

JTA daily news bulletin

Published by Jewish Telegraphic Agency, Inc. 660 First Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016

Contents copyright: Republication only by previous arrangement.

Vol. XXXVIII - Fifty-Fourth Year

Wednesday, January 6, 1971

No. 3

Talks Officially Open; Thant Reports To Security Council, Hopes Talks Will Be Fruitful

UNITED NATIONS, N.Y., Jan. 5 (JTA)--Ambassador Gunnar V. Jarring made it official today when he announced through a spokesman that the Middle East peace talks under his auspices had "resumed" this morning--after a 131-day delay. To mark the occasion, Dr. Jarring broke from practice and disclosed his agenda for the day: a morning meeting with Israeli Ambassador Yosef Tekoah and an afternoon meeting with Egyptian Ambassador Mohamed H. el-Zayyat. Tekoah emerged from his half-hour conference and declined to say anything. No appointments were set today with a Jordanian representative. Secretary General Thant was scheduled to meet with Dr. Zayyat late this afternoon. Thant's eagerly awaited report on Mideast peace progress made its appearance on schedule today. It is a 40-page document in which the Secretary General's most substantial comments are that "in the last few days it has become possible to arrange for the resumption of the discussions" and that "I hope that these resumed discussions will be fruitful."

The bulk of the report to the Security Council consists of a chronology of Dr. Jarring's activities from Dec. 9, 1967, through yesterday; the major Mideast parties' replies to 14 questions posed by Dr. Jarring in March, 1969, dealing with the countries' positions on the various provisions of Security Council Resolution 242 of Nov. 22, 1967; the parties' responses to Dr. Jarring's Nov. 18, 1970, invitation to resume negotiations; and a re-statement of the text of Resolution 242. (In Jerusalem today, political circles cautioned that the replies to Dr. Jarring's queries were made 21 months ago and should be viewed in that context.) Thant said through a spokesman today that his hour-long consultation here yesterday, evening with Secretary of State William P. Rogers had been "useful"--the word he usually employs in lieu of specific comment. Rogers--joined by Assistant Secretary Joseph J. Sisco and UN Ambassador Charles W. Yost--also conferred for 90 minutes yesterday with Dr. Jarring. Rogers told newsmen afterwards that "the emphasis should be on the parties themselves," and that for its part the United States continued to favor "quiet diplomacy."

Eban Welcomes Nixon's Pledge For Mideast Balance; Nixon Key To Peace In Big Four

(In Jerusalem, Foreign Minister Abba Eban welcomed President Nixon's reaffirmation last night of American intentions to maintain the Mideast military balance and Nixon's call on the Soviet Union to start waging peace before the Mideast blows up. Other Israeli officials noted that Nixon made no mention of the Dec. 9, 1969 Rogers plan--anathema to Israel--for virtually total withdrawal from the occupied territories.) In a one-hour, nationally televised, informal "live" interview in Washington, D.C., Nixon said a formal alliance with Israel was not "either necessary or...in the interest of peace," but declared: "(W)hat we are doing for Israel is so well known to them--and also, incidentally, it's quite well known to their neighbors--that it provides the balance that is needed...We have made it clear time and again that we would help to maintain the balance of power in the area so that Israel would not be in a position that its neighbors could overwhelm them with their superior manpower or with the forces that they got from the Soviet Union."

Nixon said the next few months would be "critical" for the Mideast, and said he hoped "we may get these talks off dead center, make some progress toward a live-and-let-live attitude: Not progress that's going to bring a situation where the Israelis and their neighbors are going to like each other--that isn't ever going to happen, perhaps--but where they will live with each other, where they won't be fighting each other." He added that "to speculate about what's going to happen in the event that Israel is going to go down the tube would only tend to inflame the situation with Israel's neighbors, and I won't do it." The President said further that "the key to peace is in the hands of...the four major powers"--a remark that appeared to contradict Secretary Rogers' comment here at about the same time that the emphasis should be on the Mideast parties. "If the Soviet Union does not play a conciliatory peace-making role," Nixon went on, "there's no chance for peace in the Mideast." At another point he said a U.S.-Soviet summit meeting now would be in nobody's interest and would "create a false sense of security."

