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Rep. Ford Says U.S. Will Take All Necessary Steps In The Interest Of Mideast Peace

NEW YORK, Feb. 15 (JTA)--The Republican party leader in Congress declared tonight that the United States will "do everything it can in the interest of peace and stability in the Middle East" and "will do more than talk." In a speech prepared for delivery tonight at the America-Israel friendship dinner of Bnai Zion, Rep. Gerald Ford, House minority leader and chief administration spokesman in Congress, affirmed that "The United States is prepared to supply the military equipment necessary for friendly governments such as Israel, to defend themselves."

Stressing the urgency of correct assessment by Israel of American intentions in the Middle East crisis and the need for improved communications between Israel and America, Rep. Ford announced that he had proposed "establishment of a telephone hot-line between Washington and Jerusalem" which, he pointed out "would enable either President Richard Nixon or Prime Minister Golda Meir to clarify any misunderstanding." The hot-line, the Republican leader said, "would also be useful if new factors developed that threatened a dangerous escalation or spreading of the conflict. 'Israel,' he said, "would have the reassurance of instantaneous communication with the President. The President could act instantly, in some unforeseen crisis, by contacting Mrs. Meir."

(In Washington, observers suggested that Mr. Ford would not have made reference to a hot-line proposal without previous clearance with the White House. They noted, too, that establishment of such a line would mark an official recognition by the United States of Jerusalem as the official seat of the Israeli Government.)

U.S. Working For Peace In The Middle East But Not At The Expense Of Israel

In discussing the supply of arms to Israel, Rep. Ford said the administration "would, of course, prefer restraint in the shipment of arms into this troubled area. But we are aware of what other major powers are doing. We are maintaining a very careful vigilance. We will not hesitate to take the steps required." The United States, he declared, is "deeply engaged in trying to help the people of the Middle East find peace. But we will not do this at the expense of Israel. Indeed, we will not do this at the expense of any nation's legitimate interests. No peace agreement will be worth the paper it is written on if either side ends up cheated and bent on violent redress as soon as it has adequate power." He pledged that "this administration is not going to negotiate the peace in the Middle East. There is no question of our negotiating away the basic rights and interest of the nations now at war. They must negotiate the peace themselves." He said that "the Soviet Union or Egypt or anyone else would be badly misguided to conclude that the United States is going to high-pressure Israel into unilateral withdrawal."

The Republican leader sharply condemned the French decision to provide Mirage jet fighters to Libya, pointing out that "the huge new infusion of arms into a hotbed of contention does not help reduce violence or fatalities." The issue, he indicated, would figure largely in talks in Washington during President Georges Pompidou's forthcoming visit. Rep. Ford disclosed that the administration currently is "looking into the broader question of the Mediterranean, the mission of the U.S. Sixth Fleet, and related factors." He declared that "we do not want a confrontation with the Soviet Union or anyone else. But we have commitments in the Mediterranean and the right to maintain military forces there."

The 1600 communal, civic and Zionist leaders at the meeting were read messages from President Nixon, Prime Minister Golda Meir and Foreign Minister Abba Eban, all of whom lauded Dr. Harris J. Levine of New York, who won the Bnai Zion America-Israel Friendship Award. Dr. Levine has served as President of the Jewish National Fund of America from 1950 to 1960 and as Chairman of the Bnai Zion Home for Retarded Children in Rosh Ha'ayin, Israel and the Bnai Zion America-Israel Friendship House in New York.

Israeli Planes Blast Egyptian Military Targets For Four Hours And Return Safely

TEL AVIV, Feb. 15 (JTA)--Israel Air Force jets blasted Egyptian military positions in the northern section of the Suez Canal zone for four hours today and returned safely to their bases. A two-and-a-half hour attack beginning at noon local time struck at artillery batteries and anti-aircraft gun positions in the target area. The planes hit the same targets again in a 90-minute evening raid that began at 6:45 p.m. local time.

