

7 Crisis at the creation

The establishment of the first US Embassy in Israel, 1947–49¹

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Prior to President Donald J. Trump's decision to relocate it to Jerusalem, the US Embassy in Israel was, for decades, located in an austere square building at 71 HaYarkon Street in Tel Aviv. On the very same street, seven decades ago, the frontal façade of the Gat Rimon Hotel presented a bizarre sight. During a time in which the United States and the Soviet Union were growing increasingly hostile as their Cold War rivalry intensified, the flags of the two countries fluttered peacefully alongside one another, overlooking the Mediterranean from the Israeli seafront. 'Their simultaneous appearance gives rise to comment by passers-by who view them with curiosity', noted the counsellor of the US Mission to Israel, Charles F. Knox.²

The establishment of the first US Embassy in Israel represents a key turning point in the consolidation of the 'special relationship', marking a new 'stage in the development of the relations between our two countries'. So the first ambassador, James McDonald, put it while presenting his credentials to Israel's Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion in 1949.³ It is, therefore, surprising to see how little attention the embassy – initially housed in the quarters of the Gat Rimon hotel – has received thus far in the historiography on US-Israeli relations and on the US approach to the Middle East region more broadly.⁴

This chapter focuses on a period of intense national, regional and international crisis spanning the months between the final acts of British rule in Palestine, in 1946–47, and McDonald's presentation of his credentials to the Israeli authorities on 28 March 1949. Thus, the emphasis here is not on the initial months of the Embassy's activities per se, but rather on the multitude of crises that US personnel had to overcome in order to open the Embassy, finally, in March 1949.

The first part of this chapter deals with the workings of the US Consulate in Jerusalem, and the challenges its personnel faced as the fighting intensified throughout 1947 and early 1948. The second part focuses instead on the US diplomatic mission in Tel Aviv, which would later become the first US Embassy in the country. Following Israel's foundation in May 1948, and Truman's recognition thereof, it became clear that the United States needed to step up its diplomatic presence *in loco*. Given the contested status of Jerusalem, which the Truman administration and a large part of the international

community argued should be placed under international controls, it became imperative to bolster the US diplomatic presence in Tel Aviv, the city where the declaration of independence had taken place and where the majority of the Israeli governmental and administrative offices were located at that time.⁵

Based on personal papers and diplomatic correspondence, the chapter explores the histories of the personnel who experienced first-hand the local and international crises that accompanied the establishment of the US embassy in Tel Aviv. Ambassador McDonald played an important role in the making of this particular ‘special relationship’,⁶ yet his perspective, as well as that of those who arrived earlier to lay the grounds for him to work in the best possible conditions, have largely been forgotten by history. Their efforts, captured in their letters home, diaries and diplomatic cables, provide unique insights into the back-stories of how the US Embassy was established and of the crises faced by those who turned the US Embassy in Israel from a risky political prospect into a diplomatic reality.⁷

‘Security will become a matter of conjecture’: the US consulate in Jerusalem and the onset of the first Arab-Israeli war

Following the establishment of the United States’ first diplomatic presence in Jerusalem in 1844, American Consuls had witnessed first-hand the periodic eruption of violence between Arabs and Jews on the ground.⁸ However, none of the previous riots and massacres had seemed to be as threatening to the safety of the US diplomatic corps as those that occurred in 1947. At that time, the principal driver of the anti-American sentiments held in much of the Arab Middle East stemmed from the Truman administration’s handling of the Palestinian question, which many Arab representatives perceived to be unjustifiably pro-Zionist. Truman’s first public statement on the matter, which the president made in June 1945, came in the form of a condemnation of the British decision not to allow greater Jewish immigration to Palestine in the aftermath of the Holocaust.⁹ In a letter to British Prime Minister Clement Attlee, Truman stated that in his view ‘no other single matter is so important for those who have known the horrors of concentration camps [...] as is the future of immigration possibilities in Palestine’. The US president then called for the ‘quick evacuation of as many as possible non-repatriable Jews, who wish it, to Palestine’.¹⁰

Truman’s stance conflicted with the views held within the State Department and the Department of Defense. The director of the Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs (NEA), Loy W. Henderson, for example, found the president’s position on the matter ‘deeply concerning’. He warned that:

In case the Government of the United States should continue to press for the mass immigration of Jews into Palestine at this time, on humanitarian or other grounds, much of the work done in the Near East in recent years in building up respect for, and confidence in, the United States and in increasing American prestige, will be undone.¹¹

Indeed, Lebanese, Iraqi, Egyptian and Saudi representatives expressed their 'anxiety and frustration' regarding Truman's policy on Jewish immigration to various US representatives stationed across the region.¹² Yet two issues above all pushed Truman to side publicly with the Zionist organisations calling for greater Jewish immigration to Palestine. First were humanitarian motivations, especially after the White House received vivid accounts of the horrific living conditions in the refugee camps in Europe; second were the high costs involved in the maintenance of those camps for the United States.¹³ The wedge between Truman's attitude on Palestine and the State and Defense Departments' viewpoint would only widen as the British authorities made clear that they would not be willing to deal with the Palestine question for much longer.

Attlee eventually gave in to Truman's insistence on the matter and proposed the creation of an Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry (AACOI) to look into the Problems of European Jewry and Palestine – mostly as a measure to delay having to make a final decision on the immigration question.¹⁴ The AACOI's 12 members submitted their final report to the respective capitals in April 1946. In it, they recommended the admission of 100,000 Jews to Palestine, the abolition of restrictions on land purchases by Jews, and the creation of an international trusteeship in Palestine. Unsurprisingly, these recommendations infuriated the Arab leaders, and American and British experts went back to work to finalise a revised proposal, known as the Morrison-Grady plan. It suggested a federal scheme for Palestine that would divide the land into semi-autonomous Jewish and Arab regions under London's control. The British then invited Arab and Zionist leaders to discuss the proposal at a conference in London, which ended in deadlock. In February 1947, Great Britain referred the Palestine question to the United Nations.¹⁵

This referral heralded a more intense phase of US involvement in the issue. Two months after the British referral, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) voted to create a Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) to investigate the issue further. Following months of work, in September the Committee proposed partition as the most viable option, calling the General Assembly to cast a vote on the proposal in November. Arab representatives, who had refused to cooperate with UNSCOP, were outraged. Tensions grew in Washington, too, where foreign relations and international security experts advised the president against alienating the Arabs, while White House staff supported the president's stance on partition. As Zionist activist and international law expert Benjamin Akzin put it, the State Department and the Secretary of Defense took a 'negative attitude to the project'. 'So obstinate is this hostility', he observed,

that those who share it would rather condemn the United Nations to inglorious defeat, and the President of the United States to the failure of a stand which he has publicly taken, than permit the consummation of a plan which does not meet their approval.¹⁶

Fearing that State Department officials would work behind his back to undermine him, Truman substituted the head of the US mission at the United Nations with the loyal General John Hilldring. Loy Henderson, still a vocal critic, was dispatched to an ambassadorial posting to India.¹⁷ Meanwhile, as the UNGA vote on partition neared, pro-Zionist lobbying efforts and initiatives multiplied. Often, lobbyists would deliberately exaggerate the Truman administration's enthusiasm for the creation of a Jewish State. Arab representatives who got wind of this lobbying tended, in turn, to inflate the degree of US backing for the project also. As a result, the passing of Resolution 181, which called for the partition of Palestine into a Jewish and Arab state with Jerusalem under international controls, was accompanied in many Arab countries by anger and frustration directed against the United States.

