Testimony Reveals That 'Liberty' Failed To Get Messages Ordering It To Move

WASHINGTON, July 10 (JTA)—The disclosure in Congress today that a Navy communications foul-up led to the presence of the U.S.S. Liberty off the Sinai coast in June, 1967, where it was mistaken for an Egyptian vessel and attacked by Israeli torpedo boats and planes, touched off a Congressional demand that the U.S. refund to Israel the $3,233,500 paid in damages. Rep. Seymour Halpern, New York Republican, declared in the House that “since testimony just released by a House subcommittee discloses that it was U.S. Government communications system negligence, mistakes and incompetence which jeopardized the Liberty, why should Israel have to pay for our own tragic comedy of errors.”

The testimony, published by the House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, was given at hearings last April and May on the Defense Department's 1969 budget. Released Tuesday, it revealed a series of blunders and misroutings of messages. The Liberty never received an order from the Pentagon to withdraw from the Sinai war zone. The Liberty, a communications ship, was attacked repeatedly by Israeli planes on June 8, 1967, at the peak of the Six-Day War. Thirty-four Americans were killed and 75 were wounded. Israel expressed regret at the time and said it was “prepared to make amends for the tragic loss of life and material damage,” which it subsequently did. The U.S. claimed that the ship was 13.6 nautical miles off Sinai when the attack occurred.

According to the testimony, the order to the Liberty to move out of Sinai waters was first misrouted by personnel in the Army communications center at the Pentagon to the Naval communications center in the Philippines. There a second personnel error misrouted the message to the National Security Agency at Fort Meade, Md., where it was filed. It was never delivered to the Liberty.

Lt. Gen. R. P. Klocko, director of the U.S. Defense Communications Agency, admitted that because of personnel failures, “the message was sent to the Pacific instead of the Atlantic.” Additional errors were also revealed. According to the published testimony, “the routing clerk aboard the flagship U.S.S. Little Rock (flagship of the U.S. Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean) failed to detect...that the Liberty was monitoring the fleet broadcast from the Naval Communications station at Asmara, Ethiopia” and as a result another message was misrouted to the Naval Communications Center in Morocco.

Congressmen at the hearing were apparently infuriated. Rep. John Rhodes, Arizona Republican, asked Gen. Klocko why a message was not sent directly to the ship to move its position “100 miles from the shore” instead of going “through all this rigmarole to move that ship.” “Here we are with the most sophisticated communications system ever known to mankind and maybe its so sophisticated that we do not know how to use it,” Rep. Rhodes declared.

Congressman Says Administration Should Reassess Israel's Responsibility

Rep. Halpern said that “the revelation of the fact that American mistakes were responsible for the terrible losses sustained in American dead and wounded would indicate that the Administration's legal authorities (should) reassess Israel's responsibility in the restitution question, Israel,” he said, “voluntarily offered at the time of the incident to make restitution. It would have been only fair and honorable for the Administration to have disclosed to Israel and to American public opinion that U.S. incompetence rather than Israeli irresponsibility was culpable.”

He suggested that “a grave disservice appears to have been done to Israel by bureaucrats anxious to cover up orders that were dispatched but never received. It was obvious that the Israeli action would never have occurred.” He urged that all the new facts available and material still allegedly suppressed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff be made available to a court of appropriate jurisdiction. The testimony did not reveal why the orders were issued to move the Liberty.

A U.S. Navy board of inquiry had ruled that the attack on the Liberty was “unprovoked” and said that Israeli forces had ample opportunity to identify the ship correctly. Israel said that when the Liberty had been challenged by an Israeli torpedo boat, it had replied with the signal used by Egyptian ships during the 1956 Sinai campaign. The Liberty, built during World War II, was a standard American cargo ship type known as a Victory ship. There are several Victory ships in the Egyptian merchant marine.

