

# JTA daily news bulletin

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## Israel Denounces Embargo, Sees French Policy Approaching That Of Its Enemies

JERUSALEM, Jan. 8 (JTA)--Israel's Foreign Ministry denounced the French embargo on the shipment of military materiel to Israel yesterday as "a one-sided and unwarranted annulment of agreements between states" that demonstrated "the will to hurt Israel's ability to defend herself against the continuing aggression and enmity of the Arab states." The Foreign Ministry's statement, released late last night, said French policy has been "steadily approaching that of countries which are the declared enemies of Israel" and declared that the embargo annulled any possibility that the French Government might "fulfill a positive function in the Middle East crisis." The Cabinet will confer Sunday on what diplomatic action will be taken with respect to France.

(President Charles de Gaulle met with his Cabinet in the Elysee Palace today to discuss the embargo, which stems from the Dec. 28 reprisal raid on Beirut Airport. The de Gaulle embargo on military spare parts and equipment to Israel was under sharp attack in virtually all sections of the French press, except the pro-Arab Communist one. The Soviet Ambassador to Paris, Valerian Zorin, said at a reception yesterday that "other countries, notably the United States, should follow the example of France." Egypt also praised the de Gaulle move as a "model" for the world. Lebanon also hailed it. The authoritative Cairo newspaper Al Ahram said today that the embargo "clipped the wings" of the Israeli Air Force.)

Defense Ministry circles here said today that while the embargo posed serious problems, Israel had prepared itself for such contingencies by stockpiling aircraft and other spare parts. Industrial and military sources said the country had a sufficient stock of French aircraft parts to last until Israel's own defense industries could replace them. Yesterday's Foreign Ministry's statement noted that Israel "by her own efforts and the optimal use of her international connections is continuing to maintain her defensive strength."

The reference was to the expansion of Israel's military industries in recent years and to the expected delivery of 50 supersonic F-4 Phantom jets from the United States. Defense Ministry sources said that local industry can at present meet almost all requirements for spare parts but conceded that the Air Force would be the service most affected by the French embargo. With the exception of American Skyhawks, a subsonic fighter, Israel's Air Force is composed primarily of several types of French planes.

The Government was reported meanwhile to be considering demanding a refund from France for more than \$100 million worth of military equipment ordered and paid for but not delivered. This includes 50 Mirage V supersonic jets that Israel paid for in full last spring but which are being held in a French warehouse. Gen. de Gaulle embargoed the jets following the June, 1967 Arab-Israel War. But that embargo did not include shipment of helicopters, spare parts for Mirages and other French aircraft in Israeli hands.

### Makes Public Inventory of Materiel Purchased From France

An inventory of French planes and other military equipment in use by Israel's armed forces was released today. It included: Ouragan single-seater jet assault planes--one of the first French aircraft purchased by Israel; Mystere jet interceptors, production of which was discontinued in 1958; Super-mysteres, one of Israel's fastest interceptors; Vautours, twin-engined, single-seater bomber-interceptors; Fouga-Magisters, a jet trainer also used as an attack plane in the Six-Day War, a type produced by Israel's aircraft industries under an agreement with the French manufacturer; Nord, twin-engined transport planes; Super-Frelon, heavy helicopters, used as assault ships troop transports; Alouette, small helicopters which are manufactured in several countries; AMX reconnaissance and tank-destroyer armored vehicles which are used in many countries; AML 245 light Panzer (armored) cars used for patrol purposes; SS-11 anti-tank missiles which are in use in at least 18 countries. In addition, according to French newspaper reports, Israel purchased a number of French high speed gunboats for its Navy several months ago.

The chief of Israel's military purchasing mission in France, Gen. Mordechai Limon, returned home yesterday for urgent consultations with the Defense Ministry and Army officers.

Israel's dissatisfaction was increased today when it became known here that France has sold large quantities of arms to Arab countries in recent months, including some to Egypt. Some details about the sales were given today by Le Monde which said that 220 halftracks had been sold to Saudi Arabia in 1968 and 70 vehicles of the same type went to Iraq, which has also opened negotiations for the purchase of 44 Mirage planes. These negotiations have not yet been concluded.

