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Mrs. Meir To Deliver Major Political Statement Tuesday; Israel's Reply Being Drafted

JERUSALEM, Aug. 2 (JTA)--Premier Golda Meir will deliver a major political statement to the Knesset next Tuesday afternoon it was announced here today by Cabinet secretary Michael Arnon. He did not specify the subject of Mrs. Meir's address but it is considered certain that she will explain her government's decision to accept the latest United States peace initiative for the Middle East. A motion approving government acceptance of the American proposals was adopted by the Cabinet Friday following a week of stormy debate which brought Israel's national unity coalition government closer to collapse than at any time since it was formed on the eve of the June, 1967 war. A special cabinet committee headed by Mrs. Meir went to work last night to draft Israel's official reply to the U.S. proposals. It did not meet today however and further sessions were being held in abeyance pending the outcome of the Cabinet crisis. The Gahal faction (Herut-Liberal alignment) is to vote tomorrow on whether or not to remain in the government in view of the acceptance of the American plan which Gahal has vehemently opposed. All six Gahal ministers attended today's cabinet meeting but no date was set for the next meeting, apparently owing to uncertainty over the coalition's future.

The motion approved by the cabinet Friday--and denounced by Herut leader Menachem Begin--provided that Israel accept the 90-day cease-fire in the Suez Canal zone, a key element of the proposals offered June 19 by Secretary of State William P. Rogers in a last ditch effort to persuade Israel and the Arab states to "stop shooting and start talking." The motion also provides that Israel will name "authorized delegates" to meet with United Nations peace envoy Gunnar V. Jarring who, under the Rogers' plan, will attempt to get negotiations under way between Israel and the Arab states. Sources close to Mrs. Meir's cabinet committee said today that no significance should be attached to the fact that it did not complete the job of drafting an official reply to the U.S. at its first session, held last night in the Prime Minister's office. They said it was never assumed that the drafting committee would accomplish that at its initial meeting. The sources stressed that "no attempt will be made to draft Israel's reply in such a way as to disguise Israel's acceptance of the American peace initiatives or make it less clear." The special cabinet committee consists of, in addition to Mrs. Meir, Deputy Premier Yigal Allon, Foreign Minister Abba Eban, Defense Minister Moshe Dayan, Minister of Justice Yaacov Shimshon Shapiro, Minister of Immigrant Absorption Nathan Peled, Minister of Tourism Moshe Kol, Minister of Religious Affairs Zerach Warhaftig and Minister-Without-Portfolio Israel Galili.

The six minister of Gahal were invited after the vote Friday to participate in the drafting committee. But the offer was turned down. Earlier, the Gahal Knesset faction voted 14-9 to quit the cabinet if the U.S. plan were accepted. Mr. Begin insisted that approval of the U.S. plan would be a "catastrophe" for Israel. Israel's acceptance of the Rogers' plan despite serious misgivings and the likelihood that it will wreck Mrs. Meir's coalition, has been attributed to firm assurances received here from President Richard M. Nixon that the 90-day cease-fire will give no military advantage to Egypt and its Soviet allies. President Nixon also reportedly allayed Israel's fears that the United Nations Security Council's Resolution 242 of Nov. 22, 1967, the basis of the Rogers peace plan, would be interpreted to Israel's disadvantage once negotiations got under way. The newspaper Maariv reported today that Israel received a satisfactory reply from Washington on the question of how the U.S. government would react if the Soviet Union were to try to get the Security Council to re-interpret Resolution 242 in terms going beyond those implied in President Nixon's message to Premier Meir. The U.S. replied that it would "see to it" that no change was made in interpretation of the resolution, Maariv said.

NRP Head, Citizens Urge Gahal To Stay In Cabinet; Split Between Liberal, Herut Wings

JERUSALEM, Aug. 2 (JTA)--Israel's national unity coalition government may yet survive its worst crisis brought about by cabinet approval of the latest United States peace initiative for the Middle East. Informed sources said here today that it still was not a foregone conclusion that the Gahal faction, bitterly opposed to the U.S. plan, would quit the cabinet. Gahal, Israel's second largest political party, is an alignment of the militant right-wing Herut and the Liberal party. Its two executive committees, representing each faction, are scheduled to meet tomorrow to decide on a last minute compromise offered by Premier Golda Meir's Labor Party to avert a cabinet split. The offer would permit Gahal Knesset members to vote against acceptance of the American plan without it constituting a breach of coalition discipline. Gahal's six ministers could, in good conscience, remain in the coalition without violating their principles or their party's policy. Herut leader Menachem Begin has mobilized opposition to the American plan which he has called tantamount to "suicide" for Israel. But political observers said today that when "the moment of truth" arrives, Mr. Begin might be out-voted. The Herut leader has threatened in that case to resign all his party posts.

