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Israel Air Force Attacks Egyptian Military Targets On Suez Gulf; Return Safely

TEL AVIV, Jan. 27 (JTA)--Israel Air Force jets attacked Egyptian military targets on the north shores of the Gulf of Suez today and returned safely to their bases. Israeli planes twice attacked Egyptian positions in the southern section of the Suez Canal zone yesterday. The second attack was launched at 11 p.m. local time. There was no Israeli comment this morning on a claim by Cairo that Egyptian commandos crossed the Sinai peninsula and penetrated almost to the Israeli border in their most far-ranging attack since the June, 1967 war. According to Cairo, the Egyptian raiders attacked an Israeli Army headquarters base near Rafah at the southern end of the Gaza Strip, inflicting heavy casualties and severe damage to equipment. The Egyptians claimed that all their men returned safely.

Several bazooka shells were fired today at Nahal Dikla in the northern Sinai without causing casualties or damage. A military spokesman said a search was under way for the attackers. Two Israeli soldiers were wounded in an exchange of fire along the Suez Canal last night. A Danish tourist lost his left leg yesterday when he stepped on a mine in an old Syrian minefield in the Golan Heights. A companion, Jan Salomonson, ran for help. A military spokesman said Egyptian forces appear to have re-occupied Shadwan island in the Gulf of Suez after it was seized and stripped of its military equipment by Israeli paratroopers last week. The Israelis occupied the uninhabited island for 32 hours, killing 70 Egyptians and taking 60 prisoners. They evacuated it on Friday. According to Israeli sources the Egyptians landed a force of undetermined size on Saturday morning when it was clear that the Israelis had departed. An Israeli spokesman said an Egyptian naval auxiliary craft hit by Israeli bombers in the Gulf of Suez Friday had been ferrying troops and supplies to Shadwan. The boat was disabled and grounded on a reef.

Eilat Ammunition Explosion Toll Up To 21; Findings Expected In Day Or Two

TEL AVIV, Jan. 27 (JTA)--Ten more victims of the Eilat ammunition explosion last Saturday were buried today as the death toll crept up to 21. One of the men, seriously wounded in the blast, died during the night. Two other wounded succumbed in hospitals yesterday. Eighteen Israeli soldiers and civilians were killed outright. A military committee investigating the causes of the disaster will present its findings within a day or two. It is expected to confirm the general belief here that the explosion was an accident resulting from a live mine that was supposed to have been de-activated. Six tons of mines were being unloaded in the military harbor at Eilat when the blast occurred. The mines were brought there from Shadwan, an Egyptian island in the Gulf of Suez occupied by Israeli paratroops for 32 hours last week. Official sources declined to say whether the mines were Egyptian being removed from the island or whether they were Israeli mines that had been taken there and then returned.

Arabs Gave World Algebra But Can't Add How Many Israeli Planes They Shot Down

TEL AVIV, Jan. 27 (JTA)--If Arab claims are to be believed, at least half of Israel's Air Force has been shot down since the June, 1967 Six-Day War. According to Arab arithmetic, the Israelis have lost 321 aircraft up to the first three weeks of January, 1970. The Egyptian Air Force admits 12 losses for the entire two and a half year period and Syria conceded 13.

An Israeli spokesman said today that Israeli air losses since June, 1967 amount to 16 planes and that the combined Egyptian and Syrian airforces lost 81 in the same period. In 1967, Israel lost three planes though the Arabs claimed 36. In 1968 Israeli losses again were three but Arab claims mounted to 49. During 1969, Israel admits nine air losses while the Arabs credit themselves with 218. And since the beginning of January, 1970, the Arabs say 18 Israeli aircraft were downed. Israel places its losses this month at one.

Abba Eban Feels Nixon's Message May Signify Reappraisal Of US Mideast Policy

JERUSALEM, Jan. 27 (JTA)--Foreign Minister Abba Eban said on television last night that President Richard M. Nixon's message of assurance to the American-Jewish leadership conference in Washington Sunday could indicate a re-appraisal by the U.S. of its recent unrewarding diplomatic moves in the Middle East. Mr. Eban said that those moves had not advanced the Soviet Union an inch toward the American position and elicited no positive responses from the Arabs. He said the U.S. was therefore possibly awaiting a new diplomatic move by the Soviets. The Foreign Minister said that the Nixon message re-affirmed the principles discussed last September with Premier Golda Meir when she visited Washington, and while this is of important political significance, it does not mean that all matters between Israel and the U.S. have been settled.

