

The Dying Hope of Palestine Commission

By NAT BARROWS

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LAKE SUCCESS, N. Y., Feb. 1—The answer from Britain is as expected: "No!"

Thus, overnight dies the desperate hope of the United Nations Palestine Partition Commission that a Jewish militia could be organized in the Holy Land prior to British abandonment of the mandate.

Grasping almost forlornly at any chance to find a way to enforce partition in lieu of the nonexistent international police force, the five harried commissioners had backed the idea of a Jewish militia of some 35,000 men.

At the same time, they were ready to support a militia for the proposed

Arab state—if any Arabs were willing to accept the offer.

But Sir Alexander Cadogan nipped the idea so quickly that the commission's liaison man, Vicente J. Francisco, delegate from the Philippines, never had a chance to begin consultations with the Jewish Agency for Palestine.

Sir Alexander told the commission, in effect:

"As long as the mandatory power retains control of Palestine it will not permit the establishment of a militia anywhere in Palestine."

That was only one blow.

He then re-emphasized Britain's unwillingness to allow the commission to enter Palestine prior to

"about two weeks" before the mandate ends, probably in mid-May.

If the commission should come earlier, Britain could not be responsible for the delegates' safety, he warned.

Despairing Zionists promptly accused Britain of deliberately trying to wreck the U. N. partition plan.

The repeated warnings to the delegates about their individual safety were, the Zionists alleged, direct attempts to create an atmosphere of uncertainty and to undermine morale.

Nonetheless, the Jewish Agency is going forward with its own plans for setting up a militia despite the obvious handicap created by inability to get organized, openly, before the

British government departs and the Arab holy war breaks all-out.

It means that the chances for effective partition by October 1 are exceedingly slim and unless the U. N. Security Council backs up the commission with some kind of international police force, those chances are practically nonexistent.

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