Israel is expected to refer to the newly disclosed information about the Liberty in the course of talks now in progress on the settlement of further claims, official sources said today. The Israelis were unaware of facts revealed prior to publication of the testimony by Congress, they said. A considerable sum is at stake. In addition to the compensation claims of 75 injured Navy personnel, there is a bill for the damage to the ship and its sophisticated equipment.

Allenby Bridge Buzzes With Activity As Arabs Enter West Bank For Vacations

ALLENBY BRIDGE, July 10 (JTA)—This bridge over the Jordan River, named for the British general who conquered Palestine from the Turks in World War I, has become one of Israel's busiest points of entry.

The normal traffic of pedestrians, cars and trucks has been swollen by hundreds of Arabs on their way to spend vacations with relatives on the West Bank or in East Jerusalem. Permission to do so was granted recently by Israeli authorities. Col. Shlomo Gazit, advisor on occupied territories to the
Defense Minister, told Jewish Telegraphic Agency correspondent Amos Ben Vered today that the number of vacationers to date has been 1,387 of whom 327 are students from colleges in Jordan and other Arab countries. Students from Egypt and Syria are admitted, though permits are not granted to others from those countries for security reasons, Col. Gazit said.

Of the non-students entering the West Bank under the vacation program, 786 have been from Jordan and 254 from other countries. Among the latter are many West Bank Arabs who work in the oil refineries of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Some of them, however, are afraid to have the Israeli entry stamp in Hebrew, French and Arabic affixed to their passports. They are worried that their passports will not be honored when they return to their countries of residence, Col. Gazit said.

But the passports must be stamped because "Israel cannot boycott herself," he added. He explained that the difficulties could probably be overcome by obtaining new passports. He noted that the Arab countries do not honor any passport including an American one, if it bears proof that its owner has visited Israel.

(New York Times correspondent Terence Smith reported from Jericho today that the vacation plan "has been frustrated by a general Arab reluctance to accept Israeli stamps in their passports." According to Mr. Smith, "of the 12,000 people authorized by the Israeli Government to cross the West Bank during the first month of the operation, only 1,000 have made use of their permits...They have refused to accept the Israeli stamp, not out of patriotism but because of fear that they will not be permitted to return to the country where they lived and worked after their month's holiday in Israel." Nevertheless, Mr. Smith noted, "on any given day more travelers are likely to enter there (Allenby Bridge) than at Lydda, the international airport, or at the port of Haifa. An average of 1,700 people plus 200 truckloads of commercial goods, mostly agricultural products, cross the bridge every day." Mr. Smith reported.)

According to Col. Gazit, nearly 40,000 persons have requested entry to Jerusalem or the West Bank to spend the summer vacation with their families. About 14,000 permits have been issued so far. They reach the applicants by roundabout ways. The International Red Cross has refused to supervise traffic over the Allenby Bridge since two of its officials were wounded in an outbreak of shooting there several months ago. But both Israeli and Jordanian troops have pulled back some distance from the bridge on their respective sides of the river and the approaches are filled only with civilian traffic, Mr. Ben Vered reported.

Although the weather is hot — the Allenby Bridge is over 1,000 feet below sea level in the humid Jordanian Valley north of the Dead Sea — many of the Arab vacationers wear dark suits and ties. Many come in their own cars and traffic jams are common as the private autos vie with 10-ton trucks for passage across the narrow bridge.

Vacationers going to Jerusalem may later visit other parts of Israel without special permission. Those visiting relatives on the West Bank need permits to go to Tel Aviv or Haifa, but they are granted freely, Col. Gazit said. The vacationers are permitted to spend as long as three months in Israeli-held territories, as few applications have been rejected for security reasons, he said.