U.S. Condemns Soviet Threat Against U.S. Personnel; Rebukes Extremist Groups Here

WASHINGTON, Jan. 5 (JTA)--The United States government condemned today a Soviet diplomatic note accusing U.S. authorities of conniving in acts of violence by "Zionist extremists" against Soviet personnel and property in this country and threatening retaliation against American citizens in Russia. The note was delivered to Acting Secretary of State, U. Alexis Johnson by Soviet Ambassador Anatoly F. Dobrynin yesterday. Its text was broadcast by Moscow radio last night. State Department spokesman Robert J. McCloskey told newsmen today that Johnson totally rejected the allegation of connivance and warned the Russians that they were "raising the spectre of officially inspired retaliation" against Americans in the Soviet Union and that "such action by the Soviet government would indeed be serious and we consider such a threat most disturbing." McCloskey said that Johnson's reply was oral and that no written reply was contemplated. However, he said, the Acting Secretary of States made it clear that the U.S. deplores and condemns acts of violence against Soviet institutions and groups in the U.S. and has "taken enforceable steps which we hope will be effective against such acts of violence." Sources close to the State Department said the sharp condemnation of the Soviet threat was prompted by the fact that American citizens and installations were involved. McCloskey later told newsmen that "we are deeply concerned and shocked by the open threat, possible retaliation against American establishments in the Soviet Union."

The Soviet note claimed that Zionist extremists not only hamper the normal functioning of Soviet offices in the U.S. and jeopardize the U.S.-Soviet cultural exchange program, but also openly threaten Soviet

diplomats and other Soviet citizens with physical violence. "The American authorities, however, contrary to their promises to take necessary measures, are in fact continuing to connive in these criminal actions," the note charged. It stressed that if the U.S. does not take necessary action to create normal conditions for Soviet organizations and groups traveling in this country, "it cannot expect the guarantee of such conditions for American organizations or offices in the Soviet Union." The American reply, while reflecting anger over the Soviet threat, also constituted the first sharp rebuke at governmental level to persons and groups that have engaged in violent actions or threats against Soviet institutions and groups in the U.S. McCloskey emphasized that the majority of U.S. citizens "reject the actions of small extremist groups" and said the government was working in cooperation with local police to prevent them. He noted the arrests of 15 persons in New York City in connection with violent demonstrations near the Soviet UN Mission. He stressed however, that the majority of demonstrations were peaceful and that the U.S. was in no way opposed to peaceful demonstrations.

McCloskey disclosed that two U.S. Embassy officials in Moscow received anonymous threatening telephone calls in recent weeks. He said it was not clear whether the threats were against the individuals or against the Embassy but the phone calls could not have been made without the knowledge of Soviet authorities because the Embassy numbers are unlisted. He said the U.S. expects Soviet authorities to "take appropriate action to protect U.S. persons and institutions in the Soviet Union." During a question period, McCloskey said the groups involved in violent actions against Soviet premises ranged in numbers from about a dozen to no more than 100. In reply to questions, he said that members of the Jewish Defense League were involved in the violent demonstrations but couldn't say whether any JDL members were among those arrested. The JDL's chairman, Rabbi Meir Kahane, implied a physical threat when he declared at an anti-Soviet rally in New York last week, "Two Russians for every Jew." Rabbi Kahane's group and its actions have been denounced by most major Jewish organizations.

Jewish Spokesmen Charge Soviet Threat Ploy To Divert Attention From Internal Policies

NEW YORK, Jan. 5 (JTA)--Jewish spokesmen charged today that the Soviet note warning that it can no longer guarantee the safety of American citizens visiting in the Soviet Union was a political ploy to divert attention away from their anti-Semitic policies and secret trials. Edward D. Moldover, president of the New York City Chapter of the American Jewish Committee told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that "the statement is an obvious smokescreen to try to obscure Russian action against Jews and intellectuals which has already been strongly condemned by world opinion." This latest action, he added, "can only heighten the mood of repression in the USSR and the isolation of its people, and have a most serious effect on the attempts to improve the cultural, economic and travel relationships between the United States and the USSR." Phil Baum, assistant executive director of the American Jewish Congress, also vigorously condemned this "blatant attempt of intimidation." He declared, "The Soviet Union is obviously willing to use any means, no matter how outrageous, to frighten those in this country or in the USSR itself who dare to criticize its anti-Jewish policies." Baum added: "We know of not one Soviet citizen in the U.S. who has been injured or even endangered by anti-Soviet protests in this country. For our part, we will not for one instance be deterred by this organizing or force from continuing our campaign of lawful protest and denunciation against the persecution of Jews in the Soviet Union."

