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Scranton Tells Israelis He Believes Peace In The Middle East Is Possible

TEL AVIV, Dec. 10 (JTA)--William W. Scranton, President-elect Richard M. Nixon's personal fact-finding envoy to the Middle East, said at a press conference in the United States Embassy here today, "I now believe more in the possibility of finding a peaceful solution to the Middle East conflict than when I came to this region....because everyone with whom I talked expressed a desire for peace." Mr. Scranton, who had separate two-hour conferences yesterday with Prime Minister Levi Eshkol and Foreign Minister Abba Eban, met again with Mr. Eban today at the latter's request and also conferred with Deputy Prime Minister Yigal Allon and Defense Minister Moshe Dayan.

In reply to questions from newsmen, he said he believed Mr. Nixon would follow the policy enunciated in President Johnson's five-point Middle East program of June 19, 1967. He said he had no knowledge of any possible impending change in United States policy toward Israel when the Nixon Administration takes office Jan. 20, adding that he had no talks on that subject prior to leaving on his Middle East mission.

Mr. Scranton sought to clarify a statement he made in several Arab capitals--and repeated on his arrival in Israel yesterday--that the Nixon Administration would pursue a "more even-handed" policy in the Middle East and would not favor one nation over any other. That remark aroused considerable interest here and some concern that it might presage a change in U.S. Middle East policy to the detriment of Israel. Mr. Scranton explained that he meant that some statements made in the U.S. gave the impression that the U.S. was siding with one of the parties in the Middle East conflict. There was a need for a clear and direct explanation--which the new Administration will try to make to all parties--that American policy is balanced, he said. Asked if Mr. Nixon would stick to his campaign statement that Israel required a margin of military superiority over its Arab neighbors to deter aggression, Mr. Scranton replied that Mr. Nixon's statement contained the proviso, "If and as long as there is a direct and imminent threat to Israel."

Mr. Scranton sidestepped questions relating to his conclusions or the recommendations he will make to Mr. Nixon as a result of his Middle East mission. He said that he would report his impressions and will make his recommendations to the President-elect when he returns home. Asked what he considered the main obstacles to peace in the Middle East, the former Pennsylvania Governor said they were "ancient, aged and some modern animosities and distrust." He said he carried no peace plan but that it was Mr. Nixon's conviction that the mission of the United Nations special envoy Dr. Gunnar V. Jarring was the right path to a peaceful solution of the deadlock.

(The U.N. announced today that Ambassador Jarring left his Nicosia, Cyprus headquarters yesterday for Sweden and Moscow. During his temporary absence to resume his post as Sweden's Ambassador to the Soviet Union, his headquarters will continue to be in Nicosia.)

Mr. Scranton disclosed that Israel's security borders was one of the main subjects of his talks with its leaders. He said, "we went into great detail on this subject" including "territorial" matters. Mr. Scranton's talks with Mr. Eshkol yesterday were described in Jerusalem as "a very frank exchange" in a "friendly and free atmosphere." Mr. Eban reportedly emphasized Israel's argument that it must be supplied with sufficient military strength to deter aggression. He also reportedly said that support of Israel by other countries did not worsen their relations with the Arabs. Mr. Eshkol is reported to have told Mr. Scranton that Israel would oppose any proposed settlement of its dispute with the Arabs that fell short of a signed peace treaty. He also reportedly repeated Israel's opposition to stationing of U.N. troops at the Strait of Tiran or on the Suez Canal as a means of ensuring free passage of all ships. He outlined the events leading up to the June, 1967 war which, he said, was the result of 19 years of unrelieved Arab hostility. Israel, he reportedly said, will under no circumstances allow events to follow the same course as they did prior to the 1967 war. He also informed Mr. Scranton of various views under discussion in the Cabinet concerning future relations with the Arab countries.

Deputy Prime Minister Allon reportedly explained to Mr. Scranton his plan to partition the West Bank between an Arab enclave and a chain of Israeli security settlements along the banks of the Jordan River with a corridor linking the Arab areas to Jordan. He reportedly said the basis of his plan was Israel's view that the Jordan River must remain its security border, and that his view was shared by most Cabinet members.