Throughout 1947, in Jerusalem, these violent anti-American feelings were expressed in a variety of ways, the most unequivocal of which was the bombing of the US Consulate on 13 October, which left everyone unscathed though rather shocked. At that time, US Consul-General Robert B. Macatee noted how 'not one Arab organisation or newspaper has expressed any regret at [the] bombing of [the Consulate]' and how 'there has been no editorial mention of [the] incident in [the] Arab press'.¹⁸ Tension further escalated following the November 1947 vote to partition British-ruled Palestine.¹⁹ Arab representatives fiercely opposed the passing of the Resolution and walked out of the UNGA once it became clear that all of their efforts were in vain. Violence spread throughout the Middle East, as disaffected Arabs protested in Jerusalem, Cairo, Aden and beyond. Although the conventional periodisation of the conflict between Israel and its Arab neighbours indicates the year 1948 as the beginning of the first Arab-Israeli War – referred to as the War of Independence or as the Catastrophe, *al-Nakba* – in fact, the very establishment of the State of Israel took place in the midst of a conflict. The confrontation between the Israeli and the Arab armies in 1948–49 followed a first phase of intense fighting between the Jewish and Arab communities in Palestine, which began immediately after the UN vote on Resolution 181.²⁰ In Jerusalem, the infighting between Arabs and Jews affected railroad access, air traffic, the postal service, and food provisions – and the American and local staff of the US Consulate soon found themselves physically and politically caught in the crossfire.

In December, Consul Macatee advised the State Department that it was becoming impossible for him to guarantee the safety of his staff, or of his family. By then, noted the consul, US personnel were 'virtually confined in security zones maintained by the British'. Macatee's reports from Jerusalem described the slaughtering of men, women and children that was taking place everywhere around the Consulate: 'It is tragic that many of the present casualties comprise innocent and harmless people, going about their daily business. They are picked off while riding in buses, walking along the streets [...] and even [...] in their beds'.²¹ Tension spread inexorably to the Consulate

itself, as Macatee anxiously observed the increasing ‘signs of unfriendliness’ that he and his staff faced when attending to even the most basic tasks outside the walls of the Consulate, such as ‘meeting [the] courier’ or ‘meeting new personnel’.²² ‘In one instance the arrival of American personnel on the scene in the nick of time prevented the burning of cars belonging to officers of this Consulate’, he noted. Within the Consulate’s walls, apprehension mounted, too, as ‘messengers, chauffeurs, domestic servants, all Arabs, also Arab office employees showing signs [of] tension and [their] continued service [may be] problematical’, noted the Consul, who requested information from the State Department ‘regarding evacuation [of] wives, families and possibly women employees’.²³ In the final weeks of 1947, Macatee instructed his staff to take comprehensive measures to guarantee their own safety, as well as that of the US citizens present in Palestine.

‘The comparative security enjoyed at present by the Consulate will last only so long as the British are here. After their departure, security will become a matter of conjecture’, Macatee communicated to the State Department. On 31 December 1947, he summarised the Consulate’s efforts to avoid isolation and attacks should the violence spiral out of control:

In case of intensified trouble here, the question of communications becomes very serious [...] we are taking emergency measures to ensure a reserve of gasoline and food in case they are cut off [...] A radio transmitter has been set up so that communications will not be entirely cut off. But beyond this, little can be done²⁴.

Were it to become necessary to evacuate the country, ‘all exits from Palestine for personnel in Jerusalem will of necessity be through hostile country’. Protection of American citizens also posed specific problems, given that the majority of Americans in Palestine were Jewish, and that they might be faced with the ‘inability to reach this Consulate in safety’, while already many ‘Americans of Palestinian Arab origin are making arrangements to leave the country as far as possible’.

The Consul expressed his frustration at being able to take only ‘inadequate measures’ to protect his staff and US citizens in the area. He lamented ‘the limited supply of firearms available’ and expressed the need to have US troops sent to the Consulate as soon as possible – though he recognised that the decision to send in American troops might have drastic consequences. Nonetheless, Macatee asked the State Department to send US Marines to help secure the lives of the Consulate staff.²⁵ His request fell on deaf ears in Washington and provoked loud criticism in Jerusalem. Denied the support that he had asked for and frustrated by the precariousness of the situation on the ground, Macatee concluded that soon ‘the problems of security and safety for this Consulate may become insoluble’. Close to retirement, Macatee decided that he was not interested in remaining in Jerusalem much longer. His wife left for America via Italy in January 1948.²⁶ Three months

later, the Consul reunited with Mrs. Macatee after the State Department sent his replacement to Jerusalem, career diplomat Thomas C. Wasson.

Snipers in Jerusalem

Wasson took over the Consulate from Macatee on 1 April 1948.²⁷ He had just one day to discuss matters with his predecessor, who was in a hurry to leave. Five days prior to that, moved by the precariousness of the situation on the ground, President Truman had called for a ceasefire in Palestine. Meanwhile, the State Department had recommended that the majority of the Consulate's personnel, activities and documents be relocated to a newly established US Consulate in Haifa, an attempt to preserve the safety of both people and papers. The arms embargo that the United States had imposed on all the parties involved in the conflict, though it was supported by the United Nations, had little effect beyond alienating Jewish Agency members, who insisted that the Arab states were still getting weapons, including arms from the British, which they were not.

Wasson, though, was no stranger to navigating emergency situations. He had been selected by the State Department to serve in Athens as Soviet pressure on Greece mounted in 1947 amidst an unfolding civil war. His previous posts included Australia, Italy, Nigeria, Senegal and post-war France. Two characteristics made Wasson an ideal candidate for the post in Jerusalem in the eyes of the State Department. First was his extensive experience of working in volatile political circumstances, which he had navigated successfully in three continents throughout the 1930s and 1940s. Second, Wasson was unmarried.²⁸ Thus, he would not have the same urge Macatee had displayed to follow his wife back home, no matter how dangerous the local situation became. These State Department calculations seemed borne out as fighting increased dramatically during April 1948. The UN Security Council convened on 17 April to discuss the implementation of a truce solution to be supervised by a Commission composed of the Consuls of the UNSC countries that had diplomatic representatives in place. Shortly after having arrived as US Consul General, Wasson, together with his French and Belgian colleagues, also assumed the additional role of UN Truce Commissioner.

