

# MARSHALL, THE RECOGNITION OF ISRAEL, AND ANTI-SEMITISM

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George Catlett Marshall is revered throughout the world as the principal military leader of allied forces in World War II and as one of only two generals who were awarded the Nobel Peace prize.<sup>1</sup> As Secretary of State, he was known as the father of the post-war Marshall Plan that played a crucial role in the reconstruction of Europe. Notwithstanding, he has been viewed ambivalently by Jewish Americans. This is because he opposed, as Secretary of State, the immediate unilateral recognition by the United States of the new state of Israel.

The meaning ascribed to this act by Clark Clifford “with” Richard Holbrooke, in their 1991 book, *Counsel to the President: A Memoir*, together with a retrospective editorial in the Washington Post by Holbrooke seventeen years later, did much to shape the thinking of many American Jews respecting Marshall’s motivation for opposing the immediate recognition of the new Jewish state. They attributed Marshall’s opposition, in part, to anti-Semitic staff members within the Department of State. In the words of Holbrooke:

Beneath the surface lay unspoken but real anti-Semitism on the part of some (but not all) policymakers.<sup>2</sup>

Although neither man actually claimed Marshall was personally so motivated, these writings, taken together, led many readers to infer that Marshall was one of the anti-Semitic “policymakers.” This essay is written to challenge and refute this inference. It is grossly unfair and should not be allowed to stand unchallenged so as to diminish the stature and sterling ethical character of this man.

While Marshall’s *position* opposing immediate recognition of the Jewish state upon British withdrawal from Palestine is well documented, his *motivation* for doing so is complex and not so well understood. During his tenure as Secretary of State, Marshall’s thinking evolved, beginning with enthusiastic support of the United Nations (UN) plan to partition Palestine into separate Arab and Jewish territories in 1947, but gravitating toward an effort to find an alternate arrangement involving a United Nations

trusteeship lacking an immediate guarantee of statehood. It is important to track Marshall's thinking and actions during this period to determine the reasons for his evolving judgment.

It is often inaccurately assumed that, at a climactic policy meeting at the White House on May 12, 1948, Marshall clashed openly with President Truman over the issue and the manner and timing of U.S. recognition, and that during the meeting Marshall threatened to resign his position as Secretary of State. Present at the meeting were State Department representatives (Marshall, undersecretary Robert A. Lovett, Soviet expert Charles Bohlen, White House liaison Robert McClintock, and Division of Near East Affairs member Fraser Wilkins), along with President Truman and White House staff members (special counsel Clark Clifford, administrative assistant David K. Niles, and appointments secretary Matthew J. Connelly).<sup>3</sup> Judging from a transcript of the meeting,<sup>4</sup> the fact that conflict occurred is certainly correct, although the conflict was primarily between Marshall, Lovett and Clifford. That Marshall threatened to resign is not correct.

The meeting proceeded as follows: after Lovett reviewed recent developments on the ground in Palestine, Marshall intervened to point out that it was dangerous for Jewish Agency chief Moshe Shertok to base long-term policy on temporary military success (and had said this to Shertok). Then Clifford, called upon by Truman to make a statement, outlined the case for immediate recognition of the about-to-be-created Jewish state.<sup>5</sup> This was followed by Lovett's rebuttal presenting the State Department position against immediate recognition and favoring a UN trusteeship upon British withdrawal until a truce was obtained.

At this point Marshall spoke again, with obvious anger, urging that Clifford was mistaken and, more importantly, that Clifford was a *domestic political* adviser to the President and should not play a role in a crucial discussion bearing on an important *foreign policy* matter. Marshall then stated, according to the memorandum of the discussion, that "if the President were to follow Mr. Clifford's advice and if in the election I were to vote, I would vote against the President".<sup>6</sup>