Israeli anti-aircraft gunners shot down an Egyptian plane in a raid over the central section of the canal zone Friday. The aircraft, believed to be a Soviet-built Sukhoi-7 fighter-bomber, exploded in midair. There were no casualties or damage caused by the Egyptian attack, a military spokesman said. But two Israeli soldiers were wounded in an exchange of fire with Egyptian forces across the waterway Friday. Military sources reported that two Arab saboteurs were killed in clashes with Israel Army patrols during the past 24 hours, one of them near Timneh in the Arava region of the Negev and the other in the Golan Heights. There were no casualties on the Israeli side. Three local Arabs were killed in the Gaza Strip Friday during the pursuit of suspected terrorists.

Israeli Bombing Of Civilian Factory Produces World Wide Reactions

UNITED NATIONS, N.Y., Feb. 15 (JTA)---The bombing of a civilian metal plant in Egypt by Israeli jets with a heavy loss of life last Thursday has stirred new efforts to defuse the worsening Middle East crisis. Israel called the bombing a "regrettable error" and stressed that its policy was to strike only at military targets in response to Egypt's declared war of attrition. In Cairo mobs shouted in the streets for "revenge in blood." United Nations Secretary General U Thant is expected to confer tomorrow with Lt. Gen. Odd Bull, chief of the UN cease-fire observers corps in the Mideast. Gen. Bull was called to UN headquarters for "urgent consultations" in view of what he described as "a virtually complete breakdown of the cease-fire" in the Suez Canal zone. Mr. Thant conferred separately Friday with United States UN Ambassador Charles Yost and the Soviet Ambassador Jakob Malik on the Mideast situation.

Acting Secretary of State Elliot L. Richardson summoned Israel's Ambassador Yitzhak Rabin to the State Department Friday to convey the U.S. Government's sharp protest against the Israeli air raid. Ambassador Rabin said after his meeting with Mr. Richardson that his talk covered the bombing raid and other aspects of the Middle East situation. He reiterated Israel's position that it would observe the cease-fire provided the Arabs agreed to do likewise. American proposals that the Four Powers undertake immediate efforts to restore the cease-fire elicited no immediate response from the UN representatives of the Soviet Union, Britain and France at last week's Big Four meeting, the 26th that the Big Powers have held on the Mideast since last April. They said merely that they would inform their governments. American officials expressed "disappointment" over the lack of a more positive reaction.

In Washington there was speculation this weekend that the bombing would delay President Richard M. Nixon's decision on Israel's request for more Phantom jets and other American military aid. State Department spokesman Carl Bartsch refused comment. Mr. Nixon said at his last press conference Jan. 30 that he would announce his decision on Israel's arms request within 30 days. Reports from Jerusalem today said that Israel expects the U.S. to agree to deliver more Phantom and Skyhawk jets despite the bombing raid. The sources said Israeli Government officials dismissed the notion that the raid would cause any delay. They believed that the bombing of the Egyptian factory was a passing incident that would have no long term affect on American policy in the Mideast. Pope Paul VI meanwhile has sent condolences to the Egyptian Government over the death of 70 civilian workers in the Israeli raid. Archbishop Agostino Casaroli, Vatican Secretary of the Church Public Affairs Council, summoned the Egyptian Ambassador Abdel Halim Makhyoum to inform him of the Pope's sorrow over the bloodshed.

Israel Condemned By World Press; Some Accept Israel's View That It Was Honest Mistake

(The world press universally condemned the bombing of the Egyptian metal plant which cost that country its heaviest civilian casualties since the June, 1967 Six-Day War. Some newspapers however accepted Israel's contention that it was an honest mistake. Others expressed doubts that it wasn't deliberate. The New York Times, in an editorial Saturday, called it an "inexcusable perversion of Israel's indisputable right to respond to President Nasser's 'war of attrition.'" The paper said that "Although Israeli authorities blame a 'technical error,' some such tragic incident was an inevitable consequence of Israel's rash policy of attacking military targets close to the crowded Egyptian capital. These attacks are too hazardous to continue.")

(In London Friday, British Foreign Secretary Michael Stewart issued a statement deploring the air raid. "Events of this kind make it all the more necessary to reduce the scale of fighting" in the Mideast, he said. It was "especially regrettable," he said, that "as so often in the past, the use of violence has brought in its train losses of civilian lives." Mr. Stewart said the British Government was giving "urgent consideration" to a U.S. proposal that the Big Four powers issue a joint appeal for restoration of the cease fire.)

