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FLURRY OF DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY AIMED AT BREAKING MIDEAST DEADLOCK.

Egypt Sees Washington As Focal Point For Breaking Impasse

WASHINGTON, Feb. 19 (JTA)--A new round of diplomatic activity aimed at breaking the Middle East deadlock took shape over the week-end as Washington officialdom prepared for the meeting between Israeli Premier Golda Meir and President Nixon March 1. Meanwhile, the State Department confirmed yesterday that Hafez Ismail, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's national security advisor, will come here Thursday for talks with Nixon and Secretary of State William P. Rogers.

Ismail's visit was arranged at the last minute, although diplomatic circles here say Cairo has been putting out feelers for high level contacts with the U.S. for some time. Rogers said at a press conference here last Thursday that there has been "lots of communications with Egypt" and that the U.S. would welcome visits by high-ranking Egyptians, but added that there was no American plan "at the moment" to welcome one. Cairo apparently took his remark as a signal that the time was opportune, the circles said.

Ismail, whose relationship to Sadat is equivalent to that of Dr. Henry Kissinger to Nixon, was in Moscow last week for meetings with Soviet leaders. He left Cairo yesterday for London where he is meeting today with Prime Minister Edward Heath and British Foreign Secretary Sir Alec Douglas-Home prior to going to Washington.

Some observers in Washington said Ismail's visit was an indication that Egypt now recognized that Washington is the focal point of any new moves to end the Middle East impasse, rather than Moscow. The U.S. is considered by Cairo to be the only power that can exert any leverage in Egypt, Egypt, nevertheless, has apparently embarked on a new global diplomatic offensive.

U.S. To Aid Negotiating Process

Cairo announced that Foreign Minister Mohammed H. el-Zayyat will fly to Peking later this month for talks with Chinese leaders. Ismail's visit to Moscow was the first by a top level Egyptian since Sadat ousted Soviet military personnel and advisors from Egypt last July. He reportedly met with Communist Party chief Leonid Brezhnev and Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko. He also reportedly met with United Nations Middle East mediator Dr. Gunnar V. Jarring who is the Swedish Ambassador to Moscow.

Rogers emphasized at his press conference that any new American initiative was intended to bring the parties into some sort of negotiating process but must not be taken as an attempt to impose any plan on the parties. "We have increased our activities in this regard recently and we intend to do even more in the weeks ahead," he said.

Rogers said the U.S. did not discount the possibility that the first phase of negotiations could be between Israel and Jordan rather than Israel and Egypt. However, he said, "We are inclined to think it would be easier if some progress could be made in relations between Egypt and Israel first, or at least parallel with progress be-

tween Egypt and Jordan."

Israeli and State Department officials are arranging a special meeting in New York between Rogers and Mrs. Meir before she ends her week-long visit to the U.S. Mrs. Meir is due in the U.S. Feb. 28. Rogers will be in Paris to attend the international conference on Vietnam. During her stay in Washington, she will be the President's guest at Blair House which is the official residence for visiting heads of state. According to protocol, Mrs. Meir is a chief of government, not a head of state. The invitation to stay at Blair House is considered a special tribute to her by the President.

EBAN DOES NOT ATTACH TOO MUCH IMPORTANCE TO ISMAIL'S VISIT

TEL AVIV, Feb. 19 (JTA)--Foreign Minister Abba Eban said today that he did not attach much importance to the visit to Washington this week of Hafez Ismail, President Anwar Sadat's national security advisor. He dismissed speculation that Ismail would try to forestall further agreements between Israel and the U.S. Egypt has no say in mutual relations between Israel and America, Eban said.

The Foreign Minister spoke to reporters on his return from a visit to Britain. He said the assignment of Ismail who is known as "the Egyptian Kissinger" was to explain his country's position in various world capitals and Washington is one of them.

Ismail sources predicted today that the U.S. would make a serious effort to get Egypt to renew contacts with Israel for an interim Suez Canal agreement but they were convinced that Washington does not plan to suggest anything new or to impose any solution on Israel.

