

# JTA daily news bulletin

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## Nixon Asserts U.S. Will Meet Israel's Arms Needs And Not Impose Peace Settlement

WASHINGTON, Jan. 25 (JTA)--President Richard M. Nixon Sunday indicated in a message to the National Emergency Conference on Peace in the Middle East that the United States would meet Israel's arms needs and gave reassurance that this country would not attempt to "impose" a peace settlement. Mr. Nixon's message was read to the conference by Max Fisher, of Detroit Mich., a Jewish leader and friend of the President. Mr. Nixon said "the U.S. is prepared to supply military equipment necessary to support the efforts of friendly governments, like Israel's, to defend the safety of their people. We would prefer restraint in the shipment of arms to this area. But we are maintaining a careful watch on the relative strength of the forces there, and we will not hesitate to provide arms to friendly states as the need arises."

The President also stated: "I am aware of your deep concern that Israel may become increasingly isolated. This is not true as far as the United States is concerned. The United States stands by its friends. Israel is one of its friends. The United States is deeply engaged in trying to help the people of the Middle East find peace. In this effort, we are consulting fully with all of those most concerned. The United States believes that peace can be based only on agreement between the parties and that agreement can be achieved only through negotiations between them. We do not see any substitute for such negotiations if peace and security arrangements acceptable to the parties are to be worked out. The United States does not intend to negotiate the terms of peace. It will not impose the terms of peace. We believe a durable peace agreement is one that is not one-sided and is one that all sides have a vested interest in maintaining. The United Nations resolution of November, 1967, described the principles of such a peace."

### Dr. Wexler Welcomes Nixon's Message As Showing Concern

Dr. William A. Wexler, President of B'nai B'rith and newly-elected chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations, addressed the conference of more than 1,000 persons from throughout the nation. Dr. Wexler said "we welcome President Nixon's message. It shows that he understands and shares our concern." Dr. Wexler said the President's words indicated to him that the President "wants no further erosion in American policy." He stressed that "our disagreement with American policy has not been over motivations or intentions but over tactics." He assailed recent State Department initiatives as having "poorly served American interests, American prestige, American credibility."

Sen. Fred R. Harris, of Oklahoma, chairman of the Democratic National Committee, addressed the conference with a charge that the Nixon administration was changing "traditional policy toward Israel" and jeopardizing that country. He called for a public explanation of the shift. He said it was "not in the national interest of the United States to try--unasked--to negotiate for the Israelis." He said that Israelis had "good reasons for their fears." He asked that the U.S. Government refrain from being "the architect of a settlement which settles nothing, but tends toward yet another round of war." Harris said that many Americans had questioned U.S. involvement in Viet Nam but that "the American stake in the future of the State of Israel is not debatable." He favorably noted Israel's need for financial help and arms.

### Republican Leader Says: U.S. Support To Israel Will Not Weaken

Sen. Gordon Allott of Colorado, chairman of the Republican Policy Committee told the conference that he knew that President Nixon would do "everything he can both economically and militarily to assure the security of Israel, short of supplying manpower in the area." He added "there can be no question of any weakening of support for Israel's sovereignty, security and strength by the U.S. Government. The U.S. Government has no intention of permitting Israel to become militarily vulnerable. The Phantom aircraft which continue to arrive in Israel are evidence of this fact."

Rabbi Herschel Schacter, retiring chairman of the Presidents Conference presided. Other speakers included Prof. Hans J. Morgenthau of the University of Chicago; Father Edward H. Flannery, executive secretary for Catholic-Jewish Relations, National Conference of Bishops; Dr. Franklin Littell, Prof. of Religion, Temple University, and Andrew Young, executive vice-president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the movement created by the late Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.

## Campaign Begun To Collect 100,000 Signatures Opposing French Anti-Israel Policy

NEW YORK, Jan. 25 (JTA)--An urgent call has been issued for the start of a nation-wide campaign to collect 100,000 signatures to a petition protesting the current anti-Israel policy of the French government. The announcement was made by Rubin R. Dobin, chairman of the Far Rockaway, N.Y. Jewish Community Council. The Council is acting at this time so that the petition can be presented to President Georges Pompidou of France during his forthcoming state visit in Washington the last week of February.

