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Eshkol Reports on Mission to Cabinet Sitting as Ministerial Security Committee

JERUSALEM, Jan. 21 (JTA)--Prime Minister Levi Eshkol reported today to the Israel Cabinet on the series of talks he completed last week with the heads of the American, Canadian and British Governments. The meeting, officially, was a session of the ministerial security committee, and, under Israeli law, reports on its deliberations are limited to the official communique. All members of the Cabinet were reported to have been present when Mr. Eshkol made his report.

Israelis Deny Reports Eshkol Tried To Influence American Jews on Viet Nam

WASHINGTON, D.C., Jan. 21 (JTA)--Israeli officials in Washington today described "as absurd" newspaper reports that Prime Minister Levi Eshkol had attempted to influence American Jewish leaders, or that he did so, on Viet Nam at the request of President Johnson.

The Israeli officials stated that "it is inconceivable that the Israel Government would handle matters of vital importance to the security of its people on such a basis. The Prime Minister would clearly limit himself to an exposition of Israel's own problems and policies in any audience he would address."

The Israeli officials stated that "the Israeli position has always been one of resistance to aggression wherever it occurs and insisting on the right of every country to lead its own life free of subversion and threats. This has been stated by official Israeli spokesmen in recent years at the United Nations and elsewhere. Similarly, Israel has invariably advocated that all situations of conflict be resolved by direct negotiations."

Republicans Assert Johnson Made American Jewish Support Condition of Aid to Israel

WASHINGTON, Jan. 21 (JTA)--The Republican Congressional Committee, in an official expression of party opinion, criticized President Johnson this weekend for deferring action on the P-4 Phantom jet fighter-bombers sought by Israel to maintain a deterrent force. The committee charged that the President asked as his "price" that Prime Minister Levi Eshkol of Israel help persuade American Jewish leaders to support the President's Viet Nam policies and his re-election bid.

An editorial in the Republican newsletter asked: "What was LBJ's price for 50 Phantom jets? Not only Eshkol's support of the President's Viet Nam policy but the Prime Minister's pledge to use his influence to help win votes among Jews in the country for LBJ's re-election bid. The jets, Johnson, in effect, told Eshkol, would be forthcoming after the election this Fall."

Citing a report in Newsweek Magazine and other information, the newsletter asserted that Mr. Eshkol was "pressured" into acceptance of this arrangement and later asked a closing meeting of Jewish leaders in New York to support Mr. Johnson.

"Either the decision to make Phantom jets available to Israel is sound or it is not," the Republicans asserted. "If it is, the planes should be made available now — not after the election. We believe the decision is sound. And we believe Mr. Politics' blatant efforts to put Israel and her prime minister on the spot will be resented by Americans generally, but particularly by our citizens of Jewish faith who will recognize that the voice is the voice of Jacob but the hand is the hand of Esau."

The editorial noted that "by the best intelligence estimates, including U.S. military leaders, NATO experts and others, the Russians are embarked on a massive military and naval buildup in the Mediterranean and Middle East. Israel needs new weapons, particularly U.S. Phantom jets, to meet the challenge posed by the Soviet presence there and by the Soviet MIGs supplied to the Arab nations."

Warns Coordinated Action Needed to Bar 'Erosion' of US Mideast Policy

NEW YORK, Jan. 21 (JTA)--The chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations said this weekend that unified and coordinated action by the American Jewish community was necessary to help prevent any "erosion" of current United States policies in the Middle East. Rabbi Herschel Schacter said American Jews had been "heartened" by President Johnson's warm welcome of Prime Minister Levi Eshkol of Israel, encouraged by the President's support of Israel's quest for peace and gratified by his recognition that Israel's security required new military deterrents.

He warned, however, that continued American political and military aid to Israel would depend on strengthening public understanding of the identity of American and Israeli interests in the Middle East. He pledged that the conference, over which he was recently installed as chairman, would devote its entire resources to this task, noting that "we speak with the authentic voice of the American Jewish community."

Rabbi Shachter took issue with the State Department position that American support of Israel would cause the Arab countries increasingly to look to the Soviet Union and denounced the State Department position on Jerusalem. He remarked that the State Department had criticized Israel for condemning property in Jerusalem for a needed housing development but pointed out that the State Department had not protested when Jordan "brazenly and brutally expropriated the ancient Jewish quarter of the Old City, destroyed historic synagogues and desecrated the hallowed cemeteries of the Mount of Olives."

Report De Gaulle Will Lift Embargo on Planes for Israel Within Month

LONDON, Jan. 21 (JTA)--President de Gaulle will lift the French arms embargo against Israel, probably within 30 days, and permit the delivery of the 50 Mirage V jet fighter-bombers Israel has on order, the London Daily Telegraph reported Saturday.