8 GEORGIAN JEWISH IMMIGRANTS HELD ON SUSPICION OF MURDERING ARAB

TEL AVIV, Feb. 19 (JTA)--Eight recent immigrants from Soviet Georgia were arrested yesterday on suspicion of having beaten to death an Arab from Nazareth they suspected of having a romantic liaison with a Jewish woman. The eight are expected to be charged with manslaughter. All are residents of Upper Nazareth, a new immigrant settlement.

The incident, which took place Friday evening, aroused tension between the immigrant community and Nazareth Arabs. Extra police were on hand to maintain order at the victim's funeral today. The murdered man was Subhi Nassir, 45, the father of seven children.

According to police, he was assaulted by the suspects while sitting in a car with a Russian Jewish woman, identified as Regina Polakovskaya, 48. She is married and arrived in Israel from Russia six months ago. The Arab was dragged from the car and fatally beaten. He died in a hospital. The woman was also injured and her hair was shaved off. She told police the Arab was giving her a driving lesson.

JNF UNDER FIRE BY WZO COMPTROLLER

JERUSALEM, Feb. 19 (JTA)--A scathing criticism of the operations of the Jewish National Fund and recommendations to correct various proced-

ures was contained in the annual survey of the land-development and reclamation agency by the Comptroller of the World Zionist Organization, published here. The 90-page survey did not challenge the basic objectives of the JNF but found fault with a variety of its activities.

Especially severe criticism was leveled at the transfer of JNF land to the Israel Lands Administration. The survey said inventories weren't taken and no precise determination was made of the total land passed to the Lands Administration. The comptroller's report said methods were lacking to keep account of the monies and that the lack of supervision over internal control and audit resulted in irregularities by an employee.

Shortcomings were also found in the tree planting program. The survey found faulty the JNF's methods of receiving and transferring money to the head office, distributing certificates and arranging security. It said that JNF publications were found accumulated in store rooms and not distributed. The report said there was no clear definition between long-term and short-term JNF emissaries, especially as it applied to expenses the JNF was expected to underwrite.

The comptroller's report also found lack of coordination between various JNF departments and the legal advisory unit. It said departments failed to obtain legal advice before undertaking certain activities. The report suggested an examination of the whole range of administrative problems relating to the exchange of JNF lands. It urged that clear and precise written instructions be issued on the various operations involved in this matter. The JNF has said it would comply with the request.

ITALY FREES TWO TERRORISTS; ISRAEL DISSATISFIED WITH EXPLANATION

JERUSALEM, Feb. 19 (JTA)--Israeli officials privately expressed dissatisfaction today with Italy's explanation of how and why two Arab terrorists who had a concealed bomb smuggled aboard an El Al airliner at Rome Airport last Aug. were released from jail. There was no official reaction here, however.

The pair, Ahmed Zaid, 24, of Iraq, and Adned Mohammed Hashem, 29, of Jordan, were arrested after two British girl passengers identified them as the men who duped them into taking a record player which contained a time bomb aboard the El Al flight from Rome to Tel Aviv. The bomb exploded in mid-air but caused no casualties and only minor damage to the plane.

A Rome magistrate freed the two Arabs last Tuesday under the "provisional liberty" clause in Italian law. They left Rome's Regina Coeli prison without bail. A Foreign Ministry spokesman said Thursday that the Israel Embassy in Rome had asked the Italian Foreign Ministry for a "clarification." The latter informed Israeli Ambassador Emil Najjar that the released prisoners were required to remain in Rome and report regularly to police pending their trial.

The Italian magistrate who released the two terrorists said he did so because the explosives in the record player could not have endangered the passengers. He noted that there had not been enough explosives to seriously damage the plane and cited as evidence the fact that the plane returned safely to the Rome Airport after the explosion. In addition, he stated that the two terrorists were only small cogs in the terrorist machine carrying out orders of higher officials who were never apprehended.

FIRST ISRAEL-BUILT WARSHIP LAUNCHED

HAIFA, Feb. 19 (JTA)--Premier Golda Meir launched the first-Israel-built warship today. The \$10 million missile boat Reshef (Flash) slid down the ways of Israel Shipyards Ltd. into Haifa Bay as bands played and several thousand spectators and shipyard workers cheered. The 450-ton diesel-powered vessel, armed with Israel's "Gabriel" surface-to-surface missiles, depth charges and anti-aircraft guns, is regarded as one of the most sophisticated craft of its type in the world.