Dobin stated that petition forms can be secured free of charge by sending a stamped- self-addressed envelope to him in care of the Far Rockaway Jewish Community Council.

## Israel Air Force Jets Hit A 120-Ton Egyptian Navy Auxiliary Vessel Near Shadwan

TEL AVIV, Jan. 25 (JTA)--Israeli Air Force jets scored hits on a 120 ton Egyptian Navy auxiliary vessel southeast of Shadwan island in the Gulf of Suez this morning. The craft, which is used as a troop and supply carrier, went out of control and grounded on a reef. An Israeli military spokesman said anti-aircraft gunners aboard the Egyptian vessel opened fire on the Israeli planes prior to being attacked.

On Friday night, Israeli forces ended their 32-hour occupation of Shadwan after removing all portable equipment including an entire British-built Decca radar station and large quantities of arms, ammunition and other military hardware. What could not be moved was demolished before the Israeli flag was finally hauled down from the lighthouse tower at the northern end of the island. The lighthouse itself was not touched because its beacon is an aid to navigation. Israeli sources estimate that a total of 70 Egyptians were killed in the Shadwan operation which began early Thursday morning and 60 prisoners were taken. The dead included the crews of two Soviet-made Egyptian torpedo boats sunk by Israeli aircraft off Shadwan on Thursday. A foreign correspondent selected to visit the island on behalf of a pool of foreign journalists reported that the Israeli evacuation went smoothly and there were no signs of any Egyptians on the island, in the air or on the sea. His report refuted claims by Cairo yesterday that Egyptian forces had driven the Israelis off Shadwan.

Israel's Defense Minister Moshe Dayan said on a radio interview Saturday that "all of Egypt is a battle field." He said Israel was not interested in conquering more territory but "as far as military objectives are concerned, there are no limitations." Gen. Dayan said that Israel's policy of striking targets anywhere in Egypt was aimed at halting or at least diminishing Egypt's preparations for a new war against Israel. He described it as a "static" policy with strategic objectives. Gen. Dayan said Israel's first priority was peace and its second was Egyptian adherence to the cease-fire. But the Egyptians want neither, he said. Instead, President Gamal Abdel Nasser has declared a war of attrition against Israel and Israel's response is to conduct its own version of such a war "to make things easier for us and more difficult for them," the Israeli Defense Minister said.

## Special Committee Formed To Probe Ammunition Truck Explosion In Eilat Harbor

TEL AVIV, Jan. 25 (JTA)--Chief of Staff Chaim Bar Lev has named a special investigating committee to inquire into yesterday's ammunition truck explosion at Eilat harbor which killed 18 Israeli soldiers and civilians and wounded 42, about half of them seriously. Army authorities announced early today that the blast "without any doubt occurred as a result of an accident." The announcement, contained in a special bulletin issued shortly after midnight, was obviously intended to refute claims by El Fatah, the Palestinian guerrilla organization, that it was responsible. The explosion, the most costly in Israeli history, occurred at 4:30 p.m. local time as a truck filled with arms and ammunition was being unloaded at the military harbor, about a half mile north of Eilat's commercial port area.

There was no official explanation of where the ammunition came from or where it was going. It is generally believed that the explosives were part of a large haul of arms and ammunition which Israeli forces seized on Shadwan, an Egyptian island in the mouth of the Gulf of Suez, on Friday. Eye-witness accounts said that Army and civilian medics were on the scene within minutes of the explosion removing the dead and wounded. The most seriously injured were evacuated by helicopter to hospitals in the north. Others were treated in the local hospital where hundreds of Eilat residents queued up to donate blood. The military harbor was cordoned off as Israeli sappers searched for unexploded shells and mines scattered in the area.