Before detailing evidence that goes to Marshall's reasoning, some additional background information is needed to frame the issue. In 1946 President Truman had approached General Marshall, then serving as special

ambassador to China (attempting, unsuccessfully but with great effort, to negotiate settlement of the Chinese civil war), to invite him home to serve as Secretary of State. Truman was counting on Marshall, whom both he and the Congress revered, to bolster the President's credibility in dealing with far eastern affairs. Upon his return, Truman promised Marshall wide policy-making latitude but Marshall explicitly rejected this unique discretion and pledged only to faithfully execute Truman's policy judgments as well as the law. Truman also told him, in a note placed on top of the briefing book left on the new Secretary's desk:

The only major political issue between the United States and the United Kingdom which may require your immediate attention is the question of Palestine . . .<sup>7</sup>

### *The Fight Over Partition*

Prior to Marshall's taking over at State in January 1947, Britain and the US had formed the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry. In April of 1946 the committee recommended that a trusteeship intended to bring Jews and Arabs together be established by the UN; that two autonomous states be created with a strong, neutral government in the south of Palestine; and that free Jewish immigration be allowed into Palestine as a whole.<sup>8</sup> When the Arabs forcefully objected, the British distanced themselves from the committee's recommendations.

At home, Congress, many state legislatures, both political parties, and many political leaders announced support of a Jewish state, or at least a homeland, in Palestine. Higher ranking military officials and the Department of State foreign service professionals opposed Zionist aims.<sup>9</sup>

Marshall in May 1947 approved the formation of the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP), composed of eleven "nonaligned countries" assigned to work out a practicable solution to resolve the security problem created by Great Britain's promised withdrawal from Palestine. Marshall approved the resulting UNSCOP majority report which favored (1) division of Palestine into a Jewish state, an Arab state, and Jerusalem; (2) a termination of the British mandate to govern Palestine by summer 1948, preceded by a transfer of authority from the UK to the UN for a brief period; and (3) "economic unity of Palestine." He stated that this partition arrangement would promote a just division of land and promote

long-term stability.<sup>10</sup> In so doing, he bucked careerist opinion in his own Department, focused in the Division of Near East Affairs and led by its chief, Loy Henderson.<sup>11</sup>

At first Marshall had few qualms about seeking partition. It was the will of President Truman (he had instructed the Department to support the plan) and it was recommended by a majority of unaligned nations included in UNSCOP. Members of the United States's UN delegation, including Ambassador to the UN Warren R. Austin, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Adlai Stevenson, applauded Marshall's role in supporting General Assembly adoption of the majority report, which included partition of Palestine as its central feature. Chaim Weizmann thanked Marshall "for the noble part which you and your administration played in solving the millennial (sic) old problem of our country and our people."<sup>12</sup>

Still, Marshall had reservations. He limited his support to those provisions UNSCOP had unanimously recommended. As prompted by Truman, he had not pressured UN members to vote either way, as he did not wish to antagonize Arab nations, and had so advised members of the US delegation to the UN.<sup>13</sup>

Marshall's support for partition had begun to wane for three reasons. First, Arab outrage with the concept of partition was intense and threats of military action and hostile actions against Jewish settlements convinced him that an all-out war would follow any attempt to implement it, pitting the combined weight of Arab nations and superior arms against the fledgling Jewish state. Thus Marshall understood that a certain degree of force would be required to implement the resolution and he communicated this observation to Truman and to Austin.<sup>14</sup> Secondly, he thought that too heavy a burden was being placed on Palestine and the British because of the number of Jews migrating there. He reacted in part by supporting legislation (the Stratton bill) that would substantially increase Jewish refugee immigration from Europe into the United States.<sup>15</sup> Finally, he had been made aware that the Soviets, who backed partition, would seek an important and unwelcome military role in any force formed to implement partition.<sup>16</sup>

He knew not only that war was coming but also concluded, as a military strategist, that the Jews were likely to lose. They were not only inferior in arms and numbers to the Arabs, but America had been demobilized and

would be of little immediate help. Also, Truman was insisting that any American force must be no more than a proportionate share of a larger multi-national force because to have the U.S. replace Britain as keeper of Palestinian peace was not the U.S. goal and would only focus Arab hostility at the U.S. Marshall was also aware of British plans to leave all strategic advantages in the hands of the Arabs as they withdrew.

