



# daily news bulletin

Published by Jewish Telegraphic Agency 165 West 46th St. New York, N.Y. 10036

© 1973, Jewish Telegraphic Agency, Inc.

Vol. XL — Fifty-Sixth Year

Monday, December 24, 1973

No. 244

## GENEVA PEACE TALKS: HISTORIC MILESTONE, BUT WHAT LIES AHEAD?

### VIEW FROM GENEVA

By Edwin Eytan, JTA European Bureau Chief

GENEVA, Dec. 23 (JTA)—Israeli circles in Geneva described Foreign Minister Abba Eban as "satisfied" with the work of the Geneva peace conference up till now. These circles made this declaration as Eban was on the point of leaving Geneva for Israel after having attended the first two sessions of the Geneva peace conference—the first Arab-Israeli peace talks since the creation of the State of Israel. The peace conference, according to a United Nations source, is "continuing its work in the absence of the four foreign ministers who attended the conference's opening phase."

A military committee composed of Israeli and Egyptian officers of general rank will meet this week in Geneva. Reliable sources say that these talks could start Wednesday or Thursday at the latest. The talks are expected to continue into Jan. when the conference will probably meet again in plenary session though at ambassadorial level. Israeli sources said that it would be reconvened at ministerial level "whenever necessary." The military committee will continue the Suez Canal disengagement talks started at Kilometer 101 and suspended Dec. 10. Israeli circles do not believe, however, that any major decisions will be taken at this level before next month.

These circles believe that Egypt will have to make a number of concessions to obtain a viable solution to the Suez Canal issue. Such concessions, which would not be to Egypt's detriment moreover, may include the promise to reopen the Suez Canal, the revival of the city of Suez and a restriction of military concentration on the eastern bank. It is believed that the reopening of the canal and the revival of the cities bordering it might be an effective way to prevent renewed Egyptian military aggressions. Both the Israelis and the Egyptians realize and openly say that there must be a sense of "continuation and achievement" in the course of these talks if the second phase is to be reached.

### 50 Year War, Or Peace?

It is only after the first obstacle is surmounted that the plenary will consider the creation of "work parties" which will deal with other specific issues such as the border situation, the consistency of peace, free navigation, the holy places and even a modus-vivendi on Jerusalem. Israel believes that Egypt will agree to simultaneous consideration of all these subjects and that the co-sponsors, the United States and the Soviet Union will want the conference to accelerate its activities next year.

"This opening phase was the easiest," Israeli circles here say. "The real tough part will come next year" is the general consensus of opinion of Israeli delegates and observers. Egyptian spokesmen in Geneva also indicated satisfaction but stressed that the real "down to earth talk" will come at the disengagement talks

(Cont'd, p.2, Col. 1)

### VIEW FROM JERUSALEM

By David Landau, JTA Jerusalem Bureau Chief

JERUSALEM, Dec. 23 (JTA)—The decision taken at Geneva over the weekend to proceed with the disengagement talks right after Christmas took everyone in Jerusalem by surprise. No one here expected any talks at all in Geneva before the new year, with the most widely cited date being Jan. 7 for the resumption of the disengagement talks. But Premier Golda Meir had committed herself and her outgoing government to talking about disengagement—and making decisions about it—even before the new government takes office, and hence the election problem is not relevant in this context and Israel's representatives will be able to negotiate freely and with authority.

Aharon Yariv, who finally quit the army last week and is devoting himself to the Labor-Alignment election campaign, is not to be drummed back into service, and the man to lead Israel in the resumed talks will be Aluf Mordechai (Motta) Gur, the military attache in Washington. His formal appointment will be published tomorrow but knowledgeable sources here confirmed leaks from Washington that he will lead the talks. Mentioned as his deputy—though no confirmation of this could be attained—is Aluf Abraham Tamir, head of planning at the general staff.

But the advancement of the disengagement talks, though a surprise, was not an unpleasant surprise to the Labor-led government. Ever since the Geneva conference has been a real and imminent event the opinion polls have been showing a swing back to the Labor-Alignment. Only today the Guttman poll taken in conjunction with the Hebrew-University-School of Social Science showed a large advance for Labor.

This was attributed in large measure to the voter's interest in the conference and in the future rather than in the war and the mistakes of the past upon which the Likud spokesmen are still harping. The fact that the opening session passed off satisfactorily, the fact that Foreign Minister Abba Eban acquitted himself well, the fact of his meeting for the first time in seven years with Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko—and the fact that the conference is to lose none of its momentum but will continue almost at once with the disengagement talks—all this means that the public mind is kept concentrating on the hopeful future rather than on the unpleasant past.

