

# JTA daily news bulletin

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## Week-End Battles Between Israeli And Egyptian Forces Fiercest Since 1967 War

TEL AVIV, Feb. 8 (JTA)--Israeli fighters shot down two Egyptian MIG-21s in an aerial dogfight over the Nile delta this morning. Israeli jets staged a 50 minute raid on Egyptian artillery emplacements and bunkers in the southern sector of the Suez Canal zone this afternoon. All Israeli planes returned safely to their bases. Egyptian aircraft made hit-and-run attacks on Israeli positions in the canal zone this morning and this afternoon without causing casualties or damage. The morning attack occurred over the Firdan bridge near the canal's midpoint. In the afternoon, two Egyptian jets dropped bombs near the southern end of the waterway and fled, a military spokesman said.

The air battle and bombing raids climaxed a week-end of the most savage fighting between Israeli and Egyptian forces since the June, 1967 war. The air battle took place over the delta. An Israeli military spokesman said a number of Egyptian planes engaged a number of Israeli planes at medium altitude. Two Egyptian MIGs were hit by aerial cannon fire. One exploded in mid-air and the other crashed in flames. The pilot of the latter was seen bailing out. According to an Israeli spokesman, Israeli forces suffered only three casualties during the entire week-end of fighting. Corp. Itzhak Mashiah, 20, was killed and two other soldiers were wounded in a heavy artillery exchange between Israeli and Egyptian forces in the southern section of the canal zone on Friday.

## Escalation Began Friday When Israeli Naval Vessel Sunk By Egyptian Frogmen

The escalation began on Friday when Egyptian frogmen sank an Israeli naval auxiliary vessel in Eilat harbor and damaged an Israeli landing craft. Within hours, Israeli jets attacked and sank a 700 ton Russian-built Egyptian mine-layer in the Gulf of Suez, pounded Egyptian positions in the northern section of the Suez Canal zone and ranged at will over Egyptian territory to blast military encampments and ammunition dumps in the Nile Valley and Nile Delta. This morning Israeli jets struck at military targets near Port Suez at the canal's southern entrance, scored direct hits on an Egyptian ammunition dump near the industrial town of Helouan and smashed installations at the Imshas Army camp 16 miles north of Cairo. A military spokesman said all Israeli planes returned safely from all actions.

Gen. Haim Bar Lev, Chief of Staff of Israel's armed forces, said in a radio interview Saturday that Israel and Egypt are now engaged in an all-out war. Gen. Bar Lev said "one cannot speak any longer of action and reaction, strike and retaliation. Each of the two countries is using all means at its disposal on the military level." He said the sinking of the Egyptian mine-layer was not entirely an act of retaliation for Egypt's attack on the Eilat naval base, although the vessel might have been spared if the Eilat attack had not taken place. The Soviet-built mine-layer, of the T-43 type, normally carries a crew of 80 and is armed with double gun turrets. It was sighted off the Egyptian naval base of Ghardaka in the Gulf of Suez and was shadowed by Israeli jets for two hours before the attack. Direct hits were scored despite evasive action taken by the vessel.

Gen. Bar Lev said "We will hit them by all means and in all places that are to our advantage and will continue doing so until Egypt returns to the cease-fire status." The Israeli Chief of Staff said the Egyptian assault on Eilat was an attempt by President Gamal Abdel Nasser to impress the leaders of four Arab countries who convened in Cairo Friday to coordinate battle plans against Israel. King Hussein of Jordan, President Nouredin Al-Atassi, of Syria and delegations from Iraq and the Sudan were meeting in the Egyptian capital as Israeli bombs rained down on targets 16 miles away. The targets included the Asyut Army camp in the Nile Valley where Egypt has a huge arms store and the Tel El Kebir camp on the Ismailia-Cairo road.

A group of top military leaders, headed by Defense Minister Moshe Dayan, hurried to Eilat for first-hand reports of the frogmen attack. Others present were Gen. Bar Lev, Navy Commander Botzer and Gen. Aric Sharon, southern command head. Gen. Dayan said there was always a possibility of penetration of the Eilat port area, despite precautions and that he was convinced that "there was no negligence" on the part of the guards. He noted that there had been a similar attack on two merchant ships in the Eilat harbor two months ago. He reiterated that the latest act was a military action against a military target but that if the Egyptians enlarged their attacks to hit civilian targets then "the Egyptians and we shall see ourselves in quite another position." He said Israel has no policy of "an eye for an eye" and that "we will hit when and where we choose until the Egyptians return to the status of cease-fire." He announced a thorough investigation would be held to seek to determine who planted the devices on the two naval vessels, where the frogmen came from and when.