Given this picture, he continued to support partition but simultaneously began a search for other means to guarantee the security of the Jewish people in Palestine when the British withdrew. The best option, in his mind, was a temporary UN trusteeship in which the UN would seek to forge a truce between the parties along with negotiations leading to shared Arab-Jewish governance. The search was to be augmented by a decision to stem the flow of arms into the region, and on December 5, 1947, he announced the implementation of an American arms embargo on the middle east.<sup>17</sup> He believed the UN had until August 1, 1948 to arrange this, as this date had been agreed to in the resolution.<sup>18</sup>

George F. Kennan, head of the State Department's planning office and a major player in shaping the Marshall Plan, now weighed in heavily. His view was that the introduction of U.S. troops into Palestine would provide only a temporary reprieve and unintendedly promote systematic slaughter of Jews in other middle eastern, Arab countries.<sup>19</sup> He also feared partition because he thought it would (1) promote competition with the USSR for Jewish favor, (2) lose US access to Arab and British interests in the middle east, (3) lead to retaliatory attacks on US citizens and interests, and (4) slow Marshall Plan operations which strongly depended on oil supplies.<sup>20</sup> He recommended a UN trusteeship and negotiations consistent with Marshall's thinking. His findings may be presumed to have influenced Marshall, as Marshall highly valued this visionary planner.

Professional opinion in the third and fourth levels of the State Department lay solidly with the Arabs. Their major argument was that access to mid-east oil reserves was necessary to protect long-term U.S. defense and domestic interests. They urged Marshall to abandon his pro-partition position, but he refused. Anti-Semitic views probably contributed to their views (later acknowledged by Lovett<sup>21</sup>).

## *Where Was Truman?*

It was a principle of Marshall's to constantly seek and follow presidential leadership on foreign policy matters. But the President, despite his clear sympathy with the survivors of the Holocaust, vacillated regarding his support for Zionist proposals, and this vacillation manifested itself in the early months of 1948. He greatly resented Zionist lobbying pressure, was shocked by acts of Jewish terrorism carried out against the British, and was aware of the need to maintain relations with the oil-rich Arabs for defense and diplomatic purposes. He was far from decided on what his course should be.

In this vacuum, Austin prepared, with Marshall's consent, a speech intended for presentation to the UN advancing the idea that the U.S. would favor a temporary UN trusteeship arrangement if the Security Council decided it could not enforce partition. A draft of the speech was sent to a vacationing Truman in Key West on February 23, 1948, asking permission for Austin to deliver it to the UN. Marshall received a positive reply from Truman and informed Austin on the same evening of the President's consent. On February 24 Austin delivered the speech to the Security Council, stating that the UN charter vested no authority in the Security Council to enforce the partition resolution, contrary to the General Assembly's earlier assumption. Force was only allowed to the UN for maintaining international peace. He asked the Security Council to decide the next step. The Council accepted the proposal, and a majority of the permanent members subsequently reported that partition could not be achieved peacefully.<sup>22</sup>

## *A Shift in US Policy*

The Austin speech constituted an apparent shift in the administration's policy toward an enlarged UN role, seemingly with Truman's blessing. U.S. support for partition had become conditional: partition should be supported so long as enforcing it did not require the use of armed force, including American forces, which exceeded Security Council authority. The public apparently agreed, showing 83 percent of the citizenry opposed to unilateral American intervention in Palestine, as well as 61 percent of American Jews.

<sup>23</sup> The second shoe fell on March 19 when:

. . . Austin announced in the Security Council that we had concluded that under existing circumstances partition could not be carried out without the

use of force and we therefore were calling for an immediate truce and for a special session of the General Assembly to consider a plan for placing Palestine under temporary trusteeship. Austin made it clear that the trusteeship proposal was not intended to prejudice the character of an eventual solution of the problem.<sup>24</sup>