See Optimism Surrounding Jarring’s Mediation Efforts In London Dissolving

LONDON, July 10 (TJA) — The optimism which surrounded the renewed activity of United Nations peace envoy Ambassador Gunnar V. Jarring appeared to be petering out today and prospects for an immediate breakthrough in the Arab-Israel impasse seemed remote. Dr. Jarring met yesterday with British Foreign Secretary Michael Stewart and earlier had a second round of discussions with Jordanian Foreign Minister Abdul Moneim al-Rifai. Dr. Jarring also conferred yesterday with Ambassador Gideon Rafael, director-general of Israel’s Foreign Ministry.

Nothing was disclosed of the talks with Mr. al-Rifai. The Jordanian afterwards would say only that “present prospects are not without hope.” The Daily Telegraph noted that the length and apparently detailed nature of the Jarring-Rifai talks suggested that the UN envoy might regard Jordan as the best channel for dealings with the Arab countries.

Mr. Stewart was understood to have expressed his Government’s growing concern over the continued closure of the Suez Canal and to have told Dr. Jarring that if there was no immediate progress toward a Middle East settlement, the problem would rapidly deteriorate. He reportedly predicted a renewal of the “angry Arab debate” in the UN Security Council and new Arab demands for sanctions against Israel.

(The London Times reported from Beirut today that America had delivered about 60 Patton tanks to Jordan at a time when the Jordanian Army was becoming increasingly critical of King Hussein’s military policies and his refusal to buy arms from Soviet Russia, although officers were complaining of shortages of almost every type of military equipment. The Times said that America has been shipping tanks, artillery, ammunition and spare parts and other equipment to Jordan for the past two months. But the shipments were not being publicized, presumably to avert increased Israeli pressure for the American F-4 Phantom jets, the Times said. The paper estimated that Jordan now had about 11 British Hunter planes.)

(In Geneva, United Nations Secretary-General U Thant told a press conference today that he believed concerted action by the Big Powers would be a most potent instrument towards solving Middle East problems of a grave character. Mr. Thant told correspondents that UN Middle East peace envoy Dr. Gunnar V. Jarring was coming to Geneva today to exchange views with him, and for that reason he could not make any assessment about progress toward peace. He said that Dr. Jarring intended to submit a report to him on Middle East mediation efforts before the end of July.)
WJCongress Hears Optimistic Reports On Jewish Life In Iran, South Africa

GENEVA, July 10 (JTA)--Optimistic reports on Jewish education and life in two widely separated countries — Iran and the Republic of South Africa — were given by delegates at a meeting of the governing council of the World Jewish Congress here today. The informants were Moshe Ker- manian of the Central Jewish Community of Iran, who addressed the council in Hebrew, and Dr. Teddy Schneider, president of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies. Both said that anti-Semitic mani- festations in their countries were minor and were discouraged by the authorities.

Mr. Kermanian reported “great progress” in education in Iran and said “we are rather proud of it.” He noted that of a Jewish population of 8,000, there were 1,400 Jewish students, which is 10 times the ratio for the country as a whole. He said that 400 Iranian Jews were now studying at Israeli universities whereas many previously went to American or European universities. He said that the Shah and the Government “continued in the great tradition of Cyrus” to consider Persian (Iranian) Jews completely Persian and were both fair and just to Jewish communal needs. Nevertheless, he said, aliyah (immigration) has never ceased and there were now 8,000 Iranian Jews in Israel, a figure equal to the entire Jewish population of Iran. Dr. Schneider said that South African Jews had always been ardent Zionists and remained so. The use of Hebrew was spreading, he said, adding that a major task confronting the community was Jewish education.

An array of notables representing the United Nations office and the UN missions of Britain, France, the Soviet Union, Italy, South Africa and Israel attended a reception given here by Dr. Nahum Goldmann, president of the WJCongress. Also present were the Chief Rabbi of Geneva and representatives of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, UN Secretariat, the International Commission of Jurists, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, and the International Confederation of Christian Trade Unions. Dr. Goldmann’s co-hosts were Dr. Joel Elkan, chairman of the governing council, and Dr. Gerhard M. Riegner, secretary-general of the WJCongress.


