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Prime Minister

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Was this what you had in mind?

London SW1A 2AH

Ans Yes

18 June 1980

Dear Michael,

Recognition of Israel: Guarantees for the Non-Jewish Community

During her recent discussions with the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary about the Arab/Israel problem, the Prime Minister mentioned that she understood that the decision to recognise the State of Israel was in some way linked to a requirement about Israel's treatment of her non-Jewish citizens.

// I enclose a short note which may explain what the Prime Minister had in mind, together with a copy of the General Assembly Resolution on Partition referred to in the note.

If the Prime Minister would like this point more thoroughly looked into you will no doubt let us know.

*[Handwritten signature]*

(G G H Walden)  
Private Secretary

M O'D B Alexander Esq  
10 Downing Street  
LONDON

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## RECOGNITION OF ISRAEL: GUARANTEES FOR THE NON-JEWISH COMMUNITY

1. The United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP), which was set up to report on the Palestinian problem after it had been referred to the United Nations by the British in February 1947, published its report on 31 August 1947. The majority proposal (Canada, Czechoslovakia, Guatamala, Netherlands, Peru, Sweden and Uruguay) was that Palestine should be divided into an Arab State, a Jewish State and the City of Jerusalem. The Arab and Jewish States were to become independent, but before their independence could be recognised they must adopt a constitution in line with the Committee's recommendations and offer certain guarantees to the United Nations. The constitutions were to provide for universal suffrage and secret ballot.
2. The General Assembly resolution of 29 November 1947, which laid the basis for the partition, did not pick up UNSCOP's proposal of making recognition depend on these conditions. It did however require that each of the two new States should enact constitutions which would, among other things, guarantee equal civil, political and other rights to all citizens.
3. Israel's Proclamation of Independence on 14 May 1948 did not follow the United Nations' prescription in detail. It did however undertake to give full political equality to all citizens. (In spite of this undertaking, there was in practice discrimination; for example, the 'law of return' passed unanimously by the Knesset on 5 July 1950 discriminates between Jews and other Israeli citizens).



4. The question of recognition of Israel became a contentious political issue. The United Kingdom withheld de facto recognition until 28 January 1949 and de jure recognition until 27 April 1950. Part of the argument on recognition was whether or not Israel was abiding by the provisions of the General Assembly resolution. For example, Mr Mayhew (Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office) argued in reply to a Motion proposed in the House of Commons by Mr Lever on 10 June 1948 that Israel had failed to implement a number of United Nations' recommendations, including that providing for representation of Arabs in the Constituent Assembly of the Jewish State.

17 June 1980



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