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State Dept. Seeking Senate Committee Elimination Of Foreign Aid Amendment On Jets

WASHINGTON, July 21 (JTA)--The State Department was reported today to be seeking to persuade the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to eliminate a House-approved amendment to the Foreign Aid bill specifying that the President sell F-4 Phantom jet fighter-bombers to Israel.

Israel has been trying to obtain 50 of the supersonic jets since last January to offset the Soviet supply of modern military jets to the Arab states to replace losses in the June Six-Day war.

If the amendment is not eliminated in the Senate committee, it will remain part of the bill to be acted on by the full Senate. Some Senate committee members told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that they would resist pressures to eliminate the amendment. One Senator said he had heard that the White House opposed the amendment and considered it an attempt to force President Johnson's hand while he reportedly was withholding the Phantoms to exert subtle pressure on Israel. The President was said to want Israel to adopt a less "rigid" position on peace negotiations. He also was said to feel that authorization of the sale of the jets to Israel might jeopardize his pursuit of a Middle East detente with the Soviet Union.

Meanwhile, Walt W. Rostow, the President's top advisor on foreign policy, disclosed in an official White House letter that United States policy on the Phantom matter was linked to American efforts to promote a peace settlement in the Middle East. In a letter to Sen. Hugh Scott, Pennsylvania Republican, who has pressed the Administration to provide the Phantoms to Israel, Mr. Rostow indicated that the question remained under review in keeping with the communique issued on talks between Israeli Premier Levi Eshkol and Mr. Johnson last January at the LBJ ranch.

Mr. Rostow emphasized that the "overriding objective" of the U.S. in the Middle East remained "achievement of a durable peace which will benefit all the people of that area." He added that "we recognize the importance of relating our arms policy to pursuit of that objective." The Rostow statement, which made supply of the Phantoms contingent on American diplomatic efforts on the Middle East, constituted the first White House admission that the two matters were linked.

Sen. Scott wrote President Johnson in reply that Israel urgently needed the supersonic jets and that arming Israel "strengthens the chance for a lasting peace in that area." He warned that if the U.S. faltered in support and commitment "and Israel's defensive position weakens, then surely the attack will come" on Israel.

A leading Republican member of the House Armed Services Committee, Rep. Bob Wilson of California, also criticized the delay on sale of the jets to Israel. In a letter to Secretary of State Dean Rusk, Rep. Wilson charged that the Soviet Union was establishing air bases in the Arab states which menaced the U.S. Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean while the U.S. continued to refuse to sell to Israel the Phantoms it needed "to maintain a deterrent strike capability against the Soviet-equipped bases being established there." He asserted in his letter that while the Administration sought a detente with the Soviet Union, the Russians were outflanking NATO by preparing jet bomber bases in Egypt, Syria and Algeria. He declared that more than 8,000 Russians were already based in Arab states.

The final wording of the House-approved amendment specified that "the President shall take such steps as may be necessary to negotiate an agreement with the Government of Israel providing for the sale by the United States of not less than 50 military planes commonly known as F-4 Phantom jet fighters, in order to provide Israel with an adequate deterrent force capable of preventing future Arab aggression by offsetting sophisticated weapons received by the Arab states and to replace losses suffered by Israel in the 1967 conflict." The amendment, offered in a bi-partisan action by Rep. Lester Wolff, New York Democrat, and Rep. Seymour Halpern, New York Republican, was approved by voice vote. The House rejected an Administration-backed move to block the amendment on the grounds that it would unconstitutionally interfere with Presidential conduct of foreign affairs.

Rep. Halpern, noting that Israel had not received a single supersonic military jet from any source since the Six-Day War, called the withholding of the Phantoms "a cynical way of conducting world diplomacy." Rep. Wolff said that "unless Israel has a satisfactory deterrent in aircraft, we can have no assurance that peace will be negotiated" in the Middle East.