### Cabinet Approves Disengagement Talks

The Cabinet today formally approved Israel's participation in the renewed disengagement talks. The communique carefully stressed that these would be a continuation—"and in the same format"—as the Kilometer 101 talks. Cabinet sources said the intention was to stress Israel's firm objection to Egypt's demand yesterday that the superpowers take part in the disengagement talks. The communique also pointedly referred to "the Egyptian front," ruling out the Jordanian suggestion at Geneva that disengagement talks also be opened between Israel and Jordan.

The Jordanian suggestion seemed to be welcomed last night by Yigal Allon, Speaking in Tel

(Cont'd, p.2, Col. 2)

(Con't. from p.1, Col. 1)

and later in the various committees. These spokesmen add that they expect Syria to join the talks in a foreseeable future should the talks proceed smoothly.

Conference sources say that the Soviet Union has used utmost pressure on Syria to bring it to the conference table but in vain. These sources expect that both Egyptian Foreign Minister Ismail Fahmy and Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko, will renew their pressure on Damascus next month. Fahmy, Egyptian sources here said, is due to visit Damascus this week to confer with President Hafez Assad. By next month the conference will be in full swing and Israel and Egypt will know whether they are doomed in U.S. Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger's word to "a 30 or even a 50 year war" or to a possible peace.

Before leaving Geneva tonight on his way back to Israel, Eban said that he believed the peace conference had inaugurated a new epoch in the Middle East and that a great possibility for peace has been born. But he warned that "the existence of the Middle East peace conference does not assure with certainty that peace will come. But the absence of dialogue would ensure that peace would be impossible."

#### JAPANESE, JEWISH LEADERS MEET TO DISCUSS JAPAN AND OIL EMBARGO

NEW YORK, Dec. 23 (JTA)--A delegation of Japan's Democratic Socialist Party, including two members of Japan's Parliament, met last night at the home of the Japanese Consul General in New York with Jacob Stein, chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations; Rabbi Israel Miller, vice-chairman; and Yehuda Hellman, executive director. The Japanese parliamentary leaders stressed the warm and continuing relationships of their political party with Israel and said the Arab oil embargo was "a great shock" to the people of Japan.

They said recent visits by Japanese government leaders to, and offers of, substantial Japanese investment in Arab countries should be viewed as showing a greater interest in countries that supply Japan with oil and not as a change in Japanese-Israeli relations. The Japanese political personalities expressed concern over the possibility of an American boycott of Japanese consumer goods.

The Jewish leaders said that in yielding to Arab oil blackmail Japan was following a policy which had historically proven disastrous, that the action of Japan weakened the American initiative for peace in the Middle East and that Japan's failure to support American foreign policy in the Mideast was losing Japan many friends in this country.

Stein told the Japanese representative that there had been great restraint in any economic reaction to Japan's actions but that if further capitulation to blackmail occurred Japan could expect a strong reaction from the American public. Stein urged that Japan act in concert with the U.S. and other oil consuming countries in resisting blackmail and in developing new and alternative sources of energy.

#### DAY-LONG EXCHANGE OF FIRE FROM EGYPTIAN AND LEBANESE BORDERS

TEL AVIV, Dec. 23 (JTA)--Exchanges of fire were reported today from the Lebanese border and the Egyptian cease-fire line while the Syrian

(Con't. from p.1, Col. 2)

Aviv, the Deputy Premier said both sides' interests would be served by a disengagement to defuse the military confrontation. He said in this meeting that Israel should favorably consider the proposal of the Jordanian delegation chief, Foreign Minister Zaid el-Rifai, at the Geneva convention to separate the forces on the eastern border as well. He agreed that there was no parallel between this and the Egyptian front--therefore the solution should also be different. Nevertheless he thought that such an act would be able to serve the interests of both sides.

At the Cabinet meeting the National Religious Party Ministers queried Allon's remarks--and though the Deputy Premier read out the exact text of his speech, in which he stressed the difference in the situation on the Jordan and that on the Suez Canal--the NRP remained dissatisfied. "Why create a problem where none exists?" asked Yosef Burg, the Interior Minister. Mrs. Meir assured the Cabinet that no disengagement talks were envisaged with Jordan at this stage. Cabinet sources said the Minister heard only a brief report on the conference opening from Premier Meir and there would be another Cabinet session this week to hear Eban's own full report--including his meeting with Gromyko.

Another task which will apparently face the Cabinet when Eban returns will be to appoint a permanent representative to the conference. Officials here are waiting to hear from Eban whether this must be done now or can be left till after the elections. Among the names being aired: Ephraim Evron and Zeev Sheck, both senior Foreign Ministry officials who were with Eban in Geneva. Authoritative sources scotch rumors that Yosef Tekoah will get the job. His image as the United Nations Ambassador rules him out--since Israel wants above all to minimize the UN role at the conference.

line was quiet. There were no casualties in the long series of small arms and artillery exchanges during the day. Incidents were reported from the Ismailia sector where Egyptians opened small arms and mortar fire mainly in the Abalswair area. Small arms and artillery fire was opened by the Egyptians in the Fayid region. In one instance shooting developed as the Egyptians attempted to improve their positions.

