Jerusalem (100,000 Jews, 105,000 Arabs), a city sacred to three faiths, that was supposed to become an international enclave under partition. The other, located on the Mediterranean coast, was Jaffa, Palestine's biggest Arab city (normal population about 65,000), bordering the all-Jewish city of Tel Aviv.

In the Jerusalem and Jaffa operations the Jews seemingly ran the risk of weakening the "legal" position that they have maintained before the U. N.; that they were the supporters of partition. But the Jews said that they were motivated by compelling military reasons: since no U. N. force was in Palestine to secure the Jewish state they felt they had to crack Arab strongholds and get into the best military position possible.

Battle of Jaffa

This is what happened in Jaffa: On Sunday the Jewish extremist organization, Irgun Zvai Leumi (3,000 first-line troops), attacked the city. Irgun commanders said that Arabs in Jaffa had "bombarded Tel Aviv for many months." From Tel Aviv heavily armed Irgun forces in armored cars and trucks struck deeply into the Arab city; the Arab defenders fell back. The British in Jaffa (about 3,000 troops are stationed there) then intervened; their armored and artillery units fired into the Irgun ranks.

At first the Haganah disapproved of the Irgun offensive. Then on Wednesday Haganah forces attacked Arab villages around Jaffa—an operation that had the effect of relieving pressure on the Irgun inside Jaffa. On Thursday the British mandate Government warned of "unlimited military intervention" unless the fighting in Jaffa was stopped. On Friday truce talks in Jaffa were begun. Yesterday the British announced that seventy Irgunists were killed in fighting after Arabs had broken a truce arrangement.

Out of all the developments on Palestine last week one great fact and two great questions emerged.

The fact was this: The Jews had won important initial victories; in doing so they had, in effect, "enforced" partition. The questions were these: What part will the Arab League

armies play in the Palestine struggle?

What part will the United Nations play?

The Arab Threat

The Arab League, formed in Cairo in March, 1945, is an amorphous union of seven states. They are Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Iraq, Trans-Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Yemen. These states occupy a strategic area, about half the size of the United States, in a part of the world where three continents meet. The countries are backward and weak; the majority of their population (total, 33,000,000) lives in poverty; disease is widespread.

There are factors tending to draw the seven countries together: religion, a rising nationalism and, especially among the rulers, a hatred of Zionism. There are factors tending to divide the League: the suspicions and rivalries of the rulers.

Enter Abdullah

In all the League there is one man who may hold the key to the Palestine situation. He is Abdullah Ibn El-Husseini, 66, King of the mountainous little country of Trans-Jordan (area 34,000 sq. mi., pop. about 335,000). Abdullah's Kingdom was originally part of the Palestine mandate. In the 1920's Great Britain set up Trans-Jordan as a separate Arab country. Two years ago the British recognized Trans-Jordan as a sovereign, independent kingdom.

Close ties remain between London's Foreign Office and King Abdullah. The British pay the bills (\$8,000,000 yearly) for Abdullah's Arab Legion, by far the strongest Arab army in the Middle East. The Legion has 15,000 trained, disciplined fighters. They have tanks, mobile artillery and other modern mechanized equipment. Their top ranking officers are British; the Legion commander is a Briton, John Bagot Glubb Pasha. About 2,000 of the Legion's soldiers are in Palestine as part of the British police force; the rest are in Trans-Jordan.

No love is lost between Abdullah and the other Arab rulers. Abdullah has long had a great ambition. He wants to rule what he calls a "Greater Syria": a kingdom that would include Trans-Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and an Arab Palestine. A year ago he declared that if the British evacuated any part of Palestine he would occupy it with his Legion.

Middle East Complex

For months there has been intense speculation, spurred by reports of Middle East intrigues, about Abdullah's intentions. The speculation has been filled with "ifs"—"ifs" of direct concern to the Arabs, the Jews and the British.

Many Arab leaders recognize the fact that the Arab Legion is the only real Arab striking force. They appear willing to back an invasion of Palestine by Abdullah in an attempt to break the Jews' armed power and prevent the establishment of a Jewish state. But they want Abdullah's invasion to be only temporary; they want him to get out once the Arabs have the upper hand in Palestine.

Many Jews have given signs that they might be willing to play ball with Abdullah—to recognize him as ruler of the Arab parts of Palestine. They feel that he would stabilize the

situation. These Jews, of course, have one great condition in any deal with Abdullah—that the King's Legion must not cross the borders of the Jewish state.

The British have pledged themselves to order the Arab Legion units out of Palestine before they give up their mandate over the Holy Land on May 15. They have not said, however, what they will do about the Arab Legion after they surrender the mandate. Some political circles think that the British will use their influence to restrain Abdullah from invading Palestine. Critics of the British, however, ascribe Machiavellian intentions to the London Foreign Office. They think that Britain's Government would be glad to have Abdullah in control of Palestine, or at least strategic portions of the country. Their theory is that the British would thus keep de facto control of the Holy Land.

Last week all circles connected with the Palestine crisis agreed that Abdullah was the man to watch.

Over the last week-end representatives of Arab League States met with King Abdullah behind guarded doors at Zafaran Palace on one of the hills of Amman, Trans-Jordan's capital. There were conflicting versions of what happened at the conference.

Plan for Invasion

Some dispatches had it that the Arab countries had decided on full scale invasion of Palestine—an attempt to conquer the whole country. Under the reported plan King Abdullah would drive into Palestine from the north and the east with the Arab Legion and troops supplied by Iraq, Syria and Lebanon; at the same time Egyptian troops would enter the Holy Land from the desert in the south.

These reports seemed to mean that the Arab rulers, despite their rivalries, had decided to gamble on Abdullah.

