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Mrs. Meir Denounces Syria, Egypt In Wake Of 3-Way Prisoner-Release Arrangement

JERUSALEM, Dec. 7(JTA)--Premier Golda Meir had bitter words for Syria and Egypt today as she revealed details of the three-cornered deal by which Israel exchanged Syrian and Egyptian prisoners of war for two Israeli civilians held in Damascus since Aug. 29 and two downed Israeli fighter pilots imprisoned in Egypt. The civilians, Prof. Shlomo Samueloff, 49, of the Hebrew University-Hadassah Medical School and Sallah Muallem 44, a Tel Aviv travel agent, were passengers aboard a TWA airliner hijacked to Damascus by Arab commandos. The two pilots, Maj. Nissim Ashkenazi and Capt. Giora Romm, were seriously injured when they bailed out of their jets over the Suez Canal months ago and were held in solitary confinement in a Cairo prison hospital. The four were released Friday.

In an official statement, Mrs. Meir denounced Damascus as "the capital of international piracy" and accused the Egyptian authorities of callous and inhumane treatment of the two injured pilots who were denied visits by representatives of the International Red Cross during most of their imprisonment.

Mrs. Meir listed the international agencies that had tried in vain to secure the release of the hijacked Israeli civilians. "Any civilized country," she said, "would have swiftly released all the passengers regardless of their nationality, as required by international law." But Syria turned a "deaf ear" to pleas by the United States Government; TWA United Nations Secretary General U Thant; Miss Angie Brooks, president of the UN General Assembly; International Federation of Airline Pilots Associations; International Air Transport Association and various governments. She said the International Red Cross was approached when it became apparent that ordinary diplomatic means had failed.

Mrs. Meir said that at first Syria refused unconditionally to free the two Israelis. But gradually, through intermediaries, a deal was evolved involving not only Syrian but Egyptian prisoners in Israel. The premier made it clear that the idea of an exchange was distasteful to the Israel Government because it required the return of legitimately held prisoners of war for civilians whose detention was in gross violation of international law.

Eventually, the Israeli Cabinet agreed unanimously to the exchange, Mrs. Meir's statement said, but the Syrians continued to stall. Finally the exchange was carried out in two stages. Thirteen Syrians were handed over to their government Friday through the International Red Cross at Kuneitra in the Golan Heights in return for Prof. Samueloff and Mr. Muallem. The two were flown to Athens in the same TWA jet which was hijacked more than three months ago. The plane had been severely damaged and repairs were completed only a week ago.

The exchanged Syrians included two jet pilots who landed in Israel in August 1968, apparently because of an error in navigation, and a number of captured Syrian soldiers and civilians. The two Israeli pilots were returned at Kantara in the Canal zone for one Egyptian pilot, five soldiers and 52 civilians. According to Israeli authorities, the Egyptian and Syrian civilians were active terrorists or intelligence agents.

Pilots Reported In Poor Conditions, Medical Care Criticized

Maj. Ashkenazi and Capt. Romm were reportedly in poor condition when ferried across the canal Friday. They were taken to a hospital where both will undergo treatment for several months. An Israeli spokesman said they suffered fractures of hands and legs and both underwent surgery at Egyptian hands. Maj. Ashkenazi underwent an operation for the seventh time only four days before his release and will have to have further orthopedic surgery. Israeli doctors who examined the pilots said their medical care in Egypt was inadequate.

Israel meanwhile published list of the Egyptians and Syrians freed. In addition to the two fighter pilots, the Syrians included five intelligence agents captured in the Golan Heights and six civilians who had infiltrated into Israel since the Six-Day War. The Egyptians included the pilot of a Sukhov bomber, Maj. Nabil Said; six soldiers who remained in Sinai after the Six-Day War and tried to enter Jordan disguised as civilians; 28 fishermen captured in the Gulf of Suez last June and September; seven saboteurs, apparently soldiers in mufti, who were captured in a boat in the Gulf of Suez while enroute to a sabotage mission; and 11 civilians captured by Israeli forces during a raid last Oct. 25 on Egyptian position on the west shore of the Gulf of Suez.