Zionists were appalled and most, save Chaim Weizman, Rabbi Judas Magnes, and a few others, reacted bitterly.<sup>25</sup> President Truman privately declared he had been surprised by Austin's statement to the UN, blaming third and fourth levels of the State Department for sabotaging his policy while Marshall and Lovett were away from Washington. He also was personally embarrassed because the day before Austin's statement, he had promised Weizmann in a secret White House meeting that his major policy direction was toward an independent Jewish state and justice for the Jewish people. Publically, he said that it was necessary to have a truce before partition could be implemented, and that American policy had not changed. As Marshall wrote to Bohlen after speaking to Truman: "He had agreed to the statement but said if he had known when it was going to be made he could have taken certain measures to have avoided the political blast of the press."<sup>26</sup>

The possibility that a UN temporary trusteeship could be arranged was not far-fetched. Although White House staffers Clifford and Niles opposed the idea and thought it damaging to the Zionist cause, Truman told the press he would not have proposed it if he did not think it had a chance of working. Moshe Shertok, head of the Jewish Agency, thought it acceptable if certain conditions were met. Unfortunately, Marshall's statement to the press that both sides had accepted most points of a truce proposal caused Shertok to immediately deny he had accepted any. Just as damaging to a truce, however, was the British decision to move up its planned withdrawal date to May 14, 1948, for it strengthened the hand of less moderate elements to stress preparations for armed conflict rather than talks.<sup>27</sup>

Thus, as of late March, U.S. policy regarding Palestine was in disarray. President Truman may have been confused as to exactly what the American policy was. There is no evidence that he communicated the fact or content of his meeting with Weizmann at the White House to Marshall or Lovett, or expressed any fresh resolve which may have stemmed from the meeting. A shaky foundation for the May 12 policy confrontation had been laid, each

side assuming it had the President's support.

### *Marshall on Matters of Race and Religion*

Throughout his long military career Marshall worked consistently toward implementing values of equality, religious freedom, and fair treatment. He was a champion of democracy, openness, and freedom of speech, particularly for the rank and file.<sup>28</sup> He promoted chaplain services without favoritism, championed the welfare, education, and employment of the many ethnic groups (Puerto Ricans, southern blacks, native Americans, et al.) within the Civilian Conservation Corps. These values persisted after WW II and are seen in his efforts as a cabinet secretary in both State and Defense Departments and as president of the American Red Cross. One outstanding example was his lonely initiative in the appointment of a Jewish woman as Assistant Secretary of Defense, Anna Rosenberg.

### *The Rosenberg Appointment*

Marshall was appointed Secretary of Defense by President Truman at the start of the Korean War in 1950. Because his earlier attempts (in 1941 and 1945) to convince the Congress to build a strong peacetime military force through universal military training had been spurned, and because of rapid demobilization following WW II, Marshall was hard-pressed to recruit or conscript qualified military personnel as warfare loomed. To help in this crucial aspect of the war effort, he searched for a new assistant secretary of defense for manpower development who had the potential to both find and rapidly develop qualified military personnel for immediate service in the field. His quest focused on Anna Rosenberg.

Born in Hungary in 1902, Anna Lederer (she later married Julius Rosenberg) immigrated with her family to America in 1912. During World War II, she served in numerous government positions including regional director of the War Manpower Commission (1942 to 1945), and ran a consulting business in which she dealt with large businesses and public figures. She was awarded the Medal of Freedom in 1945, and was the first female recipient of the Medal for Merit in 1947. When, in late 1950, Marshall nominated her for the position of Assistant Secretary of Defense, he saw no clear rival to her in terms of qualifications.

Because her name was Rosenberg and her husband had the same name as

the convicted nuclear spy Julius Rosenberg (and because she was Jewish, a woman, and born in Hungary), Joseph McCarthy and other right-wing senators launched a campaign to discredit her and keep her from the nomination. Members of Marshall's own staff advised against pursuing the Rosenberg nomination on the grounds that it would take up valuable time and probably be unsuccessful. Marshall told them they would work for Rosenberg or they would not work for him. He personally and enthusiastically testified for Rosenberg before the senate armed services committee and the opposition fell apart. Anna Rosenberg was affirmed as Assistant Secretary of Defense for manpower affairs in November 1950 and served with great distinction in the post until January 1953.