The split within Gahal is along factional lines. The Liberal wing, headed by Minister-Without-Portfolio Joseph Sapir is believed almost unanimous in wanting to stay in the government. There is also reportedly a strong leaning toward the Liberal point of view within the Herut faction. According to some observers, the Herut wing could be persuaded to remain in the government were it not for Mr. Begin. The latter, who also holds ministerial rank without portfolio is strongly supported in the cabinet by his colleague, Haim Landau. He is supported, but with less enthusiasm reportedly, by Herut's third cabinet member, Minister of Transport Ezer Weizman, a former Air Force general. Gahal sources reported today that Mr. Begin was being visited by deputations of private citizens urging him to

reconsider in the interests of national unity. Dr. Joseph Burg, Minister of Welfare and a leader of the National Religious Party, appealed to Gahal today to stay in the coalition. He claimed that "on any tactical or strategic step Israel takes, it is important that the voice of Gahal be heard." Dr. Burg also called on American Jews to "make their voices heard at this crucial time for the State of Israel." He didn't make it clear whether he was asking them to urge Gahal to stay in the cabinet.

View From Washington: First Step For Mideast Peace But Still Long Way Toward Solution

WASHINGTON, Aug. 2 (JTA)—Official Washington indicated today that it believes the first small step has been taken toward an eventual peaceful settlement of the Middle East conflict. The approval by Israel's Cabinet on Friday of Secretary of State William P. Rogers' proposals for a 90-day cease-fire and negotiations under the aegis of United Nations peace envoy Gunnar V. Jarring, was greeted here with a sense of relief that the first obstacle to peace may have been overcome although the final goal remains as distant and elusive as ever. The Rogers' proposals were accepted earlier by Egypt and Jordan with apparently firm backing from the Soviet Union. The U.S. government is now awaiting Israel's official reply, the text of which is being drafted in Jerusalem. It is not expected to be received here however before Wednesday. President Nixon set the tone of cautious optimism at a press briefing Friday at the San Clemente summer White House. Emerging from a two-and-a-half hour meeting with Secretary Rogers, Mr. Nixon announced Israel's acceptance. But he warned, "We have a long way to go. This is only a first step." In effect, President Nixon was saying that the American initiative has only set the stage for Arab-Israeli negotiations, not arranged a settlement itself.

The developments so far are regarded as a personal triumph for Secretary Rogers and his credo of "quiet diplomacy." It was Mr. Rogers' proposals to Israel and the Arab states, coupled with a plea to "stop shooting and start talking" that is credited with having breached the Mideast impasse for the first time since the June, 1967 war. The Nixon administration apparently succeeded in winning Soviet cooperation through firm warnings to Moscow of the disastrous consequences of a confrontation. Jerusalem was apparently satisfied with American assurances that the cease-fire would not be used to expand Soviet SAM-2 and SAM-3 missile sites in the area. The U.S. assurances were said to have been based on private messages from Moscow and Cairo. Twice in his press briefing, Mr. Nixon stressed that the cease-fire would not be used by either side to gain military advantage.

Nixon Reassures Israel There Will Be Military Standstill; Senators Hail Israel's Decision

On Thursday night, President Nixon, in a late evening news conference televised from Los Angeles, reassured Israel that accepting the U.S. peace plan posed no danger that "by entering negotiations her position might be compromised or jeopardized in that period." In an effort to allay Israel's fears that the 90-day cease-fire would be used by Egypt and the Soviet Union to build up their military forces, Pres. Nixon asserted that one of the conditions of the U.S. plan was that "there will be a military standstill" during the cease-fire period. He added: "I indicated on July 1 in a television broadcast... the position of this government insofar as Israel's security is concerned and our commitment to maintain the balance of power in the Mideast." (New York Times correspondent Hedrick Smith said today that Israel was told by the U.S. in June that its request for more Phantom jets was being held in abeyance until the cease-fire has run its course.)

