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EISENHOWER CONFERS WITH LEADING MEMBERS OF CONGRESS ON MIDDLE EAST

WASHINGTON, Jan. 1. (JTA) -- Thirteen leading members of the Senate and 16 members of the House were presented today by President Eisenhower with an outline of the developments in the Middle East and on his new plan which he expects to bring before Congress, asking for authorization to use economic, political and, if necessary, military measures to counter Soviet penetration into the Middle East.

The closed meeting, which took place in the White House, was attended also by Vice President Richard M. Nixon, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, Secretary of Defense Charles E. Wilson and high military officials. The briefing of the members of the Congress lasted several hours.

Meanwhile, State Department sources today stated that the United States attaches top priority to Israeli troop evacuations, not only from Sinai but also from the Gaza Strip. The United States, they said, is mindful of renewed fedayeen raids, but feels this is a secondary issue and feels that Israel should first withdraw from the Gaza Strip as well as from Sinai.

(The New York Times today reported in a cable from Cairo that two top United Nations officials who spent five days in Egypt have assured Egyptian President Nasser that the UN will exert "the utmost pressure" on Israel to speed its withdrawal "behind the 1949 armistice lines." One of the officials is reported to have told Col. Nasser that UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjold was "extremely eager to hasten the Israeli withdrawal from the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip and the Gulf of Akaba.")

The State Department official pointed out that the Department regards Israel occupation of the Gaza Strip equally as objectionable as occupation by Israel of Sinai territory. The November 2 resolution of the United Nations is being stressed here, with special reference to the call for prompt withdrawal "behind" the 1949 armistice lines.

It was made clear here today that the United States will resist any attempt by Israel to link withdrawal with fedayeen raids, passage through Suez, or any other matter. Israel must first retreat behind the old armistice lines and then the Israel complaints against Egypt will be considered by the United Nations, according to the State Department.

Another high government source voiced similar views, and said Israel cannot expect resumption of U.S. economic aid until the situation is "clarified" by Israeli withdrawal. American aid has been suspended, in effect, since the outbreak of the recent hostilities.

(A resolution opposing any Israeli retreat from the Gaza Strip was adopted in Tel Aviv today by the General Zionist Party at a meeting of its executive committee.)

Report that Israel Favors Eisenhower's New Plan is Denied

JERUSALEM, Jan. 1. (JTA) -- The Israel Government today denied that any of her officials told the press that Israel is favoring President Eisenhower's new plan for the Middle East and would even be willing to consider the stationing of foreign troops on her territory, if Eisenhower's collective security program requires it.

The denial was issued from the Prime Minister's office. It referred to a report which appeared in a New York newspaper attributing the above allegations to a spokesman of the Israel Government. "Nobody could possibly make any statement on something nobody has yet seen," a spokesman of the Prime Minister's office said. A similar statement was made tonight by Prime Minister David Ben Gurion in the Israel Parliament.

(In New York, Dr. Emanuel Neumann, president of the Zionist Organization of America, questioned the implications of President Eisenhower's reported plan to defend the entire Middle East against Soviet aggression. In a speech over the American Broadcasting Co. radio network, Dr. Neumann asked whether Israel can rely on American support in the event Israel's enemies continue their pressure.)

Israel's Foreign Minister Meets with U. N. Secretary General

UNITED NATIONS, N. Y., Jan. 1. (JTA) -- Mrs. Golda Meir, Israel's Foreign Minister, conferred yesterday for about two hours with United Nations Secretary General Dag Hammarskjold on major problems concerning the Middle East situation.

U. S. AMBASSADOR HOLDS URGENT MEETING WITH BEN GURION ON SINAI ISSUE

JERUSALEM, Jan. 1. (JTA) -- An urgent two-hour meeting was held here last night by United States Ambassador Edward B. Lawson with Israel's Prime Minister David Ben Gurion, at the former's urgent request.

Although the content of the unusually long meeting was not disclosed, it is assumed that the talk had to do with Israel's stand on its withdrawal from Sinai as presented to Secretary of State John Foster Dulles last Friday in Washington by Israel's Foreign Minister Mrs. Golda Meir.