Rabbi Gilbert Klaperman, chairman of the New York Conference on Soviet Jewry, told the JTA that "there has been no threat against Russians in the U.S. and to say that there will be threats against Americans in Russia is completely unrelated to the facts." He claimed that there was no relationship between the Zionist movement and demonstrations against the Leningrad trial which was "a reaction by humane and compassionate people throughout the world against Russian repression." The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith declared that the Soviet note is a "political ploy to cover their embarrassment rather than their fears for Russians in America." The embarrassment stems, according to Seymour Graubard, national chairman of the League, from the U.S. invitation to a group of Soviet scientists to attend the trial of Angela Davis and not from the widespread protests against the conviction of the Leningrad 11. "The difference between our two countries," he said, "is so evident. The United States holds public and open trials. The Soviets conduct their trials behind locked doors and in secret. There is no question of a threat to the safety of any visitor in the U.S."

Rabbi Arthur Schneier, of the Park East Synagogue in New York who is president of the Appeal for Conscience Foundation, told the JTA that the Soviet note "must be construed as a deliberate attempt to reduce the influx of Americans" who have been visiting the Soviet Union in rising numbers in the last few years, "among them many Jews." American residents in Moscow are estimated at several hundred businessmen, students and cultural exchange personnel in addition to the U.S. diplomatic mission. Glenn Richter, national coordinator for the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry, told the JTA that Moscow's note was "a typical Soviet over-reaction, using threats instead of dealing with the problem." He claimed that it was evidence of "Soviet sensitivity to protests on Soviet Jewry." Bertram Zwebel, general counsel of the Jewish Defense League, said this was the latest example of "Soviet disregard of minimal human standards of conduct." He noted that "any attacks upon American citizens in the Soviet Union can and will be considered acts sanctioned and directed by the Soviet government itself, while any possible 'attacks' that have been launched against Russian officials in the U.S. were carried out on the initiative of individuals, and certainly not under the supervision and urging of the American government."

Rallies in South Africa Protest Oppression Of Soviet Jews; Bomb Scare At One Rally

JOHANNESBURG, Jan. 5 (JTA)--Several massive meetings, sponsored by the South African Board of Deputies and the Zionist Federation, were held today to protest oppression of Soviet Jews. Judge Israel Maisels, chairman of the South African Zionist Federation, and Israeli Consul General Itzhak Unna, addressing a rally here, described the valiant fight of Soviet Jews to secure their fundamental rights, and Israel's efforts to mobilize world opinion to intercede with Soviet leaders. They said the commutation of death sentences imposed on two of the defendants had not changed the situation. In Durban, an anonymous phone threat placed to local police, warned that a bomb was planted in the hall where a Soviet Jewry rally was scheduled. Police searched the premises and found no trace of any explosives but the meeting was held in an adjoining area.

Pompidou, Schumann Halt Resumption Of Talks; Franco-Israeli Relations Seen Improving

PARIS, Jan. 5 (JTA)--President Georges Pompidou told newsmen today that a Middle Eastern peace must be "full and complete" and "must not mean a return to the situation as it existed prior to the Six-Day War, as this would mean the danger of renewed hostilities." He also implied that peace meant a resumption of diplomatic relations between Israel and the Arabs. Later in the day, in speaking to diplomats, Pompidou expressed great satisfaction at the resumption of the Jarring talks following a three-month extension of the cease-fire. But he warned: "This is not enough. What is needed is a change of attitude. All the concerned parties must show a different spirit if the Jarring mission is to succeed." Pompidou, who angered world Jewry last spring when he refused to deliver 50 Mirage jets Israel had already paid for, was especially warm today to Israeli Ambassador Asher Ben-Nathan, telling him "Shalom, shalom--this is my wish to you and Israel."

His statements and attitude today elicited speculation in political circles here of a possible change in France's policy toward Israel. (In Jerusalem, Foreign Minister Abba Eban praised Pompidou's endorsement of a "complete" peace treaty and observed that Franco-Israeli relations had improved somewhat over the past year. Kol Israel reported from Paris tonight that French officials are no longer grim when receiving Israeli diplomats--in fact are noticeably more gracious--and that strongly anti-Israel verbal attacks have apparently been curtailed.) Foreign Minister Maurice Schumann invited Ben-Nathan in for an hour-long talk today, and, while he did not deal with Franco-Israeli ties, he hailed the resumption of the Jarring talks and was less passionate than heretofore on the importance of the Big Four talks in New York.