France has already sold and delivered 12 Mirages with special electronic equipment to Lebanon as well as Alouette helicopters to Tunisia, Morocco, Jordan and Saudi Arabia. Other unconfirmed reports say that a number of Egyptian frogmen are currently being trained in underwater sabotage and harbor penetration at the French naval base of Toulon. France has also secretly sold to Egypt in recent weeks 155-millimeter guns, electronic equipment for ground to ground missiles, and deep armor penetrating shells.

(When questioned by the JTA whether France will halt the supply of these arms to the Arab states

Information Minister Joel Le Theule replied, "there is no reason for us to do so as the embargo applies only to countries with aggressive tendencies.")

### Paris Says Use Of French-Made Helicopters In Beirut Raid Was Factor In Embargo

PARIS, Jan. 8 (JTA)--France indicated today that use of helicopters it had provided to Israel in the Dec. 28 reprisal raid against Beirut International Airport was a factor in President de Gaulle's decision to slap an embargo on shipments of war materiel to Israel. Thirteen commercial aircraft were destroyed in the attack. No lives were taken.

Information Minister Joel Le Theule made this statement following a two-hour Cabinet meeting today under Gen. de Gaulle's chairmanship, and also told the press that, contrary to rumors, Paris had no intention of breaking diplomatic relations with Jerusalem. He also said France would not refund the \$100 million Israel paid for jet fighters and other military equipment. "We are not using the materiel ordered by Israel for other purposes. One does not have to reimburse for materiel placed under embargo," he asserted. The French Government expressed apparent indifference today to the barrage of criticism of the embargo leveled against it by France's press and politicians. He commented, "It has been noted that the Israeli lobby has been active and has tried to influence circles close to the information media."

Top-level Gaullist sources said that Gen. de Gaulle had ordered the embargo without consulting his Cabinet or Parliament and that Cabinet ministers first heard about it by Israeli radio. They said the embargo orders were sent to customs officials with instructions to block all shipments of materiel to Israel. Affected are an estimated \$30 million earmarked for Israel in 1969.

M. Le Theule said that "to say French politics has been hostile to Israel for a long time is incorrect." He noted that France had sold it 50 Mirage V jet fighters, ordered in 1966, for defensive purposes, adding that they had become a "symbol of aggression" in the Six-Day War and thus were embargoed in 1967. The Minister said France imposed the latest embargo because it wants permanent peace in the Middle East. "This can only be founded upon the application of the unanimous United Nations Security Council resolution (of Nov. 22, 1967)--that is to say the evacuation of conquered territories, establishment of frontiers that would be certain and recognizable, freedom of navigation for all, and a statute for refugees," he said. M. Le Theule said the UN measure would "bring to Israel recognition, guarantees, and freedom of navigation." He said that the French Government supports a memorandum presented last week by the Kremlin but not made public which calls for the Big Four--United States, Russia, France and Britain--to cooperate to bring about a lasting solution to the Mideast conflict.

### Emergency Committee Names Cassin, Rabbi Kaplan to Head Protest Committee

Opposition to Gen. de Gaulle's decision mounted today in Jewish and non-Jewish circles. The Emergency Committee for Israel, established at the time of the Six-Day War, met and decided to send a delegation headed by 1968 Nobel peace prize winner Prof. Rene Cassin and Grand Rabbi Jacob Kaplan to meet with Prime Minister Maurice Couve de Murville and voice its dissatisfaction. A public meeting organized by the International League Against anti-Semitism will be held. A Gaullist deputy, Achille Fould, has called for an emergency session of the National Assembly's Commission for Foreign Affairs to discuss the Government's decision and ask Foreign Minister Michel Debre to explain it. Leaders of the center parties have attacked the decision. Former French Premier Georges Bidault called the embargo "against the interests of peace." The conservative newspaper Figaro said the embargo has generated a "backlash" and was disproportionate to the Beirut attack. The center newspaper Le Parisien Libre saw a Paris-Jerusalem diplomatic rupture coming. The conservative Aurore said France cannot be considered a mediator between Israel and the Arabs. The independent Le Monde called French reaction to the Israeli raid as "imprudent and provocative as the raid itself."

