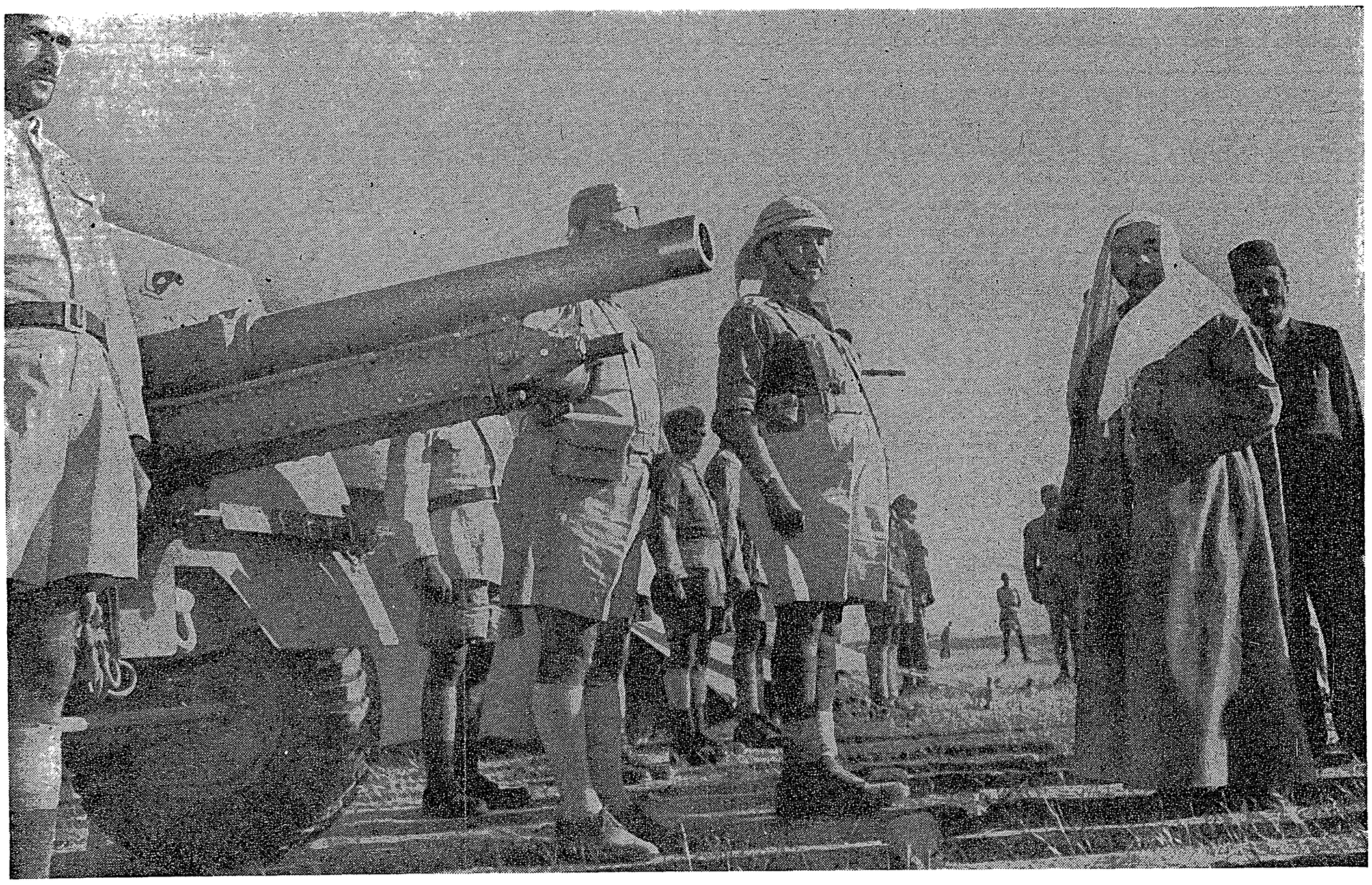
Debate -- and War
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Debate—and War