## State Department Denies Administration Has Decided To Sell Phantom Jets To Israel

WASHINGTON, Feb. 8 (JTA)--The State Department officially denied yesterday a report that appeared in the New York Times Friday that the Nixon administration has decided to sell Israel the Phantom jet and Skyhawk aircraft and other weapons it has requested. Department spokesman John King described the Times' report as "inaccurate." White House spokesmen said they had nothing to add to President Nixon's statement at his Jan. 30 press conference that he would decide within 30 days whether or not to supply Israel with the military aid requested by Premier Golda Meir when she visited

Washington last September. American and Israeli diplomats here expressed "surprise" at the Times' story. Mr. King said "No decision has been made on the matter. The Israeli request is under study."

The Times said in an editorial today that if it's report that President Nixon has decided to sell more Phantoms to Israel is correct, despite the State Department's denial, "it represents a tragic but necessary decision." The editorial observed that "there is no question of the increasing danger in the Middle East in the wake of what now looks like another round of escalated arms deliveries to this explosive region. It must be recognized that continued American arms supply, no matter how justified, is likely to encourage intransigence among the Israelis as they consolidate their hold in the occupied areas."

The report and its denial came during a week-end of mounting diplomatic activity over the Middle East and a major escalation of fighting in that region. In Cairo, President Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt held a war council with King Hussein, of Jordan, President Nouruddin Al-Atassi of Syria and representatives of the Iraqi and Sudanese governments as Israeli bombers pounded Egyptian Army camps and ammunition dumps as close as 16 miles away.

#### Pres. Pompidou Reported To Favor Restoration Of Mideast Cease-Fire Agreement

On Friday, President Georges Pompidou of France reportedly proposed in a note to Soviet Premier Alexei N. Kosygin, that the Four Powers call immediately for the restoration of the cease-fire agreements in the Mideast and a return of United Nations peace-keeping forces to that area. M. Pompidou's note was said to have been delivered in Moscow Friday by the French Ambassador, Roger Seydoux. It reportedly urged re-doubled efforts by the United States, Soviet Russia, Britain and France to find a solution to the Mideast conflict. But it reportedly did not contain any proposal for the limitation of arms shipments to that area. A Middle East arms embargo was proposed by President Richard M. Nixon in a note to Premier Kosygin last week and a similar proposal was said to have been offered by Prime Minister Harold Wilson of Britain. The U.S., British and French notes were in reply to letters sent by Premier Kosygin to the three Western powers a week ago underlining the urgency of the Mideast situation and implying that Russia would accelerate its arms supplies to Egypt unless Israel was forced to curb its continuous bombardment of Egyptian territory. Mr. Kosygin also reportedly urged President Nixon to withhold further American arms from Israel.

According to the New York Times report by its Washington correspondent, Tad Szulc, President Nixon decided to provide new arms to Israel following the arrival of Mr. Kosygin's note last week. Mr. Szulc attributed his information to "high official sources." He said the decision involved at least 25 more Phantom jet fighter-bombers and more than 80 Skyhawk jet fighters. Mr. Szulc said the Administration was represented by his sources as believing the U.S. could not accept Soviet threats to ship more arms to Egypt if Washington did not "restrain" Israel. According to Mr. Szulc, the new Phantoms and Skyhawks would be delivered to Israel in 1971. The Administration was said to have deferred a decision on Israel's request for financial assistance, part of which would be used to pay for the new aircraft. Israel has already taken delivery of an undisclosed number of Phantom jets authorized by the Johnson Administration more than a year ago in response to an Israeli request made in 1968. At least some of those planes are reportedly engaged in almost around-the-clock assaults on Egyptian military targets.

#### Nasser Tells Arab Summit Conference To Mobilize For War

The meeting in Cairo was described as a "summit" gathering of the Arab states involved in direct confrontation with Israel. That description applies to Egypt, Jordan and Syria but only partially to Iraq and not at all to the Sudan. Iraq has no common frontier with Israel but a substantial number of Iraqi troops are deployed in Jordan and Iraqi artillery has frequently shelled Israeli settlements across the cease-fire line.