Israel's acceptance of the Rogers proposals was hailed by two Senate leaders. Democratic Majority Leader Mike Mansfield expressed gratification because the proposals offered an opening now and possible opportunity later. He added, however, that Israel had little choice but to accept. The Montana Democrat used the word "squeezed" to describe Israel's position, an apparent reference to its reliance on the Nixon administration's willingness to provide Israel with more combat jets. Sen. Jacob K. Javits, of New York, a ranking Republican member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said Friday that Israel's move "opens the door to Mideast peace." He said that President Nixon's statement that there would be no military build-up in Egypt during the cease-fire had made the difference in Israel's acceptance. He said, "I feel that the backing given to President Nixon's basic Mideast policy declaration of July 1 by 71 senators... was a vital element in enabling the President to give these assurances." Sen. Javits was one of 10 senators who wrote and circulated the letter supporting President Nixon. With Israel's official acceptance still awaited, there was no indication here when the 90-day cease-fire would be put into effect. Secretary Rogers originally proposed the period July 1 - Oct. 1. U.S. officials reportedly plan a new round of talks in Cairo, Amman and Jerusalem, possibly beginning this week. They will concentrate on winning the three governments' approval of previously outlined detailed procedures for enforcing the cease-fire.

Iraq, Algeria, Syria Continue To Oppose Peace Plan; Pravda Assails Iraq For Its Stand

LONDON, Aug. 2 (JTA)—A split in the Arab world continued to widen today over acceptance of the U.S. peace proposals. Algeria announced at the last minute that it would not participate in a meeting of Arab foreign ministers and defense chiefs scheduled to open tonight in Tripoli, Libya. Earlier Algeria indicated that it would send a delegation. Iraq and Syria, which also had planned to participate declared later that they would not. The meeting was called to create Arab unity behind Egyptian diplomatic efforts. President Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt and King Hussein of Jordan have accepted the American peace initiative. Iraq is vehemently opposed to a peaceful settlement with Israel. Syria alone among the 1967 combatants has refused to accept the United Nations Security Council's Nov. 22, 1967 resolution. Both Syria and Iraq are governed by militant leftwing Baathist parties. In Jordan, where the guerrillas are strongest and most influential, Foreign Minister Anton Attallah put a damper on peace efforts Friday when Israel's acceptance of the American initiative was announced. He said the U.S. peace effort was "still-born" because of Israel's reply.

According to Mr. Attallah, the tone of Israel's response indicated that it was conditional and that Israel did not intend to withdraw from the Arab territories it occupied in the June, 1967 war. "If this is what is meant by the Israeli announcement, this attitude will create great difficulties in the way of achieving a just peace in the Middle East," the Jordanian official said. Iraq's ruling Baath party was roundly denounced yesterday by the Soviet Union for its opposition to Pres. Nasser's acceptance of the U.S. plan. An editorial in Pravda, the official Soviet Communist Party newspaper, termed this opposition as incomprehensible and as leading to a weakening of the Arab effort to regain territory occupied by Israel. Diplomats here expressed belief that the Soviet Union, trying to shore up a faltering economy at home and fearful of a confrontation with the U.S., is seeking to rally support for Pres. Nasser among the Arab states. A Soviet foreign affairs weekly, Za Rubezhom, stated the money spent on military budgets could be better used for economic and cultural construction. Due to this, the weekly state, "progressive states" are seeking a peaceful settlement. It was also critical of those Palestinians who insist that a solution of the Palestine refugee problem requires the elimination of Israel.

Jarring Returning To UN To Confer With Thant, Big Four And Israeli, Arab Ambassadors

UNITED NATIONS, Aug. 2 (JTA)--Ambassador Gunnar V. Jarring, the United Nations special Middle East peace envoy, is scheduled to arrive here tonight to begin consultations with Secretary General U Thant "and others on the current situation and on possible next steps" toward an Israeli-Arab settlement, it was announced here. The "others" referred to in the announcement by the Secretary General's office was believed to refer to the Big Four ambassadors and the ambassadors of Israel, Egypt and Jordan. A UN spokesman said Dr. Jarring's length of stay in New York and his course of action in the immediate future "will be determined during his talks here." Possible mediation sites for his talks include New York, Geneva, and Nicosia. The Big Four ambassadors, who have been working on a Mideast peace formula since April 1969, are scheduled to meet next Wednesday. Sources here said they would discuss the acceptance of the U.S. peace plan by Israel, Egypt and Jordan and which has also been approved by the Soviet Union, and report the results of their deliberation to Mr. Thant. In addition, sources observed, the Big Four could also be expected to seek agreement among themselves on details of carrying out the 90-day cease-fire truce.

