

# JTA daily news bulletin

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## Sisco: Interim Mideast Pact Still Possible; U.S. Acting As Mediator in Effort

KIAMESHA LAKE, N.Y. (JTA)—Joseph J. Sisco, Assistant Secretary of State, believes that an interim Suez peace agreement can still be achieved despite Israeli and Egyptian differences because "both sides want such an agreement." Sisco told 2,600 members of B'nai B'rith District 3 at the opening session of the group's 119th annual convention last night that Egypt and Israel consider any interim Suez pact "a practical test for peace" and a first step toward a permanent peace agreement. He added however, that "prospects for an overall peace settlement were not encouraging." He stated that the U.S. government was acting as a mediator at the request of both parties. Sisco reassured the B'nai B'rith leaders that the U.S. stood firmly behind Israel on any agreement reached with the Arab states, again stressing the need for "direct negotiations between the parties regarding any final peace settlement." Responding, Dr. William Wexler, international president of B'nai B'rith, expressed grave concern that the U.S. could not keep any such commitment "because our government is frightened to death, petrified at any confrontation with the Soviet Union," despite the fact that both nations do not desire any such confrontation. Dr. Wexler, who is also the chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations said that in a showdown, "Israel would scream for arms," and the U.S. "would equivocate and rationalize until it was too late."

Referring directly to the proposed Suez agreement, Dr. Wexler said that if the Israelis pulled back from their side of the canal and the Egyptians moved in missiles and troops, like in the recent instance of the SAM-3's, the U.S. would not act quickly enough. "When the time comes for action, our government will give up the State of Israel to gain time rather than face up to a direct confrontation with the Soviet Union," he declared. He praised President Nixon's excellent record on behalf of Israel but said, "Hard facts remain and Israel should not pull back." In his address, Sisco conceded that Israel and the U.S. have been caught off guard by the 15 year Egyptian-Soviet pact. He said, "I don't know whether the treaty makes conditions for peace more difficult. The Soviet presence in Egypt is a reality." He further observed that "Both sides have put forth positive and difficult ideas" but he asserted that the U.S. was not applying pressure to one side or the other. "Both sides must make adjustments," Sisco agreed to a request by Dr. Wexler that he meet Wednesday in the State Department with a delegation from the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

## Two Russian Jews Go On Trial Later This Month; Kroncher Expelled From Institute

LONDON, June 14 (JTA)—Two Russian Jews will go on trial this month in Kharkov and Odessa, Jewish sources reported today. They said the trial of Alexander Gorbach, 34, of Kharkov has been postponed until the end of the month because he has become ill in jail. The sources said that 35-year-old Roiza Palatnik, a librarian arrested in Odessa last Dec., may go on trial tomorrow but as of today this could not be confirmed. They identified her prosecutor as Dotsenko, first name not known. Jewish sources reported that a 36-year-old economist, Allan Kroncher, was expelled from the Plekhanov Institute of Economics and stripped of his academic rank after he applied for a character reference needed to obtain an exit visa for Israel. According to the report Kroncher was told that his appointment to the institute was terminated.

Subsequently, Kroncher's colleagues decided at a meeting to deprive him of his academic title, "candidate of economic sciences," because he was expelled for "misbehavior." The title is equivalent to an MS in economics. According to reports today from Wilna, 70 Jews who staged a sit-in at local Communist Party headquarters on two successive days last week were dispersed by police. No arrests were made. The Jews demanded an audience with a Ministry of Interior official to find out why their applications for exit visas were delayed. The Gorbach case has been reported earlier. He was arrested for the second time last month after serving a 15 day jail term in March for demonstrating outside the chief prosecutor's office in Moscow to protest the trials of Jews. According to some sources he went on a hunger strike and was force-fed with a mixture of milk, butter and sugar. Gorbach was subsequently released and re-arrested on May 7.