Assessments of the Nixon message continued to fill the columns of Israeli newspapers today. They were somewhat less enthusiastic than the initial official and unofficial reactions of Sunday and Monday when some newspapers indicated the belief that the President had reversed the policies of his own Secretary of State. The newspapers Davar, Lamerkhav and Omer agreed today that Mr. Nixon did not repudiate the Middle East statements of Secretary of State William P. Rogers which are still the valid expression of American policy. The consensus was that the practical results of the Nixon message have to be awaited before it could be assessed realistically. The English-language Jerusalem Post

which sometimes reflects Government views, called the Nixon message "a welcome reassurance of continued American support for a negotiated peace." The Rumanian-language daily, *Viata Noastra*, and the mass circulation evening paper, *Yediot Ahronot* seemed most impressed by the role of American-Jewish organizations in extracting the message from Mr. Nixon. The papers said that hitherto it was thought that American-Jewish leaders had leverage only with Democratic administrations.

Nixon's And Rogers' Statements Are Compatible; Nixon Added Nothing New

Editorial comment by leading American newspapers today reflected the view stated by White House spokesmen yesterday that Mr. Nixon had merely re-affirmed existing American policy in his message to the Jewish leaders. The Washington Post said editorially, "American policy is unchanged. The United States remains a friend of Israel, and the United States remains hopeful of facilitating a settlement acceptable to Arabs and Israelis alike." The New York Times said editorially the Nixon message to Jewish leaders and Secretary William P. Rogers' Dec. 9 Mideast statement "are perfectly compatible with each other and with the position taken by the previous Administration following the 1967 Arab-Israel war." It urged Israelis and their supporters to "recognize, as Washington has done, that arms alone cannot assure Israel's security in the long run.

Times reporter Peter Grose reported from Washington today that "Officials at the State Department were heartened, if a little mystified, at the favorable reaction of Jewish leaders to the President's statement." According to Mr. Grose, one American diplomat said he went over the Nixon statement "with a magnifying glass" and found "nothing that hasn't been said over and over again by the Secretary of State and every other official."

Three Israel Supreme Court Justices Accuse Government Of Bureaucratic Rigidity

JERUSALEM, Jan. 27 (JTA)--Three Supreme Court justices accused the Israeli Government yesterday of behaving with "bureaucratic rigidity, like in Czarist Russia or in Saudi Arabia." The angry charge was made at a hearing in the case of Lawrence Goldberg, an American student who appealed to the Israeli Supreme Court after the Ministry of Interior refused to extend his visa so that he could complete his studies here. The case was heard by Justices Joel Sussman, Alfred Witkon and Zvi Berinson. The Government's position was argued by Deputy State Attorney Michael Hashin. A compromise was reached granting a visa extension on condition that Mr. Goldberg does not use his studies as an argument if he decides to apply for another extension after his two year permit expires.

Mr. Goldberg originally applied for immigrant status under the Law of Return, asserting that he feels Jewish and Israel is his home. The young man's father is Jewish but his mother and his wife are Christian. According to Jewish religious law, Mr. Goldberg is not a Jew. His petition for immigrant status was denied by the Ministry of Interior which is headed by Moshe Shapiro, leader of the Orthodox National Religious Party. The Ministry also refused to extend his visa. The three Supreme Court justices maintained that the applicant was not obliged to "make the authorities happy." They said "all he wants to do is study and elsewhere in the world, people pride themselves on being friendly to foreigners." Justices Sussman, Witkon and Berinson have come under heavy fire from the Orthodox religious establishment in Israel for their contribution to the Supreme Court's majority decision last week to permit Israelis to hold Jewish nationality without being Jewish by religion.