Wasson and his fellow Commission members tried to pacify all the actors involved, no easy task. The initial plan envisaged that the Commission would negotiate for three months, followed by a truce period lasting between six months and one year.²⁹ Jewish Agency officials were willing to discuss their conditions for the truce, but Arab League representatives proved harder to pin down. In early May 1948, the members of the Commission were only allowed to meet Taqi al-Din Sulh, adviser to the Arab League's Secretariat, and Hussein Saraj, Transjordan's under-secretary of state for foreign affairs – interlocutors that they deemed to be 'fourth-rate leaders'.³⁰ A bigger problem, however, was that the two sides' demands remained irreconcilable. While Jewish Agency representatives linked the

question of a truce to their attainment of statehood, the Arab League and the Arab Higher Committee indicated that they would only accept a truce if it were linked to the halting of all Jewish immigration to Palestine, plus a final revocation of any prospect of partition. For their part, British officials in Palestine viewed the Commissioners' work with disdain, looking down on its members as 'inexperienced and amateurish' individuals unable to understand 'the way of the Orient'.³¹

As the date of the British withdrawal neared, it became clear that the Jewish Agency was preparing to declare statehood. Truman's special counsel, Clark Clifford, urged the president to grant recognition to the Jewish state as soon as the occasion arose. The president indicated in general terms that he would be open to doing so and this, in turn, led Clifford to encourage Jewish Agency members to push ahead with their planned declaration. Standing below a stern portrait of Theodor Herzl, David Ben-Gurion proclaimed the independence of *Eretz Yisrael*, the land of Israel, at 4:00pm on 14 May 1948, in a small, packed room in the Tel Aviv Museum. Under-secretary of State Robert A. Lovett begged the White House to delay its recognition, both in order to prepare the Arab countries for the news and to protect the safety of US representatives stationed throughout the Arab Middle East.³² Secretary of State George C. Marshall warned that Truman's planned move would backfire on the US, speeding up the pace of Communist and Soviet infiltration in the region and undermining Washington's relations with the oil-rich Arab countries. Marshall even threatened that he himself would not vote for the president in the elections. Still, his entreaties fell on deaf ears. Truman granted recognition to Israel on the very same day, 11 minutes after Ben-Gurion finished reading the declaration of independence.³³

Meanwhile, in Jerusalem, Thomas C. Wasson pushed forward with his ever more demanding job. He had predicted that the fighting would intensify after 15 May, when the Haganah (the biggest Jewish paramilitary organisation) would 'launch an all-out offensive to secure the frontiers of the new Jewish state and to improve the Jewish lines of communication'.³⁴ Later events proved him right. What he did not foresee, however, was that he himself would perish as the fighting intensified. On 22 May 1948, just a few days after the US recognition of the State of Israel, Consul-General Wasson was shot with a .30 caliber rifle in the streets of Jerusalem. The culprit, whose identity – whether Jew or Arab – is still disputed, would never be found.³⁵ The Consul died the following day at the Hadassah English Mission Hospital.

Setting up the new US mission in Israel

For those representing the Provisional Government of Israel (henceforth, PGI), Truman's decision to recognise the Jewish State made the establishment of a proper Embassy a necessity.³⁶ Indeed, in a letter dated two weeks after the declaration of independence, the president of the Provisional State Council of Israel (and future first Israeli president) Chaim Weizmann

described the PGI as ‘anxious that the United States recognition of the State of Israel should be put on a regular basis by an exchange of diplomatic representatives’.³⁷ In Washington, however, the State Department’s resistance to the president’s opening to Israel mounted. Foggy Bottom officials eventually explained to the president that the United States had recognised Israel *de facto*, not *de jure*, and further insisted that it would be prudent to withhold *de jure* recognition given that, for the time being, the country’s borders, as well as its internal political situation, were in flux.³⁸ This was a subtle, yet crucial distinction. Israeli policy-makers felt ‘genuinely concerned’ about it, and even James McDonald, the president’s choice as the US special representative in Israel, admitted he was ‘somewhat confused’ by it.³⁹

McDonald was not a career diplomat. After starting his academic career at the University of Indiana, he had worked as chairman of the Foreign Policy Association in New York and as High Commissioner for Refugees coming from Germany between 1933 and 1935 – a post which had made very clear to him what the possible consequences of the Nazi discriminatory policies against the Jews, and Hitler’s determination to exterminate the Jews, might be.⁴⁰ He kept working on refugee-related issues throughout the 1930s and 1940s, and for this reason he was selected to be one of the members of the AACOI Commission that, in 1946, had pushed for increased Jewish immigration to Palestine. In the eyes of many at the State Department, McDonald was little more than ‘a professional Zionist’.⁴¹ His nomination was highly controversial at the time, having taken place with the president, again, ignoring State Department preferences – another expression of the deepening rift between the White House and the State Department over the administration’s Middle East policy.⁴² Significantly, the president had given McDonald his ‘fullest confidence and support’ as well as the ‘permission [...] to communicate to him personally’ on crucial policy matters.⁴³ As a consequence, due to rivalries and jealousies internal to the US diplomatic corps, while heading the diplomatic mission in Tel Aviv McDonald and his entourage would often be excluded from the State Department’s chain of communications with various other US posts – including the consulates in Jerusalem and Haifa.⁴⁴

Yet Special Representative McDonald would not be the first US official to set foot in Tel Aviv. Rather, this task fell to Charles F. Knox Jr., who received the arduous task of laying the grounds for setting up the American Embassy. Despite his previous experience in critical posts, including post-revolutionary Chile, Argentina and Venezuela, Knox would leave Israel shortly after having inaugurated the US Embassy, exhausted, ill and burnt out. Knox had been selected for the post despite not having any prior experience of the Middle East. However, his ability to survive three revolutions, coupled with the fact that he too, like the late Consul Wasson, was an unmarried man who would not be dragged down by marital anxieties in times of war, made him a good candidate in the eyes of the State Department.⁴⁵ Knox’s posting in newly established, war-torn Israel proved challenging from day one. The

plane he flew in was not pressurised and Knox, who suffered from lung problems, arrived with his ‘right side filled up with pleural fluid’, ‘after one of the most exhausting airplane trips I’ve ever had’.⁴⁶ But Knox was not one to be constrained by his physical limitations. The truce was breaking down and he needed to make his way to Tel Aviv as soon as possible to establish the new US mission. In Haifa, ‘the little Hotel Zion [...] was full of US Army officers with long faces and dismal tales of the dangers to which I would be exposed in travelling to Tel Aviv’.⁴⁷ The journey to get there involved a taxi ride, followed by a truck ride, with a driver who feared ‘neither man, nor God, or the devil’.⁴⁸ Thus, it was also thanks to this fearless driver that Knox managed to dispatch his ‘mission established’ cable to DC less than 24 hours after his arrival.⁴⁹ ‘We arrived at Tel Aviv at about 5pm, nervously and physically tired, but feeling the relief of having made the trip in good order’, wrote Knox from the Gat Rimon hotel, where he based the mission for the time being.⁵⁰ He swiftly understood that ‘the quickest way [...] to get one’s head punched is to make a remark reflecting on the fighting ability of the Israeli youth, in which there is great pride’.⁵¹ Indeed, one of the first representative duties that Knox carried out while in Israel was to attend the country’s very first military parade, which he deemed ‘impressive’, albeit ‘lacking the precision of highly trained troops’.⁵² Knox reported the lively evening atmosphere in Tel Aviv’s cafes and bars, while the physical effects of the war – devastated buildings and large craters in the streets – were visible everywhere.⁵³

