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White House Spokesman Says Report of LBJ Pressure on Eshkol Is 'Buncombe'

WASHINGTON, Jan. 23 (JTA)--White House spokesman George Christian, rejected today charges by the Republican Congressional Committee that President Johnson had exerted pressure on Prime Minister Levi Eshkol of Israel to urge American Jewish political support of the President's Viet Nam policy and re-election as a condition for the sale of Phantom jet bombers.

Mr. Christian told the JTA: "Yesterday I called it ridiculous. Today I will call it buncombe."

Rep. Edward J. Derwinsky, Illinois Rep., a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, called today in a speech in the House for immediate sale of the P-4 Phantom jet fighter-bombers to Israel. He warned that "our failure to act indicates to the Russians that they may brazenly fill the vacuum created by the Administration's foreign policy ineptness."

Despite denials from the White House and official Israeli sources that President Johnson had made sale of the planes contingent on American Jewish support of his policies, the Republican spokesman repeated the charges in his speech today and warned that "President Johnson may be playing politics with free world security" by holding the aircraft "in ransom for the votes of Americans of Jewish faith."

Administration Says Ban on Egyptian Cotton Would Endanger Peace Efforts

WASHINGTON, Jan. 23 (JTA)--The Administration urged Congress today to reject a proposed ban on cotton imports from Egypt on the grounds that it would hamper U.S. relations with Egypt and endanger peacemaking efforts in the Middle East at a "delicate and promising moment." Eugene V. Rostow, Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs, told a Senate Agriculture Subcommittee hearing that a bill passed by the House to ban Egyptian cotton could also delay restoration of U.S. relations with the Arabs and facilitate Communist penetration.

Mr. Rostow said that "such a step would play into the hands of those who are actively seeking to widen the breach between the United States and the Arab world, and indeed to take positions of control in the internal affairs of the UAR, Syria, Algeria and the Yemen."

The cotton bill now before the Senate would ban Egyptian and Sudanese cotton because those governments, which declared war on Israel last June, severed diplomatic relations with the United States. Domestic producers of cotton had argued that adequate supplies of the commodity were available in the United States. They contended that dollars paid to Egypt helped President Nasser buy new Soviet arms.

'Unrealistic' To Wait for Direct Arab-Israeli Talks, Brown Tells Commons

LONDON, Jan. 23 (JTA)--Foreign Secretary George Brown told the House of Commons today that the British Government thought it was "unrealistic" and "unconstructive" to wait for direct talks between Israel and the Arab states before moving toward a settlement of their disputes. The Foreign Secretary's remarks were made in reply to a question from Laborite MP Stanley Henig who wanted to know if the Government supported direct talks. Mr. Brown said that direct talks certainly should not be excluded.

In New Delhi today, the President of India and Marshal Tito of Yugoslavia both called for a political solution of the Middle East crisis. But Tito maintained, according to JTA dispatches, that while the Arab states were ready for such a solution, Israel was delaying it by her continued occupation of Arab territories. These views on the Middle East were voiced at a banquet given by President Zakir Hussain for Marshal Tito who is visiting India for talks with Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Tito and Mrs. Gandhi will be joined on Jan. 26 by Premier Alexei Kosygin of the USSR.

President Hussain said that "while we adhere strictly to the principle that the spoils of aggression must be given up, we also adhere to the principle that every state has the right to live in peace and security with its neighbors." He said he welcomed the current efforts of the United Nations to find a peaceful solution in the Middle East.

Marshal Tito, on the other hand, said "we of course cannot be satisfied with what has been achieved in the U.N. so far in the search for a solution to the crisis in the Middle East and there exists conditions for further constructive action."

Envoy Warns Arab Refusal to Recognize Israel Can Result in New Wars

PARIS, Jan. 23 (JTA)--Arab failure to recognize the State of Israel "could bring a succession of wars" to the Mideast, warned Walter Eytan, Israel Ambassador in Paris, when he addressed the International Diplomatic Academy here tonight.

"I say solemnly that peace is the ultimate aim of our policy. In 1967, we were forced to go to war with nations which wanted to destroy us. If the Arab states do not accept Israel's existence, the future could bring a succession of wars," Eytan stated.

The Ambassador, who spoke of conditions for peace in the Mideast, added, "The normal way to attain peace is by negotiations of the states concerned. A decision to enter into negotiations was taken by Israel. The question now is: when will such a decision be taken by the Arab states?"

The Ambassador reiterated that "Israel is not trying to impose a settlement upon the Arab states but seeks free and fair negotiations between independent nations."

