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NEAR EAST-AFRICA

1. PALESTINE: Developments in Israeli-Arab negotiations---
Although Foreign Minister Sharet has informed US Ambassador McDonald in Tel Aviv that Israel is prepared to receive 100,000 Arab refugees, US representative Porter on the Palestine Conciliation Commission (PCC) reports from Lausanne that Israel's representative Shiloah, in stating that Tel Aviv would accept a specific number of refugees, failed to mention a specific figure. Porter adds that Shiloah also made it clear that actual repatriation must await: (a) preparation of an overall repatriation and resettlement plan plus assurance of its implementation, and (b) convincing evidence of progress toward a final peace settlement between Israel and the Arab states. On the territorial issue, Porter reports that Shiloah indicated Israel would stubbornly oppose any PCC plan involving reduction of any territory now held by Israel. Porter comments that he is not encouraged by the Shiloah conversations, but that he will press on in his attempts to discover if the possibility of an agreement exists.

Meanwhile, the Department of State has informed Porter at Lausanne of its considered opinion that the PCC should continue in its capacity of a "go-between" for the disputants and that anything resembling "a PCC plan" should be avoided at this time. While urging Porter to avoid committing the US to responsibility for sponsoring a specific number of Arab refugees for repatriation, the Department adds that Israel should absorb 250,000 more refugees than the 150,000 presently estimated by Israel to be within its boundaries

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