An extraordinary meeting of the Israel Cabinet today heard reports on Mr. Ben Gurion's talk last night with the U.S. Ambassador as well as on Mrs. Meir's talk in Washington with Secretary Dulles. An official communique, issued after the Cabinet meeting, said that "after exhaustive discussion" the Cabinet approved instructions to be sent to Israel's delegation at the United Nations and to all Israel embassies abroad.

The nature of the instructions decided upon by the Cabinet were not disclosed. However, it is believed that they include a reiteration of Israel's opposition to unilateral compliance by Israel alone with the November 2 resolution of the United Nations which called upon Israel to withdraw from Sinai and on all governments concerned to cease their hostilities.

Israel Puzzled by Lack of U. S. Understanding; Wants Guarantees

It is understood that, while complying with the UN resolution and continuing its withdrawal from Sinai, Israel expects also to receive guarantees that Egypt too will comply with this resolution and will cease the Suez blockade against Israel as well as the raids of Arab commandos on Israel.

The absence of any indication of American understanding of the seriousness of the Arab commando attacks within Israel, which have been renewed and even intensified since the United Nations passed its November 2 resolution, is creating among the population here the same feeling which prevailed before Israel's entrance into Sinai. Israelis are beginning to feel again that Israel must by herself assure the conditions of her own security. These sentiments are growing all the more because Egyptian circles openly assume responsibility for the fedayeen commando attacks and also clearly indicate Egypt's intention to continue the blockade against Israel shipping.

Meanwhile, authoritative circles today revealed that, as of January 7, there will be no Israeli forces in Sinai west of the line running south of el-Arish. This represents a three-day advance over the date announced by United Nations Secretary General Dag Hammarskjold. From January 7, the greater part of Sinai will be evacuated by Israeli troops, these sources stated.

ISRAEL WARNS U. N. ON FEDAYEEN ATTACKS; SAYS THEY ENDANGER PEACE

UNITED NATIONS, N. Y., Jan. 1. (JTA) -- Israel today warned the United Nations that the continuing attacks inside Israel by Egyptian-trained fedayeen commandos "will have the most serious implications for the peace and security of the area" if they are allowed to continue unchecked.

The warning was made in a communication from Abba Eban, head of Israel's delegation here, to Secretary General Dag Hammarskjold. It was the third communication on the subject written by Mr. Eban, other communications on this matter having been addressed to Mr. Hammarskjold on December 3 and December 18.

"Since the last letter," Mr. Eban wrote, "in which I drew your attention to the renewal by Egypt of fedayeen activities," nine more attacks have been carried out by fedayeen gangs "directed by Egypt." The attacks, wrote the Israel representative, came from bases in Jordan. The Egyptian Government is responsible for these attacks, it was pointed out.

To support his charges against Egypt, Mr. Eban quoted Radio Cairo as having boasted on December 24: "Arab governments are training fedayeen and instructing them in war fare which is neither forbidden nor shameful. The government of Egypt is organizing fedayeen and instilling them with readiness to fight. This too is legitimate, this is an honor for the government of Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon and other governments." Another Radio Cairo broadcast quoted by Mr. Eban had stated that, if Israel prevented the use of the Gaza area as a base for fedayeen, "there are many other places which could be used for that purpose."

Israel, Mr. Eban wrote to the UN chief, "is still awaiting the receipt of assurances against the renewal of Egyptian belligerence by sea and by land. In the light of the renewal of fedayeen activities, the indispensable character of such assurances become increasingly manifest." He asked Mr. Hammarskjold to circulate the contents of the letter to all members of the General Assembly.

MOSCOW DENIES REPORT ON RENEWING SOVIET OIL DELIVERIES TO ISRAEL

LONDON, Jan. 1. (JTA) -- Pravda, official organ of the Soviet Communist Party, denied today that the Soviet Union is planning to renew oil deliveries to Israel. The Moscow paper termed the report "slandorous and provocative," and declared that it is intended "to cause trouble between Russia and the Arab states."