Sheikh Mohammed Ali Jaabari, Mayor of Hebron, conferred for 20 minutes today with Mr. Scranton. The Arab leader reportedly presented no concrete plan but asked that the U.S. take the Palestinians' interests into account when it advocates or proposes any form of settlement of the Arab-Israel conflict. Mayor Jaabari, who has advocated the establishment of a separate Palestinian entity on the West Bank, was the only West Bank leader to meet with Mr. Scranton, although two others had requested an interview. Mayor Hamdi Kanaan of Nablus and Mayor Nadim Zaro of Ramallah failed to show up when they learned that they would be received with the Hebron Mayor. Both are strongly opposed to Mayor Jaabari's views and consider themselves Jordanians. They reportedly feared that the disunity in Palestine Arab ranks might have been exposed to Mr. Scranton if they attended a meeting jointly with Mayor Jaabari.

United States Observers Ask: 'What Does Even-Handed Mean?'

NEW YORK, Dec. 10 (JTA)--The statement in Israel yesterday by Gov. Scranton that the U.S. should adopt a "more even-handed" Middle East policy than in the past drew cautious reaction here. What observers want to know was: What does "even-handed" mean?

Rep. Leonard Farbstein, New York Democrat, demanded that Gov. Scranton clarify his statement. He wondered whether "even-handedness" signified a change in Mr. Nixon's foreign policy position on the Middle East conflict.

The executive director of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, I.L. Kenen, termed the remark a "diplomatic cliché" and said that "one should not jump to conclusions" about its significance. "What is more ominous," he says, "is that the U.S. is seemingly coming closer to the Soviet position with reference to pressures on Israel to withdraw" from occupied territories. Mr. Kenen said that "even-handedness" is a term normal in the vocabulary of State Department diplomats. They use it "in Washington all the time" and intend by it to show there is no favoritism. In the Middle East dispute it is intended to "reassure all the parties," he said.

The Washington Post reported yesterday that an informed Israeli source said the U.S. has outlined plans for settling Israeli differences with Egypt that would not involve a formal treaty, thus shifting from support for a direct settlement between the parties to support of what appears to Israelis like an imposed settlement. The source said the U.S. seemed to Israelis to be willing to sacrifice some Israeli priorities to re-establish diplomatic ties with the Arabs broken during the Six-Day War.

In Washington yesterday, State Department spokesman Robert McCloskey said there would be no U.S. "follow up" to a reported Egyptian reply to a U.S. seven-point peace proposal. He said the U.S. position on achievement of Middle East peace was identical to the one enunciated last year by President Johnson following the Six-Day War. Mr. McCloskey admitted that the U.S. had taken a new initiative to achieve peace in the Middle East. Another source said that the new effort could be considered as parallel to the work of UN envoy Jarring.

West Bank Poetess-Nationalist Says Nasser Anticipates U.S. Foreign Policy Change

TEL AVIV, Dec. 10 (JTA)--A West Bank resident who had an audience with President Gamal Abdel Nasser in his Cairo home reported today that the Egyptian leader had full confidence that America's policy toward the Arab states and Israel will change when President-elect Nixon enters the White House next month. According to Miss Fadua Touqan, a poetess and Palestinian nationalist figure who lives in Nablus, Col. Nasser "trusts" Mr. Nixon and believes that new American policies will force Israel to withdraw from all territories occupied in the June, 1967 war. She said that Col. Nasser had also regained complete confidence in the Egyptian Army which he said was now at full strength.

Egyptian MIG-17 Downed, Another Crippled In Dogfight Over Sharm El-Sheikh

TEL AVIV, Dec. 10 (JTA)--A military spokesman said today that one Egyptian MIG-17 was downed and another crippled in a dogfight with Israeli jets over Sharm el-Sheikh overlooking the Strait of Tiran at the mouth of the Gulf of Aqaba. He said one of the Egyptian planes was seen plunging into the sea and the other fled toward Egypt trailing smoke. An Israeli spokesman said that the Egyptian jets were probably on a reconnaissance mission. Sharm el-Sheikh, which commands the sea-route to Israel's port of Eilat, was occupied by Israeli forces in June, 1967. It had been used by Egypt to blockade shipping to and from Eilat. The blockade was one of the major factors precipitating the 1967 war.