### *Interaction with Jewish Leaders and Advisors*

Marshall worked closely with and relied upon the friendship of prominent Jewish-Americans before, during, and after World War II. Henry Morgenthau, the Secretary of the Treasury, was greatly influenced by Marshall's approach to U.S. Army development prior to WWII and advocated his ideas to President Roosevelt. Bernard Baruch, not a public official but a confidant of Roosevelt's, was close to Marshall and served as an important conduit between the two men. Ben Shames, a prominent Jewish economist, was head of the Office of Economic Analysis within the State Department and was assigned by Marshall to conduct important analyses which assisted in laying a foundation for passage of the European Recovery Program (the Marshall Plan).<sup>29</sup>

Marshall met several times with Palestinian Jewish leaders, receiving their advice and assessing the significance of their views. These included Weizmann, Abba Eban, David Ben-Gurion, Shertok, and Magnes. The first four represented the cream of political leadership before and after independence was achieved. Rabbi Magnes was president of the University of Jerusalem and led a faction within Palestine opposed to creation of a unilateral Jewish state, favoring instead a bilateral, cooperative arrangement with the Arabs and negotiations. Marshall met and spoke with him at length, leading one to speculate about the influence Magnes may have exerted. Unfortunately, little is recorded about their exchanges. With Shertok, conflict was evident, but not hostility.<sup>30</sup>

### *Record on Ethnic and Racial Equality*

Over the strong objections of segregationists and sexists within the regular army, Marshall was able to put into the field some critical non-white military units and the Women's Auxilliary Army Corps (WAAC). The 92<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division (African-American "buffalo" division), the much-decorated 442<sup>nd</sup> Regiment (Japanese-American volunteers), and the celebrated Tuskegee airmen of the 332<sup>nd</sup> Fighter Group of the Army Air Corps (African-American), were created and placed in important combat roles, largely at the insistence and action of General Marshall.

The concept of a women's military auxiliary was first realized in practice during WW II in Britain. It appealed to Marshall primarily on efficiency and productivity grounds. He led the fight for the corps's creation in the Congress, seeking funding and higher rank and status for its leadership. Vigorous efforts were needed to overcome congressional opposition based on prejudice and sexual stereotyping.

Marshall did in fact make certain concessions to southern segregationists in adopting local practices in southern army training bases. In addition to insisting on all-black units and black officers, he held off on the integration of black and white personnel *within* individual units in an effort to keep racial conflict from impeding the general war effort. This position was defensible at the time because the urgency of the general goal of military preparation did not easily permit simultaneous attention to massive and controversial social reform.<sup>31</sup>

### *Support of Jewish Immigration Into the United States*

Marshall worked with eight members of Congress on the Stratton bill in 1947 seeking the admission of 400,000 European Jews into the United States. He testified before the House Immigration and Naturalization committee, arguing that the United States should shoulder a larger share of the burden of Jewish resettlement.<sup>32</sup> He cited four alternatives that existed for dealing with the situation of the displaced: (1) forcible repatriation, (2) closing the camps and returning victims back to Germany and the German economy, (3) indefinite separate maintenance within Germany in assembly centers, and (4) resettlement in other countries, including the United States. Quickly dismissing the first three, he turned to arguments of the bill's

opponents that Jews should be settled in western European nations to help out their economies and societies. With Shames's help, Marshall pointed out that most of these countries were overpopulated and had an over-abundance of idle manpower. He continued:

But the problem is of such magnitude that both we and the South American countries must also take steps to aid in its solution. . . . We had hoped a year ago that admission of displaced persons into Latin America and other countries outside of Europe would solve the whole problem but we now know that it will not. Shiploads have moved to Paraguay and Brazil and some are now on their way to Venezuela. Other plans are in the making. But we cannot, I feel, sit back ourselves and expect other countries to make all the positive efforts to solve this problem in which we are so directly concerned. . . . If we practice what we preach, if we admit a substantial number . . . , then . . . (with what others are doing and will do) we can actually bring an end to this tragic situation. In so doing, we will also confirm our moral leadership and demonstrate we are not retreating behind the Atlantic Ocean. . . . (W)e are actually in a better position to receive a substantial number of these people than any other nation. We have numbers of the stock already in this country who know their language and who have the resources and the interest to assume the task of fitting a relatively small number of their kinsmen into our vast economy, without expense to this Nation in their resettlement, and with a reasonable assurance that they will not become public charges.<sup>33</sup>

Marshall's defense of the bill became the primary target of the bill's opponents. In the questioning that followed his prepared statement, he continued to insist that the U.S. needed to take the lead on the issue.