As some of the wounded men were brought into Tel Hashomer Hospital near Tel Aviv, Israel's Defense Minister Moshe Dayan was on hand to greet them and hear their accounts of the disaster. The Knesset meanwhile cancelled its 21st anniversary celebrations due to have taken place tomorrow night as the nation mourned the Eilat dead. Military authorities released the names of 16 of the dead today. They are: Pvt. First Class Falek Yoram, 19, of Merhavia; Nain Bzadya, 24, of Kiryat Atta; Deutch Lev, 55, of Haifa; Capt. Jacob Barak, 33, of Eilat; Sgt. Maj. Harari Yehouda, 33, of Eilat; Sgt. Maj. Yaacob Israel, 25, of Eilat; Corp. Zeev Bogatch, 23, of Holon; Corp. Baruc Samoka, and Corp. Yaacov Cohen, both of Acre; Corp. Sasson Nazaioff, 20, of Jerusalem; Capt. Shaul Nagar, 32, of Petach Tikvah; Menachem Menashe, 48, of Haifa and Corp. Simhah Brenner, 19, of Shderot.

## Professors' Group Urges Nixon To Veto State Department Middle East Policy

NEW YORK, Jan. 25 (JTA)--A group called American Professors for Peace in the Middle East urged President Richard M. Nixon today to "veto the short-sighted maneuvers of a handful of professional State Department Arabists" who, the group contended, were not only jeopardizing Israel's security and future existence, but endangered America's own vital interests in the Middle East. The call to President Nixon to see to it that the latest State Department proposals for a Mideast settlement are withdrawn, was contained in a full page advertisement published in the New York Times. The advertisement sought to demonstrate that Secretary of State William P. Rogers' Dec. 9 proposals for a settlement between Israel and Egypt and the subsequently published U.S. recommendations for an Israeli-Jordan peace constituted appeasement of the Arabs, a strengthening of the Soviet position in the Arab world and a blatant attempt to impose a Big Power solution in the Mideast conflict.

The appearance of the advertisement coincided with the opening in Washington, D.C. of an American-Jewish leadership conference on Mideast peace. The advertisement, signed by Harold Weisberg, chairman of the Boston chapter of American Professors for Peace in the Middle East, accused Secretary Rogers and the State Department of a "sell-out" of Israel and American interests along the lines of the 1938 Munich Pact.

## World Jewish Leaders Debate Israel Supreme Court Ruling On Who Is A Jew

JERUSALEM, Jan. 25 (JTA)--Israel's chief rabbis and Orthodox political leaders will seek legislation to overturn a majority ruling by Israel's Supreme Court last Friday which will allow Israelis to hold Jewish nationality without being Jewish by religion. The Cabinet will hold a special session on the issue next Thursday. Interior Minister Moshe Shapiro, who heads the Orthodox National Religious Party, said today that he would demand that the Cabinet initiate legislation to negate the court's ruling. The narrow five-four court decision was rendered in the case of Lt. Commander Benjamin Shalit, an Israeli Naval officer who sued the Government to have his two children registered as Jewish although their Scottish-born mother is non-Jewish and professes no religion. According to halachah Jewish religious law, a person is Jewish only if born of a Jewish mother or converted to Judaism according to Orthodox religious rites.

This concept has been the basis of registering Israelis since the State was formed. The Supreme Court's decision ordering the registrar of populations to ignore the halachic injunctions in the Shalit case was seen by the Orthodox as an attempt to separate Jews into categories of religion and nationality and thereby create a category of Jews no longer subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of halachic rule. Israelis, whether religiously observant or not, are governed by halachah in matters of personal status such as marriage and divorce. Halachah in Israel is administered exclusively by Orthodox rabbinical courts. The outcry against the Supreme Court's ruling came mainly from Orthodox circles in Israel and abroad. The decision was denounced from the pulpits of most synagogues virtually all of which are Orthodox.