President de Gaulle's decision was, reportedly, a result of his exchange of letters with former Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion and his desire to smooth over misunderstandings with the Israel Government, the paper said. It quoted other opinions in Paris that Gen. de Gaulle had been influenced in his decision by information on the Soviet arms buildup in the Middle East.

(The Washington Post reported from Paris that Lebanon has purchased 12 combat jet fighter planes in France and that Lebanese pilots were receiving training in France to handle the craft. The paper said that Iraq had ordered 75 armored cars in France for delivery this year and had an option for purchase of another 75.)

Congressman Protests Administration Decision to Send Tanks to Jordan

WASHINGTON, Jan. 21 (JTA)--Rep. Edward J. Gurney, Fla. Rep., protested today against Administration plans to supply Patton tanks to Jordan to replace armor lost in the Six-Day War. The former tank force officer pointed out that "Jordan is still cooperating with the Unified Arab Command in Cairo which is advised and guided by Soviet military officers."

Expressing opposition to the rearming of "a nation which has helped start this war against Israel," Rep. Gurney asked, "why give them the weapons to start trouble all over again? It's like pouring gasoline on a fire already burning briskly."

UN Envoy in Amman, Due in Jerusalem for Sixth Round of Talks With Eban

JERUSALEM, Jan. 21 (JTA)--The United Nations' Middle East envoy, Ambassador Gunnar Jarring, went to Amman today and is expected here tomorrow or Tuesday for a sixth round of talks with Foreign Minister Eban. There was no confirmation here of reports from Amman and Cairo that Ambassador Jarring was taking specific proposals to the Arab capitals for starting peace talks. The reports said that such proposals were based on conditions other than those officially announced as acceptable to Israel. Israel's position on peace talks has been for direct meetings with the Arab states to settle the matter of boundaries, freedom of shipping and other issues before there can be any withdrawal of Israeli forces from occupied territories.

Dayan Would Give Priority to Peace Talks With Egypt Over Jordan

TEL AVIV, Jan. 21 (JTA)--Defense Minister Moshe Dayan said this weekend that it would be more in Israel's interest to reach an agreement with Egyptian President Nasser than with King Hussein of Jordan.

In an interview with Haaretz, Tel Aviv daily, Gen. Dayan said he would like "an arrangement with Nasser on a secure border line which would ensure us freedom of passage to Elath," the southern port on the Gulf of Akaba, "and an arrangement that would ensure Israeli shipping in the Suez Canal." Israel now occupies the eastern border of the canal. He said that "after all, we are there and we can trade with them: 'You want us to retreat -- give us passage for our ships.'"

Asserting that the pre-June war borders were unsafe, he said the Tiran Strait, which controls shipping to Elath, was essential for Israel "and we cannot leave them in the hands of the Egyptians or even of the United Nations."

Five Terrorists Get Life Imprisonment in Jerusalem Cinema Bombing Case

TEL AVIV, Jan. 21 (JTA)--A military tribunal today imposed life imprisonment on five of seven El Fatah members found guilty of placing a bomb, last October, in the Zion, a Jerusalem movie house. The terrorist quintet also was found guilty of blowing up a United Nations antenna on the Government House in Jerusalem.

The sixth defendant was sentenced to 15 years imprisonment and the seventh to eight years' imprisonment after the court decided they aided the El Fatah members but did not belong to the organization.

Among the five members was an African girl, Fatma Nafassawi, who had carried the bomb into the movie house. The court said it exercised mercy in her case by not imposing capital punishment, because the charge against her was the gravest -- that of placing a bomb in a public place and knowing the deadly results it could cause. Following sentencing, the girl and another Fatah member appeared unmoved and uninterested. Other defendants seemed bewildered while two started crying.

This week the second trial of two others facing the same charges got underway before the same tribunal. The trial of Dr. Nur, head of the group, has been scheduled for next week.

French Jewish Consistory Honors Grand Rabbi Jacob Kaplan

PARIS, Jan. 21 (JTA)--The Jewish Consistory of France today held a gala reception in honor of Grand Rabbi Jacob Kaplan, who was recently elected as a member of the Institut Francais. Among the many Jewish and non-Jewish personalities who paid tribute to Rabbi Kaplan were Baron Alain de Rothschild, president of the Central Jewish Consistory of France, and Rabbi Paul Baer, who spoke for the Chief Rabbinate of Paris.