Fifty Christian Journalists Recite Memorial Prayer At The Yad Vashem

JERUSALEM, Jan. 27 (JTA)--Fifty Christian journalists representing religious news media today recited a moving memorial prayer at the Yad Vashem, Israel's monument to the Jewish victims of the Nazi holocaust. The prayer was composed by Monsignor John M. Osterreicher, of the Institute of Judaean-Christian Studies at Seton Hall University, a Catholic institution in South Orange, New Jersey. The journalists are visiting Israel as guests of the Foreign Ministry and the Ministry of Tourism. Their tour was arranged through the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith with Israel's airline El Al, providing transportation. They represent the Associated Church Press, the Catholic Press Association, the Religious Newswriters Association and the Evangelical Press Association.

Knesset Committee Hopes Nigerian Government Will Permit Israeli Volunteers

JERUSALEM, Jan. 27 (JTA)--The Knesset foreign affairs and security committee expressed the hope today that the Nigerian Government will permit Israeli volunteers to provide medical aid and distribute food to the stricken inhabitants of Biafra. The Knesset group's statement referred to the area as East Nigeria, not Biafra, the national name adopted by the province when it seceded from Nigeria in 1966, precipitating a 30 month civil war. Since the Biafran surrender earlier this month, Nigerian authorities have shown a hostile attitude toward foreign countries and groups attempting to aid the Biafrans. According to unconfirmed reports, Nigeria plans to return Israeli drugs and other relief materials already sent to Biafra because of relief rendered to Biafran civilians by Israel during the civil war.

Israeli Army Reports Six-Fold Increase Of Border Incidents In 1969 Over 1968

TEL AVIV, Jan. 27 (JTA)--The Israel Army disclosed today that there was a six-fold increase in border incidents in 1969 compared to the previous year and a 55 percent increase in casualties. But a military spokesman said the rise in casualties relative to incidents was small and proved the ineffectiveness of the enemy's operations. He said casualties among civilians decreased by one-third in 1969 compared to 1968. No absolute figures were released. Last week showed a small increase of incidents along the Egyptian border. Seventy-nine were recorded compared to 56 the previous week. But during November and December, 1969 incidents along the cease-fire line with Egypt ranged from 120 to 150 per week, the spokesman said.

TekoaH Submits Appeal To UN From Moscow Jews To Be Allowed To Go To Israel

UNITED NATIONS, N.Y. Jan. 27 (JTA)--For the third time in recent weeks, Yosef TekoaH, permanent representative of Israel to the United Nations, submitted today to the UN an appeal from Soviet Jews to be allowed to leave for Israel. The appeal was addressed to the Secretary-General U Thant and to the president of the General Assembly. It was signed by 25 residents of Moscow whose names and addresses were given in full. According to the text, the Jews declared, "we, the signatories of the present appeal, are persons of various ages, occupations, education and tastes and are not connected with one another in anything except the wish to leave the Soviet Union for Israel in order to reunite there in our own land with our relatives."

The statement added that "we have appealed innumerable times to all possible organs of authority in our country--from the Ministry of Internal Affairs to the chairman of the presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. All of us have been refused. We consider that to hold us forcibly is against the simplest concepts of humanity and morality. We demand free exit from the USSR." In submitting the letter today to the Secretary General's office and to Miss Angie Brooks, General Assembly president, Mr. TekoaH requested that the letter be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly. At a press conference today, the Ambassador made public a letter addressed to Premier Golda Meir of Israel, dated Dec. 31, 1969, and just received in Jerusalem from one of the signatories of the appeal of the 25 Moscow Jews, Mrs. Rozalia Plotkina, a physician.

In her letter, Mrs. Plotkina asked the Israeli Premier for help "by all possible means" that she should be allowed to go to Israel and join her relatives "as life in the USSR has become unbearable for me." Mrs. Plotkina stated in her letter that on March 24, 1969, she submitted to the Soviet authorities a request to permit her to go to Israel. This was refused, she reported, but immediately after submitting her application, she added, she began to be subjected to systematic persecution at her place of work.

Jewish Doctor Dismissed From Work; No Other Job As Doctor Available

"At present, Dec. 6, 1969, the matter has reached the stage when a collective trial over me has been organized at my place of work...At this 'comradely trial' which was conducted in a 'hun-like style' a resolution was adopted stipulating the necessity to dismiss me from work. This means that it is impossible for me to work in the USSR as a physician. I have no other profession. I beg you to take into consideration the fact that the only way out of my plight is my departure for homeland, Israel, and to help me."

