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Johnson Reaffirms U.S. Commitment to Israel, Views Mideast as 'Very Dangerous'

WASHINGTON, Dec. 20 (JTA)—President Johnson reaffirmed last night the United States commitment to Israel. He spoke on a nationally-televised interview on which he warned that "the situation in the Middle East is a very dangerous one."

One of the questions asked him concerned the Glassboro, N.J., meeting last summer between the President and Premier Alexei Kosygin of the Soviet Union. The question was whether "the restraint that we and the Russians seem to show in the Middle East crisis" came from Mr. Johnson's dialogue with the Soviet leader.

Replying that he considered the Glassboro conference "very useful," the President expressed doubt, however, "that it really helped solved any of the problems of the Middle East." The President referred to his statement on June 19, citing the five conditions "that ought to enter into bringing about peace in the area." (These conditions were the right of all nations in the area to live in peace, acceptance of the right of existence of each nation; freedom of navigation in international waterways; solution of the Arab refugee problem; and limitation of the Middle East arms race.)

Mr. Johnson told the newsmen that he stressed the five points to Mr. Kosygin at the Glassboro meeting, and that "he understands them." "He did not agree with them," the President added, "but I think that the Soviet Union understands that we feel very strongly about this matter, that we do have definite views." He added that Arthur J. Goldberg, the United States Ambassador to the United Nations, "has made our position" on the Middle East "very clear."

The President said that the United Nations appointment of Gunnar Jarring, as a special Middle East envoy, had led him to be "hopeful" that his five-point conditions "can be worked out and that a permanent solution can be found to that very difficult problem." He repeated that the Middle East deadlock "is one of our most dangerous situations, and one that is going to require the best tact, judgment, patience and willingness on the part of all to find a solution."

One of the newsmen asked whether the United States had "the same kind of unwavering commitment to defend Israel against invasion as we have in South Viet Nam." The President replied that the United States did not have a SEATO treaty with Israel, "if that is what you are asking. We have made clear our very definite interest in Israel, and our desire to preserve peace in that area of the world, by many means, but we do not have a mutual security treaty with them (Israel), as we do in Southeast Asia."

Eban Says Arms Talks With France Are Still On; Hails Trade Pact With Rumania

JERUSALEM, Dec. 20 (JTA)—Foreign Minister Abba Eban held a press conference here today at which he announced that a Franco-Israeli dialogue is still going on concerning arms supplies and the balance of power in the Middle East. He also declared that the Israel-Rumanian trade agreement signed yesterday has political and technical ramifications that go far beyond the matter of trade between the two countries. Further, he expressed satisfaction with the outcome of the refugee deliberations at the United Nations where the General Assembly yesterday declined to vote on a proposal to establish a U.N. custodian of absentee Arab property in Israel.

Mr. Eban said that the negative action on a custodianship was "further proof of the U.N.'s unwillingness to pass useless resolutions that would serve only to increase enmity in the area." He said that, during this year's sessions of the General Assembly and Security Council, all anti-Israel proposals were solidly defeated. He added that Israel has stood fast on matters of principle, but was flexible on lesser problems.

Discussing the new trade pact with Rumania, Mr. Eban said that "its scope is much wider than can be defined under the term trade agreement." It calls for technical, scientific, economic and cultural cooperation on a very large scale, he declared, noting that Rumania's readiness for such far-reaching measures is doubtlessly based on political decisions taken by the Rumanian Government. This is especially significant, the Foreign Minister said, in view of the attitude of the other Communist countries to the events of the past six months.

Referring to the talks with France on arms matters, Mr. Eban would say only that Israel's Ambassador in Paris, Walter Fytan, has instructions to keep in close touch with French Foreign Minister Couve de Murville on the matter. The feeling in political quarters here, meanwhile, is that the United States will take a sympathetic view of Israel's need to maintain a balance of military strength in the Middle East, in face of the rapid rearmament of the Arab countries by Russia.

Izvestia Charges U.S., Britain Are Rearming Israel; Hits 'Tel Aviv Extremists'

UNITED NATIONS, N.Y., Dec. 20 (JTA)—The Soviet Government newspaper Izvestia claimed in an article published December 13 that the United States and Great Britain are rearming Israel "as a striking force in the struggle against the independent Arab states." The article, signed "Observer," was summarized in the weekly review of the Russian press distributed here today by the Soviet Mission to the United Nations.

The article said that Britain's embargo on arms deliveries to the Middle East "after the Israeli attack on the Arab states last June, conformed to the U.N. charter" but that Britain subsequently resumed arms deliveries to Israel which "followed in the steps of Washington."