According to reports from Cairo, President Nasser urged the other Arab nations to mobilize for war and declared that Egypt was determined on a solution by force of arms. The Egyptian leader also reportedly announced promises of strong new Soviet support for the Arab cause. The semi-official Cairo newspaper Al Ahran claimed that Soviet Premier Kosygin pledged "all that's necessary" to the Arab states in his notes to the Western powers last week. According to the paper, Mr. Kosygin's note said, "We want to put it to you very clearly that if Israel continues her adventurism, the Soviet Union would place at the disposal of Arab countries all that's necessary for ousting the rude aggressors."

An Egyptian spokesman denied that President Nasser told Arab leaders either to decide to wage all-out war on Israel or resign and let others try to settle the conflict. The spokesman said, "We are fighters until death stops us. It is unconceivable that after all we have suffered and achieved we would run away from battle now." President Al-Atassi, of Syria, reportedly rejected British and French proposals to the Soviet Union that the 1967 cease-fire be restored and that the United Nations Security Council's Nov. 22, 1967 resolution on the Mideast be re-affirmed as the basis for a solution. He reportedly told the meeting that Israel must withdraw unconditionally from the occupied Arab territories. Syria has never accepted the resolution though Egypt and Jordan claim that they are prepared to go along with it if Israel withdraws.

#### Mrs. Meir Says Israel Would Return To 1950's Austerity Conditions To Pay For Arms

NEW YORK, Feb. 8 (JTA)--Premier Golda Meir of Israel said that her country would return to the austerity conditions of the early 1950's if necessary to pay for the additional Phantom jets and other weapons requested from the United States. Mrs. Meir made that remark in an interview in Tel Aviv with James Reston, a vice president of the New York Times, and the paper's Israel correspondent,

James Feron. The interview was published here today. Mrs. Meir emphasized that her country's request for additional arms was a matter of life-or-death. "We never asked for equality with the Arabs in arms. We don't even dare ask for that. We never said plane for plane and tank for tank, but there is a certain point where the imbalance is such that it is suicide," she said.

Mrs. Meir also made the point that nobody gives planes and other weapons to Israel. "Give isn't the word," she said. Israel pays hard cash. "We'd like to negotiate the old contract under which we bought the first Phantoms," she said. "It would be impossible to buy more under those terms. I say 'impossible'--but we'll do it if it means that we have to go back to a program we had in 1950, of austerity, we'll do that too, because the question is to live on austerity or not to live at all." Israel purchased 50 Phantom jets from the U.S. more than a year ago for about \$300 million. The contract called for two thirds of the amount in cash and the rest in the form of credit for five years. When she visited Washington last September, Mrs. Meir asked for more Phantoms and Skyhawks and for U.S. financial aid to help pay for them.

In the course of the interview, Mrs. Meir expanded on a statement that she has made frequently in the past--that there is no such thing as a Palestinian nation or Palestinian people. "People talk about a Palestinian state," she said. "You know, the United Nations in 1947 divided what was west of the Jordan River, in what was then called Palestine, into a Jewish state and an Arab state. We accepted because this was after the second World War, with thousands of Jews in those Nazi camps and we would do anything to get the keys to Haifa and Lydda, to bring them in. So we set about setting up our state and the Arabs set about attacking us. And they never set up their state." Mrs. Meir asked rhetorically, why the Arabs who remained on the West Bank of the Jordan did not set up a Palestinian state. She observed that they accepted Jordanian citizenship, voted for the Jordanian parliament and some even served as members of the Jordanian Government. "From then until 1967 nobody heard of a Palestinian entity. Where were they? What happened to Jordan? It wasn't a viable state. What made it viable were the Palestinians who became Jordanian. What should really be Palestine is Jordan. They call it Jordan. They could call it Palestine." Mrs. Meir's views on the Palestinians were disputed recently by the secretary general of her own Labor Party, Aryeh Eliav. Mr. Eliav asserted that there was a nascent "Palestinian nation" in existence and that Israel should recognize it.