At the UN, Mr. Thant "warmly welcomed" the Israelis' release but said he could not be certain whether his good offices had been instrumental. News of the release came just before the General Assembly's legal committee approved a resolution urging all governments to insure that hijackers are punished.

Cuba cast the only dissenting vote in the 67-1 decision, and the Soviet bloc and Arab states abstained. The measure, sponsored by The Netherlands, called on nations to enact adequate legal frameworks against interference with aircraft, to prosecute hijackers and to cooperate with efforts of the international Civil Aviation Organization, a UN-related agency, to apply international conventions.

In New York, TWA said on Friday "Of necessity" its efforts on behalf of the two Israelis "had to be

conducted in secrecy. Our dealings were further complicated by the fact that we do not serve Syria... and the U.S. does not maintain diplomatic relations with that country."

In Washington, it was reported that Israel was absent from a list of 13 nations that will hold a special meeting Dec. 16-19 to "supplement and support international efforts" to deal with hijacking of commercial airliners. A State Department spokesman said the countries which will attend provide most of the world's civil air service. The number of participants will be restricted "to permit full discussion in the limited time available." The nations attending will be the U.S., Australia, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, England, France, West Germany, Italy, Japan, and The Netherlands.

Former Captives Tell Story of Tension, Abuse, Hatred In Damascus Jail

TEL AVIV, Dec. 7(JTA)--Joy was boundless at Lydda Airport on Friday when the two hijack victims were reunited with their families after more than three months' captivity in Damascus. Prof. Samueloff and Mr. Muallem were embraced by their wives and children and received warm handshakes from Premier Golda Meir, Foreign Minister Abba Eban and Minister of Transport Moshe Carmel.

The men, unshaven and wearing open collar shirts looked worn and haggard as they recounted their ordeal. Mr. Muallem, who speaks fluent Arabic said he was beaten and tortured for days as the Syrians attempted to extract military information intelligence he could not have given since he was excused from military service for health reasons. He said the Syrians wanted to know about tanks and planes. They questioned him, took him into a darkened room where he was beaten and finally threw him into solitary confinement., later he was placed in the same cell with Prof. Samueloff, he said.

The professor said he was not subjected to physical maltreatment but to psychological torture. "We came face to face with hatred," he said. "We do not hate them, and yet such hatred as they showed for us I have never seen in my life."

Prof. Samueloff said the only Syrian who was humane was a young doctor who treated both prisoners. The others, he said, "have a very different conception of humanity, human rights, liberty and of human treatment."

Both men said that during incarceration they read chapters and Psalms from a Bible which Mr. Muallem's family sent them in a Red Cross parcel. Mr. Muallem also gave Prof. Samueloff lessons in Arabic. "So the days passed," Prof. Samueloff said later at his home. He said he felt like the Gestapo was present every time a Syrian came into his cell. He said that when he was permitted to write to his family, a Syrian once looked over his shoulder as he tried to put down a few innocuous lines. "The Syrian seemed to enjoy his job. My hands were trembling. At that moment I could have killed him," he said.

There was an equally poignant if more quiet scene of reunion at a military hospital where two downed pilots exchanged for 58 Egyptian war prisoners saw their families for the first time in months. Maj. Nissim Ashkenazi and Capt. Giora Romm were greeted by Defense Minister Moshe Dayan and chief of Staff Chaim Bar Lev. Both said they were held in solitary confinement and neither was aware of the other's presence until freed. Capt. Romm's first question after his release was, "who won the elections?"

The excitement of having the prisoners home overshadowed, at least for the time being, the fact that Israel had to yield to a kind of "blackmail" to secure their release, observers said. This was a bitter pill especially for government officials who said repeatedly that Israel would not exchange legitimate war prisoners for illegally held, hijacked civilians. But Gen. Dayan conceded later that no military action could have brought the prisoners home alive.