Pravda also denied that Alexander Abramov, Soviet Ambassador to Israel, who is about to return to the Jewish State, discussed resumption of oil deliveries with any authoritative government leader. Moscow cut off oil deliveries to Israel, and recalled Abramov after Israel had launched the Sinai campaign, but Russia is scheduled to send Abramov back to his Israel post this week.

ISRAELI FIRMS TO FILE DAMAGE CLAIMS AGAINST THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT

JERUSALEM, Jan. 1. (JTA) -- Israeli oil companies that are partners to this country's oil agreement with the Soviet Union are preparing to file damage claims against Russia for abrogation of the oil pact and interruption of the flow of oil from that country.

Claims can be submitted, under the agreement, to arbitration by the Moscow Chambers of Commerce Trade Court which, according to Israeli trade circles here, has been found in the past to be fair. One previous Israeli arbitration proceeding before that court had been adjudicated satisfactorily, these sources said.

Observers here see the Kremlin's capping of the oil flow to Israel as a "typical case" of the misuse of economic pressure for political purposes.

ISRAEL NEGOTIATES NO ALLIANCE WITH FRANCE, BEN GURION TELLS KNFSSET

JERUSALEM, Jan. 1. (JTA) -- Premier David Ben Gurion denied in parliament today that any negotiations for an Israeli alliance "are being conducted with France or with any other country." Mr. Ben Gurion made the statement in answer to a question by a member of parliament representing the left-wing Mapam Party, adding: "We are content with the effective cooperation and mutual friendship between Israel and France."

Paying tribute to French aid in this country's recent military campaign, Mr. Ben Gurion declared he considers it his duty to increase Franco-Israeli cooperation. "As a result of that cooperation," he stated, "the Egyptian dictator was prevented from carrying out his designs to annihilate Israel. I am sure that the entire Jewish people is grateful to France for her assistance to Israel in this last fateful year."

A message of friendship from France to Israel, in observance of the New Year, was broadcast on the radio here today from Premier Guy Mollet of France. After expressing "admiration" for the Israeli people and army, M. Mollet stated: "Israel can expect France's help in achieving a just peace in the Middle East."

55,000 IMMIGRANTS ENTERED ISRAEL IN 1956, JEWISH AGENCY REPORTS

JERUSALEM, Jan. 1. (JTA) -- A total of 55,000 immigrants came into Israel in 1956, marking a 53 percent increase as compared with 1955, and representing the heaviest influx of immigrants into this country in any single year since 1951.

These were among figures made public here today by the Jewish Agency, which announced that 55,000 more immigrants are expected to flow into Israel during the first nine months of 1957.

A special fund of 1,000,000 Israeli pounds (\$550,000) has been set up by the Agency and the Israel Federation of Labor to help support and absorb into the country's economy the immigrants arriving from Egypt as a result of the expulsion of Jews from that country. More than 500 Jews have arrived from Egypt so far, and many of them are craftsmen and professionals.

Among the Egyptian Jews are a number of Karaites, a Jewish sect dating back to the Babylonian exile. The rabbinate here has received assurances that the Karaites will be given special protection toward retaining their own identity. The Karaites, since Babylonian times, reject all Talmudic interpretations of the Bible, and oppose what they call "repressive rabbinic law."

10,000 JEWS REGISTER WITH RED CROSS FOR EMIGRATION FROM EGYPT

GENEVA, Jan. 1. (JTA) -- More than 10,000 stateless Egyptian Jews have registered for emigration from Egypt at a special Red Cross section opened in the offices of the rabbinate in Cairo, according to H. A. Goodman, chairman of the European executive of Agudat Israel.

The first boatload of these Egyptian Jews will leave Alexandria soon for Europe, where they will be given assistance by Jewish organizations and by the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Goodman stated.

U. S. INVESTORS TO CONSTRUCT OIL PIPELINE FROM HAIFA TO TEL AVIV

JERUSALEM, Jan. 1. (JTA) -- Construction of a six-inch oil pipeline from Haifa to Tel Aviv, at a cost of 2,000,000 Israeli pounds (\$1,100,000), will be started this week. The pipeline is expected to bring to Tel Aviv 500,000 tons of refined petroleum products annually.