A report from Amman heard here claimed that Israeli jets invaded Jordanian airspace today in an attempted raid on Iraqi artillery positions but were driven off by Jordanian anti-aircraft fire. According to an Amman military spokesman, Israeli fighters swooped over Mafraq, a town about 50 miles northeast of Amman and 60 miles east of the Jordan River demarcation line. There was no confirmation here of the Amman report. Mafraq was a target of last week's retaliatory air raid by Israeli jets on Iraqi artillery positions that had been shelling Israeli settlements in the Beisan and Jordan valleys.

King Hussein of Jordan warned his troops today that he had learned that Israel planned a new, large scale attack on Jordan. The King's alleged warning was reported in the semi-official Cairo newspaper Al Ahram which quoted an Amman newspaper as the source. King Hussein did not say when the attack was expected nor did he identify the source of the purported information.

Israel's First Heart Transplant Patient Continues To Improve, Still Unconscious

TEL AVIV, Dec. 10 (JTA)--Itzhak Sullam, Israel's first heart transplant patient, continued to improve today and was no longer being fed intravenously although he had not regained consciousness, it was reported from Bielinson Hospital in Petach Tikvah. The report said that beginning today he was taking nourishment directly. Neurologists who examined the 41-year-old patient said his state of unconsciousness may continue for several days without harm to his body.

A proposal to lay down legal rules for heart transplant operations was presented to the Cabinet today by Dr. Josef Burg, Minister of Social Welfare, a member of the Orthodox National Religious Party. Dr. Burg said he thought rules were important because, the issue was too important to be left to the discretion of "professionals alone." Another NRP member, Dr. Zerach Warhaftig, Minister of Religious Affairs, proposed yesterday that a committee of rabbis and doctors should convene to rule on transplant cases.

West German Envoy Sympathizes With Israelis Protesting Light Sentences For Nazis

TEL AVIV, Dec. 10 (JTA)--Ambassador Carl Hermann Knocke, West Germany's envoy to Israel, expressed sympathy with demonstrators who picketed his Embassy here today to protest against the light sentences meted out by West German courts to ex-Nazis who were involved in the massacre of 33,000 Jews in the Babi Yar ravine in the Ukraine in 1941. A delegation representing the demonstrators, members of the Israel Resistance Fighters and the War Victims League, was received by the Ambassador. He said he had read Yevgeny Yevtushenko's poem "Babi Yar," and fully appreciated their feelings, which he would relay to his Government in Bonn. He told the delegation that while everything was being done to punish those responsible for war crimes, it was difficult after 25 years to gather evidence.

Dayan Says Government Might Repatriate Subversives If They Contribute To Peace

JERUSALEM, Dec. 10 (JTA)--Defense Minister Moshe Dayan said in the Knesset (Parliament) yesterday that the Government would consider applications for repatriation from persons expelled to Jordan for subversive activities if it thought their return would contribute to peace and relieve tension. Gen. Dayan said applicants would have to sign a commitment to refrain from illegal activities and not to disturb public order. Such a commitment had already been signed by one deportee, Miss Leikha Shehabi, of Jerusalem.

New Security Measures Lead To Increase In Agricultural Produce Prices In Jordan

JERUSALEM, Dec. 10 (JTA)--Travellers arriving from Jordan reported today that the price of agricultural produce there had gone up, apparently as a result of the Israeli ban on vehicular traffic over the Allenby and Damiya bridges which previously served as the commercial links between Jordan and the West Bank. The ban was imposed as a security measure following last month's explosion in Jerusalem's Machane Yehuda market which took 12 lives. Truck cargoes must be unloaded for inspection and then transported by porters to the opposite bank of the river. As a result, the once brisk trade between the West Bank and Jordan has come to a halt. Non-commercial traffic across the bridges was nearly normal yesterday although private vehicles were banned and their passengers had to cross on foot. Customs check points have been established about 250 yards from the Allenby bridge. A shuttle bus service has been established.