Knox’s first weeks in Israel quickly turned violent: the UN-imposed truce collapsed and between 7 and 18 July bombs fell without interruption. His reports were succinct, but graphic. ‘This morning I was out on business when the enemy [attacked]. I took refuge and was perfectly safe, but the explosions, 1½ blocks away, sounded awfully big’. Gradually, the psychological pressure mounted. ‘Things have been a little rough lately’, Knox wrote home. He was,

disturbed because I can’t get on with the business of setting up the mission. More than half the day I am sitting in air raid shelters, or waiting for the all-clear so that I can get a taxi, or running for cover [...] there is nothing to do but grin and bear it and hope that it will soon be over.⁵⁴

In the short-term, Knox’s predictions proved overly grim. On 18 July 1948 a further UN-sponsored truce came into effect. It lasted until mid-October, finally giving Knox, and the local population, a respite from the bombardment. The lull in hostilities proved a blessing for the Israeli forces, which set about mobilising the men and resources that would enable them to take the offensive in later rounds of fighting. Meanwhile, between July and October Knox used all of his skills and determination to get his work done. He had already officially set up the mission at the Gat Rimon hotel and began working on citizenship requests and other consular matters. He also started hiring local employees, travelling around the country and attending official functions.⁵⁵

In early August, the Director General of Israel's Foreign Ministry, Walter Eytan, approached Knox 'with obvious embarrassment' to share that the Soviets had, like him, encountered severe difficulties in finding available office space, and intended to set up their own diplomatic mission on a different floor of the same hotel. In fact, just a few days after Knox's arrival in Israel, PGI Foreign Minister Shertok gave the order to communicate to the Soviets that 'view impending arrival US Representative [...] earlier arrival their Minister most desirable'.⁵⁶ Knox, eventually, acquiesced to the prospect of sharing the Gat Rimon Hotel with them. With the war forcing the Americans and Soviets into a cheek-by-jowl co-existence, in 1948 Tel Aviv thus became an urban stage for the Cold War rivalry that pitted the two superpowers against one another. Much of their rivalry on the ground played out at a symbolic level. At the national opera, for instance, competition over which national anthem should be played first – American or Soviet – became a delicate matter with serious political implications; so, too, the choice of which colour necktie – black or white – to wear at parties, especially if these commemorated important political events such as the 1917 Bolshevik revolution.⁵⁷

The pause in the fighting finally allowed Knox to get some things done, but he still faced substantial obstacles to the creation of a fully functioning diplomatic mission. His difficulties were compounded because the State Department neither provided him with sufficient funds for the mission, nor sent a fiscal clerk to Tel Aviv, leaving important budgetary issues unresolved. The situation became even more problematic after that when, on 16 August 1948, the Israeli authorities introduced the Israeli pound. The new currency quickly rose against the US dollar, meaning that the debts that the Tel Aviv mission had been accumulating increased substantially overnight.⁵⁸ Knox simply could not pay the officers, clerks and guards who had agreed to work for the mission. The situation pained him: 'I am almost disposed to let them go rather than be further embarrassed', he wrote to the State Department in August 1948, adding that

This problem, in addition to such "minor" items such as no transportation, [n]o possibility of negotiating leases on living quarters because we have no idea what our allowances are, inadequate coding facilities, one confidential typist for five men, no American stenographer etc etc [*sic*], have complicated the situation so that more than half of our time is taken up in trying to figure out the mechanical means of operating (on no money) to the detriment of reporting and analyzing the problem here. I am too tired, too old and have missed too many vacations, to take a rap like this and my desire to go fishing and enjoy life is becoming irresistible.⁵⁹

The arrival in Tel Aviv of the future first US ambassador to Israel, James McDonald, did not immediately improve matters for the diplomatic mission.

Although the fighting was officially suspended, tension on the ground was still very high and political violence spread even as the truce held. The most disturbing episode for the US diplomatic personnel took place in September 1948, shortly after McDonald's arrival. At the beginning of the war, the United Nations had appointed Count Folke Bernadotte of Sweden to come up with a proposal that would appease both parties and put an end to the armed hostilities. In his report, Count Bernadotte called for the creation of two states – one Jewish and one Arab – but revised the partition boundaries, reducing the amount of land that would be assigned to the Jewish state in favour of the Arabs. Unsurprisingly, the Israelis rejected the plan. The Arabs did, too, as they rejected the notion of a two-state solution, arguing for one united Palestinian state. On 17 September 1948, the day after he submitted his 'Progress Report' to the UN, Bernadotte was shot dead in Jerusalem. It soon became clear that the culprits were four men associated with the *Lohamei Herut Israel* (also known as *Lehi* or the Stern Gang), Jewish ultra-nationalists who had been heavily involved in the fight against the British from 1940 onwards and who remained operative also after the British had left.⁶⁰ Shortly after the assassination, Prime Minister Ben-Gurion outlawed the organisation and ordered a series of mass arrests of its most intransigent members, officially declaring the *Lehi* a terrorist organisation.⁶¹

The killing of Bernadotte in Jerusalem had serious consequences for US personnel in Tel Aviv. McDonald, for the first time, made use of Truman's permission to reach out to him directly on delicate policy questions: 'So shocked was the world by this tragedy that there seemed a possibility that Washington would penalize Israel by breaking diplomatic relations. To discourage and if possible avert such action I wrote, and had delivered by hand, a personal letter' to the president who, in turn, promised to 'discourage any move to weaken the Mission or to withdraw its head as a form of sanction'.⁶² Diplomatic questions aside, the Mission's precarious security circumstances became increasingly pressing. 'The Security Attaché with special guards for the residence arrived, tommy-guns and all within half an hour, and thirty minutes later the Government sent a heavily armed police detail to throw a cordon around the house', recorded administrative officer Curtis Barnes.⁶³ McDonald sent 'another telegram reemphasizing to the Department the imperative need of an independent communications system. We made our case by pointing out that we just missed being [...] voiceless and deaf in an emergency.'⁶⁴ Before leaving for Israel, McDonald – like Macatee before him – had asked for US Marines to be sent to guard the safety of the diplomatic mission, though to no avail.⁶⁵ While McDonald insisted to the State Department that their mission needed to be better equipped, his aides tried to protect themselves from other possible attacks. 'With McDonald properly guarded', Knox wrote in a letter to his family,

the next man on the "security" list is myself. I have been going to the office every day and trying to carry on as usual, but the nervous tension

is considerable [...] On several occasions I have had to hurriedly change my sleeping place [but] if I am marked and some nut is determined to kill me, there is not much that I can do about it [...] I must keep on about my business [...] I am not worried.⁶⁶