Izvestia referred to the U.S. intention to supply Israel with A-4 Skyhawk fighter-bombers this year in fulfillment of a prior commitment. "Thus," said Izvestia, "the United States and Britain, the states chiefly responsible for turning Israel into a militarist state, again help to arm Israel and play into the hands of the Tel Aviv extremists in their attempts to consolidate their hold on the occupied Arab territories."

Rumanian Envoy in Paris Calls on All Mideast States to Respect Sovereignty of Others

PARIS, Dec. 20 (JTA)—Rumania's Ambassador to France, Victor Dimitriu, declared here today that his country's position on the Middle East is based on non-interference in the internal affairs of the states in that region and respect for their sovereignty, which remains unchanged since the events of last June. He noted that Rumania continues to maintain normal diplomatic relations with both sides in the conflict, and observed that the role of small and medium nations is growing in world affairs, regardless of their military power.

The Rumanian envoy's remarks were made against a background of comment and speculation in the French press and on radio and television over what is being said behind closed doors in Warsaw, where the Foreign Minister of Soviet Russia and foreign ministers or deputy foreign ministers of seven other Communist nations have been meeting since yesterday on the Middle East situation.

That situation remains a subject of intense interest beyond political and diplomatic circles here. The satirical weekly, "Canard Enchaîné," has just published a moving and highly favorable report on Israel. In film circles, the French producer, Bokanowski, announced plans for a movie spectacle in the style of the late Cecil B. DeMille, that would trace Jewish survival from the destruction of the Temple to present times. He said the huge cast will include such stars as Brigitte Bardot, Elizabeth Taylor, Charles Chaplin, Yul Brynner and Orson Wells.

El Al to Inaugurate Excursion Flights from Israel to Rumania

TEL AVIV, Dec. 20 (JTA)—El Al, Israel's national airline, announced today that it will start regular flights to Bucharest, Rumania, next spring, and will offer two-week tours to that country for Israelis at all-inclusive fares of under \$200. El Al's announcement followed the signing in Jerusalem yesterday of a \$14 million Israel-Rumania trade agreement and civil air transportation pact for 1968. The scope of the trade agreement is expected to increase by 15 percent annually in 1969 and 1970.

Wall St. Journal Sees Egyptian Economy Grim; But Sees Nasser Still Trusted

NEW YORK, Dec. 20 (JTA)—Despite the devastation of the Egyptian economy as the result of the Six-Day War, the fellahin have been virtually untouched and live as they have always lived with the result that they have remained loyal to Nasser and are prepared to follow him into another war with Israel. These were the conclusions reached by Wall Street Journal correspondent Ray Vicker, after visiting an Egyptian village typical, he said, of those in which 24 million of the country's 31.5 million people live.

Writing from the village of Mit-Rahina, the correspondent reported that the war has had an impact on the villages in only the smallest ways, the chief being the curtailment of kerosene supplies. "The peasantry remains almost untouched by the conflict of captains and kings," the correspondent declared. "Their stomachs still full, their way of life unshaken, the fellahin have no reason to abandon their firm allegiance to President Nasser — one important reason why Egypt's ruler has been able to maintain a strong diplomatic (if not military) front against Israel, despite crushing problems."

The Wall Street Journal correspondent painted a grim picture of the Egyptian situation. "Economic worries continue to mount," he said, "Egypt today is nearly insolvent, and owes more than one billion dollars to foreign governments, not including debts incurred in the recent acquisition of Red arms to replace those abandoned in the desert during the June war. Roughly 80% of the UAR's oil-refining capacity has been destroyed by Israeli shelling. The cotton crop, an important export, is off 11 percent this year because necessary insecticides weren't distributed. The Suez Canal, which normally brings in \$250 million a year, is shut down. The tourist business has all but disappeared. Amin Shaker, Minister of Tourism, estimates it formerly brought Egypt \$100 million a year."

The correspondent noted the aid Egypt is receiving from the Communist bloc, the other Arab states, Italy and France, but, he said, "the real strength of Egypt lies in the apparent willingness of its people to trust President Nasser's judgment. A Western diplomat in Cairo, asked if economic pressures are likely to force the UAR into a settlement with Israel, shakes his head and declares: 'the world is going to have a long wait if it thinks economic problems will force the UAR to bargain on Israeli terms.'"

Mr. Vickers reported that "unrealistic as the determination not to compromise with Israel may seem to a visitor, it is obviously firmly entrenched. And it is entrenched most firmly of all among the

fellahin." He points out that "almost no one places any blame for the war and Egypt's defeat on President Nasser." One villager he quoted as typical, said the fiasco was caused by "bad people" since removed from the government, and "on Israeli aggression supported by the United States."