On Wednesday U. N. representatives in Jerusalem entered the picture, attempted to dissuade Abdullah. A Security Council truce commission—composed of the consuls in Jerusalem of Belgium, France and the United States—sent a telegram to Amman. The message warned against intervention in Palestine, said: "Any warlike decision or action on the part of Trans-Jordan will undoubtedly be the cause of the gravest censure by the Security Council and the entire United Nations as a possible threat to the peace."

The reply of the King of Trans-Jordan was that the Jews must stop their attacks on Arabs and their attempts to establish a Jewish state. In Amman the Secretary General of the Arab League, Abdul Rahman Azzam Pasha, said: "We have a unified command. The battles will take maybe six months and maybe a year but the Jews cannot hold out against the Arab flood."

The U. N. Dilemma

By yesterday the special session of the General Assembly to "consider further" the question of Palestine, had been in session for fourteen days. In that period the Assembly itself met three times in plenary session; the Assembly's Political and Security

Committee held fourteen meetings, the Trusteeship Committee held five meetings and the Security Council devoted three sessions to the Palestine question. Despite all these activities the United Nations' record on Palestine in the fourteen days stands at zero.

'Deteriorating Situation'

All last week the delegates were bogged in procedural details. Their discussion turned on three aspects of the situation ("a rapidly deteriorating situation" at least half a dozen speakers called it). The aspects were: trusteeship as a substitute for partition; a truce for all Palestine; a truce to safeguard the Holy Places in Jerusalem. These were the developments:

**Trusteeship.** Before the special Assembly session was called, the United States suggested a "temporary trusteeship" until Arabs and Jews "agreed" on a solution. The suggestion was never very popular and the United States has yet to make a formal proposal. Thus the Assembly's Political and Security Committee, which is supposed to come up with a formal plan, has not even a formal document before it.

The other U. N. delegates are asking the Americans two big questions about the trusteeship suggestion. One is: Who will enforce it? The other is: What about Jewish immigration? The U. S. has not supplied answers.

Last week the U. S. suggested that the Political Committee put aside the two questions and ask the General Assembly's Trusteeship Committee to draw up a plan. Sir Carl Berendsen, of New Zealand, chairman of the Trusteeship Committee, balked. He said the proposal was worse than "putting the cart before the horse." It would, he said, put the Trusteeship Committee "into the cart before you know there is a horse—or even a donkey."

Talk of Truce

**Truce for Palestine:** A week ago yesterday, the Security Council "ordered" the Jews and Arabs to "cease all activities of \* \* \* a military nature." A Truce Commission—made up of the consuls in Palestine of the U. S., Belgium and France—was appointed to "supervise" the truce. Last week the Truce Commission filed its first report. Although the contents were not disclosed, it was no secret that the Commission had reported a complete failure. On Friday the Truce Commission sent another message. It said: fighting "on a larger and more important scale" can be expected soon.

**Truce for Jerusalem:** The Old City of Jerusalem was the capital of ancient Palestine. It is a walled section of one square mile, which holds about one-seventh of Jerusalem's population. Within the walls are religious places sacred to Jews, Arabs and Christians. The population of the Old City is 27,500, of whom 2,500 are Jews.

Because of the Old City's world significance the Trusteeship Council of the U. N. last week sought to assure its immunity in the mounting strife. Jewish and Arab leaders were consulted. On Wednesday a truce was tentatively agreed to; a plan was put

forward to set up a U. N. commission to see that the truce was carried out. Then, on Friday, the truce arrangement talks became bogged in detail. Over the week-end the Council commission is considering a new American proposal for an "emergency trusteeship" for the Holy City.

The discussions of all three of these problems had an air of unreality about them—"shadow-boxing," one delegate called it. The delegates looked to the U. S.—which originally had backed partition and last March had come out for some sort of trusteeship—to show the lead. Officially the U. S. delegation stuck to its position that "temporary trusteeship" was still the solution.

The Hilldring Appointment

But last week there was speculation that the U. S. might be switching its position again. The speculation was based on this. On Wednesday Secretary of State George C. Marshall announced the appointment of Maj. Gen. John H. Hilldring as assistant to the Secretary of State for Palestinian Affairs. General Hilldring was Assistant Secretary of State in charge of Occupied Areas from March, 1946, until August, 1947.

General Hilldring has long been a supporter of Zionism. Last fall he was one of the American officials who had swung U. S. support to partition. Only last Tuesday, in a speech in San Francisco, he said, "I am convinced any attempt to bring about peace in the Holy Land at the cost of abandonment of partition will increase rather than lessen disorder and bloodshed, and is doomed to failure in advance."

There seemed no doubt that the orders for General Hilldring's appointment had come from the White House. There was reason for believing that Democratic politicians—who have been dismayed by the loss of voting strength that the American shift on partition threatened—had a voice in the decision.

Despite the Hilldring appointment there was little expectation that the U. S. would swing around again to support of partition. Rather, it was felt, the U. S. might be willing to let the trusteeship suggestion die in committee and stall for time before advancing another proposal.

Assembly Prospect

Among many delegates at Lake Success at the week-end this was the prospect seen for the special session of the General Assembly:

There may be no new decision—either to abandon or reaffirm partition. The trusteeship proposal will be laid over until the regular Assembly session in Paris next September.

Arabs and Jews will be pretty much left to themselves to govern the parts of Palestine they control until the regular session meets. Perhaps a resolution will be passed urging both sides not to try to make partition formal.

There may be some sort of limited trusteeship for the Old City of Jerusalem, provided Jews and Arabs agree.

Many delegates have little stomach for this "do nothing" program. Yet they see it as the only possible course. Moreover, in some circles—particularly in the U. S. delegation—there is a feeling that over the sum-

mer the course of events in Palestine may make both Arabs and Jews more willing to accept some sort of a U. N. solution.