Five Israeli Cabinet Ministers Coming to United States to Aid Drives

JERUSALEM, Jan. 23 (JTA)--Defense Minister Moshe Dayan's office denied press reports today that Gen. Dayan had an appointment to meet the new U.S. Secretary of Defense, Clark M. Clifford, when he visits the United States next month on behalf of the Israel Bond Organization and the United Jewish Appeal. The Defense Minister's office said that no appointment had been scheduled and it also denied local press reports that Gen. Dayan had made his U.S. visit conditional on being authorized by the Government to meet the Secretary of Defense.

Gen. Dayan is scheduled to speak in New York City on Feb. 19, in Chicago on Feb. 21 and in Los Angeles on Feb. 24 and 25. He will visit the United States at the request of Prime Minister Levi Eshkol who was urged by American Jewish leaders to send top Israeli public figures to campaign on behalf of the continuing Israel emergency fund drive this year. Other Cabinet members already there or scheduled to visit the United States are Finance Minister Pinhas Sapir, Labor Minister Yigal Allon, Minister of Commerce Ze'ev Sharef and Yosef Sapir, Minister Without Portfolio.

Gen. Bull Reports to Israelis on Plans for Freeing of Ships in Suez Canal

JERUSALEM, Jan. 23 (JTA)--The Foreign Ministry received a letter from Lt. Gen. Odd Bull last night believed to state Egypt's plans to proceed with clearing the southern end of the Suez Canal in order to free 15 merchant ships stranded there since last June when the canal was shut down by the Egyptians. Gen. Bull heads the United Nations' cease-fire observer corps in the Middle East.

The Foreign Ministry refused to disclose the contents of the letter which is believed to be couched in general terms. Israel has insisted that it be informed in detail of every move the Egyptians intend to make in the canal. According to the Egyptian-Israeli cease-fire terms, neither party is permitted to use the canal without the agreement of the other.

(In London, Foreign Secretary Brown told the House of Commons that he had "very great hopes" that the four British ships trapped in the Great Bitter Lake "will be out in the reasonably near future." Mr. Brown said the Government is "in constant touch with the United Arab Republic authorities" on the matter and that the Ambassador in Cairo has been given a time-table of the survey work necessary to clearing the southern end of the canal.)

Forty-Four MPs Signify Adherence to New Labor Party in Knesset

JERUSALEM, Jan. 23 (JTA)--The chairman of the Knesset (Parliament) Committee announced this afternoon that the designation, Labor Party faction, has been approved for 44 Knesset members who advised the committee of their adherence to the new United Labor Party of Israel.

But a problem, more sentimental than political, arose when former members of Rafi, one of the three parties to the merger, were reluctant to take their new seats in the Mapai section of the Knesset chamber and thus leave their old leader, former Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion, seated alone. Mr. Ben-Gurion opposed the merger of Rafi with the Mapai-Achdut Avodah alignment and said he would not join the new party under its present leadership. He will continue to retain his seat in the Knesset but as an independent one-man faction.

Nablus Mayor Advises Arabs to Recognize Israel's Presence on West Bank

JERUSALEM, Jan. 23 (JTA)--Unobtrusively, the Allenby Bridge that links the occupied West Bank with Jordan, is becoming a regular international border post through which people and goods move with relative freedom. Forty-one former West Bankers crossed the bridge from Jordan yesterday, returning under the family reunion scheme approved by Israel some months ago. The Ministry of Interior meanwhile has recommended that police take over the job of checking travellers' documents, a duty handed up to now by Israeli army units.

The Mayor of Nablus advised fellow Arabs today to come to terms with Israel's presence on the West Bank because Israel shows every intention of staying there and cannot be destroyed. Mayor Hamdi Kanaan, who was elected before last June's war, said that was the opinion of all West Bank mayors.

Mayor Kanaan spoke to correspondents of Agence France Presse and an Israeli news service. He said that the "conquest of Palestine by Israel" in 1948 was the "greatest disaster of the century" and that Israel should have been "annihilated" a year or two after its establishment, "but now it's too late."

He cited as evidence of Israel's intention to remain in the West Bank territories, various projects such as road building and offers of loans to West Bank schools. He noted that Israeli occupying forces in Nablus "try to be pleasant" but are met with "glances of venomous hatred" from the citizens.

U.S. Department of Commerce Predicts Upswing in Israel Economy in 1968

WASHINGTON, D.C., Jan. 23 (JTA)--The U.S. Department of Commerce believes that Israel's economic growth which slowed down in 1966 and 1967, will pick up momentum in 1968 with the result that Israel will export more and will improve as a market for imports of consumer goods and capital equipment from America. This assessment is contained in an article in "International Commerce," a weekly publication of the Bureau of International Commerce of the Department of Commerce.

