

JTA daily news bulletin

Published by Jewish Telegraphic Agency, Inc. 660 First Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016

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Vol. XXXVI-Fifty-Second Year

Wednesday, May 21, 1969

No. 97

Mrs. Meir Sends Nixon Message Urging Avoidance Of 1957 'Mistake', Says 'Maariv'

JERUSALEM, May 20 (JTA) -- Premier Golda Meir was reported today to have sent a personal message to President Richard M. Nixon urging him not to repeat the "mistake" made in 1957 when the United States and the Soviet Union compelled Israel to withdraw from the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip from which Israel had ousted Egypt in the 1956 Sinai campaign. The report appeared in the usually well-informed afternoon daily, Maariv. There was no confirmation or denial from the Premier's office.

According to Maariv, Mrs. Meir reminded Mr. Nixon, who was President Dwight D. Eisenhower's Vice President at the time, that as a result of the action of the super-powers, the explosive situation that had prevailed prior to the Sinai campaign had been restored. This soon became active belligerence between Israel and the Arab states and this, in turn, led to another war.

Mrs. Meir was described as asking President Nixon to let the people of the region settle their affairs without Big Power interference. This, she reportedly said, would be the best for all concerned.

Thant Reported To Have Voiced U.S., Soviet Concern To Egypt Over Suez Tensions

WASHINGTON, May 20 (JTA) -- The Washington Post said Tuesday that when United Nations Secretary-General U Thant called on Egyptian Ambassador Mohammed H. el-Kony last Friday to express concern over the continuing incidents at the Suez Canal, he, "in effect, spoke with the authority of the Soviet Union and the United States." According to Robert Estabrook, the newspaper's UN diplomatic correspondent, the initiative for the meeting with Mr. el-Kony was Mr. Thant's but "it is assumed he discussed the idea with Soviet Ambassador Jacob Malik" on May 8 when Mr. Malik visited him to deliver a letter.

That letter, according to Mr. Estabrook, "was unusual in that it seemed to be a warning to the Cairo Government about the Suez Canal fighting, although it did not mention Egypt by name. Its references to Israel were mild by comparison with previous denunciations."

Mr. Thant also had a meeting with U.S. Ambassador Charles W. Yost before the Secretary-General's meeting with the Egyptian envoy and it was believed, said the correspondent, that they discussed Thant's initiative. He said that Donald Bergus, the senior American diplomat in Cairo, was also reported to have relayed American concern to Egyptian Foreign Minister Mahmoud Riad.

"Soviet representatives," the Post said, "have been extremely sensitive to any implication that they are counseling restraint to the Arabs, and U.S. officials have been careful to avoid comments that would put the Russians on the spot. Nevertheless, there are indications that in fact both super-powers have begun to press their clients--the Arabs in the case of the Soviet Union and Israel in the case of the U.S."

Assistant Secretary of State Joseph Sisco and Soviet Ambassador Anatoly F. Dobrynin held their 15th meeting yesterday in continuing bilateral talks and were scheduled to meet again today. According to the Post, "they are believed to have gotten relatively further in their exchanges than have the Big Four ambassadors who have been meeting in New York."

(Israel's Ambassador Yosef Tekoah said in a letter to Mr. Thant yesterday that Egypt has "decided to sacrifice the welfare of the population along the west bank of the Canal and to turn this sector into a daily battlefield." He noted that Egypt had announced and carried out evacuation of Port Said's civilian population "for the avowed purpose of extending Egyptian attacks to the Port Said area." The Israeli disputed the veracity of Egyptian "assurances" to Mr. Thant that it would contribute "to the maximum extent" toward reducing risks to the UN cease-fire observers.)

Red Cross Arranges For Return Of Dead Israeli Found By Egyptians

TEL AVIV, May 20 (JTA) -- Red Cross authorities were today making arrangements for the return of the body of a 21-year-old Israeli second lieutenant found by Egyptians floating in the Suez Canal. Egypt claimed he headed a patrol that tried to cross the Canal in three rubber boats but was turned back by fire. The discovery of his body made headlines in Cairo newspapers. An Israeli Army spokesman said Lt. Chaim Ben Yona was hit during an incident on the night of May 13-14 and fell into the Canal. Efforts to locate the body were under way since then. Israel said that in the incident, which was not further explained, no other Israeli casualties were suffered.

Dead Sea Potash Works Near Sodom Escape Damage Following Katyusha Rocket Attack

TEL AVIV, May 20 (JTA) -- A potash plant on the Dead Sea near Sodom was the target last night of a Katyusha rocket attack apparently by Arab guerrillas. It escaped damage and there were no Israeli injuries, a military spokesman said. The attack followed Israeli Air Force operations against Jordanian positions near the Allenby and Abdullah bridges.