Israel's Three Socialist Labor Parties Merge into New United Party

JERUSALEM, Jan. 21 (JTA)--More than 2,200 delegates joined by guests and well-wishers from 22 countries around the world, attended the founding conference here tonight of Israel's new United Labor Party -- Mifleget Avodah Yisroel (MAL) -- composed of Mapai, the party of Prime Minister Levi Eshkol; Rafi, the dissident labor party established by former Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion, and Achdut Avodah, another Mapai offshoot which has returned to the fold.

The contract of union, combining the three labor parties, was signed earlier today by the secretaries of each of them -- Mrs. Golda Meir for Mapai, Shimon Peres for Rafi and Israel Galili for Achdut Avodah. Adding their signatures were the 187 members of the new party's secretariat and the 15 founding members. Among the latter were Mrs. Rachel Ben-Zvi, widow of the late President Yitzhak Ben-Zvi of Israel and Mrs. Rachel Shazar, wife of incumbent President Zalman Shazar.

Noticeable by his absence from the ceremonies and conference was former Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion who bitterly opposed the merger of Rafi -- the Israel Workers Party -- with Mapai. Mr. Ben-Gurion stood firm on his refusal to join the new party under its present leadership. A Rafi delegation that visited his home at Sdeh Boker in the Negev yesterday was unable to persuade him to attend the merger festivities. Also opposed to the merger, but for different reasons, was Mrs. Meir, Israel's former Foreign Minister and secretary-general of Mapai who refused an offer by the Mapai central committee yesterday to become secretary-general of the merged parties. "I received my mandate from you and on your dissolution I return my mandate to you," she said.

The merged party will have three bodies -- a 438 member central committee, a 187 member secretariat and a small body to be established next week. The merger of the three party factions in the Knesset (Parliament) and within the World Zionist Organization, will also take place next week. The three parties have already merged in several municipalities, including Jerusalem. Dissident factions of Rafi, opposed to the merger, have seceded and declared themselves "independent."

Mr. Ben-Gurion did not attend the final meeting of the Rafi central committee. But his election to the secretariat of the new united party was proposed by Defense Minister Moshe Dayan, who, with Mr. Ben-Gurion, was one of the founders of Rafi. The nomination was greeted by applause.

British Intellectuals Appeal to Kremlin to Accord Equal Rights to Soviet Jews

LONDON, Jan. 21 (JTA)--Two hundred and twenty-five professors and instructors at twenty British universities signed a full-page advertisement that will appear in the Times of London tomorrow urging the Soviet Union to grant Russian Jews the rights accorded to all other ethnic and national minorities in the USSR.

The appeal was sponsored by the Inter-University Jewish Federation and the Universities Committee for Soviet Jewry which are comprised of Jewish and non-Jewish students. It called on Prime Minister Kosygin to honor his pledge of last year that Russian Jews who wish too may emigrate in order to be reunited with their families in other countries. Gordon Hausmann, speaking for the organizers, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that the signatures were collected on very short notice and accurately reflected the feeling in academic circles and among British intellectuals generally on what they consider a grave moral issue. One of the signers was Sir William Hayter, former British Ambassador to Moscow, who now teaches at New College.

Janner Urges British Jews to Participate in Human Rights Year Activities

LONDON, Jan. 21 (JTA)--Leaders of British Jewry were urged today to participate in all activities connected with Human Rights Year, proclaimed by the United Nations in order, among other things, to focus attention on the plight of Jews in the Soviet Union. The call was issued by Sir. Barnett Janner, M.P. chairman of the foreign affairs committee of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, at the Board's monthly meeting here. Mr. Janner stressed that much of the work being done on behalf of Russian Jewry "cannot be discussed in open session."

American ORT Approves \$15.2 Million Budget for 1968 Overseas Programs

NEW YORK, Jan. 21 (JTA)--The Organization for Rehabilitation Through Training (ORT), which serves Jewish educational and humanitarian needs throughout the world, has adopted a record budget of \$15,109,500 for 1968, it was announced at the national conference of the American ORT Federation here today. The budget, which exceeds last year's allocation by more than \$1.7 million, was determined by rising costs, increased teachers' salaries and equipment replacement needs.

The American share of the budget is \$4,386,500 of which \$2,250,000 will be provided by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee for ORT operations abroad. The 78,000-member American Women's ORT has pledged an additional \$1,612,500. The balance will be made up from contributions here and overseas. But pledges so far are about \$500,000 short of meeting the organization's needs in the year ahead, the conference was told.

ORT and other Jewish organizations were urged to exercise special concern for the "tens of thousands of Jews throughout the world," particularly in Eastern Europe and Moslem lands, whose security was seriously undermined by the Arab-Israeli war of last June. Samuel L. Haber, executive vice-chairman of the JDC, made this point in his address to the ORT conference. He said that the war had set in motion forces whose historical consequences may not become apparent for many years, but which threatened the Jewish populations in East European and Moslem lands.