According to Raymond S. Yaukey, of the BIC's Near East-South Asia division, the downtrend in Israel's economic growth reached bottom and began a gradual rise in late 1967. The nation's current economic plans call for annual industrial production to grow from the \$2.2 billion comprising 22 percent of Israel's gross national product in 1966 to \$3.6 billion or 27 percent of the GNP by 1971. Industrial exports are to rise even more rapidly from \$400 million in 1966 to \$800 million in 1971. The plan envisages total investments in industry amounting to over \$1 billion during the five-year period, up to half of which is to come from foreign sources, Mr. Yaukey wrote. "The growth targets it (Israel) has set should pave the way for increased U.S. sales of the industrial machinery and capital equipment that will be needed in this effort."

Mr. Yaukey noted that the U.S. share of Israel's imports has held fairly close to 25 percent in recent years and believes it will continue to hold despite devaluation of the Israel pound which gives a price advantage to the sterling bloc. He noted in this connection a decided preference for U.S. products in Israel and the "record dollar proceeds from U.S. remittances and Israel Bond sales in the U.S. (totalling over \$600 million in 1967) which serve to underscore the prominence of the United States as a supplier in the eyes of Israeli buyers."

Leyland Motors Says Merger Will Not Affect Its Operations in Israel

LONDON, Jan. 23 (JTA)--The merger of the Leyland Motor Corp. with the British Motor Holdings Co. last week will in no way affect the former company's operations in Israel, Sir Donald Stokes, chief executive of the new corporation told the Financial Times today. The Leyland Motor Corp. is a 50 percent partner in Leyland Ashdod Ltd. which assembles busses and trucks in Israel, and has a 25 percent share in Autocars, a Haifa firm that manufactures passenger automobiles.

Sir Donald spoke in denial of press reports in Israel that Leyland's operations in that country might seriously embarrass its new merger partner which has been trying to penetrate the Arab market. He said "we have an arrangement (in Israel) that is going ahead perfectly satisfactorily and we do not envisage any change at all."

Israel to Observe June 16 As 'Jerusalem Day' to Mark Reunification

JERUSALEM, Jan. 23 (JTA)--The Ministry of Tourism announced today that next June 16 will be celebrated as Jerusalem Day to mark the unification of Old and New Jerusalem after the Six-Day War. The program will include a festive morning pilgrimage to the West Wall and an evening program.

Deny Allegation Soviet Anti-Semitism Charges Are Only Zionist Propaganda

NEW YORK, Jan. 23 (JTA)--The American Jewish Conference on Soviet Jewry today emphatically refuted an allegation appearing in a publication of the American Council for Judaism, that its campaign "to expose the grievous plight of Jews in the Soviet Union" was a propaganda exercise that "originated with Zionist elements in the United States." The allegation was contained in an article written for the AJC quarterly, "Issues," by Peter Worthington, staff correspondent of The Toronto Telegram, who was stationed in Russia for two years. It is being widely circulated by the Council for Judaism.

Rabbi Israel Miller, chairman of the American Jewish Conference on Soviet Jewry, declared that "only wilful ignorance or deliberate malice can lie behind the charge." He noted that the Conference, comprised of 25 major American Jewish philanthropic, religious, fraternal, service and Zionist organizations was brought together because of their "profound concern about the repression of Jewish life in the Soviet Union. That repression is real and serious, as evidence from many varied independent sources attest," he said.

Mr. Worthington said in his article that he found Soviet Jewry to suffer from the same restrictions, repressions and pressures to conform that effect all minorities in the Soviet Union, and in fact, all Asians, but were no worse off than other groups in the USSR and in some instances lived better, more comfortable lives. He said that while the Soviet Government followed a virulently anti-Israel and pro-Arab policy especially since last June's Six-Day War and sought to direct the attitudes of all Soviet citizens to conform with that policy, he found no evidence of official anti-Semitism. He said that while individual anti-Semitism exists in the Soviet Union -- as it does elsewhere -- the Government takes pains not to be identified with it. He warned, however, that "international Zionism" could aggravate the situation of Russian Jews. He alleged further that press reports which do not conform to Zionist policy rarely appear in North American newspapers and complained that this applied as well to his own newspaper. The contention that only the "Zionist line" receives a fair hearing in the American press has been a consistent allegation of the American Council for Judaism and of Arab propagandists in this country.

In refutation of Mr. Worthington's assertion that Jews are no worse off than other national minorities in Russia, Rabbi Miller cited the fact that synagogues have been systematically closed there, fewer than 70 functioning today in contrast to 450 in 1956. There is one synagogue for every 44,000 Russian Jews compared to one church for every 1,800 adherents of the Russian Orthodox faith and for every 1,100 Baptists, he said. He noted further that there is only one yeshiva in the country and it is not functioning, which means that there can be no replacements for the handful of aging rabbis and other religious functionaries.