‘We knew through our information service that the Underground were going to kill somebody – we just hoped it wasn’t us’, recalled Barnes, for whom Bernadotte’s murder proved particularly upsetting for more than one reason: ‘It was decided that it wasn’t safe for us to stay in the house because at one party we had an agent from the Underground come out. Was she cute. I had a date with her before Charlie [Knox] put his foot down and stopped it. And before I could get him talked out of it, Bernadotte was murdered, and she was clapped in jail.’⁶⁷ To add to the romantic-political melodrama, Barnes was not the only one who had been socialising with *Lehi* members. In early October 1948, another woman from the Stern Gang was arrested, at dawn, while in the company of a different member of the US mission in Tel Aviv, the special adviser to McDonald Herbert J. Cummings.⁶⁸ Although head of mission McDonald seems not to have been aware of Barnes’s affair, he discussed Cummings’s incident on the very same day with his closest aides at the Tel Aviv mission, including Cummings himself. They all agreed to communicate the incident to the State Department but to put it in such a way as to protect Cummings’s reputation: ‘For once, I felt a little bit more of a diplomat than Knox because, though I had shared his opposition to Cummings’ contacts with the Stern Gang after it had been outlawed, I did not, as did Knox, say in effect “I told you so”.’⁶⁹

Though possibly unaware of the existing levels of intimacy between female Stern Gang members and US officials posted in Tel Aviv, the British meanwhile warned the US State Department about the ‘extreme danger of leaks occurring in Tel Aviv’.⁷⁰

From diplomatic mission to embassy: James G. McDonald’s endeavours

Many of the mission’s problems persisted throughout 1948. For one, the security situation did not improve – indeed, McDonald used to refer to the surroundings of the Tel Aviv mission as ‘death alley’.⁷¹ Communications were still problematic. McDonald registered in his diary the lack of enough code clerks and lamented that the mission’s work was ‘crippled by inadequate staff’.⁷² Knox, meanwhile, became increasingly exhausted and burnt out. In November 1948, his aide reported that he ‘looks like hell and if [the State Department] don’t get him out of here in two or three months, he will go in a box’.⁷³ McDonald, too, wrote in his diaries that he was sure that Knox’s health had been ‘impaired by overwork’,⁷⁴ while Knox himself was determined to ‘remain here, if my health permits, until the war is over, the

Mission organised, and some policy set in this unhappy land.' As he wrote home in regard to setting up the US mission in Tel Aviv,

I don't think [...] I will ever understand what exactly the Department had in mind in sending me in here and leaving me five months without the elemental necessities of operating, particularly in an area of active warfare [...] I'm speaking of the appalling lack of thought and preparation evidenced in Washington.⁷⁵

With foreign representatives still in the firing line, one hotly debated topic in Tel Aviv was how to arrange the evacuation of the Mission in case of an attack.⁷⁶ In his diary, McDonald recorded how Red Cross workers were 'sniped at nearly every day'. Two French UN observers were killed as soon as they disembarked the aircraft that had brought them to Gaza, their bodies stripped of their clothes and left on the airfield.⁷⁷ The US Consul in Jerusalem, John McDonald (homonymous though not related to the Tel Aviv chief of mission), was recalled to DC as he slipped into alcoholism after one of his guards was shot right next to him and was left to die in the street by his security detail.⁷⁸ Gradually, however, the mission in Tel Aviv also secured some important achievements. From the political perspective, the 'unfolding drama of the president's [Truman's] victory' in the elections of November 1948 offered considerable reassurance, given that McDonald was a presidential appointee.⁷⁹ His opinions would continue to be taken seriously in the White House, notwithstanding any State or Defense Department remonstrations. This became apparent as McDonald insisted on flying to Paris for the first part of a UNGA meeting scheduled to take place away from the UN Headquarters, in late 1948:

The [Bernadotte] plan would come up for consideration by the General Assembly in Paris, according to the latest information I had, sometime in November. And as this word came to me, I resolved that I must be in Paris in November. I was convinced, completely convinced [...] that UN approval of the Bernadotte Plan [...] could mean only one thing: the renewal of war in the Middle East.⁸⁰

McDonald's take on this, as on several other issues on the Israel-Palestine question, differed starkly from that of many in the State Department. At first, President Truman had supported the plan, standing by it in the aftermath of Bernadotte's assassination. The British also regarded implementation of the plan as important in order not to frustrate Arabs' ambitions and to limit Israeli expansion. However, from Israel's perspective the Plan's terms included were decidedly unfavourable, as they envisaged the 'inclusion of the whole or part of the Negev in Arab territory' and the 'inclusion of the whole or part of Western Galilee in Jewish territory'.⁸¹ The Israelis

were instead determined to hold on to both regions, given the Galilee's rich soil and the Negev's geostrategic location, which would provide Israel with access to the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aqaba. McDonald had long highlighted that the PGI would never agree to 'give up the Negev', as this would have meant 'reducing Israel to miniature state which would constitute area of population pressure and breed future conflict'.⁸² He insisted to the State Department and the White House that supporting the British and the Bernadotte plan 'would not endear the other Arab states to the US', while Israel 'would inevitably become embittered toward the US'. Thus, 'by forcing transfer of Negev, the US would gain no further friends in the Middle East and lose one friend'.⁸³

While in Paris, McDonald tried to shift US policy from initial support of the Bernadotte plan to its later endorsement of the Israeli claim on the Negev. He had intended to go to France to work on the UN approach to Palestinian Arab refugees, given his long-standing expertise on refugee questions. Yet, 'from the refugee discussion, General Marshall gave me an opening, which permitted me to present a much longer and more detailed exposition of my views about Israel than I had dared to hope for', recorded McDonald in his diary.⁸⁴ Marshall was to retire soon, and left Paris on 21 November to report back to the president. John Foster Dulles took over from him, and, according to McDonald, found the British delivering 'sweetly reasonable' speeches, exaggerating 'the British concessions, the Jews' unreasonableness', and leaving out 'anything about Great Britain's record of mistakes or of its real policy'.⁸⁵ From Paris, the ambassador strove to convince Truman to oppose the British line:

I am convinced Bevin still hopes [to] undo Assembly resolution November 29 [on partition] [...] President would thus be checkmated and Britain would then be freed [...] to rearm the Arab States and enable and encourage them continue war against Israel.⁸⁶

He recommended that the president make contact with Secretary of State Dulles to reaffirm this point and to 'press vigorously president's suggestion that Israel be admitted to the UN this session'.⁸⁷ State Department officials were not impressed by McDonald's unilateral, and highly partial diplomacy. As the Director of the Office of Special Political Affairs, Dean Rusk, pleaded with the Secretary of State: 'If we begin to get sudden telephone calls which cut across instructions, reserve a wing at [the mental hospital] St Elizabeth's'.⁸⁸ Additional McDonald dispatches for the White House only followed and, eventually, in December 1948, the Bernadotte plan was put aside.⁸⁹