Czech Jewish Leaders Receive Svoboda's Assurance That Millenium Will Be Celebrated

PARIS, Dec. 10 (JTA)--Two Czechoslovakian Jewish leaders reported here today that President Ludvik Svoboda had given them his personal assurance that they could proceed with preparations to celebrate the 1,000th anniversary of the Jewish community in Czechoslovakia. According to Frantisek Fuchs of Prague and Dr. Benjamin Eichler of Bratislava, the celebrations will culminate next July when the Prague community hopes to be host to an international Jewish gathering. The Czech Jewish leaders attended a meeting of the European Executive of the World Jewish Congress here. Other representatives of East European Jewry present were Dr. Lavoslav Kadelburg, of Yugoslavia, and Chief Rabbi Moses Rosen, of Rumania. Jewish communities of Spain and Greece were also represented.

Special Political Committee Slated To Take Up 3 Draft Resolutions On Refugees

UNITED NATIONS, N.Y., Dec. 10 (JTA)--The Special Political Committee was scheduled tomorrow to begin consideration of three draft resolutions on the Arab refugee question. The committee concluded general debate today on the report of Commissioner-General Laurence Michelmore of the UN relief and

Works Agency for Arab Refugees (UNRWA). Sixty-one speakers presented statements during 18 meetings devoted to the refugee issue and the extension of UNRWA's mandate, due to expire June 30, 1969. Mr. Michelmore told the Committee today that the Agency's estimated income for 1969 was \$5 million short of its budget. He said that if no new contributions were forthcoming by early 1969, UNRWA would have to contemplate reducing its activities. He announced that West Germany had contributed \$1 million to construct shelters in emergency camps in Jordan.

Sweden presented a draft resolution today that would endorse efforts by Mr. Michelmore to continue to provide humanitarian assistance on an emergency basis, and as a temporary measure, to Arab refugees displaced by the June, 1967 Arab-Israel war. The draft would have the General Assembly appeal to all governments, organizations and individuals to contribute generously to UNRWA and to other governmental and non-governmental bodies concerned with the refugees. The committee was also considering an American resolution to extend the life of UNRWA to June 30, 1972. Also up for consideration was a draft resolution submitted by Iran, Pakistan, Senegal and Turkey--and opposed by Israel--which would have the General Assembly call on Israel to take immediate measures for the return of refugees who fled from occupied territories in the wake of the Six-Day War. The resolution would call upon the Assembly to express the conviction that the plight of newly displaced persons could be relieved by their speedy return to their former homes and refugee camps in Israel-held territory.

Commons Refuse To Permit Introduction Of A Bill That Would Abolish Kosher Slaughter

LONDON, Dec. 10 (JTA)--The House of Commons, by a 219 to 60 vote, refused today to permit the introduction of a bill to amend the Animal Slaughter Act in a manner that would abolish shechita--Jewish ritual slaughter. The bill, which David Ensor, Labor MP, wanted to present, had the backing of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and the Council of Justice for Animals. It was opposed by the Board of Deputies of British Jews. The measure would have required the stunning of animals prior to slaughter. Mr. Ensor defended it and said he had received over 700 letters and 8,000 signatures of which only 15 were opposed. Peter Archer, another Labor MP, said he had witnessed slaughter by stunning and kosher methods and if he had seen anything "distressing or foul" he would side with Mr. Ensor.

Appeal To Thant To Aid Jewry In Soviet Union, Arab Countries, On Human Rights

NEW YORK, N.Y. Dec. 10 (JTA)--Two appeals bearing on human rights and the plight of Jewry were addressed today to Secretary General U Thant of the United Nations, coinciding with the 20th anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights.

A petition of 250,000 signatures urging Mr. Thant to put the question of the violation of human rights of Soviet Jewry on the current agenda of the General Assembly was presented to Ambassador J. Russell Wiggins, United States representative to the UN, by the American Jewish Conference on Soviet Jewry which asked him to transmit it to Mr. Thant.

In the second appeal, the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations asked Mr. Thant in a letter to renew his efforts to send a UN representative to Egypt, Iraq and Syria to protect the remaining Jewish minorities.