General Assembly Recesses Subject to Recall; Mideast Issue Still on Agenda

UNITED NATIONS, N.Y., Dec. 20 (JTA)—The 22nd session of the General Assembly recessed in the early hours of this morning with the Middle East situation still on its agenda. At the closing, the Assembly President, Rumanian Foreign Minister Corneliu Manescu, called "on the countries directly concerned" to "concentrate their efforts to find through negotiations, a solution" that would lay the foundations for a lasting peace in the region. Mr. Manescu added such a solution must safeguard the legitimate rights of all peoples of the region "through the renunciation of all claims to territorial annexations as a result of military operations."

Mr. Manescu's remarks were made in a summation of the General Assembly's work relative to the Middle East during the current session. He said that the session could be resumed at any time that "member states and the Secretary-General decide that appropriate conditions exist for the study of any of the three items remaining on the agenda." Apart from the Middle East, the other items still on the agenda are the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and the situation in Southwest Africa.

Mr. Manescu referred to the Security Council's November 22 resolution on the Middle East as an "eloquent illustration" of the application of means provided by the U.N. Charter for the pacific settlement of international disputes. Ambassador Shabtai Rosenne, acting permanent representative of Israel at the U.N., praised Mr. Manescu's direction of the General Assembly during its current session.

Eshkol Tells Knesset Joint U.S.-Israel Desalination Project May Never Materialize

JERUSALEM, Dec. 20 (JTA)—Prime Minister Levi Eshkol indicated in the Knesset (Parliament) today that the joint American-Israeli project to build a nuclear powered plant in Israel for the desalination of sea water may never materialize, unless Israel receives part of the necessary cash outlay in the form of a grant and the rest as a low interest loan.

Mr. Eshkol estimated the cost of the project at \$200,000,000. He said it was still in the planning stage, and there has been no decision to go ahead. His remarks were in response to an agenda motion on the subject presented by Dr. B. Avniel of Gahal, the Herut-Liberal Party faction in the Knesset.

Israeli Finance Minister Lauds Dutch for Generous Aid After Six-Day War

AMSTERDAM, Dec. 20 (JTA)—The people of Holland, who raised over 16 million guilders (\$4.2 million) for Israel's needs after the Six-Day War, were lauded today by Israel's Finance Minister, Pinhas Sapir, who stopped here briefly on his way home from London. The contributions to Israel came from many non-Jews as well as from Holland's small Jewish community.

'Passion Play' Readied for 1970 Reprise With Old, 1850, Anti-Semitic Script

OBERRAMMERGAU, Dec. 20 (JTA)—The Passion Play, which is staged in this Bavarian town every 10 years, will be performed 91 times in 1970, using intact the anti-Semitic text of 1850, despite world-wide protests, it was learned here today.

The protests in 1966 and early 1967 reached such a pitch that Dr. Alfons Goppel, Minister President of Bavaria, promised to seek to induce the Oberammergau sponsors to use a different text. His efforts failed. Hans Schwaigerhof, who was to have directed the 1970 performances, resigned in protest against the anti-Semitic text. The text portrays the Jews as a fiendish, bloodthirsty people.

Ten leading American intellectuals joined in November, 1966, in a call for a world-wide boycott of the Passion Play. However, the village is busy now sprucing up its 50,000 guest rooms for tourists. Casting is scheduled to begin soon.

Chile's President, Chief Rabbi Join Ceremonies in Spirit of Ecumenism

SANTIAGO, Chile, Dec. 20 (JTA)—The spirit of ecumenism has been implemented here through the establishment of a Government-sponsored first-aid station opened here today, with ceremonies in which the President of Chile was joined by four local, religious leaders, including Chief Rabbi Manfred Lubliner.

Dr. Lubliner, speaking during the ceremonies in Hebrew as well as in Spanish, referred to the ecumenical spirit engendered by the Vatican Council II. President Eduardo Frei participated in the inaugural event for the new, ultra-modern first-aid station. The other clergymen who participated, in addition to Rabbi Lubliner, represented the Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant faiths here.

El Mercurio, the largest newspaper in this capital, today published Babi Yar, Soviet poet Yevgeni Yevtushenko's world-famous work on the Nazi massacre of Jews in Kiev in World War II. The poem was banned in the USSR by former Premier Nikita Khrushchev, but has since been published there. The occasion for publication of Babi Yar here was Mr. Yevtushenko's visit to Chile.

The newspaper also published a statement by the central committee of the Chilean Jewish community, praising the Soviet poet's moral courage in protesting against anti-Semitism. At the same time, the central committee sent messages to Soviet Premier Kosygin in Moscow, and to the Soviet Ambassador here, protesting against official discrimination against Jews in Russia.