LONDON, July 10 (JTA)—A new and large edition of the “Protocols of the Elders of Zion” is being financed by King Faisal of Saudi Arabia. The long-discarded “Protocols,” a virulent anti-Semitic publication purporting to be of Jewish origin, has been published in Russia and has appeared in various forms since the beginning of the century.

Sources disclose that 200,000 copies are being printed in French, most of them destined for French-speaking Africa. Distribution by Arab League offices has already begun. Another 100,000 issues are being prepared in English, Spanish, Italian and Arabic. The “Protocols” have been freshly edited by the “Islamic Institute for Research and Publication” in Beirut.

Member Of India’s Parliament Says Government’s Policy Toward Israel ‘Immature’

NEW DELHI, July 10 (JTA)—M. P. Bhargava, a Congress Party member of the Indian Parliament, yesterday accused his Government of “immaturity” in its foreign policy and said that an example was its attitude toward Israel. Indian foreign policy has been consistently pro-Arab in the Middle East dispute and New Delhi maintains no diplomatic ties with Israel.

DAIA National Convention Heards Governor-General Of Buenos Aires Province

BUENOS AIRES, July 10 (JTA)—The DAIA, central representative body of Argentine Jewry, opened its three-day national convention at Mar Del Plata yesterday, an occasion that coincided with Argentina’s Independence Day. The convention was attended by 140 delegates from Buenos Aires and 104 from the provinces. Present also for the opening banquet was Francisco A. Imaiz, governor-general of Buenos Aires Province, his finance minister, Dagnino Pastore, and other high officials. Israeli Ambassador Moshe Alon brought greetings “from eternal Jerusalem.”

Dr. Isaac Goldenberg, president of the DAIA, said in his address that Jews endow Argentina with their Jewish singularity. Gov. Imaiz said, in reply, that Argentina “receives with affection all who come to be part of us, to share our sorrows and our hopes.’

West German Justice Minister Renews Plea For Abolition Of Statute Of Limitations

BONN, July 10 (JTA)—The Federal Minister of Justice, Gustav Heineman, today renewed his plea for abolition of the statute of limitations on the prosecution of Nazi war criminals accused of murder. The statute goes into effect on Dec. 31, 1969. Mr. Heineman said he doubted that a majority could be found for abolition in the Bundestag, West Germany’s lower house.

500 French-Speaking Jews Get Full Scholarships To Study At Israeli Universities

PARIS, July 10 (JTA)—About 500 French-speaking Jewish students will leave for studies in Israel at the end of July under full scholarships enabling them to attend Israeli universities. About two-thirds of the group are members of the North African and French Sephardic Jewish community. The program is under the direction of the Israel Students Authority, a joint Israeli Government and Jewish Agency body.
Israel Concerned That Sirhan Trial May Become Platform For Anti-Israel Propaganda

DETROIT, July 10 (JTA)—The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs has informed a Detroit resident of its concern that the trial of Sirhan B. Sirhan, accused assassin of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, be made "into a platform for anti-Israel propaganda," Shaul Ramati, of the Ministry's information department, responded to a letter from Sol. A. Dann, an attorney. Mr. Dann had written the Israeli Government in Jerusalem about the forthcoming Sirhan trial in Los Angeles.

Mr. Ramati wrote, "I think we shall have to give the matter quite a lot of thought once the trial starts, as there may well be an attempt to turn it into a platform for anti-Israel propaganda—a platform on which we will not be represented but which will get maximum publicity."

Hadassah, Orthodox Union Call For Effective Federal Gun-Control Legislation

NEW YORK, July 10 (JTA)—Hadassah, the women's Zionist Organization of America, announced today that it has petitioned every member of the United States Senate and House of Representatives to support effective gun-control legislation and pledged that its 318,000 members in all 50 states will "keep this issue alive until the proper legislation has been passed." The announcement, by Mrs. Mortimer Jacobson, national president, was regarded as an unprecedented action by the organization which has hitherto concerned itself with projects to develop Israel and help its needy. It reflected the growing concern in the American Jewish community for stronger Federal control of the proliferation of firearms. A similar appeal to Congress to pass President Johnson's gun-control law was made today by Rabbi Joseph Karasick, president of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations.