ON THE BATTLE FRONT—THE SUPREME ARAB COMMANDER REVIEWS THE ATTACKING ARMY



King Abdullah of Trans-Jordan (right, in white headdress) with soldiers of his army, the key force in the Arab effort to defeat Israel. International

Action on Palestine

The Arab League invasion of Palestine fifteen days ago—an invasion aimed at the new Republic of Israel—started political shock waves that grew in ever-widening circles. Last week, far away from the Middle East, the shocks were felt in world chancelleries and at the United Nations.

In Washington and London conflicting policies on Palestine brought about a serious split between the United States and Britain.

In the United Nations the Security Council was caught up in the conconflict. Late yesterday the Council for the second successive Saturday ordered a cease-fire in the Holy Land—a cease-fire to last four weeks.

In the Palestine war the fighting centered outside the borders of Israel. This fighting, for the moment at least, seemed to be going in favor of the Arabs; they took the ancient walled section in the center of Jerusalem. But a decisive battle in Palestine has yet to be fought.

The Debate

The Security Council wrangle over Palestine brought a strange alignment. Russia and the U. S., which have clashed on virtually every international issue since the war's end, stood shoulder to shoulder for strong action to halt the Holy Land war. Their common adversary was Britain.

Last week it became increasingly clear that Britain held a key to a solution for Palestine. Britain has close ties with the states of the Arab League—particularly with Trans-Jordan, Iraq and Egypt. She has treaties with all three countries under which Britain supplies the arms and equipment for troops—treaties which are still being honored. British officers trained the armies of Trans-Jordan and Iraq. Britons hold the highest military ranks in Trans-Jordan's Arab Legion, the strongest force now fighting the Israeli Army. Besides, Britain supports the Legion by an $8,000,000 yearly subsidy. There are other ties with Trans-Jordan; her King, Abdullah, was set on his throne by Great Britain and given a 34,000-square-mile chunk of the former Palestine Mandate as his kingdom.

When the fighting in Palestine was brought before the Security Council two weeks ago it was clear that the way Britain used this Middle East influence would have vital effects on the Council's action.

'Breach of the Peace'

A week ago last Monday, Warren R. Austin, American representative at the U. N., proposed that the Security Council take action under Chapter VII of the Charter. In effect, he asked that the U. N. brand the Arab attacks in Palestine as aggression. He said: "There is a threat to the peace and a breach of the peace."

The Austin resolution called for a cease-fire in Palestine; the implication was that if the cease-fire order were not obeyed the next step would be for the Council to take stronger action under Chapter VII to stop the war—economic sanctions or, possibly, as a final resort, armed force. Russia supported the American resolution.

Sir Alexander Cadogan, the British delegate, said he had "grave doubts" about the American proposal. He said he was not convinced that there was a "threat to international peace." He rejected the American implication that the Arabs were the aggressors; that there was "little legally to choose from between the claims of Jews and Arabs in Palestine." However, he told the Council, if the U. N. decided to take action the United Kingdom would support that action.

Britons made no bones about their displeasure over what they considered efforts to put them on the spot on the whole issue. Their feeling was this: Britain, by her support of Zionism over the years, had made a great contribution to the Zionist cause. Now, because she did not recognize as legal the claims of Israel, she was being berated not only by the new state, but by old friends in the United States and U. N.

There was criticism of the British point of view—particularly among American spokesmen. It was said that Britain's promise to abide by a U. N. decision was vitiated by Britain's reluctance to assist the U. N. in reaching a decision.

Cease-Fire Order

Nevertheless, Britain won support. The American resolution was watered down. The phrase "breach of the peace" was deleted. One week ago yesterday the Security Council adopted a simple "cease-fire" order to both sides in the Palestine struggle. Israeli and Arab forces were given until last Monday to comply. The next day Israel agreed to abide by the order if the Arabs did likewise. The Arabs asked for and got an extension until Wednesday.