The Ashkenazic Chief Rabbi, Isser Yehuda Untermann, claimed that the Court's ruling confirmed the existence of "a destructive tendency" on the bench on the question of who is a Jew and was "in basic and fundamental contradiction to Jewish religious law and our sacred Torah." The Sephardic Chief Rabbi, Itzhak Nissim, said the judgment was an attempt to distinguish between Jewish religion and nationality which are "indivisible." He claimed that the ruling could lead to a situation where a person was considered a gentile abroad but a Jew in Israel. Another Orthodox leader, Dr. Zerach Warhaftig, the Minister for Religious Affairs, demanded in the Cabinet today to know what the Government's stand was in the controversy. The Minister of Justice, Yacov Shimshon Shapiro outlined the court's decision and its constitutional implications. Two Orthodox political factions, the Agudat Israel and the Poalei Agudat Israel, have already submitted private members' bills to the Knesset which would overturn the court's decision. Opinion was divided in political circles over how the Knesset would act. A majority appeared to believe that some sort of legislation would be adopted eventually that would preclude any distinction between Jewish nationality and religion. Minister-Without-Portfolio Victor Shemtov, of the Mapam faction said he did not believe the Cabinet would make any attempt to alter the majority decision of the Court.

### Majority Say Jewish Religion Not Identical With Jewish Nationality

The Court hearings were held by an unprecedented panel of nine justices, comprising all present members of the Supreme Court, which normally has ten members. There is a current vacancy caused by the resignation of Benjamin Halevy who was elected to the Knesset. The majority held that the Jewish religion was not identical with Jewish nationality and that an individual could belong to the "Jewish nation" without being a Jew by religion. The minority held that the "Jewish nation" could not be separated from the Jewish religion. Lt. Cmdr. Shalit said he could not comment on the ruling because he was on active duty. Attorney General Meir Shengor, who argued the Government's case, commented only that "the matter has now been removed to the political level."

American Orthodox Jewish leaders denounced the Supreme Court ruling. Rabbi Norman Lamm, professor of Jewish philosophy at Yeshiva University, charged that the Court "sacrificed the unity of Jewish people on altar of a provincial liberalism or less charitably on a socio-political expedience." Rabbi Zev Segal, president of the Rabbinical Council of America called the ruling a glaring violation of halachah which could bring a "tragic rupture into relations between Jews in and outside Israel." Leaders of Conservatives and Reform Judaism in America, which have no counterpart in Israel, withheld comment. The Chief Rabbi of Great Britain said in a BBC interview Friday that he was concerned that the court decision might "drive a wedge" between Jews and would create difficulties in matters of personal status which are under the jurisdiction of rabbinical courts. Alderman Michael Fidler, president of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, said he didn't think that the Anglo-Jewish community would be affected by the court's decision. He said British Jews would continue to adhere to religious law which holds that only the offspring of a Jewish mother is Jewish.

The Daily Telegraph quoted "diplomatic circles" in London as predicting that the Court's ruling would encourage thousands of persons in Britain, America and Europe to emigrate to Israel. The paper said its sources thought that the decision was important to "Jews who have married people of other faiths."

### Sapir Says Interest Rates Paid In US On Israel Bonds Will Not Be Increased

NEW YORK, Jan. 25 (JTA)--Finance Minister Pinhas Sapir told the American-Israel Chamber of Commerce and Industry Friday that the interest rate paid here on State of Israel bonds would not be increased. Mr. Sapir's statement was in reply to a question which referred to recent interest rate increases on American securities and bank deposits. Mr. Sapir said the present interest rates on Israel bonds would be maintained. He expressed confidence that this would not affect the sale of bonds here and also predicted decreases in American interest rates in the future.

## Jacques Torczyner And Rep. Podell Assail US And French Middle East Policies

NEW YORK, Jan. 25 (JTA)--Jacques Torczyner, president of the Zionist Organization of America, lashed out against the State Department's appeasement policy in the Middle East and against France for supplying Libya with 100 Mirage jet warplanes in his address to the ZOA National Executive Committee meeting Saturday night. He called on President Nixon to respond promptly and favorably to Israel's Prime Minister Golda Meir's request for more arms to Israel because of the imbalance now created by the French arms deals. "We are fighting against appeasement in Vietnam," he said. "Why should we support appeasement in the Middle East?"

Declaring that Jews are as aroused now as in 1967 during the Six-Day War, Torczyner told ZOA leaders from throughout the country that "American Jews don't want the horrible experience of 1957 to be repeated when Israel had to pull back which resulted in another war in 1967." Torczyner urged the American Jewish community "to keep informing its neighbors not to fall into the trap of the Soviet Union which wants to eliminate American influence from the Middle East," and asserted that the Nixon administration is "susceptible to the impact of public opinion" which "is rejecting Secretary of State (William P.) Rogers's statements on the Middle East."