(The New York Times in an editorial today condemned the embargo as a manifestly "uneven-handed" policy and "twisted diplomacy" which eliminated France from a constructive role in solving the Middle East crisis. The majority of the West German press was also critical. One paper said Gen. de Gaulle's word "is not worth any more than his franc." A major newspaper, the Sueddeutsche Zeitung of Munich said "de Gaulle has clearly taken the side of the Arabs.")

### Beigin Recalls A Friendlier Attitude Toward Israel By De Gaulle

JERUSALEM, Jan. 8 (JTA)--An Israeli Cabinet Minister who was formerly on friendly terms with President Charles de Gaulle said today that the new French arms embargo did not tally with Gen. de Gaulle's previous attitude toward Israel. Menachem Beigin, leader of the Herut Party and a minister without portfolio, said in the Knesset (Parliament) that the French leader had told him in 1957 that Israel should not evacuate the Gaza Strip or the Sinai Peninsula, which it had occupied in the 1956 Suez campaign. Israel subsequently pulled out under pressure from the United States and the Soviet Union. Gen. de Gaulle was not then in power. Mr. Beigin said the French embargo was obviously an attempt to intimidate Israel, but, he declared, "the days are past when one could frighten Jews." He called the move "a grave breach of trust" by France.

### Bar Lev Sees Weakening Of Arab Terrorists, Apparently Warns Lebanese On Raid

TEL AVIV, Jan. 8 (JTA)--Maj. Gen. Chaim Bar Lev, chief of staff of Israel's armed forces, said today that there was evidence of erosion and defections in the Arab terrorist and sabotage organizations fighting Israel. He added, however that these development do not mean a beginning of the end of

sabotage against Israel but may indicate that Israel is on the right track in its war against the terrorists. Gen. Bar Lev spoke following a retreat parade at the new officers' candidate school at Mitzpeh Rimmon. He used the occasion to reiterate Israel's warning that Arab governments which shelter and support terrorists on their territory would be held responsible for their actions. He said those governments would learn that support of the terrorists was not worth the high price they may have to pay. Although he mentioned no country by name, Gen. Bar Lev's remarks appeared to be addressed to Beirut. He made them several hours after a band from Lebanon blew up an empty house in the Israeli village of Shetula near the Lebanese frontier. There were no casualties in the incident.

### **El Al, With 1 Airliner Temporarily Out of Operation, Purchases 8th Boeing 707**

TEL AVIV, Jan. 8 (JTA)--El Al, Israel's national airline, announced today that it has purchased its eighth Boeing 707 jet airliner, which is expected to be delivered at the end of January or the beginning of February. Meanwhile, El Al is operating a chartered plane to maintain its schedules. One of its planes was temporarily removed from operation after an attack on it in Athens last month by Arab terrorists.

### **Contradictions Surface in Reports of USSR Peace Plan Under Study in Western Capitals**

WASHINGTON, Jan. 8 (JTA)--Contradictory versions of the contents of a reported Soviet peace plan for the Middle East have appeared here in the past two days. The secret plan was said to have been presented a week ago to the Western powers which reportedly are still studying it.

Information from one source today indicated the Soviets have proposed a timetable, based on the Security Council's Nov. 22, 1967 resolution, by which Israel would withdraw to its pre-June, 1967 borders in return for reciprocal commitments from the Arabs, including termination of their state of war with Israel. But the Israeli withdrawal would come first and while Israel would be guaranteed freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba, the Suez Canal navigation issue would be left to future arrangement. According to this information, final frontiers would be drawn along the lines of the pre-June, 1967 borders, to be guaranteed by the Big Powers and policed by an international force, presumably under the auspices of the Security Council.