Avivim, Dovev Shelled; Israeli Soldier, Civilian Injured In Separate Incidents

TEL AVIV, Jan. 5 (JTA)--The Israeli settlements of Avivim and Dovev were shelled from Lebanese territory early today but no casualties or damage was reported. An Israeli soldier was wounded when a grenade was thrown at a military vehicle in the Gaza Strip last night. A civilian truck driver was injured by a mine explosion near El Arish in the northern Sinai. Another incident was reported at the military settlement of Nahal Dikla last night.

Riad Meets With British Leaders; Seen as Effort To Improve Egyptian-British Relations

LONDON, Jan. 5 (JTA)--Egyptian Foreign Minister Mahmoud Riad conferred with Prime Minister Edward Heath, Foreign Secretary Sir Alec Douglas-Home and other British diplomats here today. His visit was regarded by observers here as part of the Egyptian diplomatic offensive in various capitals on the eve of the resumption of the Jarring peace talks. They said the British government was also using the occasion to improve relations with Cairo. Foreign Office circles said the Middle East was the main topic of discussion although Riad is also believed to have pressed Egypt's request for a \$33.4 million export credit to help finance a new oil pipeline from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean, parallel to the Suez Canal. Riad's arrival was delayed by bad weather and his meetings with British officials were telescoped into a single day. He will be visited at his hotel tomorrow morning by Joseph Godber, Minister of State at the Foreign Office.

Riad met with Prime Minister Heath at No. 10 Downing St. and was the guest of Sir Alec at a luncheon in his honor. He came here at the invitation of the British government which was announced last month. Some observers said the invitation was in line with the views expressed by Sir Alec in his Oct. 31 speech in Harrogate in which he outlined his government's stand on the Middle East. In that speech, he called for Israel's withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories with only "minor" border alterations, a proposal almost identical to that advanced by U.S. Secretary of State William P. Rogers in Dec., 1969. Douglas-Home's speech aroused anger in Israel and in pro-Israel circles here. The British government sought to assure the Israelis that there was no change in British policy on the Middle East. But charges persisted today that the British government is bent on "appeasing" Cairo.

Threat Of Renewed Warfare Taken Seriously; Sadat: Soviet Troops Man Missile Sites

JERUSALEM, Jan. 5 (JTA)--Israeli officials "take seriously" President Anwar Sadat's threats of renewed Egyptian warfare against Israel, the Jewish Telegraphic Agency learned today from reliable sources. The sources referred to Sadat's speech yesterday to 15,000 Egyptian farmers in the Nile delta village of Tanta which kicked off a nation-wide campaign to rally the Egyptian masses for possible war when the current cease-fire expires on Feb. 5. Sadat claimed that Egypt was now strong enough to do battle with Israel. "We will go into this war whatever the cost, in defense of our honor, and the enemy will bear the cost," he said. The Israeli sources said the bellicosity of Sadat's speech and his references to electronic warfare indicated that he expects strong Soviet backing should fighting resume in the Suez Canal zone. But they also noted Sadat's statement, that the next six months will be decisive, left the door open for continuation of the cease-fire.

Sadat made the first public disclosure by an Egyptian leader that Soviet troops were manning missile sites in the canal zone. He also disclosed that six of them were killed in an Israeli air raid on a missile base at Dasher 20 miles south of Cairo last year. He did not say when the raid occurred. Cairo radio announced such a raid last Feb. 17. Israeli deep penetration raids over Egypt were halted last March. Sadat's remarks did not make it clear whether Russians still were manning missile sites in Egypt. He said Egypt would do all that was possible to avoid a new war after the cease-fire expires. "We have no objection to talking peace. But the way the other side looks at it, the Arab nation was defeated and part of it was occupied and it must pay the price of this defeat," he said. "We will not behave like a conquered nation because we are not yet finished," he declared. He told the crowd that Israel was spreading propaganda that the Egyptian people were war weary. "Are you fed up?" he asked the farmers. They responded, "No, no. We will fight." Referring to Soviet troops in Egypt, Sadat said that President Roosevelt and Winston Churchill had asked Stalin for help against Hitler in World War II. "This was no shame. But when we ask the Russians to help defend our country it becomes taboo. What is good for them is bad for us."