Mr. TekoaH revealed that there are now numerous parents, brothers and sisters, husbands and wives pleading to be reunited in Israel with their nearest members of their families. He said "There are children who have waited in vain for years to see again their fathers and mothers. There are Jewish girls who do not marry for fear that this might further reduce a prospect of reunion with their families in Israel." Appealing to the Soviet Government to permit the emigration of Jews who wish to go to Israel, Mr. TekoaH said that the Soviet Government "would earn worldwide esteem if it were to grant Soviet Jews their fundamental human rights." He added that there were undoubtedly Jews who may wish to remain in the Soviet Union but he pointed out that this could not justify the denial to those who are longing to go to Israel, of their simple human rights to do so.

Spare Aircraft Parts Cargo On El Al Seized By Swiss Custom Authorities

GENEVA, Jan. 27 (JTA)--Swiss Customs authorities seized a cargo of aircraft spare parts from an El Al airliner that was about to take off today for Tel Aviv. The cargo, described as a "fairly large consignment of war material," arrived here from London aboard a plane of a different airline. It contained no arms or munitions. The Swiss said the consignment had no authorization and was seized as a precaution. A Government spokesman said an inquiry would be made but declined to give further details.

Scuffle Erupts Between Jewish And Arab Students During Anti-Israel Lecture

MONTREAL, Jan. 27 (JTA)--Mohamed Choucri, the Egyptian Ambassador to Canada, beat a hasty retreat from a lecture hall at the Sir George William University as violence erupted between a group of Arab students and Jewish students supported by non-Jewish Israeli sympathizers, during a speech he was delivering several days ago. Fighting broke out when the Arab students started chanting El Fatah slogans. No injuries were reported and the scuffle was subdued by university security guards. In his speech, the envoy charged Israel with "ruthless and racist political aggression," comparing Israeli alleged persecution of Arabs with Nazi practices during World War II. He said "Zionist colonialism is distinguished by three main features: racism, addiction to violence and expansionism." He said that "Jews may very well be God's chosen people but Arabs refuse to admit the hand of God is guiding them to dissemination of violence, hatred and destruction." He was frequently shouted down during his speech by angry pro-Israeli students and beat a quick exit through the basement garage of the university, declining to make any comments. He finished his planned address.

Washington Officials Confused About Basis For Nixon's Message To US Jewish Leaders

WASHINGTON, Jan. 27 (JTA)--Evidence of confusion emerged in official Washington circles today over whether France's decision to sell Mirage jets and other modern weaponry to Libya figured in President Nixon's message to the American-Jewish leadership conference here Sunday. The President said the United States "will not hesitate to provide arms to friendly states as the need arises." Carl Bartsch, a State Department spokesman, told newsmen yesterday the Franco-Libyan arms deal was "certainly being taken into consideration" in the Administration's assessment of Israel's arms needs. But White House spokesman Ronald Ziegler asserted yesterday Mr. Nixon's remarks were not linked

89 House Republicans Favor Direct Arab-Israeli Talks; Crane Praises Nixon's Message

WASHINGTON, Jan. 27 (JTA)--Rep. Philip M. Crane, Illinois Republican, told the House Tuesday that 89 House Republicans now subscribe to his resolution calling for "face-to-face" Arab-Israeli negotiations and that President Nixon has given impetus to the resolution by his message this week supporting Israel. The Congressman said "the President has voiced a new guideline that will reassure our friends and serve notice upon our foes. The response of the Israeli Government, expressed by Prime Minister Golda Meir, is gratifying." Rep. Crane said "the President's statement gives new thrust and meaning to our resolution." He said it indicated that "a consensus is emerging on this vital policy matter."

The Congressman said the President's message to the National Emergency Conference of Jewish Leaders "has done much to clarify American policy by 'rejecting any notion of the Soviet Union or the Arabs that a so-called peace can be imposed upon Israel by the superpowers.'" He said that the President's statement reflected "the spirit and essence of our resolution." The Congressman made known that he will continue to press for "a real peace" instead of diplomatic formulations that tend to appease the Russians and Arabs.