While discussions at the UN continued, fighting on the ground persisted as the Israelis pushed to secure as much territory as possible and the Arabs sought to block them. As the war in the Negev intensified, Tel Aviv mission staff observed the latest developments anxiously: 'We are stumbling around

here at night in this Christmas season in a total blackout [...] I NEVER saw such a mixed up mess as this one', recorded Knox.⁹⁰ The 'mess' risked becoming worse still, in December 1948, when Israeli forces attacked British aircraft; in response, London notified Jerusalem that, if necessary, the UK would be ready to fight alongside Egypt.⁹¹ US diplomats worked to deescalate the crisis. They promoted Ralph Bunche's attempts to mediate armistice agreements between Israel and the Arab states. And they pressed Israel to withdraw from the Gaza Strip and to join Egypt in accepting the Security Council's 9 January 1949 call for a ceasefire.⁹² Days earlier, the UN General Assembly had voted to establish a Jerusalem-based Conciliation Commission that would work to 'achieve a final settlement of all questions outstanding' between the conflicting parties.⁹³

On 25 January, the first Israeli general elections took place, and Prime Minister Ben-Gurion formed a coalition government. Shortly thereafter the State Department approved a \$100 million Export-Import Bank loan to Israel – another measure that McDonald had long advocated.⁹⁴ 'With the elections over, the way was cleared for US recognition *de jure* of Israel [and] following *de jure* recognition, the question of our diplomatic representation in Tel Aviv came up', recounted McDonald in his memoirs.⁹⁵ Once again, the Israelis were well aware of the political manoeuvring taking place in Washington, quickly getting hold of the news that McDonald would be appointed as the United States' first ambassador to Israel.⁹⁶ The cable with the official confirmation arrived in Tel Aviv at 11am on Friday 4 February.⁹⁷

Conclusion

Taking place after President Truman's controversial decision to recognise – at least *de facto* – the State of Israel in May 1948, the process of setting up the first US Embassy in Israel unfolded during a period of high tension in international politics. Between 1947 and 1949, with the establishment of the State of Israel and the onset of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the map of the Middle East changed fundamentally. The death of America's Jerusalem Consul Thomas Wasson, the killing of UN mediator Bernadotte, as well as the deaths of several UN observers and members of the diplomatic corps and their security guards are chilling reminders of just how precarious the situation was – and sometimes still is – for international diplomatic personnel. Knox's and McDonald's repeated requests for better communications equipment, staff and funding at a time in which war raged and their work was punctuated by pauses to run for cover from the bombings, is a helpful reminder of what the beginning of the 'special relationship' between Israel and the United States looked like to those on the spot.

As the evidence presented here demonstrates, the history of the establishment of the first US Embassy in Israel at a time of intense crisis is also a history of other, wider issues: of the struggle between the White House and

the State Department over US policy direction in the Middle East; of the materialisation of US-Soviet rivalry in an urban environment where representatives of the two superpowers were forced to work in close proximity; and of the experiences of mission staff struggling to set up an Embassy in a war zone. On the one hand, the State Department's ostracisation of McDonald, exemplified by its by-passing of the Tel Aviv mission in important communications between Washington DC, Jerusalem and Haifa testifies to the difficulties that the chief of mission and his staff faced in trying to secure their position *in loco*. On the other hand, being a presidential appointee provided McDonald with opportunities to influence the president, and thus US foreign relations, directly. His involvement in the UN negotiations in November 1948 in Paris, from where he reached out directly to the White House – to the State Department's frustration – clearly shaped US policy on the conflict, contributing to the US abandonment of the Bernadotte Plan in conformity with Israeli preferences regarding the control of the Negev and Western Galilee.

It was in this dangerous political climate that Knox, and then McDonald, worked to establish the US Embassy – and then made their mark on US-Israeli relations, the Middle East conflict and the workings of US diplomatic postings abroad. McDonald played a role in aligning, whenever possible, the positions of the American and Israeli governments on delicate policy matters. Given his expertise on refugee issues, he also pushed the Israeli, Arab and US governments to deal with the question of Palestinian refugees, albeit without achieving the results he wanted. And some measures that are in practice to this day – such as the inclusion of Marine forces to guard American embassies and consulates worldwide – originated because of the alarm raised by US personnel at the time of the first Arab-Israeli war. Ultimately, the political tensions at home subsided and so, too, did the anti-American protests in the Middle East. Why? On the ground, the armistice agreements signed in 1949 halted the first round of the conflict. Back home, Dean Acheson replaced George C. Marshall as secretary of state, and the relations between the White House and the State Department entered a calmer phase. But the actions by Knox, McDonald and other diplomats *in loco* were invaluable in burnishing the reputation of the United States abroad and advancing the situation on the ground.

The experiences of US officials and support personnel working in Tel Aviv constitute a key component of the history of US-Israeli relations and US foreign relations more broadly. Having established the mission in Tel Aviv during wartime; secured office space and personnel; and befriended key Israeli political figures, despite not speaking the language or having prior experience of the region, Knox finally requested relocation to a less demanding post: 'It looks a fair promise that the war is over. I've seen this thing through the rough period and am anxious to get home. The loan, the *de jure* recognition, the raising of status to an Embassy, and the Ambassadorship of McDonald are all very gratifying, and', he concluded, 'it's a good time to break away.'⁹⁸

Notes

- 1 I am grateful to the organisers of the *Embassies in Crisis* conference for their support of my work. I am profoundly grateful to John Bush for the invaluable help accessing archival materials held in the Columbia University Archives, and to Chuck Kraus and Laura Deal of the Wilson Center for Scholars for the support in accessing materials held at the US National Archives, and I thank the archivists of the Harry S. Truman Presidential Library, who helped me during my research stay in Independence, MO. I thank Jacco Pekelder, Giles Scott-Smith and one anonymous reviewer for providing helpful comments. This research has been made possible by an Utrecht University Aspasia Research Grant.
- 2 Knox to Secretary of State, 11 August 1948, quoted in Fetter, H.D. “‘Two or Three Air Raids Daily. What a Bother’”: An American Diplomat in Israel during the War of Independence’, *Israel Affairs* 18:4 (2012), fn. 62, p. 561.
- 3 McDonald, J., *Envoy to the Promised Land, 1948–1951* edited by Richard Breitman, Norman J.W. Goda, Barbara McDonald Stewart and Severin Hochberg (Bloomington: Indiana University Press in association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Washington DC, 2017), diary entry of 28 March 1949, p. 444. Key texts on the special relationship between Israel and the United States include Reich, B. *The United States and Israel: Influence in the Special Relationship* (New York: Praeger, 1984) and Ben-Zvi, A. *The United States and Israel: The Limits of the Special Relationship* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).
- 4 With the exception of Fetter’s aforementioned article and Neiditch, H.M.’s ‘United States Consul General Thomas C. Wasson and the End of the Palestine Mandate’, *Studies in Zionism* 10:69 (1989), pp. 65–85. Indeed, the embassy is largely absent from studies such as Druks, H. *The US and Israel, 1945–1973* (New York: Speller, 1979); Spiegel, S. L., *The Other Arab-Israeli Conflict: Making America’s Middle East Policy, from Truman to Reagan* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1985); Little, D., *American Orientalism: The United States and the Middle East since 1945* (London: IB Tauris, 2003) mentions the embassy only in passing (see p. 78) as does Hahn, P. H., *Caught in the Middle East: US Policy toward the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1945–1961* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), p. 135, fn. 23, although speaking of a later time period. These and related works on the United States’ approach to the conflict under Truman that mention the Embassy do not focus on the diplomatic mission itself, but generally refer to various policy decisions made in Washington, DC, such as the United States’ refusal to move the Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem in the early 1950s despite the insistence of the Israeli establishment.
- 5 A new consulate was also opened in Haifa. For administrative reasons, the State Department did not consider the US Consulate in Jerusalem throughout this time period as being located in Israel.
- 6 On the crucial role of embassies and ambassadors see, for example, Pastor-Castro, R. and Young, J.W. (eds.) *The Paris Embassy: British Ambassadors and Anglo-French Relations, 1944–1979* (London: Palgrave, 2013).
- 7 See, for example, Scott-Smith, G., ‘Introduction: The Evolving Embassy – Changes and Challenges to Diplomatic Representation and Practice in the Global Era’, *New Global Studies* 11:2 (2017), pp. 1–8.
- 8 In 1928 the status of the Consulate changed into that of a Consulate General: US Consulate General in Jerusalem, *History of the Consulate General*, available at: <https://jru.usconsulate.gov/our-relationship/policy-history/io/> [Last accessed 9 November 2017].
- 9 The 1939 British government White Paper limited Jewish immigration to Palestine to 75,000 over the next five years. For background on Britain’s Palestine