The Soviet Union and France have reportedly discussed a possible Big Four draft statement recognizing the responses by the three Mideast nations to the U.S. proposals. Although the statement would be couched in general terms, it would, observers say, be sufficient for Mr. Thant to refer it formally to the Security Council. Mr. Thant summoned Dr. Jarring from his vacation home in Viken, Sweden, on Friday after Israel announced it would appoint a representative to confer with the Swedish ambassador. Last Wednesday, UN Under-Secretary Dr. Ralph J. Bunche said the UN stands ready to do "whatever is necessary for peace keeping and observance of the cease-fire" and will "deliver without delay." One of the first UN actions, Dr. Bunche stated, would be the reestablishment of the eight observation posts along the Suez Canal - four on each side - that had been destroyed or damaged by Egyptian and Israeli artillery fire. There are currently 10 observation posts - five on each side of the Canal - staffed by 94 members of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO). Maj. Gen. Ensio Siilasvuo of Finland, who replaced Gen. Odd Bull as chief of the UNTSO forces yesterday, discussed the possibility of beefing up the UNTSO forces during his visit to the UN last week. Strengthening the UNTSO force is required to make certain that the 90-day cease-fire truce is not used for reinforcing either the Israeli or the Arabs in their military weaponry.

Israeli Jets Hit Egyptian Targets, Blast Jordanian Positions Facing Beisan Valley

TEL AVIV, Aug. 2 (JTA)--Israeli Air Force jets attacked Egyptian military targets in the Suez Canal zone this morning and returned safely to their bases. Israeli jets also blasted Jordanian positions facing the Beisan valley following last night's Katyusha rocket attack on Beisan township in which two young children and a pregnant mother were slightly injured. The attack, mounted from Jordanian territory with the aid of Jordanian Army regulars, damaged an apartment house but none of the occupants were hurt. An Israeli family of three was injured by a hand grenade explosion in the Gaza market place today. The family, a father, mother and child, came from Rishon LeZion to shop and were parking their car when the grenade was thrown. A local resident of Gaza was also injured. Police have detained a number of suspects. Last night's attack on Beisan township was one of the heaviest in recent months. The injured children were identified as Zipora Israeli, six, and her three year-old brother, Avi, who were hit by shell fragments as they were entering a bomb shelter. The pregnant woman suffered a slight concussion when a shell exploded near her as she was on her way to a bomb shelter. Her name was not given.

An Israel Army civilian employee was wounded Saturday during an exchange of fire with Egyptian forces in the Suez Canal zone. Several Katyusha rockets were fired Saturday night at Shaar Hagolan settlement but caused no casualties. A 20-year-old Israeli soldier, Haim Ziv of Jerusalem, was killed Thursday in an exchange of Israeli-Egyptian fire along the Suez Canal and Ovadia Shaul, also 20, of Haifa, died on Thursday of wounds suffered in a similar exchange six months ago. Another soldier, whose name was not disclosed, was injured Thursday. The Army reported today a sharp drop in military and civilian casualties during July compared to the previous month. A total of ten soldiers and four civilians were killed as a result of enemy activity on all fronts compared to 43 soldiers and civilians killed during June. The Suez Canal front continued to account for the heaviest casualties with six soldiers killed and 40 wounded between July 1-31. Two soldiers and four civilians were killed at El Hamma on the Jordanian front. One soldier was killed and one was wounded on the Syrian front. One soldier was killed and four soldiers and four civilians were wounded in the Gaza strip. On the Lebanese front, 11 soldiers and five civilians were wounded but no fatalities were reported during July.

Agudath Israel Accuses PEARL Of Die-Hard Opposition To Jewish Religious Education

NEW YORK, Aug. 2 (JTA)--A charge that the ten Jewish groups which have joined the Committee for Public Education and Religious Liberty (PEARL) are "die-hard opponents of Jewish all-day religious education" was leveled by Agudath Israel of America, national Orthodox Jewish movement which advocates government support of non-public schools. This accusation was made by the executive president of Agudath Israel, Rabbi Morris Sherer, after the announcement that PEARL had filed a suit on Thursday morning against Governor Nelson Rockefeller and other New York State officials challenging the constitutionality of the law recently enacted by the State Legislature providing for the reimbursement to non-public schools of their expenses for certain State-mandated services. Agudath Israel has estimated that the Jewish all-day schools (Yeshivos) in New York State will receive \$1 1/2 million from this mandated services act. In a statement issued by Rabbi Sherer after the suit was filed by PEARL, the Orthodox Jewish leader declared:

"For years, certain Jewish organizations spearheaded by the American Jewish Congress have brought disgrace to the Jewish name by their highly-publicized harassment of the non-public religious schools in their efforts to obtain government support for their secular studies programs. The court trials which they have initiated against local and federal governments, as well as their widely-publicized denunciations of the efforts of the religious schools of all faiths to obtain their fair share of the tax dollar, have created a false image of the American Jew fighting for secularism versus religion." Noting that these Jewish groups refuse to place Jewish educational interests above the "outworn and extreme application of the church-state separation dogma," Rabbi Sherer charged that PEARL and "its Jewish partners are not in tune with the changing climate in America, which now has recognized that the government does indeed have specific responsibilities to the non-public schools." Expressing confidence that the courts will uphold the constitutionality of the Mandated Services Law, Rabbi Sherer declared: "The American public must know that these groups do not speak for the Jewish citizens of our land on this subject."

Meanwhile, the AJCongress released this weekend a survey of 60 additional cases affecting separation of church and state or religious freedom that were pending in State and Federal courts as of June 30. According to the survey, 27 cases involve public aid to church-related educational institutions, two of which will be heard this fall by the United States Supreme Court. Joseph B. Robinson, general counsel of the AJCongress, noted that the court will have a "clear opportunity to deal broadly in the coming term with the constitutionality of public aid to church-affiliated schools." Mr. Robinson added that while the court has not hastened to write any new law in this area it has "frequently disposed of cases on narrow or even technical grounds."

Brooklyn Synagogue Almost Destroyed By Fire; Report Heavy Smell Of Gasoline At Scene

NEW YORK, Aug. 2 (JTA)--A Brooklyn synagogue, Congregation Kesser Torah, was nearly destroyed by fire early yesterday. A spokesman for the Fire Department said the blaze was not of suspicious origin despite earlier reports at the scene referring to a "heavy smell of gasoline." The two-alarm fire, which began shortly after midnight, was brought under control some 45 minutes later. Damage due to the fire included charring of prayer books. Officials of the congregation could not be reached for immediate comment. On July 20, the Crown Heights Jewish Community Council in Brooklyn, and a nearby two-family residence, was firebombed. The interior of the Council - a storefront operation - was heavily damaged.

Floridians Favor More U.S. Military Aid To Israel; Face-To-Face Israeli-Arab Talks

WASHINGTON, Aug. 2 (JTA)--Rep. J. Herbert Burke, Republican of Florida, has reported that a poll of his district taken earlier this year showed 74.2 percent of his constituents favored an increase in U.S. military assistance to Israel; 58.2 percent were against the reduction of U.S. arms aid to Israel; and most of the district was in favor of anything that might bring peace, or at least lessening of U.S. involvement, but not at the expense of U.S. military support of Israel. Rep. Burke said 91.9 percent of his district voted "yes" on whether there should be face-to-face negotiations between the Arabs and Israel, and a little more than two-thirds of the district voted in favor of negotiations for a peace settlement under the direction of the Four Powers. Slightly more than 75 percent voted for U.S. neutrality in the Arab-Israeli dispute. A further breakdown of the vote showed that more Republicans than Democrats were against reduction of U.S. assistance to Israel, but more Democrats than Republicans were for increased U.S. military assistance to Israel.

American Jews Urged To Stop Running But To Continue Building Neighborhoods

TEL AVIV, Aug. 2 (JTA)--The executive director of the Crown Heights Community Council of Brooklyn, N.Y. called upon American Jews to stop running but to continue building and strengthening their neighborhoods. David Farber, presently honeymooning in Israel, said American Jewry and Israelis share the same problem: both wish to exist and live harmonious life together with their neighbors. This is not possible for Israel, he said, because of the Arab leaders who exploit their own people. In America, the problems are caused by those few who wish to use the phrase "discrimination and exploitation" for their own personal needs at the expense of their own people, Mr. Farber stated. He said American Jews should emulate their Israeli brethren. "On the one hand, we should endeavor to find the right formula for peaceful coexistence and harmony between the different kinds of people. On the other hand, we should resist with all our determination any effort to encourage us to run away." Mr. Farber sent a cable to New York's Mayor John V. Lindsay expressing his dismay at the fire-bombing of his office in Crown Heights on July 20. No arrests have been made and the police investigation is continuing.