Major Canadian Jewish Groups Charge French Arms Sale Is Opportunism

MONTREAL, Jan. 27 (JTA)--The Presidents of the Federated Zionist Organizations of Canada and Canadian Jewish Congress declared yesterday that the French government's arms agreement with Libya "is a calculated act of political opportunism. The sale in such massive quantities of sophisticated aircraft to a nation which has openly declared herself at war with Israel adds a new dimension to the tragic arms race and undermines the prospects for a peaceful settlement of the Middle East conflict." The statement by the organizations added that the Jewish community of Canada condemns this action by the French government. It makes an urgent call to its fellow Canadians to protest an intervention in the Middle East which must be regarded as dangerous and obstructing a peaceful solution." The group also sent a telegram to Pierre Siraud, Ambassador of France to Canada, stating "the reputation of France as a nation dedicated to equality, liberty and fraternity is being destroyed by your government's announced sale of arms to Libya. Canadian Jewry requests you to convey to your government deepest concern for an act which can only be described as obstructing a peaceful solution to the Middle East conflict."

US Orthodox Rabbis And Britain's Chief Rabbi Urge Reversal On Who Is A Jew

LAKEWOOD, N.J., Jan. 27 (JTA)--American Orthodox rabbis urged Israel's Premier Golda Meir today to take the lead in nullifying last week's majority decision by Israel's Supreme Court which will allow Israelis to be registered as Jewish by nationality although they may not be Jewish by religion. About 500 rabbis attending the mid-winter conference of the Rabbinical Council of America, passed a resolution assailing the Israeli high court's ruling. Rabbi Zev Segal, president of the Rabbinical Council, claimed that it "represented one of the greatest dangers to survival in the history of the Jewish people."

The pressure from the Orthodox rabbis mounted as the Israeli Cabinet was scheduled to meet Thursday to take up the controversial issue. Cables addressed to Mrs. Meir demanded the enactment of new legislation by the Knesset that would invalidate the court's decision. Rabbi Segal claimed that Orthodox arousal over the issue was shared by a majority of Israelis and a majority of American Jews no matter what their religious affiliations. No statement on the matter has been issued so far by spokesmen for the Conservative and Reform branches of American Judaism. Meanwhile, in London, Britain's Chief Rabbi Immanuel Jakobovits cabled Premier Golda Meir of Israel today that he was deeply concerned over the Israeli Supreme Court's ruling last week that will allow Israelis to be registered as Jews by nationality even if they are not Jewish by religion. The Chief Rabbi urged Mrs. Meir to re-affirm existing regulations which require the registration of Jews according to religious precepts.

TV Documentary On Israeli Air Force Scheduled On NBC February 3

NEW YORK, Jan. 27 (JTA)--The Israeli Air Force is the subject of a television documentary on N.B.C.'s "First Tuesday" series Feb. 3. Producer Bob Rogers saw the IAF in action during the Six Day War, and spent a month in Israel with a film crew, determined to find out "what made these guys so good." Rogers found that "probably the underlying factor that lets everything else happen is a sense of unity and determination. Building on that, which is common to most Israelis, as far as I can tell, and certainly common to the Armed Forces, the IAF has managed to turn its very limited means into a superb fighting force."

The program marks the first time a non-Israeli journalist has been allowed to film a jet squad exercise in the air. The exact size of the IAF and the graduating class at the Israeli Flight School, are closely guarded secrets, according to Mr. Rogers, but both are small, emphasizing "quality over quantity." "Many experts," he said, "including some in the Pentagon, believe that the IAF is, pound for pound, the best combat air force in the world." He classified the aircraft as a "grab-bag of international equipment," some of it older than the pilots who fly it.

Agudath Israel Urges Orthodox Jews To Elect Responsive Men To NY School Boards

NEW YORK, Jan. 27 (JTA)--Agudath Israel has launched a city-wide campaign to alert Orthodox Jews to the importance of electing "men who are sensitive to the needs of the non-public schools" in the March 19 school board elections under the new decentralization plan. At the same time, the organization said that if men who "discriminate" in the distribution of funds are elected, they will "press charges" against the Federal and State governments to revert to centralized distribution of funds.