### Knesset Prepares To Debate Amendment Which Determines Who Is Jewish

JERUSALEM, Feb. 8 (JTA)--Government and opposition forces inside and out of the coalition prepared today for tomorrow's Knesset debate on an amendment to the Law of Return which would establish religious criteria as the sole determinant of who is entitled to be registered as Jewish by nationality. The legislative measure was drafted by the Cabinet to comply with demands by the Chief Rabbinate and the Orthodox political parties that their concept of Jewish nationality and religion as one in the same be written into the law of the land.

The Government initiated the legislation primarily to avert a threatened walk-out by the National Religious Party over last month's Supreme Court ruling that an Israeli may be registered as Jewish by nationality even if he is not a Jew by religion. The Government easily defeated a motion of no confidence on the matter in the Knesset last week. But forces opposed to what they regard as appeasement of the Orthodox establishment are gathering strength.

The State List, an opposition faction headed by former Prime Minister David Ben Gurion, has been lobbying for a secret ballot on the measure. This would permit many Labor Party members opposed to the bill to vote against it without risking retaliation by the Party leadership for breach of discipline. The State List, which has only four seats in the Knesset has asked Mr. Ben Gurion to speak on the issue before the Knesset tomorrow. While the former Premier has generally gone along with the religious bloc on matters involving religious issues, he does not accept the idea that Jewish religion and nationality are inseparable. He is expected to oppose the amendment. Today's cabinet session was also devoted to a detailed report on developments on the international scene by Foreign Minister Abba Eban. Mr. Eban leaves next week on an official visit to West Germany and other European countries.

### Israeli Professional Employees Demanding Wage Hikes In Excess Of Wage-Package Deal

JERUSALEM, Feb. 8 (JTA)--Some leaks appeared today in the Labor-Management-Government "package deal" that is supposed to curb wage, price and tax increases for the coming fiscal year. The Government is expected to publish new sales tax rates and other fees tomorrow. Professional employees meanwhile are demanding wage hikes far in excess of the eight percent agreed to in the three-party deal. The additional taxes were expected. The Government agreed to keep taxes from soaring in return for a Management pledge to keep prices down and an agreement by Histadrut, the labor federation, to an across-the-board wage raise of four percent in cash cost-of-living allowances and four percent in Government defense bonds. But the Government insisted that it needs another \$35 million in revenue.

A ministerial committee met today to decide where the "bite" will be. Most economic experts believe it will fall on automobile owners in the form of new taxes on maintenance costs and higher license fees. Also expected are heavier sales taxes on imported cigarettes, alcoholic beverages and such luxury imports as salmon and caviar. Salaried professionals are scheduled to meet this week with Yerucham Meshel, deputy secretary general of Histadrut to discuss their demand for a 20 percent wage increase. The group has already served notice on Histadrut that it does not consider itself bound by the wage package deal. It cited a research study undertaken on behalf of professional employees which showed that their salaries lagged by an average of 17 percent behind the income of self-employed professionals during a four year period in which wages were ostensibly frozen.

### Hadassah Conference To Focus On Problem Of Disaffected Jewish Youth

NEW YORK, Feb. 8 (JTA)--A four-day mid-winter meeting of Hadassah, focusing on the "problem of disaffected Jewish youth," will open here tomorrow. Other topics to be discussed include Israel today, Eastern European Jewry, Jews in Arab lands, and Aliyah. In a prepared keynote address, Mrs. Max Schenk, Hadassah national president, said that some Jewish youth of today, opposing the principles of their parents, have adopted the "philosophy of the enemy." This "exaggerated liberalism," she said, leads many of these youths to denounce Zionism and Israel as an expression of hyper-nationalism. She contended that many Jewish youths are ready to "fight and even die" for the blacks, the Vietnamese, the Biafrans, the Greeks and the Czechs, while rejecting Judaism.

She called for an educational program that would "demolish the lies and attacks" the present Zionism and Jewry as "imperialistic and expansionist." She called these attacks a danger to the entire Jewish community, particularly because they are "being swallowed and absorbed into the blood stream of Jewish youth of the new left persuasion." Mrs. Schenk added: "Let us not decry the blindness of this youth. Let us rather try to open their eyes. We must fill in the gaps in their knowledge--even where possible the lacks in their personal experience." Mrs. Schenk said that Hadassah's medical, vocational training and Youth Aliyah programs were also "high on the agenda." Other speakers at the meeting will include Hon. Shlomo Argov, Minister Plenipotentiary of the Israeli Embassy in Washington, D.C., Dr. Yoram Dinstein, Consul General of Israel in New York and Professor Nathan Rosenstreich, Professor of Philosophy at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Members of Hadassah's national board, representing more than 318,000 women in the U.S. and Puerto Rico, will be at the meeting.