Allon Rebuffs Terms For Education Ministry, Threatens Cabinet-Making Negotiations

JERUSALEM, Dec. 7(JTA)--A new crisis erupted within the ranks of Premier Golda Meir's Labor Party over the week end and threatened to wreck the new national coalition government that she has succeeded in putting together after a month of stormy negotiations. Deputy Premier Yigal Allon flatly refused to accept the post of Minister of Education on the terms agreed upon by Mrs. Meir and the Orthodox National Religious Party which demanded that a deputy minister of education be selected from its ranks.

Mrs. Meir agreed to the demand as the price of NRP participation in a coalition cabinet. Mr. Allon balked and Mrs. Meir, furious over the rebuff, three times threatened to resign her mandate. She told a Labor Party leadership meeting here, "Either you convince Mr. Allon to accept the post or I resign." She was reportedly on the verge of informing President Zalman Shazar on Sunday that she was unable to form a government. Her Labor colleagues were reported to have persuaded her to hold off, at least until Wednesday, when her mandate expires and she must either ask the President for another extension or resign.

Political observers said today that Mr. Allon was expected to bow to the will of his party's supreme bodies. But the whole episode was likely to engender bitterness within party ranks. Mr. Allon, who headed the Ministry of Immigrant Absorption in the outgoing coalition government, apparently, had agreed to accept the education portfolio without relinquishing the deputy premiership. But when he learned that Mrs. Meir had agreed to the religious party's demands, he refused to take over a ministry in which a deputy, not of his selection, was already installed. A full meeting of the Labor Party executive was scheduled for today to try to iron out the difficulty which is apparently the last obstacle to formation of a new government.

Earlier, Mrs. Meir reached agreement with Gahal (Herut-Liberal alignment) the second strongest party. If reversed its original refusal to accept the Ministry of Posts as one of its four portfolios in the new government. She also apparently succeeded in convincing the left-wing Mapam to join the coalition with the rightist Gahal. The Mapam political committee meets next week, reportedly with a majority

in favor of joining the cabinet. Gahal has said however that it would not join a coalition in which the third-ranking NRP was left out and the NRP will not enter the cabinet unless it gets the deputy post in the Education Ministry.

Should Mr. Allon stand firm, though that is considered unlikely, he would probably retain the Absorption Ministry while the education post would be offered either to Gen. Yitzhak Rabin, Israel's Ambassador to the United States, or to Zeev Sharef, Minister of Finance, Commerce and Industry in the outgoing Government. Mr. Sharef is being displaced by former Finance Minister Pinhas Sapir, a powerhouse in Labor Party ranks, who indicated some time ago that he wanted his old ministry back.

It was not known whether Gen. Rabin, Mr. Sharef or anyone else would accept the Education Ministry on the terms laid down by Premier Meir and the NRP. The incumbent Minister of Education, Zalman Aranne, had angrily rejected the deal a week ago when he apparently thought he would be retained in the post in the new government.

See Big 4 Efforts Stepped Up With Apparent Sense Of Urgency For New Initiative

UNITED NATION, N.Y., Dec. 7 (JTA)--The Big Four have noticeably stepped up the pace of their Middle East deliberations in what appears to diplomatic observers to be a growing urgency to come up with some new initiative to halt a rapidly deteriorating situation. The Big Four --United States, Britain, France and Soviet Russia--met yesterday for the second time since resuming their talks (last week) after a five months hiatus. They are scheduled to convene again next Tuesday.

Lord Caradon of Britain is reportedly concerned that the Arab summit conference scheduled in Rabat, Morocco, Dec. 20 will destroy whatever small hope there is for Arab moderation. Lord Caradon appears to be leaning toward a Big Four stand that would mollify the Arabs, sources said. He has reportedly stressed the importance of tackling the refugee problem and also wants to take up questions of future boundaries between Israel and Jordan, Israel and Syria. The Four Power talks that began early this year and recessed last July 1, and the parallel bilateral talks between the U.S. and Soviet Russia had been devoted mainly to a settlement between Israel and Egypt.

Israel still insists that Egypt is the key to a settlement by any of the Arab states. Syria has not even nominally accepted the Security Council's Nov. 22, 1967 Mideast resolution which, the Big Four reiterated last week, was in their view the only basis for a settlement.