Over last week-end the American and British Governments made moves to come together on the Palestine question. The American Ambassador, Lewis W. Douglas, conferred with British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin. There were similar conferences in Washington.

On Wednesday the Security Council met to receive the Arabs' answer. The answer had been drafted by representatives of the seven Arab League States in Amman, capital of Trans-Jordan. The answer was no. The Arabs said they would agree to a truce only on one big condition—that Israel renounce its statehood. They left one small loophole for further negotiation.

Supporters of strong action in Palestine took the view that the Arabs had flaunted the U. N. Mr. Austin said, "From King Abdullah we find a communication that is characterized by a sort of contumacy of the United Nations and the Security Council."

Dr. Alfonso Lopez, of Colombia, pointedly asked Sir Alexander if Britain's Middle East treaties committed her "to help the Arab Governments even if they do not fall in line with the cease-fire order." In effect he wanted to know if Britain would cancel arms shipments and call home her officers in the Trans-Jordan Legion. Sir Alexander said he would have to consult London before answering.

Concern in London

The question was a tough one and London was clearly worried about it. There were signs that British officials and ordinary citizens were disturbed by the growing rift with the U. S. There was pressure on Mr. Bevin to be more conciliatory. The Times, London, added its powerful voice. It said the task for Britain was to persuade the Arabs "to reconcile themselves to the existence of the State of Israel."

On Thursday Sir Alexander spoke before the Security Council. His answer seemed to indicate Britain's awareness of the criticism directed against her. He said that Britain had ordered her army officers in the Arab Legion withdrawn from Palestine; that Britain would consider the next quarterly subsidy to the Legion ($2,000,000 due July 12) in the light of decisions taken by the U. N.; that Britain would participate in a general embargo of arms shipments to the Middle East if the Security Council so ordered.

But Sir Alexander's statement made no concessions toward the American demand for action against the Arabs under Chapter VII of the Charter. Instead he proposed a new "truce" plan. Under it the Security Council would:

(1) Call upon both sides to order a cessation of all acts of force for a period of four weeks, while a settlement is sought.

(2) Call upon both parties to refrain from introducing "fighting personnel or men of military age" or new armaments in Palestine, during the cease-fire.

(3) Direct that "if the resolution is rejected by either party or both, the present situation in Palestine will be reconsidered with a view to action under Chapter VII of the Charter."

Andrei A. Gromyko, the Russian delegate, immediately denounced the resolution. He filed a substitute which was in substance the original American resolution for immediate action under Chapter VII against the Arab States.

Arab representatives at Lake Success voiced approval of the British resolution. Under it their forces would stay in Palestine. Since it was clear that the Israeli Government would reject it, the possibility was raised that Israel might be branded the aggressor.

Israel representatives backed the Russian proposal, denounced the British. From their view, the British plan would cut off immigration, freeze their manpower and war matériel for the four-week period.

On Friday Mr. Austin told the Council the United States supported the Russian resolution. He said that the Arab attempt to "blot out" Israel was "a matter of so great importance that we cannot sit here and say: 'Oh, we wash our hands of it. We shall not do anything about it that will be effective; we shall just keep talking about negotiating a cease-fire—after we have tried five times and failed.'"

Late Friday the French delegate, Alexandre Parodi, introduced a third resolution. It was a narrow proposal confined only to Jerusalem. He proposed that the Council call on the Arabs and Israel to cease hostilities in the Holy City within twenty-four hours under pain of sanctions.

Late yesterday the Council took up the Russian proposal. Seven votes are necessary for approval. Only five "ayes" were cast. There were six abstentions. Then the Council turned to the British proposal.

The ban on armaments was broadened into a general arms embargo. The ban on introduction of military personnel" was amended. Then the Council came to the crucial final paragraph calling for action under Charter VII. It was approved.