- policy see, for example, Miller, R. (ed.) *Britain, Palestine and Empire: The Mandate Years* (London: Routledge, 2010).
- 10 Harry S. Truman, Letter to Prime Minister Attlee Concerning the Need for Resettlement of Jewish Refugees in Palestine [Released 13 November 1945, dated 31 August 1945]. Available at: <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/president-truman-letter-to-attlee-concerning-resettlement-of-jewish-refugees-in-palestine-november-1945> [Last accessed 22 January 2018].
 - 11 Foreign Relations of the United States (henceforth, FRUS), 1945, Vol. 8, Doc. 730: The Director of the Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs (Henderson) to the Acting Secretary of State (Acheson), 1 October 1945.
 - 12 *Ibid.*
 - 13 Hahn, *Caught in the Middle East*, p. 33.
 - 14 Benson, M. T., *Harry S. Truman and the Founding of Israel* (Westport, CN: Praeger, 1997), p. 67.
 - 15 On this, see Caplan, *Futile Diplomacy* Vol. 2 (London, Routledge, 1983); Louis, R. and Stookey, R. W. (eds.) *The End of the Palestine Mandate* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1988).
 - 16 *Documents on the Foreign Policy of Israel* (henceforth, DFPI), December 1947 - May 1948, Doc. 134, B. Akzin to S. Welles, 23 January 1948.
 - 17 This did not, however, soothe the concerns of pro-Israeli observers. See, for example, DFPI, Vol. 1, 1948, Doc. 264: O. Gass to E. Kaplan, 3 July 1948.
 - 18 FRUS 1947, Vol. 5, Doc. 824: The Consul General at Jerusalem (Macatee) to the Secretary of State, 19 October 1947.
 - 19 United Nations General Assembly, Resolution 181, A/RES/181(II), 29 November 1947. Available at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20120524094913/http://domino.un.org/unispal.nsf/0/7f0af2bd897689b785256c330061d253> [Last accessed 9 November 2017].
 - 20 On the two phases of the conflict see Shlaim, A. *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World* (London: Penguin, 2000), p. 28.
 - 21 FRUS, 1947, Vol. 5, Doc. 925: The Consul General at Jerusalem (Macatee) to the Secretary of State, 31 December 1947.
 - 22 FRUS, 1947, Vol. 5, Doc. 911: The Consul General at Jerusalem (Macatee) to the Secretary of State, 10 December 1947.
 - 23 *Ibid.*
 - 24 FRUS 1947, Vol. 5, Doc. 925: The Consul General at Jerusalem (Macatee) to the Secretary of State, 31 December 1947.
 - 25 United States Department of State, Bureau of Diplomatic Security, *History of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security* (Washington, DC: Global Publishing Solutions, 2011), p. 96.
 - 26 DFPI, 1947–1948, Doc. 150: Meeting: L. Kohn – W. Porter, 28 January 1948.
 - 27 Neiditch, ‘United States Consul General Thomas C. Wasson’.
 - 28 *Ibid.*
 - 29 DFPI, 1947–1948, Doc. 409: Meeting: H. Berman - R. Neuville, 24 April 1948.
 - 30 DFPI, 1947–1948, Doc. 482: C.V. Herzog to G. Meyerson, 7 May 1948.
 - 31 DFPI, 1947–1948, Doc. 482: C.V. Herzog to G. Meyerson, 7 May 1948.
 - 32 Hahn, *Caught in the Middle East*, p. 50.
 - 33 *Ibid.*
 - 34 CIA Online Archives, Confidential Report, n.d., available at: <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP78-01617A006000050049-3.pdf> [Last accessed 13 April 2018].
 - 35 On Wasson’s time in Jerusalem see Neiditch, ‘United States Consul General Thomas C. Wasson and the End of the Palestine Mandate’.