American Jewish Community Bids Farewell to Harmans in Series of Functions

NEW YORK, Jan. 23 (JTA)--More than 500 top American Jewish leaders jammed the grand ballroom of the Biltmore Hotel here tonight to bid a warm farewell to Israel's Ambassador to the United States, Avraham Harman, and Mrs. Harman. The dinner was sponsored by the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, composed of 21 national Jewish groups. George Maislen was dinner chairman.

Rabbi Herschel Schachter, chairman of the Conference, presented the Harmans with an engraved Steuben glass bowl. The gift, he said, was "a modest expression of our deeply felt tribute to a couple whose warmth of personality, devotion to the cause of American-Israeli understanding and commitment to Jewish peoplehood have made a profound impact on the American Jewish community."

Rabbi Schachter also announced that the American Friends of the Hebrew University had launched a \$1 million scholarship endowment in honor of Ambassador Harman. The Israeli diplomat, who will leave Washington early next month after serving as ambassador since 1959, will assume the presidency of Hebrew University later this year.

Ambassador Harman will be succeeded by Major Gen. Itzhak Rabin, former chief of staff. The Presidents Conference, which sponsored the dinner as the American Jewish community's adieu to Ambassador and Mrs. Harman, is regarded as the representative spokesman of U.S. Jewry on international issues affecting the security of Israel and the Jewish people.

Jewish Agency Tenders Farewell Luncheon

The Jewish Agency-American Section tendered a farewell luncheon to the Harmans today with some 40 friends and associates of the couple in attendance. Mrs. Rose L. Halprin, chairman of the American Section, presided and the speakers included Rabbi Israel Miller, chairman of the American Zionist Council and the Ambassador and Mrs. Harman.

Mrs. Halprin acclaimed the Harmans for having "contributed greatly to the development of Zionism in Israel" and for having "jointly made an impact on America that will be long remembered." She pointed out that the Harmans had been "born and brought up in Zionism" and were dedicated to Zionism from early childhood.

Both, she said, "have contributed greatly to the development of Zionism and Israel -- the Ambassador as one of his country's leading diplomats and Zena as an outstanding figure in the field of international social welfare. Together, in the many years they have spent on their assignment in this country, they have ably represented Israel and have jointly made an impact on America that will be long remembered. We bid them a fond farewell."

Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America, will hold a farewell brunch in honor of the Harmans next Sunday, at 11:30 a.m. in the Empire Room of the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. Mrs. Mortimer Jacobson, national president of Hadassah, will present Ambassador Harman with a special scroll of honor. Mrs. Siegfried Kramarsky, national chairman of the Hadassah Medical Organization Committee, will present Ambassador and Mrs. Harman with a personal gift. Dr. Abram Leon Sachar, president of Brandeis University, and Rep. Ogden R. Reid, former U.S. Ambassador to Israel, will speak.

Yad Vashem Honors Ontario Doctor Who Saved Polish Jewish Child From Nazis

OTTAWA, Jan. 23 (JTA)--In a short but moving ceremony at the Embassy of Israel today, Ambassador Arieh Eshel presented a certificate of honor issued by the Israel Commemorative Institute of Martyrs and Heroes (Yad Vashem) to Dr. Zbigniew Gorecki, now of Cornwall, Ont., who as a young doctor in Poland in 1942 saved the life of a Jewish child by smuggling her out to safety under the noses of the Gestapo. Her parents had decided to commit suicide rather than be killed by the Nazis, and before their death, had entrusted their 8-year-old daughter to Dr. Gorecki in the hope that he could save her.

Friends of Lubavitch To Hold Exhibition of Chassidic Art in Philadelphia

PHILADELPHIA, Jan. 23 (JTA)--An exhibition of the works of Chassidic artists, sponsored by the Philadelphia Friends of Lubavitch, is scheduled to open at the Lubavitch Center here on Feb. 4 it was announced by the group today. The exhibit will include works by Chenoch Lieberman and Zalman Kleiman of the United States and religious artists from Israel and other countries. The opening ceremonies will be attended by the sculptor Jacques Lipchitz who has created an original lithograph for the art show.

According to Joseph N. Gorson, chairman of the event, the purpose of the exhibit is to "expose and introduce the Jewish community to the philosophy of the Lubavitch movement expressed through the artwork of its devoted followers."

First AJC Conferences On Education and Youth Get Under Way in Mexico City

NEW YORK, Jan. 23 (JTA)--A series of conferences on education and youth, the first of their kind to be held in Mexico, will be held in Mexico City under the auspices of the Mexican office of the American Jewish Committee, the Committee announced today. The sessions are being held at the Centro Deportivo Israelita and will be for parents, teachers and the general public. Sergio Nudelstejer, AJC director in Mexico, is coordinator of the series.