Last Tuesday's communique implied a willingness to consider secure borders between Israel and Syria as part of a package deal. It spoke of the readiness of the Four to consider specific questions concerning the implementation of the 1967 resolution "in all its aspects as a 'package deal' relating to the entire region of conflict in the Middle East."

It was indicated that the Soviet Union had requested this broadening of language although Russia's motives remained obscure. Some Western diplomats believed the Soviets are concerned over the influence of Red China in Syria and the growing strength of Arab guerrillas. Russia has not yet responded to the latest U.S. formulation of Oct. 28, one which reportedly went a long way toward meeting Egyptian demands for Israeli withdrawal from the Sinai. Some sources reported that Russia will reply during the current Four Power sessions. In Reports that the future of the Golan Heights and the West Bank were on the Big Four Agenda, elicited no official comment here. An official expressed the private opinion that the Four should steer clear of territorial details because "the deeper they get into specifics, the more difficult their task of reaching an agreement will become."

Israel Describes Refugee Resolution At United Nations As '1-Sided' And Malevolent

UNITED NATIONS, N.Y., Dec. 7 (JTA)--A draft resolution on Arab refugees which Israel described as "one-sided" and "malevolent" was approved 50-22 with 38 abstentions in the General Assembly's special political committee Friday. It was one of three resolutions on the refugee issue approved by the body. Israel voted against it as did the United States. Israel abstained from voting on a U.S. sponsored draft approved 100-1 but voted in favor of another draft resolution sponsored by 18 nations which was carried by a vote of 102-0 with three abstentions.

The resolution which Israel found offensive was sponsored by Asian and African countries, led by Somalia, and was pushed through by the combined votes of the Soviet Union and Communist bloc countries and the Arab states. It affirmed the "inalienable rights of the people of Palestine" which it claimed were denied by Israel through alleged collective punishment, arbitrary detention, curfews, destruction of homes and property, and deportations.

Israel's Ambassador to the UN, Yosef Tekoah, said that adoption of their resolution was "regrettable" but noted that it had been approved by a minority of the member states which indicated that most UN delegations did not support its view of the nature and origin of the refugee problem.

The resolution which Israel approved would have had the General Assembly endorse the efforts of the United Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) to continue to provide humanitarian assistance as far as practicable on an emergency basis and as a temporary measure to other persons in the area who are presently displaced and are in serious need of continued assistance as a result of the June, 1967 hostilities. It called on all governments and organizations and individuals to contribute generously for that purpose.

Mr. Tekoah said that Israel abstained from voting for the U.S. sponsored draft because it had reservations on some items included in it. The American draft called on the Assembly to note that the situation of the refugees continued to be "a matter of serious concern" and directed attention to the continuing critical financial position" of UNRWA with contributions falling short of the funds needed to cover the agency's essential budget requirements, among other elements.

Synagogue Council Head Decries Linking Of Viet Withdrawal With 'Betrayal Of Israel'

NEW YORK, Dec. 7(JTA)--The president of the Synagogue Council of America today assailed individuals who draw a "simplistic equation" between Israel and Vietnam. Rabbi Solomon J. Sharfman said it was "politically and morally reprehensible" to suggest that U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam "must inexorably lead to a betrayal of Israel."

Rabbi Sharfman spoke at the annual dinner of the Synagogue Council, the representative body of the lay and rabbinic branches of Reform, Conservative and Orthodox Judaism in the U.S. He criticized sharply "public statements that Jews who are critical of the Nixon Administration's policy in Vietnam are doing a disservice to Israel." Without identifying those alleged to have made such statements, the rabbi said they "ignore the fundamental distinction" between Israel and Vietnam and "do a major injustice to Israel no less than to our own country."