New Iraqi Military Regime Expected To Maintain Prior Regime's Hard Line On Israel

JERUSALEM, July 21 (JTA)--The new Iraqi military regime headed by Maj. Gen. Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr, is expected to maintain a hard line in its position toward Israel, informed Israeli sources said today. The sources pointed out that anti-Israel statements, including calls for renewed warfare against Israel, were prominent in the communiqués issued by the new regime after its coup d'etat last Wednesday.

The old regime headed by ousted President Abdel Rahman Aref, they noted, had been charged with slackening in the 'struggle against Israel' and with failure to strengthen Iraqi forces which were hence unable to help avert the Arab defeat in the Six-Day War.

The Israeli press, commenting on the bloodless Iraqi revolution, stressed the anti-Israel line of the new Government and pointed out that the only stable Government in the Middle East was Israel's. The press said Arab regimes were constantly shaky as a result of personal intrigues which periodically resulted in coups which had severe internal and inter-Arab repercussions.

"Iraq's bark is worse than its bite," one source here said. Even though Iraqi troops are still stationed on Jordanian soil, they are some distance from the cease-fire line and have not been involved in any direct confrontation with Israeli units since the Six-Day War, the source said. Even current rumors about withdrawal of the Iraqis from Jordan had little bearing on Israel since they were never stationed along Israel's borders except during the June, 1967 war.

Israeli officials said that the Iraqi Army was now beset by internal troubles and mutual suspicions among its commanders and was not considered much of an adversary for a modern army. Its main purpose, they point out, had been to serve as a kind of augmented police force used principally against the Kurds in the north whom they had been unable to subdue for more than a decade.

Iraq's politics had been somewhat closer to the hard line of Egypt and Syria than to the softer one taken by Lebanon, but since there is no direct frontier between Israel and Iraq, negotiations with Iraq, one of the belligerents in the Six-Day War, was considered to be a second magnitude problem, officials pointed out.

During the war, an Iraqi brigade attempted to cross the Jordan River but was severely hit by the Israel Air Force and retreated. An Iraqi plane was shot down over Israel and the Israel Air Force later bombed an airfield in Iraq.

Israeli sources said that the troops stationed in Jordan had been used to help anti-regime elements from overthrowing King Hussein and expected that this role would remain unchanged.

Of all the Arab states that had troops in Israel fighting during the 1948 War of Independence, Iraq was the only one that refused to sign the armistice agreement with Israel but later agreed that it would abide by the Israeli-Jordanian agreement. A clause holding Jordan responsible for the Iraqi troops stationed on her soil had been inserted into that agreement.

Eban, Dayan And Galili Focus On Question Of Peace And How To Reach It

JERUSALEM, July 21 (JTA)--Peace -- and how to achieve it -- were the themes of speeches by three Israeli Government officials over the weekend.

Foreign Minister Abba Eban said in a radio interview that differences between the United States and Israel over the method by which peace with the Arabs should be reached were more apparent than real. Mr. Eban told the Cabinet on Sunday that there was a wide range of understanding between the U.S. and Israel on ways and means to settle the conflict.

Speaking at a Haifa labor rally, Defense Minister Gen. Moshe Dayan said that "today more than ever, the way to peace is in standing fast." Israel was closer to a settlement with the Arabs, both in neighboring countries and within present borders, today than ever before, he declared.

Information Minister Israel Galili, in a speech in Tiberias to hundreds of new recruits in Nahal para-military units, declared that, "It is time Arab rulers understand that time is not working in their favor. Israel of tomorrow will not be softer or weaker than in the past. It will be even stronger than in the past." The Arabs' position that there can be no negotiations, no peace and no free navigation in the Suez Canal indicates that the war is not yet over, he declared.

Mr. Eban told the nation that in his conferences last week with George Ball, the new United States Ambassador to the United Nations, and Mr. Ball's delegation, it was established that the U.S. did not believe in any permanent solution that was not based on a treaty signed directly between the Arabs and Israel. With Mr. Ball was Joseph Sisco, Assistant Secretary of State, and Alfred Atherton, head of the Arab-Israel desk at the State Department. Also visiting Israel last week was McGeorge Bundy, Ford Foundation president and former advisor to President Johnson, who conferred with top officials.

