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CONCERN GROWS IN WASHINGTON OVER SYRIAN THREATS AGAINST ISRAEL

WASHINGTON, Aug. 23, (JTA) -- Reports of an announcement in Syria today by the Syrian Army Chief of Staff that Syria had decided to launch a "war of liberation" against Israel have attracted the notice of the State Department which is increasingly concerned about the strident tone of Arab threats.

Today's dispatches from Damascus quoted the Syrian Chief of Staff as saying that his country was ready to go ahead with "a war of liberation to regain Palestine." He said the recent aerial clash in the Lake Tiberias area was "the forerunner of future battles." He cited the "liberation wars in Viet Nam and Algeria" as examples of "wars of determination" to be followed by the Arab masses against Israel. "America has to kneel to the gallant Vietnamese," the Syrian Chief of Staff said, and indicated that the time was ripe for "liberation" warfare against Israel while the United States was preoccupied in Viet Nam.

State Department officials said they were awaiting official reports on the admittedly serious threats by the Syrian Chief of Staff. It was noted that such a threat from a Syrian government military authority caused more concern than similar utterances by such non-governmental agitators as Ahmed Shukaary, chairman of the so-called Palestine Liberation Organization.

Authorities are troubled because United States influence in Syria is less than it is in any other Arab state. The Syrians are regarded as the most irresponsible of the Arab states and some subordinate military officer could set in motion an escalating conflict that might embroil the whole frontier and region.

Possibility of Syrian 'Limited War' Against Israel Seen

There was thought in some quarters here that Syria would like to wage a limited war against Israel through guerrilla and underground means -- protected by some forthcoming Soviet policy declaration against Israeli reprisals. The Syrians, in this sense, would seek a privileged sanctuary from which to wage a "liberation" campaign against Israel.

However, State Department officials are cautioning Israel not to cite the American military strikes against North Viet Nam because the United States regards the two situations as different. The United States' position is that the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization exists on the Syrian-Israel border while such U.N. presence is lacking in the Vietnamese situation.

Officials here have repeatedly urged both Israel and Syria to cooperate with the UNTSO and resolve differences through the United Nations while refraining from military action. The United States does not feel that even Syrian strikes into Israel, of a limited nature, justify Israeli counter-blows across the border.

It was also learned today that concern exists lest the Soviet Union back Syria in an escalating situation, thus bringing about a confrontation that the United States wants to avoid in the Middle East at a time when this country is so deeply involved in Viet Nam.

ISRAEL CONSIDERS CURRENT WEEK AS CRITICAL; WAR OF NERVES PREVAILS

JERUSALEM, Aug. 23, (JTA) -- High officials here today expressed the opinion that the current week will show whether Syrian threats against Israel are part of a war of nerves or are the forerunners of a campaign of planned Syrian aggression.

Official circles here are of the opinion that Syria would not dare to get into open warfare with Israel. However, Syria may start a wave of intensified guerrilla-type terrorist violence in Israel. Asked whether, in the face of the Syrian threats of war, Israel would request a meeting of the United Nations Security Council, the officials said that this would depend on whether there was evidence that these threats constituted more than a war of nerves.

The official sources discounted the possibility that the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization could undertake the recovery of the Syrian MiG-17 jet fighter which was shot down by Israel into Lake Tiberias last week. They expressed doubt whether the UNTSO had the necessary equipment for such an operation. At the same time it was indi-

cated by the same sources that Israel would certainly not provoke any incident and wished, if possible, to avoid complications over the delayed salvage of the Israeli police boat marooned on a Lake Tiberias sandbar, following the Syrian attack on it last Monday. It was hoped here that Syria would revert to its original agreement, given to the UNTSO last Wednesday, not to interfere with Israel's salvaging -- together with the UNTSC -- of the Syrian MIG, after which it would be returned to Syria.

ISRAEL TO INVEST \$241, 000, 000 IN AGRICULTURE DURING FIVE YEARS

JERUSALEM, Aug. 23. (JTA) -- Israel will invest 725, 000, 000 pounds (\$241, 000, 000) in agricultural development during the next five years, with nearly 200, 000, 000 pounds (\$67, 000, 000) of that amount scheduled for livestock, Agriculture Minister Haim Givati told a press conference yesterday.

He said plans called for an increase in Israel's farm output during that period of 37 percent for a total value of 838, 000, 000 pounds (\$279, 000, 000). He predicted an even greater rise in farm exports during the five years from \$84, 500, 000 to \$149, 000, 000.

He warned, however, that profitability in the citrus industry had reached a crisis point because of inflated costs. He said that if there was no new wave of cost increases, citrus would continue to be sold at the official rate of exchange of three pounds per dollar. He said this was being made possible by additional Government payments for dollars earned, as export subsidies.

INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON ARAB-JEWISH PEACE TO BE HELD IN ISRAEL

TEL AVIV, Aug. 23. (JTA) -- A three-day international seminar on Arab-Jewish peace will be held in two weeks at the Institute for Judeo-Arabic and Afro-Asian Studies at Givat Haviva, near Hadera. The seminar will be sponsored by the newly-established Fund for the Advancement of Martin Buber's Philosophy of Peace.