Jewish Groups Ask Supreme Court to Rule on 1866 Open Housing Law

NEW YORK, Jan. 21 (JTA)--Seven national Jewish organizations and 81 local Jewish councils filed a friend-of-the-court brief with the Supreme Court last week, seeking to halt the "damaging social, psychological and economic effects on minorities — especially Negroes — of housing segregation."

The various groups, all of which are affiliated with the National Community Relations Advisory Council, urged the court to prohibit housing discrimination by enforcing the fair housing section of the 1866 Civil Rights Act.

Edwin J. Lukas, legal counsel of the American Jewish Committee, and Samuel Rabinove, director of the American Jewish Committee's legal division, prepared the brief for the organizations. The national organizations are: American Jewish Committee, Jewish Labor Committee, Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A., National Council of Jewish Women, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, and United Synagogue of America.

Conservative Leaders Pay Tribute to United Synagogue Women on Golden Jubilee

NEW YORK, Jan. 21 (JTA)--The 200,000 members of the National Women's League of the United Synagogue of America were accorded "alumnae" status by the Jewish Theological Seminary of America as part of a tribute paid them by the leaders of Conservative Judaism on the occasion of the League's 50th anniversary. A citation conferring the honorary title was presented to Mrs. Sol Henkind, president of the League, by Dr. Bernard Mandelbaum, Seminary president, at a banquet tonight marking the Golden Jubilee Year of the women's group.

Earlier, the organization, which is affiliated with 800 Conservative synagogues in the United States and Canada, was hailed by Rabbi Louis Finkelstein, Chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary, who praised its membership for their role "in the preservation of the Jewish tradition." He called them upholders of "the ideal of the Jewish home beautiful" and said that the Women's League "through its influence on the other central institutions of Conservative Judaism and on the strengthening of family life, will be a potent force for the maintenance of Judaism in our time."

The National Women's League of the United Synagogue of America was founded in January, 1918, by Mrs. Solomon Schechter, wife of the Seminary's second president. It is the women's arm of Conservative Judaism and conducts a wide range of religious, educational and service activities reaching the Jewish and general communities in the United States, Canada, Mexico and Puerto Rico.

The Jubilee tribute consisted of a luncheon and banquet and was highlighted by Torah sessions conducted by Professors Shalom Paul and Avraham Holtz of the Seminary, attended by 700 women.

Rabbi Simon Greenberg, Vice Chancellor of the Seminary, told the women in an address at the Jubilee banquet that "religious leaders must be active in the reconstruction of the social, economic and political order, but they must not do so at the price of abandoning or even neglecting their primary historic role of helping the individual to fashion himself ever more completely in accordance with the image of God which has been bestowed upon him." Rabbi Greenberg said that "the home and mother are religion's indispensable allies" in fashioning "the moral and ethical personality."

Achievement awards were presented to 36 sisterhoods throughout the continent for their outstanding service to Judaism and 50 additional sisterhoods received honorable mention. Jubilee awards for "exceptional contributions to the spiritual and educational enrichment" of the American Jewish community were presented to Dr. Evelyn Garfiel, of New York City, Mrs. David A. Goldstein, of Philadelphia and Mrs. B. Reuben Weilerstein of Atlantic City, N.J.

Thousand Join in Cultural Foundation's Tribute to Reunified Jerusalem

NEW YORK, Jan. 21 (JTA)--More than a thousand people prominent in the cultural, civic and business fields attended the 20th annual dinner tonight of the America-Israel Cultural Foundation which took the form of a tribute to a reunified Jerusalem. Mayor Teddy Kollek of Jerusalem was guest of honor and received the Foundation's annual King Solomon Award. A citation was presented to Hanna Rovina, founder-member of Habimah, to mark the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the first Hebrew-speaking theatre.

A feature of the program was the presentation by distinguished Broadway actors of a narrative by Norman Corwin on eternal Jerusalem and its significance to man through the ages. The Zamir Chorale and Foundation scholarship students provided Israeli music. Throughout the evening, color slides depicting Jerusalem scenes were projected on an on-stage screen.

Isaac Stern, Foundation president, greeted the guests. The presentation to Mayor Kollek was made by Jacques Lipschitz, the sculptor.

Italian Jewish Federation Bids Communities Aid Sicilian Earthquake Victims

ROME, Jan. 21 (JTA)--The Union of Jewish Communities here appealed today to all Italian-Jewish institutions to fully participate in the rescue work for the Sicilian population hit by the earthquake. Even before the appeal was made, the Turin Jewish community had contributed 250,000 lire (\$16,000). The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee previously announced a contribution of one million lire.