(The Sunday Observer of London said the heavy loss of civilian lives from the Israeli raid, whether intended or not, marked a serious stage in the escalation of Mideast warfare. The paper said it would "impose severe pressures on Nasser to retaliate in kind, even at suicidal cost." Rome newspapers today were inclined to accept Israel's acknowledgment of an error in the bombing, except for the Communist press. Most newspapers referred to Israel's efforts in the past to avoid hitting civilian centers. But the news agency Ansa carried a dispatch from its Cairo correspondent noting that the metal works was bombed with such precision as to cast doubts on Israel's assertion that it was a mistake.)

Most newspapers took the position that Israel's warning to Egypt that there were at least three live bombs in the metal plant wreckage timed to go off within 24 hours after the raid was proof of the genuineness of Israel's claim that the plant was hit by accident. The warning, regarded as unprecedented in warfare, was issued by Defense Minister Moshe Dayan within hours after the raid. He said the information was gleaned from returning pilots and asked the International Red Cross and the UN cease-fire observers corps to advise Egyptian authorities to search out the bombs and defuse them to avoid further loss of life.

Israelis See Nothing New In Scheduled Meeting Between U Thant And Jarring

JERUSALEM, Feb. 15 (JTA)--Israeli diplomatic circles attach no particular significance to this week's meeting between United Nations Secretary General U Thant and his special Mideast peace emissary, Ambassador Gunnar V. Jarring. Dr. Jarring returned to his post as Sweden's Ambassador in Moscow last spring when the Four Powers commenced their deliberations on the Mideast. Mr. Thant announced on Friday that he would stop over in Moscow on his way to Burma Tuesday to confer with Dr. Jarring. Israeli circles said today that Dr. Jarring had intimated to Foreign Minister Abba Eban that he would not resume his peace-seeking mission in the Mideast until the Four Powers end their talks.

Fire Kills Seven Elderly Jews; Pres. Heinemann Denounces Arsonists

MUNICH, Feb. 15 (JTA)--The West German Government has posted a 75,000 mark (\$20,500) reward for information leading to the capture of arsonists responsible for a fire here Friday that took the lives of seven middle aged and elderly Jews. President Gustav Heinemann of the Federal Republic denounced the outrage today. He said he was particularly disgusted because the victims were persons who have suffered so much in the past. Police in all ten West German states and in West Berlin are guarding Jewish community centers, synagogues, schools and kindergartens. The fire gutted a four-story stucco building that housed a community center, an old aged home and a synagogue. Police Commissioner Hans Vogel declared that it was arson. Police discovered a gasoline can in the stairwell of the building. The flames broke out on the top floor and spread swiftly along the wooden corridors and stairs.

After announcing the reward, the highest in post-war German history, Interior Minister Hans Dietrich Genscher flew to Munich where he inspected the burned out building. A 30-man team of Federal and Bavarian State police is investigating the blaze. They are the same team assigned to the case of three Arab terrorists who attacked El Al passengers at Munich Airport last Tuesday, killing one and injuring 23 other persons. According to a report from Amman, Jordan, carried on the West German radio yesterday, the Palestinian terrorist organization that claimed credit for the Munich Airport attack denied any connection with the fire in the Jewish community center. The prevailing opinion here is that the fire was set by Arab agents or by German extremists of the far left or far right.

West German Chancellor Willy Brandt, who is visiting Denmark, pledged that "We will do everything to capture the culprit or culprits." Miximilian Taucher, president of the Jewish community of Bavaria, declared that the outrage was aimed not only at the Jews of Munich but at "all Jewish communities in Germany and throughout the world." Minister Genscher said the Federal Republic would do everything possible to see that Germany does not become "a playground for terrorists." But he saw no connection between the fire and the Arab attack at Munich Airport.

According to the police, two of the victims were survivors of Nazi concentration camps. They were identified as David Jakubowicz, 60, who was born in Czechoslovakia and George Pfau, 63, born in Lemberg, who held German and Israeli nationality. Both men had families in Israel. The other victims were listed as Mrs. Jadwiga Pfau; Regina Becher, 59, a Rumanian-born milliner who held Brazilian nationality; Leopold Gimpel, 50, born in Lemberg and a resident of the United States for several years; Max Blum, 71, an American citizen who worked as a furrier; and Siegfried Offenbacher, 70, a librarian of German and Israeli nationality.