### AJCongress Urges Lindsay To Release Report Of Attacks On Houses Of Worship

NEW YORK, Feb. 8 (JTA)--Concerned by the latest outbreak of synagogue arson and vandalism, the American Jewish Congress has asked Mayor Lindsay to make public the Police Department report on the epidemic of attacks against houses of worship in 1968 and last year. Assemblyman, Albert H. Blumenthal, chairman of the Congress' Metropolitan Council, noted in a letter to the Mayor that a special unit of the Police Department had been formed in December 1968 to investigate crimes against churches and synagogues in the city. He recommended that the Police Department make public the number of incidents, the number of those arrested, the number of those convicted and the findings of the Department as to the age and character of those involved in last year's incidents.

"Such a report," Mr. Blumenthal said, "would enable us to assess the seriousness of these incidents and to make a determination as to whether there is a wave of such crimes, as many believe there is." He said that disclosing the results of the police investigation last year, would also "reassure the public, help deter further attacks and serve as a warning to would-be vandals that they will not escape punishment for their acts." On Jan. 28 at the Minsk Congregation, firemen found three cans of naphtha cleaning fluid and two cans of paint used to daub six huge swastikas on walls and doors. The fire was set in a stack of prayer books and rags piled up near the main door. On Jan. 19 a fire at Congregation Ahvath Torah destroyed five Torah scrolls valued at more than \$2,000 each and damaged the upstairs where the rabbi lived. At the Flatbush Yeshiva's Joel Braverman High School, vandals painted a Black Panther slogan on the wall of the four-story building and paint-sprayed the name of the Arab guerrilla organization "Al Fatah," across a valuable mosaic mural depicting the 12 tribes of Israel.

### Soviet Officials Rebuffed By Jews Asked To Withdraw Public Appeal To Emigrate

NEW YORK, Feb. 8 (JTA)--Soviet Government officials recently visited the Soviet Republic of Georgia in a futile effort to persuade Jews there to withdraw their signatures from a public appeal for help to enable them to emigrate, according to a report by the American Jewish Committee. The Committee said the information indicating that Soviet Jews are resisting official pressures to discourage emigration came from the Committee's Paris office. The report stated the Soviet officials were rebuffed in Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia, and in Kutaissi where signers of the Nov. 10 letter refused to withdraw their names. The AJC report said the officials went to the Tbilisi synagogue on a Saturday morning and sought to convince the worshippers of the dangers to the Jewish community in the letter and that the reaction was one of indignation and protest from the worshippers.

### Joseph Brainin, Journalist And Associated With Weizmann Institute, Dies At 74

NEW YORK, Feb. 8 (JTA)--Funeral services will be held Tuesday, 11:30 a.m. at Riverside Memorial Chapel for Joseph Brainin, retired executive vice president of the American Committee for the Weizmann Institute of Science, who died here last night at the age of 74. Mr. Brainin, a journalist and writer, recently returned from a six-week stay at the Weizmann Institute in Rehovoth, Israel where he helped prepare the archives of the late Dr. Chaim Weizmann, Israel's first President, for publication. Mr. Brainin was associated with the Weizmann Institute since its founding in the nineteen-thirties and was a staff member of the American Committee since 1953. After his retirement in 1967 he continued to serve in an advisory capacity. Mr. Brainin established the Seven Arts Feature Syndicate in 1921 and served as its editor and managing director until 1938.

### George W. Rabinoff, Social Worker And Educator, Dies In New York At Age 77

NEW YORK, Feb. 8 (JTA)--George W. Rabinoff, a social worker and educator who served in executive capacities with the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds, died here today after a long illness at the age of 77. Mr. Rabinoff entered social work in 1914 after graduating from City College and completing studies at the New York School of Social Work. He served for 15 years as executive director of the Bureau of Social Research and as associate executive director of its successor agency, the CJFWF, now the national association of Jewish Federations of the United States and Canada. Mr. Rabinoff also served for a time with UNRRA, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency as deputy director of its European regional office in London. Memorial services will be held Feb. 15 at East End Temple at 1 p.m.