Mrs. Jacobson said, "we have called upon every member of the House and the Senate to support, with all the vigor at his command, a bill that will outlaw the sale of mail order firearms of any kind; require registration of all firearms; and make it mandatory for all persons owning firearms to be properly screened and registered."

134 Americans And Canadians En Route To Israel To Become New Settlers

NEW YORK, July 10 (JTA)—One hundred and thirty-four Americans and Canadians were on the high seas today enroute to Israel where they plan to settle. The group, sponsored by the Israel Aliyah Center, Inc., sailed from New York Monday aboard the Greek liner, Queen Anna Maria. According to the Aliyah Center, it was one of the largest sailings of American settlers to Israel in recent years.

They are a vanguard of more than 1,000 Americans and Canadians who were expected to settle in Israel this summer. Abraham Frank, director of the Aliyah Center, said that 344 persons departed for Israel during June and more than 800 were scheduled to settle there during July and August. The 134 range in age from a 10-month-old infant to a 76-year-old woman. Most are professionals or skilled workers.

Gen. Dayan Will Make One-Day Trip To New York In December To Address UJA

NEW YORK, July 10 (JTA)—Gen. Moshe Dayan, Israel's Minister of Defense, will make a one-day visit to the United States in December to address the annual banquet of the United Jewish Appeal here. The function is scheduled for Dec. 4. A previous visit by Gen. Dayan had to be cancelled on the eve of his departure because of security developments.

Philip M. Klutznick Named Board Chairman Of The Swiss Israel Trade Bank

NEW YORK, July 10 (JTA)—Philip M. Klutznick of Chicago, a national Jewish leader, has been elected chairman of the board of the Swiss Israel Trade Bank. The bank is one of the largest commercial banks in Switzerland, its headquarters are in Geneva. Its affiliated banks include the Foreign Trade Bank, Ltd., Israel and it has branches throughout the world.

American Israeli Marketing Corp. Names Stulman Chief Operating Executive

NEW YORK, July 10 (JTA)—The appointment of Stephen L. Stulman as chief operating executive of the American Israeli Marketing Corp., a private American importing, trading and merchandising company that specializes in Israeli consumer and industrial goods, was announced here today. Mr. Stulman was previously vice president of the Israel Industrial Services Inc., a New York investment subsidiary of the Israeli Discount Bank and the PEC-Israel Economic Corp.

Dr. Nahum Y. Nir-Refalkes, Former Speaker Of Israeli Parliament, Dead At 84

TEL AVIV, July 10 (JTA)—Dr. Nahum Yacob Nir-Refalkes, who was speaker of the Knesset (Parliament) in 1959, died at Beilinson Hospital here yesterday at the age of 84. Dr. Refalkes was a veteran Labor Zionist leader.

Memorial Services Held For Abraham Laredo, Headed Tangiers Jewish Community

TANGIERS, Morocco, July 10 (JTA)—Memorial services were held here for Abraham Laredo, former president of the Tangiers Jewish community, who died last week. The ceremonies were attended by local Moslems as well as Jewish leaders and by the consul of France, Spain and Italy.

Israeli Doctor Is Member Of Five-Nation Team On Medical Mission To Vietnam

NEW YORK, July 10 (JTA)—An Israeli expert in plastic surgery is one of a medical team of 13 surgeons and nursing specialists who left here for Saigon to treat war victims and to help train local medical personnel. The Israeli is Dr. Isaac Kaplan, head of the department of plastic surgery at Beilinson Hospital, Petah Tiqva, Israel. Five countries are represented on the team, including the U.S.