Less than two weeks before the British withdrawal, Marshall wrote:

. . . I had been pressing for the admission of a substantial number of displaced persons into the United States, as I felt that the integrity of our whole position depended on our willingness to accept displaced persons. Some of the strongest opposition had come from persons whose only reason for opposing the measure was that they did not like Jews. . . . I now felt more optimistic about securing the passage of such a measure.<sup>34</sup>

Unfortunately, the bill was ultimately defeated.

## *Keeping Faith With the United Nations*

Like his former boss Franklin Roosevelt, Marshall placed high hopes in the United Nations for keeping peace in the post-war world. Along with President Truman and the entire US delegation, he had been the object of criticism from other UN members for switching positions from partition support to trusteeship in February-March. To unilaterally recognize the Jewish state as soon as the British withdrew, and to do so without prior notice to the UN or even to the American delegation, was certain to undermine further the United States's leadership in the world body. Lovett had advanced this point at the May 12 meeting as a reason to stay with the effort to create the trusteeship. Eleanor Roosevelt wrote to Marshall after the recognition decision was announced:

The way in which the recognition of Palestine came about has created complete consternation in the United Nations. . . . Much as I wanted the Palestine State recognized, I would not have wanted it done without the knowledge of our representatives in the United Nations who had been fighting for our changed position [i.e., a truce plus a temporary UN trusteeship]. . . . Several of the representatives of other governments have been to talk to me since, and have stated quite frankly that they do not see how they could ever follow the United States' lead because the United States changed so often without any consultation. There seems to be no sense of interlocking information between the United States delegation and the State Department on the policy making level. . . . More and more the other delegates seem to believe that our whole policy is based on antagonism to Russia and that we think in terms of going it alone rather than in terms of building up a leadership within the United Nations. . . . I have seldom seen a more bitter, puzzled, discouraged group of people than some of those whom I saw on Saturday. Some of them I know are favorable to the rights of the Jews in Palestine, but they are just nonplused by the way in which we do things.<sup>35</sup>

She was also reflecting Marshall's unhappiness with being blind-sided by the White House. He told Truman in a meeting on May 17:

. . . we must proceed (relative to the arms embargo resolution adopted by the UN in April) in this matter with extreme care or we will give a final kick to the UN. . . . I went on to say that we [Marshall, Lovett and the U.S. delegation] felt that the United States had hit its all-time low before the UN. . . ."<sup>36</sup>

## *Reflecting on the May 12<sup>th</sup> Meeting*

Marshall did not consider himself a member of the Democratic party. He had requested as a condition of his appointment as Secretary of State exemption from party obligations and expectations. And, as a matter of principle, he deferred to the President on all policy matters. He understood the political world, but wished to stand clear of its machinations. Although he admired Truman greatly and deferred to him as a matter of constitutional duty, he was yet made uncomfortable that any foreign policy issue should be decided in whole or in part on the basis of domestic political considerations. This view goes far in explaining his negative reactions at the White House meeting.

Marshall frankly regarded Clifford as a “a pip-squeak lawyer” (Lovett’s recollection) with no real expertise in foreign policy matters, so why, he reasoned, should Clifford be in a position to oppose Lovett’s and Marshall’s argument for pursuing a temporary UN trusteeship? The suspicion that Clifford was maneuvering Truman into factoring into the recognition decision an election campaign strategy undoubtedly unsettled Marshall, a mood which he rarely allowed to overtake the priority he gave to the presidential role.