Dutch Government Taking Measures To Protect Eban And Jewish Community From Attacks

AMSTERDAM, Feb. 15 (JTA)-- Israel's Foreign Minister Abba Eban and Mrs. Eban arrived at Schiphol Airport today. The Ebans were welcomed by the Netherlands Foreign Minister Joseph Luns amid strict security precautions taken by the Dutch secret service and airport police. The Royal Dutch constabulary guarded all Jewish-owned buildings here, including the Israel Embassy, against possible Arab terrorist attacks coinciding with Mr. Eban's arrival. Holland is the first stop on the itinerary of Mr. Eban's current visit to four Western European countries. He will visit Belgium, West Germany and Luxembourg. His visit to Bonn will be the first ever by a ranking member of the Israeli Cabinet.

Mr. Eban spoke briefly to reporters at Lydda Airport before taking off this morning. He said the purpose of his tour was to acquaint European leaders with the situation in the Mideast. He observed that Israelis sometimes tend to forget that in addition to the United States Israel has friends in Western Europe. Asked why he omitted France from his itinerary, Mr. Eban said, "It was France that omitted me, not I that have omitted France." He added that there not many points of accord between Israel and France at this time that would make for a friendly visit there.

Protests Continue To Mount Against Arab Terrorist Attack On El Al Airline

TEL AVIV, Feb. 15 (JTA)--Defense Minister Moshe Dayan was at Lydda Airport last night to greet his son, Assaf, who narrowly escaped injury when Arab terrorists attacked a bus load of El Al passengers at Munich Airport last Tuesday. The 24 year-old film actor arrived here from London. All he would say when asked to describe the attack was, "I'm glad its over." (The terrorist assault which took the life of one passenger and wounded 23 others drew world-wide expressions of shock and outrage. At Cambridge, Mass. 520 students and faculty members at Harvard University signed a letter yesterday declaring that they were "provoked and repelled by the murder and maiming of civilians" by Arab terrorists. According to a Harvard instructor, Steve Cohen, copies of the letter were sent to United Nations Secretary U Thant, the U.S. State Department, the West German Embassy in Washington and the International Air Transport Association. The letter stated that "the assassination of defenseless civilians in international airports is an act of war against all humanity and it deserves universal condemnation.")

(In Washington Thursday, acting Secretary of State Elliot L. Richardson declared that the United States cannot "disregard the tragic loss of life and injury to civilians resulting from renewed attacks by terrorists against civilian passengers travelling on international air transport far from the area of conflict." Mr. Richardson's statement on Munich was coupled with one deploring the Israeli bombing of a civilian metal works factory in Egypt with a heavy loss of life last Wednesday.)

(In Bonn Friday leaders of the Christian Democratic Union, the chief opposition party, said they planned to ask Chancellor Willy Brandt in the Bundestag what representations his government has made to the Arab states to prevent the recurrence of such attacks. Jewish students in Munich organized a protest march Friday.)

Rep. Gallagher To Introduce Resolution Calling For Immediate Supply Of Jets To Israel

BAYONNE, N.J., Feb. 15 (JTA)--Rep. Cornelius E. Gallagher, New Jersey Democrat and member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, announced here today that he would introduce a resolution in Congress calling on the administration to supply Skyhawk jets to Israel immediately. The Congressman said his resolution would be introduced in the house tomorrow. He made his announcement in accepting an award from the Bayonne Zionist district in recognition of his services in behalf of American-Israeli relations. The award was in the form of a donation to the Jewish National Fund for the planting of trees in Rep. Gallagher's name.

Gallagher charged that American policy on the Middle East "threatens to draw us into a tragic morass of mixed intentions such as developed in Vietnam." He warned that "unless American policy is clear, convincing and coolly demonstrated in the Middle East, we may be tempting the Arabs and their Soviet advisors to think the unthinkable and move where no free state could ever let them go." He declared that a "policy which leaves no doubt as to where America's interests are aligned in the Middle East" would be administered "by sending arms to Israel when arms are required to counter the arms sent to the Arabs by the Soviet Union." It was for this reason, he said, his resolution would call for shipment of additional jets to Israel during the current year.