Rep. Bertram L. Podell of Brooklyn, who just returned from special meetings with French government leaders in Paris, told the meeting that "for money, the French have become merchants of death." Commenting on the sale of the 100 French war planes to Libya, the congressman said, "the name of the game is power. France is facilitating the Soviet drive in the Mediterranean." Podell said "I am convinced that some sort of tacit Franco-Soviet diplomacy is emerging. It does not matter whether the arms of the radical Arab states, like Libya, come from Moscow or Paris. They are furnished for the same purpose - the Arab war against Israel." Podell reiterated his opposition to having a joint session of Congress honor French President Georges Pompidou when he visits the United States next month. "I have protested to the Speaker of the House and urged that such a session not be held. My feelings on this matter are so strong that I will boycott such a special session," he said.

## ORT Announces 1970 Budget Of \$19,173,000; Largest In Its 90 Year History

NEW YORK, Jan. 25 (JTA)--Dr. William Haber, President of the American ORT Federation, announced a 1970 budget of \$19,173,000, an increase of \$1,500,000 and the largest in 90 years of ORT history, at the organization's National Conference here this weekend. The increase is expected to go largely for education in Israel, France, Iran and India. President Nixon, in a message sent to the Conference, said that "through your rehabilitation and training programs you have lifted hearts and lives, thus restoring dignity and opportunity to the impoverished and to refugees the world over." Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir sent a message lauding ORT for its work in "preparing the youth of Israel and Jewish youth abroad for the tasks which our people have been called upon to shoulder."

Eugene Abrams, former official of the U.S. Agency for International Development and now head of the ORT Technical Assistance Department announced the initiation of a refrigeration technicians training school in Santiago, Chile, to be financed by the Swiss government. He said that 12 ORT educational and manpower development projects had been activated in nine countries of Latin America and Africa.

ORT Director-General Max Braude told the conference that there had been a "radical change" in the Jewish occupational spectrum in the last few decades, and that ORT was responding to this by innovating such science-based studies as automation, nuclear technology and computer technology.

Morris B. Abram, President of Brandeis University, told the delegates that the Nixon Administration has aggravated campus turmoil by not following through on its commitment to higher education. "While the turmoil continues to rage within our gates," he declared, "the trickle of Federal funds to the campus indicates plainly that the promissory rhetoric about aid to the economically deprived is simply not being fulfilled."

Dr. Samuel Rubert, President of Chicago Men's ORT was named "Man-of-the-Year." Alvin Mermin of New Haven and William Wolpert of New York received ORT "Achievement" awards. ORT, Organization for Rehabilitation through Training, operates programs in 24 countries and 87 cities. There are 623 trade and technical education projects with 91 different occupational skills being taught.

## AJCommittee To Lindsay: Modernize Human Rights Unit; Mayor Responds Favorably

NEW YORK, Jan. 25 (JTA)--The AJCommittee's request that Mayor John V. Lindsay make the City Commission on Human Rights a full City Department has received a favorable response from Mayor Lindsay. In a letter to the Mayor several days ago, Haskell L. Lazere, Director of the New York Chapter, asked that all city offices and agencies dealing with social problems and race relations be put under the Commission.

He said that "we are confronted not only with the need for eliminating discrimination because of race, religion or national origin, but also easing tensions between groups in our city. As we expand opportunities for minorities, simultaneously there have to be reassurances for others that their opportunities are not diminished." A spokesman for Mayor Lindsay said that Mr. Lazere's letter was "a thoughtful paper which will be given careful study." Mr. Lazere compared the present Commission to "a model T Ford in a race with a Ford Lotus. The needs of the 70's," he added, "will not be met by the concepts or structures of the 40's or 50's." He contended that the Commission should be the "keystone of a well-coordinated, carefully-planned, on-going city program. We have a commission that does not have the status, budget or authority of a full City Department."