The Americans, Mr. Eban said, did not concur with Israel in her insistence that any matter of substance must be discussed only in direct talks with the Arabs from the start. Israeli officials took the position that this was the only way to find out if there was any real wish for peace on the part of the Arab countries.

Gen. Dayan said that Israel must have plans for peace but must be ready to carry on without peace until it was reached. "If we insist this time on firm and binding terms on the normalization of relations, then we shall eventually achieve real peace," he asserted.

Eshkol Tours Sinai, Suez With Dayan And Bar-Lev, Voices Confidence In Israeli Strength

JERUSALEM, July 21 (JTA)--Premier Levi Eshkol toured Israeli military positions throughout the Sinai Peninsula and along the Suez Canal yesterday and later expressed optimism that any military action there by Egypt would fail. The Premier inspected the living and working conditions of the Armed Forces by helicopter and military vehicle along with Defense Minister Gen. Moshe Dayan, Chief of Staff Chaim Bar-Lev, and Brig. Gen. Yeshayahu Gavish, commander of the southern district.

Among the places he visited were the Mitla pass, where Egyptian armor was devastated during the Six-Day War; Port Tewfik, overlooking Port Ibrahim on the Egyptian side of the canal; and the Great Bitter Lake, where 15 ships have been blocked since Egypt closed the canal during the war. He also toured the sites of other routes that Israel's Armed Forces took during the war and the sites of several clashes.

Summing up his impressions of Mitla, Mr. Eshkol said he still felt "the fear of the collapsed Egyptian war machine whose remnants and embers are still scattered there, and the fear of the Egyptian soldier who went to war at (President Nasser's) command and, at the end, fled to save his life."

On the Israeli side, he said, heroism was "grounded in conscious understanding." If it were not for "Nasser's indifference to suffering, none of his people would have suffered nor would the ships be trapped in the lake," Mr. Eshkol said. "The world has come to know how to evaluate the words of peace uttered by Mr. Nasser's messengers such as his Foreign Minister (Mahmoud) Riad," Mr. Eshkol said. "We are obliged to believe him when he said he wished to destroy us." Mr. Rias said recently in Scandinavia that Egypt accepted the "reality" of Israel, a remark that was later denied in Cairo.

(It was reported from Istanbul that Soviet flat-boats weighing about 300-400 tons each passed through the Bosphorus over the weekend, and possibly were heading for dredging operations in the Suez Canal. Authorities in Istanbul said the boats were going to join a 10,000 ton Russian dredger that passed through the Bosphorus earlier this month.)

Israeli Troops Kill Arab Saboteur, Three Others Escape, In Clash Near Damiyah Bridge
JERUSALEM, July 21 (JTA)--In the most serious guerrilla incident reported over the weekend, Israeli Army authorities said one Arab saboteur was killed and three others escaped into Jordanian territory when an Arab terrorist unit was repulsed while attempting to penetrate an Israeli position near the Damiyah Bridge early Friday morning. A Russian-made bazooka was found near the dead saboteur. There were no Israeli casualties.

During the past two weeks, Army sources reported, 17 terrorists had been rounded up in the Hebron and Bethlehem areas. Some of those arrested were believed to have been collecting military information, according to the London Daily Telegraph.

An Israeli soldier was slightly injured Saturday morning when a jeep hit a mine in the southern part of the Golan Heights not far from the Jordanian border. In the Beisan Valley area, a border police halftrack was attacked Friday morning by bazooka shells and machinegun fire while on routine patrol near Ashdod Yaacov. Another armored car and Army vehicles rushed to the scene and opened fire to silence Jordanian positions and to help extricate the halftrack. There were no casualties.

An hour later, another border police halftrack hit a mine while on patrol north of the Maoz Chaim settlement in the valley. There was slight damage to the vehicle but no casualties. A search of the area revealed two more anti-vehicle mines which were dismantled. A number of other shooting incidents were also reported over the weekend but no casualties were reported by Army officials.