Mrs. Meir, who smashed a bottle of champagne across the steel bows, stressed that with the launching Israel reduced once again its dependence on foreign sources for weapons of war. The Reshef and her sisters now building are developments of the Saar-class gunboats built for Israel in France several years ago. But according to Rear Admiral Benjamin Telem, commander of the Israeli Navy, they are far superior. The Reshef will carry a crew of 45 and will have a speed of 40 knots, 46 land miles per hour.

TREPPER IN SANITARIUM NEAR WARSAW

COPENHAGEN, Feb. 19 (JTA)--Former master spy Leopold Trepper is in a sanitarium near Warsaw and has written to his son that his chances of getting a Polish visa to emigrate to Israel are "worse than ever." Trepper's son, Michael Brodje, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that he received a letter from his father who had been missing from his Warsaw apartment for the past week.

The 68-year-old former leader of the "Red Orchestra," wrote that his health was "very bad" but that he hoped to be out of the sanitarium by his next birthday, Feb. 23. Trepper closed his letter with the words, "Please take care of mother." His son told the JTA that this meant that Trepper has little hope of seeing his wife again. Mrs. Elisabeth Trepper was permitted to leave Poland last year and has been campaigning on her husband's behalf in Western Europe.

Trepper's son said he received a letter from the president of the Human Rights Committee in Belgium, Lowell Aropstein, saying that the committee's recent letters to the Polish Embassy protesting Trepper's plight were returned unopened.

500 IN PRAYER RALLY FOR IRAQI JEWS

MONTREAL, Feb. 19 (JTA)--More than 500 persons attending a community prayer rally here last night demanded that the Iraqi government reveal the fate of nine Jews imprisoned in Baghdad last fall who are believed to have been executed recently. The Canadian Jewish Congress, whose Eastern Region sponsored the rally at the Spanish-Portuguese Synagogue, has asked the Iraqi authorities to give the prisoners a fair trial if they are alive or, if they are dead, to return their bodies for burial according to Jewish ritual.

The participants in the rally recited prayers for Jews in mortal danger in Iraq and other Arab countries and kaddish for those believed executed. The rally was addressed by Aaron Kattan, a local community leader originally from Iraq, Ralph Lalouz, vice-chairman of the CJC's Eastern Region and Rabbi Howard Joseph of the Spanish Portuguese Synagogue.

Congregation Kehlath Israel of Newark, N.J., which closed its doors several months ago, has donated 31 Torah scrolls for needy synagogues in Israel. They were presented today to Israel Consul Michael Shashar by Sam Stein, president of the Congregation, and members of the Board of Directors at the Israeli Consulate in New York; Shashar promised to forward them to Israel next week.

SPECIAL JTA INTERVIEW

JORDAN'S FORMER DEFENSE MINISTER
PESSIMISTIC ON PEACE PROSPECTS

By Robert Slater and David Landau,
JTA Jerusalem Correspondents.

JERUSALEM, Feb. 19 (JTA)--Anwar Nusseibeh, former Jordanian Defense Minister, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency today that no Israeli leader in his view was likely to move towards the Arabs on a peaceful settlement and for this reason he is gloomy about the prospects for a Mideast settlement in the near future. In one of the few interviews he has granted to an Israeli news organization, the 60-year-old Jerusalemite now "retired" from political life, was asked which of the Israeli leaders would be most likely to make peace with the Arab states. "None," he quickly replied.

Nusseibeh resigned as Jordan's Ambassador to London in Jan. 1967. Earlier he had been Defense Minister and then Governor of Jerusalem. An attorney by profession, the soft-spoken native of Jerusalem spends his retirement quietly at his home off the Nablus Road, a five minute walk from Jerusalem's Old City.

During the hour long interview Nusseibeh declared that it might be hard to bring Arabs and Israelis to forget their differences in this generation. Israelis remembered the World War II holocaust; Arabs were conscious of the refugees' plight and the dispossession of their land, he said. But education might ultimately prove the best vehicle to bring the two sides to shed the "psychological problems" that have created the Mideast impasse. "The Israelis will have to become more acclimatized to the Middle East and the Arabs will have to overcome the fears to which they are subject and in the shadow of which they live," he said.