## Soviet Naval Power Growing In Mediterranean; U.S. Position Weakening

WASHINGTON, June 14 (JTA)—The growth of Soviet naval power in the Mediterranean is being stressed by high ranking naval officers here who claim that by next year the United States would not be in a position to "face down" the Soviet Union should a new war develop in the Middle East. According to the officers, if a new Mideast war breaks out in mid-1972, they would have to advise the President on purely military grounds to let Israel be overrun by a joint Soviet-Egyptian attack. They said the defense of Israel would be complicated in a severe crisis because it would not involve NATO and America's allies in central and southern Europe might be reluctant to get involved by giving permission for U.S. troop transports and combat planes to cross their countries. The officers made a gloomy assessment of U.S. naval strength in the Mediterranean compared to Russia's by the middle of next year. They noted that the Soviets now have naval bases in Egypt and Syria while the U.S. has lost all of its bases in the Middle East. Moreover, they claimed, the Sixth Fleet was smaller and older than in the past compared to the rapidly growing Soviet naval squadron in the Mediterranean. Ranking naval officers have expressed similar views in closed Congressional hearings over the Navy's \$21.8 billion fiscal 1972 budget. Observers here tend to view their pessimistic prognostications as a familiar ploy to extract larger appropriations from Congress.

But there was no denying that Soviet sea power is building up rapidly in the Mediterranean and elsewhere and Moscow is making no secret of the build-up. Tass, the Soviet news agency, reported yester-

day on the week-end visit to the Soviet Mediterranean fleet by Defense Minister Andrei Grechko and Adm. Sergei G. Gorshkov, commander-in-chief of the Russian Navy. They were accompanied by high ranking government and Communist Party officials. More significant than the visit, according to observers, was the decision to give it maximum publicity. The decision seemed to emphasize the Soviet Union's desire to convey to the U.S. and to Israel that a powerful Soviet military-naval presence is now a permanent factor in the Eastern Mediterranean. The size of the Soviet Mediterranean fleet varies from 40-70 ships, according to Western sources. It includes a dozen submarines and at least one helicopter carrier, the latter capable of landing marines in an amphibious strike. (Commander Abraham Botzer of the Israeli Navy said Friday that Israel's fleet could prevent any attack from the sea but could not prevent hit-and-run raids. He said Israeli naval planners based their strategy on the assumption that Soviet advisers were "taking an active part in everything that goes on in the Egyptian Navy." Botzer said a growing Soviet fleet was concentrated at Alexandria, Port Said and Mersa Matruh. The latter port, near the Libyan border, is becoming the main Soviet naval base in Egypt, Botzer said.)

### Israel Will Take 'Action' Against Nations Aiding Attacks On Israeli Shipping

JERUSALEM, June 14 (JTA)—Implied threats of "action" against any country aiding and abetting attacks on Israeli shipping in international waters emerged here today in the aftermath of Friday's bazooka attack on the Israel-bound Liberian tanker Coral Sea in the Straits of Bab el-Mandab. According to well informed sources, the Israel government is resorting to political measures for the time being to prevent a repetition of the incident. But most Cabinet ministers are reported to be convinced that the efficacy of this approach is extremely limited and that "the principal action to assure free navigation has to be taken by the security organs," the sources said. The Jewish Telegraphic Agency learned that when news of the attack reached the government Friday, Israel approached "an important friendly Western power" and was advised by it to delay announcing the incident to give Liberia a chance to announce it. The Liberian government made no announcement over the week-end and Israel broke the news yesterday. Some details have been suppressed by the local censor. The tanker was steaming through the narrow channel west of Perim island when the attack occurred. Perim reportedly has been fortified by South Yemen.

Israeli circles cited the incident as one more reason why Israel should never withdraw from the Sharm el-Sheikh strongpoint on the southern tip of the Sinai peninsula. Sharm el-Sheikh, about 1,000 miles from the Straits of Bab el-Mandab, is the Israeli base closest to that vital waterway. Should Israel give it up, the sources said, the protection of Israeli shipping in the straits would be difficult if not impossible. Maritime circles in Haifa said today that "special measures" have already been taken to protect Israeli shipping on all maritime routes leading to the port of Eilat on the Gulf of Aqaba. They did not indicate what the measures were. The word from Haifa, Israel's largest port and maritime center, was "business as usual." The Zim Lines, Israel's largest shipping company, operates about 13 vessels from Eilat to Africa, Southeast Asia and Australia, all of which pass through the Straits of Bab el-Mandab. Some of the vessels fly the Israeli flag and the others are chartered foreign-flag ships.