Still, Truman concluded the meeting by seemingly agreeing with Marshall, leaving Marshall and Lovett with the impression their view had prevailed over Clifford’s. Lovett only got the opposite news from Clifford by phone afterwards. How Lovett broke the news to Marshall and how Marshall reacted is unknown. Clifford convinced Lovett that Truman was rock-solid at not wishing to delay recognition even an hour or two beyond the end of the British mandate. A deal was subsequently cut by Clifford and Lovett which Lovett sold to Marshall: while *de facto* recognition would be forthcoming upon Britain’s withdrawal, official U.S. support of *de jure* recognition would be delayed until the new nation had a name, settled borders, and a plan to create an acceptable constitutional framework. Clifford asked Lovett to assure Marshall that he, Lovett, had indeed been speaking for Truman at the meeting.<sup>37</sup> Marshall was probably not satisfied with the compromise, but he agreed not to publically object and that the State Department would implement the action. Certainly, his relations with Truman remained excellent until his death.<sup>38</sup>

*Some Thoughts About the Confrontation*

The record of Marshall's entire career clearly supports the conclusion that Marshall typically acted on the basis of national interest, and never upon racial or religious prejudice. The evidence further suggests he was sensitive to the plight of the Jewish people in Palestine, threatened as they were by superior arms and British connivance. In other words, while it is possible, although debatable, to agree with Clifford's argument for immediate recognition of Israeli statehood, it is unfair to accept his presumptive analysis of Marshall's motives for opposing it.

This is precisely the question that Forrest C. Pogue, Marshall's major biographer, sought to answer in his interview with Lovett on August 29, 1973. Lovett told Pogue that as of May 12, 1948, Marshall was not in daily command at the State Department because of ill health and distraction with other matters (European economic recovery, the Soviet blockade of Berlin, Soviet takeover of Czechoslovakia, and negotiations with Spain), as well as his continuing efforts with the American UN delegation to manage events in Palestine. He thus ceded much of the running of the agency to Lovett. Marshall, he said, was probably not fully aware of internal conflict within the State Department on the Palestine question ("I don't think that General Marshall had seen some of the contradictory papers which had been submitted at that point").<sup>39</sup> He noted that some of the pro-Arab position papers were based on the size of the Arab world and its immense oil reserves, but conceded "there were some among them who were also inclined to be anti-Semitic."<sup>40</sup>

It was Lovett's view that Clifford probably was aware of these papers when he referred to the State Department's "interference" in the President's decision prerogatives regarding the recognition decision:

I think, I suspect [that] what happened was [that] Clifford probably said, we are going to make this announcement [recognizing the Jewish state]. He hadn't told the "Old Man" [Marshall] about it; in fact he hadn't told me about it.<sup>41</sup>

In effect, Clifford, a domestic political advisor to the President, could be seen as usurping the Secretary of State's role in recommending whether and how recognition was to be effected (Truman had not said at the meeting that Clifford was speaking for the President). Such perceived effrontery could

well have triggered Marshall's anger.

It may be, as Truman himself said, that the President saw eye to eye with Marshall, Lovett, and Austin on most matters involving Palestine.<sup>42</sup> However, he was disturbed by what he termed as opposition to his decision within the third and fourth echelons of the State Department. He complained that while "it was always understood that eventually we would recognize any responsible government the Jews might set up," the "striped-pants boys" would like nothing better than to "sabotage the President's policy." Whatever he may have felt, at no time did Truman indicate that the disagreement was between himself and Marshall. Indeed, it was a matter of faith for Marshall to always defer to the President on political questions, and immediate recognition was a presidential decision that Lovett regarded as 95 percent political.<sup>43</sup>

It cannot be said with certainty that Israel would have been better served by a UN trusteeship, negotiations toward a truce and a bilateral state. That very debate was going on in Palestine between Magnes and his allies on one side and Ben-Gurion, Weizmann, and Shertok on the other. But there is no more logic in arguing that Marshall or Lovett was motivated by anti-Jewish sentiment than to argue that Magnes was similarly motivated. Although one of the hallmarks of Marshall's management style was to give great weight to the experts who worked under his leadership, it appears from the way he handled the Palestinian issue that here he placed his trust in Lovett, Bohlen, Austin, Kennan, and members of the U.S. delegation to the UN rather than upon Henderson or others in the Division of Near East Affairs.