Israel Receives Congressional Testimony On 'Liberty,' Awaits U.S. Claims Action
JERUSALEM, July 21 (JTA)--Israel has received United States Congressional testimony regarding the U.S.S. Liberty, and Government officials here said the next move was up to the American Government on the question of compensation claims.

The testimony showed that a communications foul-up was responsible for the failure of the electronic spy ship to receive orders to leave the Sinai battle area during the Six-Day War. Israeli officials expressed the view that this information might be expected to result in a different American attitude on Israel's responsibility for attacking the ship, killing 34 crew members, wounding 75 and so severely damaging the vessel that it was decided not to repair it.

Israel apologized to the U.S. for the attack and paid \$3,323,500 to the families of the men killed, but no claims for the wounded or the damage have been submitted by the U.S. The State Department, which still officially holds Israel entirely responsible for the accidental June 8, 1967 attack, was studying the testimony, and officials conceded that a complicated legal issue of contributory negligence existed. It was expected here that this factor would be taken into account when Washington presents its final bill for all compensation claims. The ship was off the Sinai coast and was assaulted by Israel jets and torpedo boats which had mistaken it for an Egyptian ship when it failed to identify itself properly.

Ars. Meir Reaffirms Resignation From Party Post; Successor Will Be Chosen
TEL AVIV, July 21 (JTA)--The secretariat of the Israeli Labor Party will meet this week to select a secretary-general to succeed Golda Meir, who declared over the weekend that her resignation from the party post was final. Her resignation has been accepted. Premier Levi Eshkol said, "We have spent much energy in trying to change her decision, but in vain." A number of possible successors have been mentioned, including Finance Minister Pinhas Saphir.

COJO Urges Thant To Insist Upon Inquiry Into Status Of Jews In Arab States
GENEVA, July 21 (JTA)--The Conference of Jewish Organizations (COJO) has urged United Nations Secretary-General U Thant to insist that any representative appointed to inquire into the situation of civilians in the Middle East be given an unrestricted opportunity to visit Jewish communities and Jews under detention in Arab countries.

The request was part of a resolution on Jews in Arab lands passed by COJO at a three-day parley here. The resolution expressed the organization's "deep distress" at the plight of Jews in Egypt, Syria and Iraq and called on those Governments to end their "discrimination and inhuman treatment of Jews living in their midst" and to restore to them "elementary human rights."

(A UN investigation of the condition of civilians in the Middle East war zone was ordered several months ago by the Security Council. Israel agreed to cooperate provided the probe also covered Jews in Arab states. But Arab refusal to allow such an investigation has forced Mr. Thant to delay naming his emissary.)

More Than 49,000 Receive Resettlement, Related Assistance in 1967, Hias Reports

NEW YORK, July 21 (JTA)--More than 49,000 Jewish men, women and children received resettlement and related assistance from the United Hias Service last year, including 6,242 migrants and refugees who were aided in finding new homes in Western countries.

Gaynor I. Jacobson, executive vice president of the worldwide migration agency, stated in Hias' annual report that as a result of the Six-Day War, almost 25,000 Jews fled from Tunisia, Morocco, Libya, Egypt, Lebanon and other Arab countries. "A significant number of these people were helped by our agency," he said. "We provided guarantees for transportation costs, reception at docks and airports and necessary services at reception points. In addition, we worked with other voluntary agencies and friendly governments to secure documents and exit permits for stateless and persecuted Jews." Mr. Jacobson noted that 1,356 refugees and migrants were assisted by Hias to resettle in the United States last year.

Carlos L. Israels, Hias president, noted that the Hias caseload of persons registered for migration as of the end of 1967 was 14,744, the highest since the Hungarian uprising of 1956. He said that 1967 expenditures totalled \$2,183,311. "In projecting our 1968 budget," Mr. Israels said, "the agency expects to assist about 59,000 Jews, including 6,635 refugees and migrants who will be helped to find new homes in the U.S., Canada, Australia, Latin America and Western Europe. Total expenditures for this program will approximate \$2,375,000!"