The Coral Sea, a 65,000 deadweight ton tanker flies the flag of Liberia, has a Greek Master and a partly Greek crew. She is on charter to an Israeli firm and her agents in Israel are Cargo Ships El Yam Ltd., an Israeli company engaged in world-wide shipping. The owners of the tanker were not identified. They could be Israeli or foreign or a combination of both. Israeli circles appeared to be piqued over the apparent indifference displayed by the Liberian government over the attack on the Coral Sea. Israeli circles are inclined to dismiss the claim made yesterday by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine in Beirut that its commandos were responsible for the attack on the Coral Sea. They are also convinced that Egypt was not behind the attack. Although nothing official has been said about the identity of the sea-going terrorists, the feeling here is that they may have been harbored and otherwise aided by South Yemen and possibly by a terrorist organization in Eritrea.

### Hatfield Urges Elimination Of Open-Ended Commitment To Military Aid To Israel

WASHINGTON, June 14 (JTA)—Sen. Mark O. Hatfield of Oregon, who nominated Richard M. Nixon for President at the 1960 Republican Convention, urged today the elimination of the President's open-ended commitment to military aid to Israel. The legislation, approved by Congress last year, authorizes the President to give Israel as much military aid as he feels necessary. In testimony today before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Hatfield asked that aid requests be handled individually to "see if each one is within our national interests." He added, "Our one-sided support of Israel to the neglect of her neighbors has had an effect similar to our overarming ourselves to such an extent that other sectors of our economy and our relations with other countries have deteriorated." Hatfield, who has been critical of Israeli policy in the past and favors the internationalization of Jerusalem, in his testimony today continued his support for Palestinian participation in direct Middle East peace talks by commenting: "Palestinians feel as though they have been severely wronged, and quite rightly. They live in virtually subhuman conditions in refugee camps and have little if any real expectations of regaining their homeland." Hatfield did not affix specific blame for the Palestinians' plight.

### Amir: Israel Has Made Major Concessions To Achieve Mideast Peace

ELLENVILLE, N.Y., June 14 (JTA)—Rebeuzaim Amir, the Israeli Consul General in New York City, accepted the Brith Abraham World Peace Award here and denied that Israel has been "intransigent and inflexible" in her Middle East policy. "We have already made major concessions," Amir advised the Brith Abraham convention. "But we owe it to our children and to the Jewish people not to make concessions which will endanger the security of Israel and the very survival of its people for the sake of any illusory arrangements which have proved useless in the past." Amir emphasized that "the peace we so ardently strive for must be more than just a piece of paper." Rather, he said, it must be "real and lasting," based on "defensible, agreed and recognized borders," and there must be "a public Arab commitment to live in peace with Israel." Amir stressed that Israel "will continue to take all the measures necessary for the defense of its citizens, its territory and its economic lifelines."

## 15 Arrested At U.S. Mission To UN After Demonstrators Handcuff Themselves To Mission

UNITED NATIONS, N.Y., June 14 (JTA)--Twelve rabbis, two Jewish professors and the national coordinator of the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry were arrested and charged with criminal trespass today after they handcuffed themselves to the United States Mission for two hours to protest the State Department's alleged failure to take "meaningful" action to aid Soviet Jewry. Five of the rabbis had sat in at the Mission for three and a half hours June 9 following a larger, interfaith demonstration outside the building June 3. "We have not seen in this interval," today's group said, "any meaningful intent by our federal government for concrete action for Soviet Jews." It added: Our handcuffs represent chained Soviet Jewry. It is our moral duty to cry out. If this can be in no other way than by civil disobedience, then we accept the consequences." A Police Department spokesman said penalties in such a case were at the judge's discretion, but added that in this particular case--with all the demonstrators first offenders--the charges would likely be dropped. Glenn Richter, the SSSJ leader arrested, noted to the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that this was the "first bust" for himself and the other 14 demonstrators.