This version of the Soviet proposal was at variance on several key points with a version reported in the Washington Post yesterday by its United Nations correspondent, Robert H. Estabrook. Mr. Estabrook, who attributed his information to a Soviet diplomat, said the Russian proposal eschewed the timetable concept previously sought by Egypt in favor of a "package deal." The latter called for Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories, concurrently with arrangements for opening the Suez Canal to navigation by Israeli shipping and the implementation of other aspects of the Nov. 22 resolution. According to Mr. Estabrook, the Soviet proposal envisaged the establishment of an international peace-keeping force on both sides of the Arab-Israeli border and certain border adjustments. It also purportedly proposed that in lieu of a peace treaty between the Arabs and Israel, both sides register "undertakings" with the Security Council under some sort of international guarantee.

A Soviet press release issued at the UN today called Mr. Estabrook's report "absolutely unfounded" and denied that any Russian diplomat had made a statement to him. Mr. Estabrook said in a dispatch from the UN today that a Soviet diplomat actually sought him out to make the statement and that another Soviet source was known to have made a similar statement to a non-U.S. official at the UN.

Neither version of the Soviet proposal contained any reference to the future status of Jerusalem. But a report from another source said today that the Soviets were pressing for the internationalization of East Jerusalem. Both the Estabrook version and the later report said the U.S. was skeptical of the practicability of the Soviet plan and was totally against any kind of imposed solution in the Middle East.

### **Moscow Radio Sees New Middle East War Likely. Blames Israel For Tensions**

In related developments, Moscow Radio reaffirmed support for the Arabs in a broadcast to the Chinese that termed the Middle East explosive, blaming Israel for the tensions. Russia said a new war was likely to occur.

The Soviet Navy has quietly moved units into the area of the Red Sea, in a position to menace Sharm el-Sheikh at the entrance to Aqaba Gulf and the southern approaches to the Suez Canal and Sinai Peninsula. This was confirmed by U.S. officials as a dispatch from Moscow announced a "goodwill" naval visit to the port of the Hodeidah, Yemen. The Moscow report said the powerful Soviet cruiser, Admiral Fokin, and another ship, would visit Yemen beginning Thursday. The Admiral Fokin is equipped to fire guided missiles.

Lebanon's President Charles Helou accepted the resignation of Premier Abdullah Yafi and his four-man Cabinet, and began trying to form a new Government. The Yafi Government resigned partly as a result of student agitation for a harder line against Israel following the Beirut raid. Defense and Foreign Minister Hussein Oweini was under attack for the defense breakdown that permitted the raid.

The Egyptian newspaper Al Ahram attacked 16 U.S. Senators who issued a bi-partisan statement urging U.S. support for Israel in the Middle East conflict. Writer Clovis Maksoud accused the eight Democrats and eight Republicans of trying to create an atmosphere that would facilitate Israeli domination of U.S. policy during the Nixon administration.

### Catholic Church Leaders Ask Eshkol to Seek End to 'Unjust' Criticism of Pontiff

JERUSALEM, Jan. 8 (JTA)--Prime Minister Levi Eshkol received a letter from Catholic Church leaders today asking him to intervene "to end this unjust campaign" of criticism of Pope Paul VI by some Israeli leaders in connection with the Dec. 28 Israeli reprisal raid on Beirut Airport. The Pope's message of sympathy to President Charles Helou, of Lebanon, was taken by some as implied criticism of Israel's raid without corresponding criticism of the Arab terrorist act that brought it about. The most vociferous critics of the Pope here were Dr. Zerah Warhaftig, the Minister for Religious Affairs, and the Sephardic Chief Rabbi, Itzhak Nissim. The latter accused the Pontiff and the Vatican of waging an extensive campaign against the Jewish religion and people. Rabbi Nissim was rebuked by an unidentified Cabinet minister Sunday for making "too sweeping an accusation."

Catholic Church leaders here were reported to be profoundly disturbed by the interpretation placed on Pope Paul's letter to President Helou. However, a Dominican friar who lives in Jerusalem said on a radio interview Monday that when the Pope spoke ex cathedra he was subject to criticism like any other personality. The Latin Patriarch, Msgr. Alberto Gori, conducted a special mass here to express "filial affection" for the Pope. It was attended by the French and Spanish consuls general.