- 36 See, e.g., DFPI, Vol. 1., Doc. 14: E. Epstein to M. Shertok, 17 May 1948; *ibid.*, Doc. 36: M. Shertok to G. Marshall, 19 May 1948; *ibid.*
- 37 DFPI, Vol. 1., Doc. 91: C. Weizmann to President Truman, 26 May 1948.
- 38 For a dated though still relevant study of the question of recognition from a legal perspective see Lauterpacht, H. *Recognition in International Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948; reprinted in 2013). In a meeting with Israel's representative in the United States, Eliahu Epstein, Under-secretary of State Lovett pointed out two main reasons underpinning Washington's hesitance on the matter of recognition: 'Israel might expand frontiers to Amman[.] Communists might conceivably acquire dominant influence in your government' – DFPI, Vol. I, 1948, Doc. 107: E. Epstein to M. Shertok, 29 May 1948.
- 39 FRUS, 1948, Vol. 5, Doc. 476: Memorandum of Conversation by the Under Secretary of State (Lovett), 21 July 1948.
- 40 See, for example, *Refugees and Rescue: The Diaries and Papers of James G. McDonald, 1933–1945*, edited by Richard Breitman, Barbara McDonald Stewart and Severin Hochberg (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007).
- 41 FRUS 1948, Vol. 5, Doc. 428: Memorandum by Mr. Robert McClintok to the Director of Office of United Nations Affairs (Rusk), 1 July 1948.
- 42 McDonald, *My Mission*, pp. 3–19; as well as, for example, FRUS 1948, Vol. 5, Doc. 398: Memorandum of Telephone Conversation, by the Under Secretary of State (Lovett), 22 June 1948.
- 43 FRUS, 1948, Vol. 5, Doc. 476: Memorandum of Conversation by the Under Secretary of State (Lovett), 21 July 1948.
- 44 See, among others, McDonald, *Envoy*, pp. 38, 44, 75, 78.
- 45 Fetter, 'Two or Three Raids Daily'.
- 46 Harry S. Truman Presidential Library (henceforth, HSTL), Charles F. Knox Jr. Papers (CFKP), Box 1, Knox to Gary, 22 November 1948, and Knox to Allan and Jane, 9 August 1948, respectively.
- 47 HSTL: CFKP, Box 1, Knox to Allan and Jane, 9 August 1948.
- 48 *Ibid.*
- 49 HSTL: CFKP, Box 1, Herbert J. Cummings to Mr. Macatee, 23 November 1948.
- 50 HSTL: CFKP, Box 1, Knox, n.d.
- 51 National Archives Records Administration (NARA), Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, RG 84, Box 1, Folder 702, Charles Knox to State Department, 13 July 1948.
- 52 NARA, FSPDS, RG 84, Box 1, Folder 800, Charles Knox to State Department, 30 July 1948.
- 53 *Ibid.*
- 54 HSTL: CFKP, Box 1, Letter Charles to Jess Knox, 17 July 1948.
- 55 *Ibid.*
- 56 DFPI, Vol. 1, Doc 362: M. Shertok to E. Epstein, 22 July 1948.
- 57 McDonald, *Envoy*, p. 76 and p. 229, respectively.
- 58 *Ibid.*, pp. 80–1.
- 59 HSTL: CFKP, Box 1, Knox to Joe, 22 August 1948.
- 60 On Lehi, also known as the Stern Gang, see: Golan, Z. *Stern: The Man and his Gang* (Tel Aviv: Yair Publishing, 2011); Heller, J. *The Stern Gang* (London: Frank Cass, 1995). On the murder of Count Bernadotte see Marton, K. *A Death in Jerusalem* (New York: Arcade, 1996).
- 61 FRUS, 1948, Vol. 5, Doc. 609: The Special Representative of the United States in Israel (McDonald) to the Secretary of State, 20 September 1948.

- 62 Rare Book and Manuscript Library (RBML), Columbia University Library (CUL), James G. McDonalds Papers (JGMP), Box 5, Folder D361, Truman to McDonald, 4 October 1948.
- 63 HSTL: CFKP, Box 1, Knox to Jess and A and Dad, 28 September 1948.
- 64 McDonald, *Envoy*, p. 131.
- 65 FRUS, 1948, Vol. 5, Doc. 476: Memorandum of Conversation by the Under Secretary of State (Lovett), 21 July 1948.
- 66 HSTL: CFKP, Box 1, Knox to Jess and A and Dad, 28 September 1948.
- 67 HSTL: CFKP, Box 1, Curtis Barnes to Jessie, 5 December 1948.
- 68 McDonald, *Envoy*, pp. 175–7. On McDonald's insistence about having Cummings join the Tel Aviv mission see McDonald, *My Mission*, p. 14.
- 69 McDonald, *Envoy*, p. 177.
- 70 FRUS 1948, Vol. 5, Doc. 578: The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Douglas) to the Secretary of State, 3 September 1948.
- 71 McDonald, *Envoy*, p. 156.
- 72 McDonald, *My Mission*, p. 61.
- 73 HSTL: CFKP, Box 1, Curtis Barnes to Jessie, 5 December 1948.
- 74 McDonald, *My Mission*, p. 61.
- 75 HSTL: CFKP, Box 1, Knox to Gary, 22 November 1948.
- 76 McDonald, *Envoy*, p. 156.
- 77 *Ibid.*, p. 186, fn. 86.
- 78 *Ibid.*, p. 171.
- 79 McDonald, *My Mission*, p. 218.
- 80 *Ibid.*, p. 89.
- 81 For the first and second versions of the Bernadotte Plan see, respectively, UNSC S/863, Text of Suggestion presented by the United Nations Mediator on Palestine to the two Parties on 28 June 1948, available at https://ecf.org.il/media_items/522 [Last accessed 13 April 2018]; and UNGA A/648, Progress Report of the United Nations Mediator on Palestine submitted to the Secretary-General for Transmission to the Members of the United Nations, available at: http://www.zionism-israel.com/hdoc/Bernadotte_plan_text_September_1948.htm [Last accessed 13 April 2018].
- 82 FRUS 1948, Vol. 5, Doc. 626: The Special Representative of the United States in Israel (McDonald) to the Secretary of State, 28 September 1948.
- 83 FRUS 1948, Vol. 5, Doc. 643: The Special Representative of the United States in Israel (McDonald) to the Secretary of State, 4 October 1948.
- 84 McDonald, *Envoy*, p. 251.
- 85 *Ibid.*, p. 260.
- 86 FRUS 1948, Vol. 5, Doc. 792: The Special Representative of the United States in Israel, Temporarily at Paris (McDonald) to the President's Special Counsel (Clifford), 26 November 1948.
- 87 *Ibid.*
- 88 McDonald, *Envoy*, p. 263; FRUS 1948, Vol. 5, Doc. 793: The Acting Chairman of the United States Delegation at Paris (Dulles) to the Secretary of State, 26 November 1948.
- 89 Interestingly, the Israelis knew this already in August: DFPI 1948 Vol. 1, Doc. 479: E. Esptein to M. Shertok, 24/6 August 1948. On this, see also Heller, 'Failure of a Mission: Bernadotte and Palestine, 1948', *Journal of Contemporary History* 14:3 (1979), pp. 515–34.
- 90 Capitalised in the original. HSTL: CFKP, Box 1, Knox to Jess, 28 December 1948.
- 91 In accordance with the military clauses of the 1936 Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of Friendship and Alliance, Morsy, L., 'The Military Clauses of the Anglo-Egyptian

- Treaty of Friendship and Alliance', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 16:1 (1984), pp. 67–97.
- 92 Ben-Dror, E. *Ralph Bunche and the Arab-Israeli Conflict: Mediation and the UN, 1947–1949* (London: Routledge, 2016).
- 93 McDonald, *Envoy*, p. 279.
- 94 FRUS 1948, Vol. 5, Doc. 838: The Special Representative of the United States in Israel (McDonald) to the Secretary of State, 20 December 1948; FRUS 1949, Vol. 6, Doc. 355: The Special Representative of the United States in Israel (McDonald) to the Secretary of State, 5 January 1949.
- 95 McDonald, *My Mission*, p. 136.
- 96 FRUS 1949, Vol. 6, Doc. 428: Memorandum by the Secretary of State to the President, 27 January 1949; DFPI 1948–1949, Vol. 2, Doc. 366: E. Elath to M. Sharett, 1 February 1949.
- 97 HSTL: CFKP, Box 1, Knox to Jess, n.d.
- 98 HSTL: CFKP, Box 1, Knox to Jess, 6 February 1949.