Hillel Directors Hear Campus Rabbi Faces Clash Between Old Faith, Open Inquiry

GROSSINGERS, N.Y., Dec. 20 (JTA)—The rabbi on the college campus was viewed here today as being caught in a "clash of expectations" between the institutionalized Jewish community, which expects him "to preserve the ancient faith among modern rebels," and his university surroundings "which call him to open search and inquiry."

The conflict is creating "a growing uncertainty of their role and direction" among the rabbis and other clergymen who serve as religious counselors to college students, Dr. Alfred Jospe, director of programs and resources for B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundations, told the annual conference of Hillel Directors here. Eighty-one rabbis, who serve at major American and Canadian schools, are participating.

The problem is further complicated, Dr. Jospe noted, by the fact that major spokesmen of religion "maintain that religious faith is no longer considered plausible or tenable" by large numbers of students. He conceded that preaching and traditional liturgy were not particularly effective with students, and "there is need to use the idiom of contemporary thought and culture" to make religious observance relevant to students. But he also warned against a "cult of relevance," citing a danger that "worship of relevance may ultimately destroy the relevance of worship."

Similarly, Dr. Jospe added, the campus rabbi's practice of "going where the action is" — joining in student protests of social concern — does not necessarily "make believers out of students." It may be, he said, that the student activists are "borrowing for their ends a respectability and legitimacy that the term 'religion' lends to anything in America. Student radicals have rarely responded by filling the pews of synagogues or churches as believers," Dr. Jospe said.

Kaufman Sees Ethical Acts as Authentic Expression of Jewishness

Rabbi Jay Kaufman, executive vice-president of B'nai B'rith, in another address here, said that the campus rabbi's involvement in social action affords him "the opportunity to add the Jewish knowledge and commitment which probably motivates students in deeds of social justice." "There are no tests of faith," he said, "no dogma to profess, no rituals which are the litmus paper of a student's Jewishness. However, the ethical act is an authentic expression of his Jewishness, and that is where the rabbi on campus also must be."

Hillel directors reported an increase in intermarriage counseling and requests for religious instruction in conversion. In most cases, they said, the couple involves a Jewish boy planning to wed a non-Jewish coed.

Announcement of a two-year \$60,000 grant from the Charles E. Merrill Trust, to provide supplementary fellowships to Hillel and congregational rabbis for independent research and study, was made by Prof. Louis Gottschalk, chairman of the Hillel Foundations national commission.

Columbia U Torchlight Parade, Teach-In, Call for Freedom for Jews in USSR

NEW YORK, Dec. 20 (JTA)—The sound of the shofar and the kindling of menorahs marked the start here this evening of an interfaith torchlight procession on behalf of freedom for Soviet Jewry. The march, joined by more than 2,500 Columbia University students of all faiths, was sponsored by the Committee on Soviet Jewry, an independent group of Jewish and non-Jewish students at Columbia's undergraduate and graduate schools.

The entire campus was made available by the university for the demonstration, which was followed by a teach-in at McMillan Theater where a capacity audience heard a group of distinguished authors and scholars discuss various aspects of the life of Jews in Soviet Russia. In addition to a large contingent of Columbia faculty, the procession and teach-in were attended by Congressman William Fitts Ryan and Deputy Mayor Robert Sweet.

The teach-in was described as the first of its kind on a major American campus. It was joined by the prize-winning author, Elie Wiesel; Irving Howe, writer and editor of Dissent; Dr. Abraham J. Heschel, professor of Jewish ethics at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America; the Rt. Rev. Msgr. James Edward Rea; Amitai W. Etzioni, associate professor of sociology at Columbia; Peter Juwiler, associate professor of government at Barnard College; and B. Z. Goldberg, noted Yiddish essayist and author of "The Jewish Problem in the Soviet Union."

According to Rabbi A. Bruce Goldberg, Jewish chaplain at Columbia and advisor to the Committee on Soviet Jewry, the purpose of the campaign, which precedes the week of Chanukah and Christmas, is "to gain official Soviet endorsement for the Jewish community to live as Jews within the USSR, and permission to emigrate to countries where they will be able to enjoy the religious and cultural liberty that is the heritage of all men."

Harold Goldman, Philanthropist, Dies in Boston at Age of 64

BOSTON, Dec. 20 (JTA)—Harold S. Goldberg, a leader in Jewish philanthropy and a vice-president of the American Jewish Committee, died here Monday at the age of 64. Mr. Goldberg was former general campaign chairman of the Jewish Philanthropies of Greater Boston, a past president of the Boston Jewish Vocational Service and a trustee of the Boston Jewish Memorial Hospital. He was a member and former trustee of Temple Israel in Boston.