Sen. Javits Says U.S. Support For Israel Is Irreversible; U.S. Will Continue Aid

NEW YORK, Feb. 15 (JTA)--Sen. Jacob K. Javits said last night that "it is critically important for the Soviet Union to recognize that United States support of Israel is irreversible and that the United States will continue to afford the aid required for Israel's survival and will not allow the military balance to be tipped against Israel." The New York Republican told the centennial dinner of Hunter College that "an essential first step" in preventing a wider war in the Mideast was restoration of the ceasefire that ended the Six-Day War.

He severely criticized the "seeming detachment of France from the effort to bring peace to the area" and said an immediate American action to provide needed Phantoms and Skyhawks to Israel would be "a far more suitable reply to the French government than threatened street demonstrations against President Pompidou which could be 'counterproductive.'" The Senator again referred to the failure of Big Four and Two Power talks and renewed his proposal that the U.S. take the initiative in convening a regional peace conference. He described the Arab terrorist organizations as a "new major factor complicating the search for peace in the Middle East." He also called the Arab commandos "a greater threat to the Arab states than to Israel."

Sen. Montoya Calls Upon Pres. Nixon To Approve Immediate Sale of Aircraft To Israel

ALBUQUERQUE, New Mexico, Feb. 15 (JTA)--U.S. Senator Joseph M. Montoya called upon President Nixon last night to approve immediate sale of modern military aircraft to Israel, "in as large a quantity as is necessary for her to defend herself." Addressing a bonds for Israel dinner, here, the New Mexico Democrat termed recent statements by Secretary of State William P. Rogers as "catering to dictators such as Nasser and his ilk." He condemned the French government for its ongoing policy of fostering greater tension in the Middle East through aggressive arms sales to Arab states. "Every Israeli who dies from French steel will lie on France's national conscience for a long time to come. I denounce such callous trading in human lives," he declared. Sen. Montoya praised Israel as a staunch friend of the U.S., and declared that "I see no reason why the U.S. must stoop to where she seeks passing favor of Arab dictators who obey Moscow's dictates."

Rabbi Assails Expenditure On Synagogues And Recreation Centers As Obscenity

NEW YORK, Feb. 15 (JTA)--Rabbi Arthur Gilbert, dean of the newly formed Reconstructionist Rabbinical College linked with Temple University in Philadelphia, Pa. called upon the Jewish community "radically to revise their priorities and to enter into dialogue with the new youth culture if Judaism is to fulfill its role in establishing world justice and peace." Addressing an audience of Reconstructionist Jews at the Jewish Congregation of Pacific Palisades, the rabbi asserted, "in an age when we are confronted by the harsh problems of poverty, racism, urban blight and war, the Jewish communities capital expenditure for multi-million dollar synagogue buildings, plush recreational centers and elementary school education is an obscenity." He urged Jewish federations drastically to increase their expenditures for the education of high school and college youth to support graduate Jewish education and to make social action a central function of Jewish religious concern.

Jewish Agency To Hold Memorial Meeting In Honor Of Levi Eshkol

NEW YORK, Feb. 15 (JTA)--A Memorial Meeting in honor of the late Prime Minister Levi Eshkol will be held tomorrow in the Auditorium of the Jewish Agency, sponsored by the Jewish Agency--American Section and the American Zionist Council. It will be attended by representatives of all leading American Jewish organizations. Speakers will be Mrs. Charlotte Jacobson, member of the Executive Committee of the Jewish Agency, Rabbi Israel Miller, Chairman of the American Zionist Council, Yakov Aviad, Acting Consul General of New York and Pinchas Cruso, honorary President of the Labor Zionist Organization of America. Cantor Robert Segal of Congregation B'nai Jeshurun will chant the El Moleh Rachamim.

Yeshiva University's School Of Science Receives \$900,000 From National Science Foundation

NEW YORK, Feb. 15 (JTA)--The National Science Foundation has awarded \$900,000 to the Department of Physics of Yeshiva University's Belfer Graduate School of Science, it was announced by Dr. Samuel Bilkín, President. The three-year grant is the largest ever awarded by the NSF under its Departmental Science Development Program.