All this leaves the question of why Clifford and Holbrooke hinted at anti-Semitism on the part of Marshall and his lieutenants at State, imputing lower-level State Department prejudices to them. Concerning Marshall, it is likely that Clifford and Holbrooke lacked fuller knowledge and appreciation of Marshall's character and actions throughout his career. It is more probable that Clifford was wounded by Marshall's personal attack upon him at the pivotal White House meeting on May 12, 1948. Clifford in 1948 was deeply committed to the cause of Jewish independence and was not a neutral player. He could easily have been moved to ascribe to Marshall less than honorable motives to compensate for the insult he had suffered at Marshall's hand in front of the President.

Although Clifford's career began well before 1948, it is instructive that his recollections in *Counsel to the President* covering his public life begin with the events of the May 12 meeting, and these stayed with him throughout his career. The book's very first sentence reads:

My mind's eye roams over forty-five years of a life in Washington. . . . But my memory comes to rest first on a meeting in the President's office on a Wednesday afternoon in the spring of 1948, when the Truman Administration faced a decision whose consequences are still with us today. This is where I shall start. The rest will follow.<sup>44</sup>

Clifford recalled that, even before the meeting, "Marshall did not like me."<sup>45</sup> He describes his sympathy with and devotion to the concept of a Jewish state and his leadership, along with the President and David Niles, of the partition initiative. He made several disparaging remarks about Marshall's behavior, most notably his reference to "a righteous God-damned Baptist tone" that the matter should not be decided on the basis of politics and if domestic politics were not involved Clifford would not be in attendance.<sup>46</sup>

Holbrooke, famous for his intellect and negotiation skills displayed in Yugoslavian and Pakistani affairs during the 1990's and 2000's, may have been speaking from an enthusiasm for Jewish statehood. He was a Jewish man who identified with the valiant efforts of the Jews in defending their new homeland. As a respected scholar he had researched anti-Semitic tendencies of State Department professionals of the era. It is likely that he would not cast Marshall in this role, hence his editorial comment that "not all" policymakers at State were anti-Semitic.

### *A Final Note*

It is the position of the author that Marshall sincerely believed that a UN trusteeship was a better pathway to resolution of the Palestinian problem, for Jews, Arabs, and Americans, than partition. He probably would have supported recognition at a time beyond the date of British withdrawal, in particular because recognition was a decision the President had the constitutional right to make. Had the White House's final decision not been so abrupt and embarrassing for our prestige in the UN, had he been given clearer guidance by Truman as to what the latter was determined to do, and

had he been allowed time by the British to further pursue a truce or at least to try to build a multi-national peace-keeping force to prevent all-out war, a conflict with the President might have been avoided. It is likely that the timing and manner of the recognition decision, as much as Clifford's political role in the decision process, were the sources of Marshall's unhappiness.

In light of recurring Arab-Israeli wars, border hostilities, and mutual recrimination over the past sixty-five years since independence was achieved, it is not difficult to argue that a UN trusteeship and a shared governance approach, as difficult as they would have been able to work out in the climate then existing, would have been a preferable course to follow. Anti-Jewish and particularly anti-American animosity in the Arab world may well have been far less common and much Jewish, Arab, American and other western nation bloodletting avoided. Even a simple delay of recognition for a reasonable period—while the U.S. and UN worked to meet Palestinian and Israeli needs—might have reaped large long-term benefits. To term Marshall's approach an anti-Jewish option, let alone one due to anti-Semitic attitudes, does a disservice to the idea of rational discussion as well as the efforts of many Jewish activists of the time who supported this course of action.<sup>47</sup>

Marshall acted throughout his time as Secretary of State fairly and with balance regarding the perplexing problem of Palestine. No convincing case has been made, either by Clifford, Holbrooke, or other observer or historian, that he acted in any way that could be termed prejudicial to the cause of the Jewish people. It would be a travesty to allow to stand any reading of the historical record that would impugn the reputation of this great American who contributed so much to the nation and world, and whose reputation for integrity and fairness is without equal in the annals of American public life.

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