He said there is a sharp distinction between the Southeast Asia War and the situation facing Israel. "The survival of Israel is a moral imperative that transcends the transient, shifting grounds of short-range strategies and interests," Rabbi Sharfman said. "Sooner or later American soldiers will be out of Vietnam, and it is the Vietnamese themselves who must inevitably determine their own fate. The issue for them is not whether there is or is not to be a Vietnam on the map. Rather it is what kind of government, coalition or otherwise, will govern them. There is no danger that Vietnam will cease to exist," he said. "For Israel, however, that indeed is the issue will Israel stay on the map...or will it be destroyed? For it is the destruction of Israel that remains the constant objective of Arab policy."

Rabbi Sharfman said he did not speak for or against President Nixon's Vietnam policy. He noted that whatever the position of American Jews, "be it one of confidence in the Administration's policies or one of criticism and dissent, it is a position that flows from a profound concern that we have as American citizens for the long-range interests and welfare of this nation."

He conceded that "the effect of a withdrawal from Vietnam on the security and survival of small nations who are dependent on us for assistance is also a relevant moral and political concern. But it is both politically and morally reprehensible to suggest that an American disengagement in Vietnam, which in any event is the stated goal of President Nixon no less than of the dissenters, must inexorably lead to a betrayal of Israel."

Tanenbaum Hails National Council Of Churches' Rejection Of Middle East Resolution

DETROIT, Dec. 7(JTA)--The action of the General Assembly of the National Council of Churches in rejecting as "one-sided" a resolution on the Middle East was described today by a Jewish "fraternal delegate," Rabbi March H. Tanenbaum, as "an important contribution to reconciliation between Christians and Jews."

Rabbi Tanenbaum, director of the inter-religious affairs department of the American Jewish Committee, said the Assembly's decision to return a draft resolution on "displaced Palestinians" to committee for revision in more balanced terms was "a genuine act of statesmanship which deserves the appreciation of all men of good will who seek to reduce polarization and extremism in the Middle East and who are committed to trying to build a middle ground on which Christians, Jews and Moslems who seek the welfare of all the people in the area can work together."

The resolution was introduced from the floor by a spokesman for the Arab-American Congress for Palestine, a Detroit-based group which raises funds for the El Fatah terrorist movement, recruits guerrilla candidates and publishes the Voice of Freedom, a pro-Fatah newsletter.

The resolution urged the delegates to assist "the displaced Palestinians...by all possible means to return to their homes" and also asked that "the department of information services of the National Council of Churches help interpret to the American churches the concern of the Middle East Christian community, especially the demand for justice by the Palestinian people." Despite a strong appeal by Norman Assad, the Arab speaker, for support of the Palestinian cause and for an anti-Israel stand by Protestant churches, the National Council voted Thursday for a re-drafting of the statement to accord with the Council's May 2, 1969 policy statement on the Mideast crisis. That statement expressed concern for the human needs of the Palestinian Arabs but also for the Jews in the Arab countries...and the Jews of Israel (who) must be assured of safety and their rights."

In response to the Arab presentation, Rabbi Tanenbaum prepared a memorandum which was distributed to key members of every major Protestant and Orthodox denomination at the assembly. It said that the resolution reflected only one side of the Mid East situation and that "no statement of any other view was heard." It held that "to take a position based on a limited, patently slanted presentation would...be unfair and hardly reasonable."

The memorandum also declared that "Arab information programs have frequently exploited anti-Jewish as well as anti-Israel themes and rhetoric. American churches ought not to allow their structures and publications to become manipulated in information programs that will feed either directly or indirectly anti-Semitism, already far too greatly exacerbated by tensions in this country and abroad."

Mrs. Lucy K. Broido Is Dead At 69; Was Wife Of Joint Distribution Committee Chairman

NEW YORK, Dec. 7(JTA)--Mrs. Lucy Kaufmann Broido, 69, wife of Louis Broido, chairman of the Joint Distribution Committee, died today at her home here. Services will be held Tuesday in the Central Synagogue and interment will be in her native Pittsburgh.

Mrs. Broido, a New York City resident since 1926, had long been identified with Jewish and with civic causes. She had been a member of the board of the National Council of Jewish Women and was one-time president of the NCJW's New York section. She was treasurer of the International Council for Jewish Women at the time of her death. She had received a New York City award for her work in creating and conducting the Council Workshop for Senior Citizens.