Participants will include Prof. Giorgio de La Pira, former Mayor of Florence, Italy, and sponsor of the Mediterranean Colloquiums during recent years; Prof. Seymour Melman of Columbia University, and Prof. Robert Mizrachi of the Sorbonne. The Fund is sponsored by the New Outlook magazine. Its members include Prof. Ernst Simon of Hebrew University, Yaacov Hassam, a member of Israel's Parliament and Dr. Nahum Goldmann, world Jewish leader.

JEWISH WAR VETERANS LAUDED BY JOHNSON FOR BACKING VIET NAM POLICY

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J., Aug. 23. (JTA) -- President Johnson has commended the Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A. for backing the Administration's Viet Nam position as the organization opened its 71st annual national convention here today.

The President, in a letter to the JWV, noted action by the JWV at the recent Washington plenary session of the National Community Relations Advisory Council, central coordinating body of Jewish organizations and community councils, blocking a resolution that JWV claimed "conveyed a distorted impression of American policies connected with the Viet Nam war."

All other Jewish groups in NCRAC approved the proposed resolution that would have voiced concern that the right of dissent in America is being diminished as a result of American participation in the war. The JWV veto killed the resolution, however, and the President informed the veterans that he appreciated the point made by the veterans. JWV opposed the resolution as inaccurate and unjustifiable.

Thousands of veterans from throughout the nation gathered here for a convention that will be highlighted by an address by Vice-President Hubert H. Humphrey and by special reports by Jewish veterans of military service in Viet Nam. The Vice-President is expected to make a major statement of American policy in the troubled Near East.

BRAZILIAN AUTHOR APPEALS TO MOSCOW ON TREATMENT OF SOVIET JEWRY

RIC DE JANEIRO, Aug. 23. (JTA) -- Paul de Castro, a well-known Brazilian writer who is known also as friendly toward the Soviet Union, has appealed to the USSR to stamp out anti-Jewish discriminations in Russia.

Writing in Correio da Manhã, one of the leading dailies in this country, Mr. de Castro summarized criticisms of Soviet bias against Russian Jewry, voiced recently at the plenary assembly of the World Jewish Congress in Brussels. He lauded the "restraint" shown by some critics in regard to Soviet bias against Jews, saying that recitation of facts without anger was "the right way to proceed." Then he stated: "It is crucial for the Soviet Union to reexamine this problem, since the present situation does, to a large extent, harm the reputation of the Soviet Government in the entire world."

AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE SUBMITS VIEWS ON RELIGION IN U.S. CENSUS

WASHINGTON, Aug. 23. (JTA) -- The American Jewish Committee submitted today a statement here outlining its attitude toward the issue whether a question on religion should be included in the 1970 Decennial Census. The statement was presented by Morris B. Abram, president of the organization, to the House Committee on Post Office and Civil Service which is now holding hearings here on plans of the U.S. Census Bureau for the 1970 census of the population in this country.

Mr. Abram reaffirmed in his statement the opposition of the American Jewish Committee to the inclusion of a question on religion in the 1970 census as a violation of the First Amendment. However, he urged that the U.S. Census Bureau study alternate methods of obtaining data on religion without the compulsion accompanying the Decennial Census.

"The reason for the Committee's opposition," Mr. Abram said, "is that answers to questions in the Decennial Census are mandatory under the law. To compel a person to profess his religious affiliation or lack of affiliation is to deprive him of religious freedom, in direct violation of the First Amendment. The subject has never been included in a Decennial Census, and we earnestly hope that the Federal Government will not disturb this tradition."

Mr. Abram recognized, however, the "widespread interest" in data on the religious composition of U.S. population, adding that such information has "considerable sociological, cultural and practical uses." This information, he said, "is needed by scholars and by the religious communities themselves, and is also of interest to the general public. The religious bodies, in spite of their best efforts, have been unable to compile adequate statistics about their memberships. There seems to be no way to gather reliable data without active involvement of the Federal Government."

Advocates Sampling Method which Provides Voluntary Answers

Pointing to the use of sampling as one alternative method of obtaining such data, the president of the AJCommittee said there were differences of opinion on the constitutionality of a question on religion where the answer would be entirely voluntary. He urged the House Committee to study the issue.

Mr. Abram recalled that a Census Bureau sample study in 1957, covering 35,000 households, had obtained valuable information on the religious make-up of the population, including statistics on the age, geographical distribution, fertility, and intermarriage rates of members of the major faith communities. These results were published in an official Census Bureau publication and were summarized in the American Jewish Year Book.

"An even larger sample might well uncover a correspondingly greater amount of valuable data," Mr. Abram added, then added this caution: "If that course is followed, we maintain that any question asked must restrict itself to religious affiliation or identity as understood by each respondent, and must avoid probing into anyone's religious belief or behavior. Any question asked must be clear, simple, and of a kind likely to attract a high rate of response. The wording of the question in the 1957 sample Census -- 'What is your religion?' -- seems to have met these criteria, and might well serve as a model for future inquiries."