Nusseibeh was asked whether he ever acted, as widely believed, as the "go-between" in bringing Premier Golda Meir and the Jordanian King Hussein to secret talks in the last year. He says simply "this is not true," adding further that he does not accept that secret talks between the two sides have taken place at all. He cites the statements of both Israeli and Arab leaders as evidence for this conclusion.

His own visits to Jordan are occasioned by private or family affairs, he stresses, and while he usually attempts if he can to pay a courtesy call on the King and meet his ministers, this is because "Jordan is a small place" and one tends naturally to meet the people one knows. Nusseibeh has also met with Israeli leaders too but, he says, there is no need for him to transfer messages and ideas from Arabs to Israelis since the leaders of both sides make public statements frequently and express their views openly.

Kissinger Might Be An Asset

Secret talks as a way of obtaining a Middle Eastern peace are not really that valuable, Nusseibeh asserted "because the attitudes of both sides have never been secret." As for other ways of getting the two sides to closer positions, Nusseibeh refers to statements by Arab leaders that there is no problem in accepting American Presidential envoy Henry Kissinger as a possible mediator. With a smile, the former Jordanian minister noted that Kissinger's Jewish origin "might even be an asset when he talks to the Israelis."

Still, he added, the fundamental question in American-Israeli relations "is whether President Nixon can persuade--not pressure--the Is-

raeli Prime Minister to accept the minimum that the Arabs demand."

Israel would gain a "tremendous victory," the former Defense Minister stated, if it were to accept a peace settlement that would return the administered territories to the Arabs but would bring the Israelis "recognition and peace. If you say this isn't a valid price--that's your privilege--but it's the price the Arabs have offered to pay. Territories are not the guarantee of peace. The guarantee is peace and recognition and the relations which would evolve thereafter."

Nusseibeh says he would welcome the principle of demilitarization--but not only of the areas Israel would vacate. "If I had my way I would advise the demilitarization within reason of the entire Mideast area. We have so much else to do to which we can more usefully devote our resources." At any rate, he said, demilitarization should be "on a basis of reciprocity. You might find it difficult to believe, but Arabs fear Israeli aggression too. I think a formula could be found so that a feeling of security for both sides could exist, and if it should be on the basis of demilitarization, why not?" he asked.

Of the Israeli leaders, Nusseibeh said they were "all charming," but he said they were still the main obstacle to a settlement because of their insistence on imposing Israeli conditions. Saying that "I don't think that any occupation is desirable," Nusseibeh blamed the Israelis for ruthless and objectionable conduct in pursuit of this policy, but he credited the Israelis for "permitting Arabs to move freely across the Jordan River, to and from East Jordan and the Arab states."

He cited "the fact that I can speak to you freely, provided that I don't throw a bomb. If this house is bugged, I haven't heard about it. But the ruthlessness in all else is clear," he added with a certain bitterness. Nusseibeh rejected the concept, advanced by Defense Minister Moshe Dayan, by which Jordanians would be able to live in Israeli-administered territory but would be able to participate in the political life of Jordan. "I don't subscribe to the Dayan principle that I can live in Israel and participate in the politics of China," he said.

Overall Regional Settlement Needed

Nusseibeh was skeptical of a partial Suez Canal settlement with Egypt which he said, unless closely tied to the full implementation of Resolution 242, might "freeze the situation." What was needed was an overall settlement for the whole region. Thus he did not envision a separate peace with Jordan first. "It would be worth extending ourselves to reach an acceptable situation on a global level," he said.

On Jerusalem, Nusseibeh says that Arab sovereignty and administration should be restored to the Arab sector of the city. "I see no reason why in this context the city shouldn't remain open," he added, noting that there was no good reason for restoring the barbed wire and walls that divided Jew from Arab in Jerusalem before 1967.

Asked if there was any merit to Deputy Premier Yigal Allon's alleged proposal to provide extra-territorial status to Jordan over the Moslem quarter of Jerusalem's Old City as part of an overall settlement with Jordan, Nusseibeh noted that the Israeli leader had emphatically denied making the suggestion. He added that once one accepted the principle of restoring Arab sovereignty and administration, the area to which it will apply is already defined under Resolution 242 and the Charter of the United Nations.