Small arms and artillery fire was also reported from the area north of the town of Suez. Fire was returned. At noon today a number of mortar shells were fired from the Lebanese territory at Israeli forces on the Djabel Ross--Mount Dov region which is the southeastern edge of the Lebanese-Israeli border. There were no casualties.

Six Israeli soldiers were wounded in shooting incidents along the Egyptian front between Thursday and midnight Saturday, a military spokesman reported. He said the firing was almost continuous over the weekend with Egyptian forces using virtually every weapon in their arsenal from small arms and mortars to artillery, tanks and "Sager" anti-tank missiles. Israeli forces returned the fire.

The first casualty of the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) was suffered Thursday. A UN spokesman said a Finnish soldier was grazed by a bullet in the right temple as Israeli and Egyptian forces exchanged fire near the town of Suez. The wound was described as slight. Two Israeli soldiers were wounded Thursday in a shooting exchange west of Fayid and two others were hit by Egyptian fire east of El Bateh island. A fifth Israeli soldier was wounded Friday during a shooting spree in the Jabal Attaka region in the southern section of the cease-fire. Another was hit shortly after midnight last night west of Fayid.

## GENEVA ATMOSPHERE: FIRST TIME FOR REAL CHANCE FOR PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

By Edwin Eytan, JTA European Bureau Chief

GENEVA, Dec. 23 (JTA)--The first phase of the Arab-Israeli peace conference opened and closed here over the weekend. The event that was a quarter of a century in the making saw Israelis and Arabs sitting face to face for the first time since the State of Israel was established. The suspicion, bitterness and mutual antagonism arising from a generation of hot and cold war, capped by the fierce and costly battles of last Oct. 6-22, was clearly evident in the formal opening speeches Friday by the foreign ministers of Egypt, Jordan and Israel. But Saturday's brief - 20 minute - closed-door session before phase one adjourned was reported to have been surprisingly cordial and the atmosphere was decidedly more hopeful than when the conference began.

United Nations Secretary General Kurt Waldheim who presided at the first phase, summed up the feelings of all of the participants when he said on departing from Geneva today, "For the first time we have a real chance for peace in the Middle East." The opening phase chalked up several agreements - one was to set up a special Israeli-Egyptian military commission to unravel the knotty problem of disengagement of military forces along the Suez Canal. The conference also agreed to set up working parties or subcommittees to start discussing individual issues. Each of the attending foreign ministers is leaving behind here delegates of ambassadorial rank to represent them when the full conference resumes again early next year. No date has been announced but it is generally believed that the conference will convene again on or about Jan. 7, 1974. The joint military committee, which will consist of Israeli and Egyptian officers of general rank and their aides, is expected to convene shortly after the Christmas holiday. While no date was announced sources here said the talks would get underway no later than Dec. 27, possibly a day earlier.

The ornate Palais Des Nations, the home of the UN in Geneva and originally the home of the League of Nations, was quiet today as the principals returned to their respective capitals. U.S. Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger flew back to Washington last night to report to President Nixon. Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko will depart for Moscow tomorrow. Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban was leaving Geneva today. Zaid el-Rifai, the Jordanian Foreign Minister, left this morning. The Egyptian Foreign Minister, Ismail Fahmy, met today with U.S. Ambassador-at-Large Ellsworth Bunker who will take Kissinger's place when the peace conference reconvenes. The Egyptian delegate said at a press briefing after yesterday's closed door session, "The ice has been broken and finally the Egyptians and Israelis can sit down together to settle the long strife in the Middle East."

The prospects for the Geneva conference seemed to be clearly enhanced by the high status of its promoters and sponsors. Officially under UN auspices, it is in fact the creation of U.S.-Soviet agreement and Kissinger is conceded to be its chief architect. Israeli circles here said they were satisfied with Kissinger's address Friday. They said that he spoke as a "mediator." The American diplomat was indeed even-handed in his formal presentation. He quoted an Arab proverb saying, "The past is now dead." He also quoted the Jewish sage, Hillel, "who speaking for all mankind expressed this problem well, 'I'm lo ani li az me li?--if I am not for myself who is for me, but if I am for myself alone who am I.'"

Kissinger said that one of the first tasks of the conference was to strengthen the cease-fire agreement which remains fragile. "A new renewal of hostilities would be both foolhardy and dangerous," he said. He defined the American attitude as doing all it can to achieve a peace agreement. Kissinger said that "A peace agreement must include these elements: withdrawals, recognized frontiers, security arrangements, guarantees, a settlement of the legitimate interests of the Palestinians and a recognition that Jerusalem contains places considered holy by three great religions." The American Secretary of State observed in conclusion that the future of the Middle East rests "in the hands of the Israeli and Arab governments including those who are absent who, we all hope, will join us soon." His reference was to Syria which has boycotted the Geneva talks.