In addition to the matter of religion, Mr. Abram's statement discussed Census questions on ethnic identity, color or race, and civil rights. His conclusions were:

Ethnic Identity -- While favoring the continuation of questions referring to ethnic origin, which in the past have "helped afford much valuable insight into the ethnic characteristics of the American population and its subgroups," he urged an updating of some of the questions in keeping with changing situations. "For example," he said, "to obtain data that will now be analogous in significance to those of 1960, it will now be necessary to ask about grandparents' as well as parents' place of birth."

Color or Race -- Data broken down by color or race have proved "widely useful," Mr. Abram said, "as a measure of the extent to which various racial groups are discriminated against or otherwise disadvantaged," and should be continued.

Civil Rights -- To help implement Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Mr. Abram said, it has been suggested that questions on voting and registration be included in the 1970 Census. "If the Justice Department feels that such information is essential to enforce the Act, we see no objection to such questions," he concluded.

Mr. Abram's statement hailed the Census Bureau as "probably our nation's greatest social research agency," adding that "its scholarship, its technical competence, and the accuracy and value of its publications have deservedly won renown throughout the world." He expressed certainty that the Bureau will continue to function on the same high level as in the past. "In that spirit we commend to your attention our expressed views," he stated,

ISRAELI MEDICAL STUDENTS GO TO TURKEY TO HELP EARTHQUAKE VICTIMS

JERUSALEM, Aug. 23. (JTA) -- A team of ten senior Hebrew University medical students will leave tomorrow for western Turkey to join the relief operations for the thousands of victims of the earthquake in Turkey. Israel's Mogen David Adom, and a number of municipal health services, are sending medical supplies and plasma to Turkey.

CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO ATTEND DEDICATION OF KNESSET BUILDING

WASHINGTON, Aug. 23. (JTA) -- A Congressional delegation has been named to attend the dedication of the new Knesset building in Jerusalem on August 30, it was learned today.

The delegation will include Sen. Clifford Case, New Jersey Republican, Sen. Walter Mondale, Minnesota Democrat, and Rep. William I. Murphy, Illinois Democrat, a member of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs.

ORTHODOX SYNAGOGUE VANDALIZED FOUR TIMES WITHIN FIVE DAYS

WASHINGTON, Aug. 23. (JTA) -- An Orthodox synagogue on the edge of the District of Columbia has been vandalized so badly and desecrated so many times that the situation "calls for something more than ordinary policing," The Jewish Week, Washington's newspaper, reported here.

The house of worship is the Young Israel Shomrai Emunah Synagogue, located in Hyattsville, just across from the boundary of the District of Columbia. The Jewish Week quoted the synagogue's spiritual leader, Rabbi Gedaliah Anemer, as reporting that, in four raids within a five-day period, vandals smashed 40 windows, some of these dedicated to the memories of deceased members; tore up Holy Scrolls; spilled wine on prayer shawls; broke a Star of David decoration separating the men's section from the women's section; defaced walls; and burst open locked doors.

Rabbi Anemer said there had been previous attacks against the synagogue, during prayer services, but that he had refrained from publicizing those actions for fear of offending persons living in the community whose teenage children were believed responsible. Now, however, Simon L. Cain, president of the neighborhood's citizens' association, pledged that everything possible will be done to prevent further desecrations, by either adults or children.

One police official in the area said the synagogue was being vandalized because many nearby residents believe it had been abandoned. The house of worship, opened eight years ago, had many scientists among its members. More recently, however, many of those members have shifted to a synagogue in Silver Spring.

MOSHE KOUSSEVITSKY, WORLD-KNOWN CANTOR, DIES IN NEW YORK; WAS 67

NEW YORK, Aug. 23. (JTA) -- Funeral services were held here today for Moshe Koussevitsky, one of the world's leading cantors, who died in his home in Great Neck, N.Y., this morning after a long illness. He was 67. His body will be flown tomorrow to Israel for burial.

Born in Smorgon, Russia, he became known as the greatest cantor in pre-war Poland as chief cantor at the famous Tlomacka Synagogue in Warsaw. He fled from Warsaw when the German army invaded the city and escaped to the Soviet Union where he remained during the war years. He gave many concerts in Russia during those years.

He came to the United States after the war, resuming his cantorial career. At his death he was cantor of Temple Beth El in Brooklyn, where the funeral services were held.

ARNOLD HOFFMAN, JEWISH ARTIST, DEAD; WON FAME FOR ANTI-NAZI PAINTINGS

NEW YORK, Aug. 23. (JTA) -- Funeral services will be held here tomorrow for Arnold Hoffman, a Russian-born Jewish artist who won fame when he turned from landscapes to anti-Nazi themes. He died Sunday night in the hospital at 80 after a long illness.

One of his paintings, "Civilization, 1940," depicted Jewish men, women and children being disgorged from cattle cars at the entrance to one of the Nazi death camps. In 1942, his large anti-Nazi paintings were shown and then hung in Freedom House in New York. A war poster, "Slave World or Free World," was distributed by the Office of War Information among workers in arms factories.

Born in Odessa, he studied at the School of Beaux Arts there where he became a teacher before he was 20. He then studied in Germany and came to the United States in 1910. His work is on display in many museums and private collections.