### World Jewish Congress Endorses Program To Work More Closely With Christians

ROME, Jan. 8 (JTA)--The governing council of the World Jewish Congress wound up its meetings here yesterday by endorsing a program to work more closely with Roman Catholics, Protestants and Orthodox Christians. The delegates, representing Jewish communities all over the world, agreed to confer more frequently with Christian leaders on mutual problems.

A spokesman for the WJ Congress said the framework for closer ties already existed. He said, "Catholics and Protestants are increasingly aware that Jews are more than a people of a specific religion." Dr. Joachim Prinz, of Orange, N.J., chairman of the governing council, said the meeting had cleared the air on several questions, notably Jewish relations with the Vatican. Pope Paul VI was criticized by many Jewish leaders last week for his note of sympathy to President Charles Helou, of Lebanon. It was interpreted in Jewish circles as a condemnation of Israel's Dec. 28 reprisal raid on Beirut Airport without condemning Arab terrorism. Dr. Nahum Goldmann, WJ Congress president, said following an audience with the Pope Monday, that the Pontiff had given assurances that his message was not intended to be anti-Israel.

### Eshkol Stresses Unity as International Parley of Jewish Leaders Opens in Israel

JERUSALEM, Jan. 8 (JTA)--An international conference of Jewish leaders, called by Prime Minister Levi Eshkol, opened here today with a reception for the 160 delegates at the home of President Zalman Shazar. It convened later at the Knesset (Parliament) where the visitors were addressed by Mr. Eshkol. The conference will run through Jan. 12. Attending were representatives of the 22 constituents of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, the organizations that comprise Cojo (Conference of Jewish Organizations) and 14 other national and international Jewish bodies engaged in political, humanitarian and religious activities. President Shazar told the gathering that the most important aspect of the conference was the fact that it is being held.

Prime Minister Eshkol stressed in his keynote speech that the parley was not ideological in nature. "We are assembled here," he said, "to emphasize what unites us, not what divides us." He then addressed himself to current events that have united world Jewry with Israel, among them continued terrorist incursions and yesterday's announcement by France of a total embargo on all strategic materiel to Israel. Mr. Eshkol likened the French action to "binding the hands" of one disputant in the arena who is threatened by another. He said this was hardly to be expected from a third party which lays claim to objectivity and to the role of peacemaker in the Middle East dispute.

Terrorist activities, Mr. Eshkol said, were part of the pattern of Arab warfare with Israel since 1948 which has been to agree to cease-fire arrangements and then allow terrorists to shell villages and commit acts of sabotage while armies are rebuilt. He said however that there were some rays of hope such as discussions by certain Arabs about the prudence of renewing war against Israel.

Mr. Eshkol also spoke of the plight of Jews in the Soviet Union and the dangers of assimilation in the Western countries. He urged Jewish communities and organizations abroad to give top priority to Jewish education. Another speaker, Dr. Nahum Goldmann, president of Cojo and the World Jewish Congress, asked Israel to accord world Jewry the role of junior partner in building the State.

### Israelis Try to Fathom Reason Behind Destruction of Damiya Bridge to Jordan

TEL AVIV, Jan. 8 (JTA)--Israeli circles speculated today why Arabs--and which ones--blew up yesterday the Damiya Bridge, one of the two remaining spans linking the East and West banks of the Jordan River. The Jordanian end of the structure was demolished by an explosion shortly after mortar and artillery fire was opened up on an Israeli tractor on the West Bank.

Some Israeli sources believe the span was destroyed by terrorists acting independently of Jordanian authorities. Others said that the explosion might have been accidental. They said it could have been touched off by a mortar shell that hit explosives cached under the bridge by Jordanian forces in the eventuality of an Israeli invasion. (A military spokesman in Amman blamed Israeli mortar and artillery fire for destroying the bridge and denied any Arab involvement.)