The pipeline is being built by a private company of American investors. The Tel Aviv terminal, costing an additional sum equal to the sum spent for the pipeline, will also be a private enterprise, being built jointly by Shell Oil, Mobiloil and Delek Israel Oil Company.

An agreement for resumption of oil drillings halted while the Sinai campaign was under way, and for beginning of new drillings, was reached here today at a conference by Minister of Development Mordehai Bentov with representatives of Israeli and foreign oil companies.

Mr. Bentov requested the foreign oil companies that have prospecting rights in this country to resume their drillings. Israel companies had continued their work while the military campaign was under way in the Sinai Peninsula. But many of the projects previously undertaken by the foreign firms were halted, principally because many of the foreign oil experts and technicians left the country while the fighting was on.

The Minister of Development asked intensification of the search for oil to increase the country's supply during the present fuel crisis. The oil companies agreed with Mr. Bentov to rent experts to one another, and to rent unused equipment so that all drillings might be stepped up.

AMERICAN JEWISH CONGRESS INFORMED OF U. S. INTEREST IN EGYPTIAN JEWS

NEW YORK, Jan. 1. (JTA)-- Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., permanent United States representative at the United Nations, has informed the American Jewish Congress that he shares its concern about reports of the plight of the Jews in Egypt. In a letter to Dr. Israel Goldstein, AJC president, Ambassador Lodge said that the State Department "will keep this matter under active surveillance."

Ambassador Lodge's letter, which was dated December 27, was in reply to a telegram sent to the U. S. delegation to the United Nations, expressing concern over continuing reports that "the Nasser Government is pursuing a program of depriving Jews of their livelihood, despoiling their property and forcing their departure from a land where they have dwelt for centuries."

In his reply to the telegram, Ambassador Lodge declared: "The Department of State has been seeking to obtain on a continuing basis an accurate picture of the situation in Egypt in the light of the many conflicting assertions in the matter. Abnormal circumstances arising from the hostilities there have made complete reporting of such events very difficult."

"Nevertheless," Ambassador Lodge's letter continued, "the United States Ambassador in Cairo has brought to the attention of the Government of Egypt the deep concern of the United States Government over the reports. Pending further clarification of the actual situation with respect to the treatment of Jews in Egypt, the Department will keep this matter under active surveillance with a view to determining any further steps which might be helpful in the circumstances."

Ambassador Lodge called attention to the fact that, on December 21, the United States made a statement "expressing its concern from the rostrum of the General Assembly, in order to put us on record before the world body as abhorring such practices as have been alleged."

ISRAEL STARTS ANTI-POLIO DRIVE; INOCULATES 120,000 INFANTS

JERUSALEM, Jan. 1. (JTA) Medical teams assisted by women acting as volunteer clerks today launched "Operation Polio," a countrywide campaign in which 120,000 children--including 20,000 Arab children--between the ages of six months and 3 years will be inoculated with anti-polio vaccine.

The intensive campaign, which has been carefully planned in advance, is being carried out simultaneously in cities, towns and rural areas. Volunteers from Hadassah, and other women's organizations are aiding "Operation Polio," which is being conducted by the Ministry of Health and the National Polio Foundation. The vaccine being used is Salk vaccine, obtained from the United States. Vaccine produced in this country will be used after its safety has been confirmed by Danish and American laboratories which are now testing it.

CANADIAN JEWS BOUGHT \$4,500,000 WORTH OF ISRAEL BONDS IN 1956

MONTREAL, Jan. 1. (JTA) -- Canadian Jewry purchased a total of \$4,500,000 worth of Israel Bonds during 1956, it was reported today by Martin Newmark, general manager of the State of Israel Bond Organization in Canada. The Canadian Jewish community of 200,000 men, women and children has purchased a total of \$15,500,000 in Israel Bonds since the campaign was started slightly less than four years ago.