The demonstrators were demanding, as were the two previous demonstrating delegations, that President Nixon issue a "strong statement" on the plight of Soviet Jews and on the upcoming Kishinev trial of nine Jews; Yiddish and Hebrew broadcasts into Russia on the Voice of America facilities, and White House support for Rep. Edward I. Koch's bill for 30,000 emergency visas for Soviet Jews. "This was not the first time the request had been made," Richter noted before the police cut the 15 sets of handcuffs. "The State Department forced us into it," he said of today's action. "Whatever we have done in no way matches the courage of Soviet Jews." A Mission official told the JTA: "We deplore this kind of demonstration. It doesn't help the cause of Soviet Jewry or the democratic process." He said "nothing can be done by the State Department" on the various demands by the protesters, except to participate in a consideration of changes in VOA broadcasts. "Extensive consideration" of that matter for more than 20 years, he said, has convinced the Department that Soviet Jews do not constitute a national group within the USSR and thus are not automatically entitled to Yiddish or Hebrew broadcasts. He said Mission activities were "considerably" affected by today's demonstration, with diplomats having to be escorted in and out of side entrances. The formal complaint against the demonstrators was filed by the Federal Buildings Administration. Those arrested were released on personal recognizance and are due in court June 22, the day after the Kishinev trial is expected to begin.

## Miller Urges Nixon To Respond Affirmatively To Israel's Request For Military Aid

NEW YORK, June 14 (JTA)--Rabbi Israel Miller, president of the American Zionist Federation, expressed "profound concern" in a letter to President Nixon today "at reports of our government's failure to respond affirmatively to the threat of Israel's security and its deterrent military capacity by delaying action on Israel's latest request for military assistance." Stating that he was writing on behalf of the AZF's 700,000 members, Rabbi Miller warned that the new Soviet-Egyptian treaty of friendship and cooperation "was aimed at the United States and the free world as much as it was aimed at Israel." "In light of these latest developments," Rabbi Miller wrote, "it would be disastrous for our government to attempt to pressure Israel into making any concessions to Egypt by any actions or threats, real or implied, of postponing additional arms shipments and economic aid. Such actions would violate your own explicit statements of American policy that the arms balance would be maintained, that there would never be an imposition of peace terms upon Israel, and the interests of peace would be served by negotiations entered into by the parties to the conflict." Rabbi Miller called on Nixon to "honor those words now so that the enemies of Israel will know full well that support of Israel and the attainment of a true peace are policies and objectives which remain constant on the part of the United States and are not subject to erosion or attrition."

## Dr. Sabin Receives Honorary Doctorate From Tel Aviv University

TEL AVIV, June 14 (JTA)--Dr. Albert B. Sabin, president of the Weizmann Institute of Science, today received an Honorary Doctorate from Tel Aviv University for "his dedication to the fields of preventive medicine and medical research to which he has devoted a lifetime of service," and for "his inestimable contribution towards the advancement of science, higher education, human welfare and the cause of peace...which have earned him international civic, scientific and academic honors throughout the world." The citation further recognized Dr. Sabin's active support of higher education in Israel and further noted that his interests "have ranged beyond the educational and health problems of country and include problems of cultural integration and ultimate peace between Israel and her Arab neighbors."

## Supreme Court To Investigate 'Rumors' That Soccer Players Accepting Bribes

JERUSALEM, June 14 (JTA)--Israel's Supreme Court is going to investigate an alleged football scandal, it was disclosed following yesterday's Cabinet meeting. The Cabinet voted unanimously to have Supreme Court President Shimon Agranat appoint a three-man inquiry commission to carry out the probe under the provisions of a 1968 law. The commission will investigate "rumors" that soccer players and teams were accepting bribes to fix games in order to influence team standings in the leagues and the results of football pools. The Cabinet decided that the rumors were "a matter of vital public interest" that had to be investigated.

## World-Center Of European Rabbis Launch Campaign To Preserve Jewish Cemeteries

JERUSALEM, June 14 (JTA)--A campaign to preserve Jewish cemeteries in Eastern Europe, and to alert the United Nations of any attempts to destroy such sites, is under way under the auspices of the World-Center of European Rabbis. The organization is seeking to establish "Gidrei Avot"--groups concerned with fencing-in cemeteries throughout Eastern Europe. The campaign was initiated at a meeting here sponsored by the World-Center amid reports of attempts by some Eastern European governments to destroy some Jewish graveyards because there is allegedly no one to care for them. Action taken after similar conferences in recent years here and in Montreal has saved cemeteries in Poland and Czechoslovakia and the monuments to the Baal Shem Tov and the Rabbi of Opta.