Ambassador Wiggins accepted the Soviet Jewry document from Lewis Weinstein, chairman, and Rabbi Israel Miller, past chairman of the Conference. He promised to make sure that the petition reached Mr. Thant. He recalled a statement by Mrs. Jean Picker in the General Assembly's Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee, in which she voiced U.S. concern over continued anti-Semitic manifestations in the Soviet Union and Poland and protested against interference with the freedom of any religion. The document bears the signatures of persons of all races and faiths. It is reportedly the first group of signatures to be sent to the Secretary-General on the subject of Soviet Jewry. It points out that "Jews are forbidden to publish religious literature and cannot produce devotional articles. Seminaries and training schools for rabbis and religious teachers do not exist. Jews in the Soviet Union are not permitted a central or coordinated structure."

The petition noted further that Soviet Premier Alexei Kosygin had failed to carry out the promise he made in December, 1966 that Soviet Jews would be allowed to emigrate to be reunited with their families abroad. "We are only asking for Soviet Jews what has already been guaranteed to all its citizens in the Soviet Constitution and what the Soviet Union reaffirmed on an international level as recently as May, 1968 when it approved the Teheran proclamation on human rights," Mr. Weinstein said.

Rabbi Herschel Schacter, Presidents Conference chairman, said in his letter on Jews in Arab countries that their situation had deteriorated since the Six-Day War "with no relief in sight." He said there has been a new wave of terrorism in Iraq in recent weeks with new arrests and the murder by torture of an Iraqi Jew. (The arrests followed the advent of a new regime on July 17. The latest murder victim was a businessman who died in prison while jailers tried to extract an attempted bribery confession from him.)

"In Egypt where hundreds of Jews still languish in jail--their families destitute and unprotected--the pattern has changed from an occasional release to a virtual standstill in this last year. In the past several months only a few Jews have been allowed to leave Egypt," Rabbi Schacter said. "In Iraq, Jews remain subject to imprisonment, harassment and persecution. Denied their civil rights and subject to discriminatory legislation, this pitiful and impoverished remnant of an historical community is the victim of continuing exploitation as new governments--new ministers of the interior--exact renewed extortions. In Syria, a whole community has been imprisoned--herded into a ghetto, tagged 'Jew,' deprived of sustenance, recourse to relief or hope of emigration."

Goldberg Urges Nixon Administration To Seek Action On Conventions

NEW YORK, Dec. 10 (JTA)--Arthur J. Goldberg called today on the incoming Nixon Administration to encourage ratification of the United Nations genocide and other human rights conventions pending in the Senate and to submit to the Senate for approval the Convention on Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Mr. Goldberg, former Ambassador to the United Nations as well as Supreme Court Justice and Secretary of Labor, made his appeal as president of the American Jewish Committee in a statement issued for Human Rights Day.

Jewish Agency-American Section Greets President-Elect Nixon, Offers Cooperation

NEW YORK, Dec. 10 (JTA)--The Jewish Agency - American Section disclosed today that it had sent a letter to President-elect Richard M. Nixon, congratulating him on his election and promising full cooperation. The letter was signed for the agency by Dr. Emanuel Neumann, its chairman. "It is our ardent hope and prayer that your Administration of that exalted office may be crowned with success for the good of our blessed country and all its inhabitants, and the peace and welfare of all mankind," the letter declared. "Together with all elements of the American Jewish community, we shall be happy to offer our full cooperation to you and the members of your Administration in the fulfillment of America's noblest purposes."

Jewish Youth Group Presents Plaque To Commemorate Danish Rescue Of Jews From Nazis

NEW YORK, Dec. 10 JTA--The North American Jewish Youth Council, coordinating body for 23 national Jewish youth organizations in the United States and Canada, presented a plaque to Consul General G.F.K. Harhoff of Denmark in recognition of the rescue of 7,000 Danish Jews from the Nazis in World War II through the united efforts of the Danish people. The presentation was made yesterday by a delegation headed by Jerry M. Epstein, chairman of the council. Mr. Harhoff spoke in reply. The Youth Council has initiated programs throughout the country to commemorate the rescue of the Danish Jews. It also sponsors a scholarship fund for the benefit of Danish students.