Novosti Quotes Rabbi Levin On Jewish Education Deficiencies in USSR And U.S.

WASHINGTON, July 21 (JTA)--Chief Rabbi Yehuda Leib Levin of Moscow has been quoted by Novosti, the Soviet overseas propaganda agency, as admitting on his return to Moscow from visiting American Jewry that there were some deficiencies in Jewish education in Russia and stating that U.S. Jewish leaders admitted a decline in religious education in the U.S.

The rabbi conceded that a yeshiva in Moscow "failed to enroll a sufficient number of students" but attributed this to atheism in the Soviet Union and "a general decline in religious feeling," Novosti reported. He said that "young Jews readily come to the synagogue to have a good time on Simhat Torah or Passover" but "prefer to study in secular educational establishments," according to Novosti.

Rabbi Levin claimed American rabbis told him there was a similar decline in religious interest among American Jewish youth. He said he hoped his visit contributed to American-Soviet relations. He said the greatest impression came from meetings "with my brethren in faith." Rabbi Levin was quoted by Novosti as saying, "a shocking impression was made on me by the complete ignorance or distorted picture and widespread prejudice on the question of the status of Judaism and the life of Jews in the USSR."

'Reader's Digest' Reports Kosygin Hot Line Pressure On LBJ During Six-Day War

NEW YORK, July 21 (JTA)--The Soviet Union tried to pressure President Johnson to take action to halt Israeli advances during the 1967 Six-Day War, even indicating it was prepared to risk nuclear war, according to an article in the Reader's Digest on the use of the Moscow-Washington teletype hot line during the Arab-Israel War.

The hot line was used five times during the war in what the magazine, in a copyrighted article, said was a "war of nerves and of wills" waged by President Johnson and Soviet Premier Alexei N. Kosygin. The article, "Countdown in the Holy Land," based on interviews with participants in the teletype confrontation, was written by Reader's Digest roving editor, Lester Velie.

Premier Kosygin used the hot line "for the first time in anger" on Tuesday, June 6, the second day of the war, the article said. In that call Mr. Kosygin demanded that President Johnson persuade the Israelis to stop their advance in the Sinai Desert and withdraw, hinting that otherwise the Soviet Union would intervene.

The President's answer was that the United States would not unilaterally act and the matter should be referred to the United Nations. Premier Kosygin called again that day and, ignoring the President's preference for UN action, again demanded that the United States force the Israelis to withdraw.

Mr. Kosygin's message, the magazine said, indicated that "the Soviets would have to make perilous decisions...with dire consequences." "It was clear," the article said, "the Russians were coming as close as they could to saying that they were prepared to risk nuclear war."

President Johnson's second reply to Mr. Kosygin was the same as the first, the article said, and no more transmissions were made until June 10, the last day of the war.

Premier Kosygin called three times on June 10 to demand the U.S. act immediately halt the Israeli advance (now being made into Syria). President Johnson answered that he could exercise no more control over the Israelis than the Russians could over the Arabs, the Reader's Digest article said. The article said after Premier Kosygin's third call, President Johnson sent units of the Sixth Fleet toward the Syrian coast.

Funeral Services Slated For Gershon Swet, Veteran Jewish Journalist, Publicist

NEW YORK, July 21 (JTA)--Funeral services were scheduled today for Gershon Swet, Hebrew press officer of the American section of the Jewish Agency and for many years a publicist and journalist in the Jewish news field. He died July 19 at the age of 75.

Born in Russia, he came to the United States in 1948. He served as a correspondent for the daily Yediot Achronot in Tel Aviv; Novoye Russkoye Slovo, a New York newspaper; Hadoar, Hebrew weekly in New York; and La Pensee Russe in Paris. He served as a journalist on various newspapers in Berlin and in Paris and was editor of Musica Hebraica in Jerusalem and a member of the editorial staff of the Jerusalem daily, Haaretz. He was a former chairman of the Palestine Association of Journalists.