It remained to be seen whether the rivals in the Holy Land would abide by the Council decision.

The War

At the start of the Arab invasion of Palestine the prediction was that Trans-Jordan's Legion would be the "cutting edge of the Arab scimitar." This army of King Abdullah—a man who is "not responsible to anyone," according to the Trans-Jordanian Constitution—is only about 10,000 strong (a single United States infantry division numbers 14,000). Yet, because of its training and British equipment, the Legion is considered the most effective Arab force. It has been led since 1939 by an experienced British campaigner, Brig. John Bagot Glubb Pasha (the "Pasha" is an honorary title), 51.

The prediction that the Legion would carry the main burden of the Arab invasion has been upheld. Except for the Egyptians, who have occupied Arab sections of the sparsely settled Negeb in the south of Palestine—and have driven north toward Jerusalem—the other Arab armies have done little. The Legion's troops are scattered over much of Arab Palestine. They have been on the move at various places. But so far the battles have provided no conclusive test of the strength of the Legion vis-a-vis Haganah—the Israeli army of more than 40,000 trained regulars.

Two Battles

Last week the main fighting—miles outside Israel's borders—took the form of battles in *Jerusalem* and along the Israeli *lifeline* from Tel Aviv to the Holy City.

Jerusalem. The city has been split roughly in half between Israeli armed forces and the Arab Legion. Israeli troops, along with much of the city's Jewish population of about 100,000, hold the western sections of Jerusalem. The Arab Legion controls the east, southeast and northeast districts. The Walled City—2,500 Jews were in its normal population of 27,500—has been a blockaded island in the Arab-held area.

Thirteen days ago the Arab Legion started a full-scale assault against the Jews and Israeli troops in the Walled City. The Legion poured shells into the Jewish quarter behind the walls, sent in troops for hand-to-hand combat. The going was tough. Jews crept through underground passages—some dating from Roman days and as deep as seventy feet—to strike back at the Arabs. Slowly the Jews felt the pinch of blockade: they starved for water, food—and ammunition.

On last Friday the defenders of the Walled City's Jewish quarter—a quarter reduced to rubble—surrendered to the Arabs. Combatants were made prisoners of war. The women and children were turned over to the Red Cross for care. In the Old City King Abdullah paid a surprise visit to his Legionnaires. Arabs shouted: "Long live Abdullah! You are king of Jerusalem!"

The Lifeline. The fate of all Jerusalem may be decided not so much by fighting inside the city as by fighting along the "lifeline" road to Tel Aviv. The Arab Legion's strategy seems to be aimed at isolating Jerusalem—and starving out the Jews there—by cutting that lifeline. Almost the entire length of the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv highway runs through Arab territory. Last week a battle raged for control of the strategic road. The battlefields were at the half-way point on the highway about fifteen miles west of Jerusalem. They were Latrun, a former British internment camp for Jews, and the ravine of Bab el Wad.

'The Broom'

Besides the two main battles last week there were lesser military operations. Israel—its territory still intact—improved its military position somewhat. In the north Israeli troops struck deep behind Arab lines to destroy bases and communications centers. Almost all of northern Galilee was swept clear of Arabs. The Israeli forces called this operation "The Broom."

What the grand strategy of the Palestine campaign may turn out to be is highly uncertain. Much depends on what Abdullah does—or tries. There are some military analysts who think he may first consolidate his hold on the predominantly Arab sections of Palestine. Then, these analysts think, he may try to flank the main centers of Israeli strength and drive across the Negeb to Gaza on the sea. If accomplished, this move would make one of Abdullah's dreams come true: Trans-Jordan would have an outlet on the Mediterranean.

ON THE U.N. FRONT—THE ARAB REPRESENTATIVES SPEAK



Associated Press
Naji el-Asil of Iraq; Jamal el-Husseini, member of Arab Higher Committee, and Mahmoud Bey Fawzi of Egypt.

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