### Soviet Hostility, Harshness Toward Israel Muted

The conference was opened by Waldheim at 11:10 a.m. local time Friday, 40 minutes late. This delay was occasioned by a last minute dispute over the seating arrangement. The Arabs had demanded that the Israeli delegation be seated next to the empty chairs of the absent Syrians to symbolically mark Israel's ostracism. Israel rejected the arrangement. Waldheim conferred for a half hour with the U.S. and Soviet leaders to resolve the dispute. At their intervention, it was agreed that Israel would be seated between the U.S. and UN delegations, diagonally across the council chamber from the Egyptian delegation.

Gromyko's speech Friday contained not the slightest hint that Moscow has altered its policy of all-out support of its Arab friends. But observers here noted that the harshness and hostility toward Israel that has typified so many Soviet speeches about the Middle East at the UN and other forums was missing. Gromyko said that Russia harbored no "hatred" of Israel and recalled that the Soviet Union supported the creation of the Jewish State and recognizes its "right to live in peace" and be assured of its integrity. "Contrary to certain affirmations, the Soviet Union has never doubted or questioned Israel's right to exist," Gromyko said. He and Eban met for 80 minutes Friday evening. It was the first meeting between top level Israeli and Soviet diplomats since 1966. Sources here said it was cordial and frank.

Waldheim opened the conference by stressing that it "has a unique opportunity to come to grips with a most difficult, dangerous and complex international problem." He warned, however, that if the opportunity is not seized, the world will "inevitably be confronted once again with a dangerous, and highly explosive situation in the Middle East." Both the Egyptian and Jordanian ministers repeated in their speeches, the old Arab conditions for peace: Total withdrawal from the occupied Arab

territories, return of East Jerusalem and the settlement of the Palestinian question on the basis of the Palestinian self-determination. The Jordanian delegate, G. Rifai, accused Israel of "deportations, expulsions and maltreatment" of the Arab civilians living under Israeli occupation. He stressed that Jordan will "not accept a partial agreement with Israel on questions which interest all the Arabs."

Fahmy accused Israel of "relying on force." Turning to Israel's Abba Eban he said that peace will come when Israel will give up using force "and would at long last agree to give back all the occupied Arab territories including the part of Jerusalem occupied since 1967." He warned that should the conference fail to reach an agreement on these principles "the Arabs would have to use other means to recuperate the lands which they have lost" but added that he hoped that the Geneva conference will succeed. An appropriate conclusion, said the Egyptian minister, would include the assurance of political inviolability for all the states, territorial integrity, political independence and appropriate guarantees which could be given by either the United Nations, the big powers or even the two together.

Eban, apparently taken aback by the violence of the Arab attacks, asked to address the meeting in the afternoon. He reportedly rephrased some of his sentences during this recess to remind the Arabs of some bitter realities. In the afternoon, Eban reminded the conference that Israel has been the butt of "an emotional assault which goes far beyond the political context." He said that this, "sweeps all human solidarities aside" and recalled the Arab endorsement of the Nazi type anti-Jewish myths. He charged the Arabs with being so hate-filled that this leads them "to mutilation of Israeli soldiers in the field, murder and torture of Israeli POWs and culminated in Syria's sadistic refusal to carry out the Geneva Convention."

#### Israel Is An Organic Part Of The Middle East

Eban stressed that Israel "is not alien to the Middle East as it is an organic part of its texture and memory." He said that Israel's contributions to the area "are too valuable to be swept away." Eban outlined Israel's aims at the conference as a peace treaty "whose meaning is not exhausted by the absence of war. Peace also commits us to positive obligations." He said that the treaty for which Israel hopes would provide for the permanent elimination of hostility, blockade and boycott. He said that the peace treaty "to be negotiated with each neighboring state" should contain an agreement on boundaries but added that for Israel "the test will be the defensibility of the new frontiers." He said that the experience of 1973 "confirmed our view that peace makers should not reconstruct vulnerable and inflammatory situations." Eban defined Israel's "overriding theme in peace discussions as security" and said that Israel will forward to the conference detailed proposals. Turning to Jerusalem, the Israeli delegate said that Israel does "not wish to exercise exclusive jurisdiction or unilateral responsibility in the holy places of Christendom and Islam which should be under the administration of those who hold them sacred." Israel, he said, would be willing to discuss an agreement providing for free access and pilgrimage to the holy places. He said that Syria's absence is normal as that country "is not yet qualified to participate at the peace conference" because of its lack of "all human decency."

Turning to the Palestinian issue, Eban said that solutions can be found after a peace treaty will have removed the political incentives for keeping the problem alive. Israel, he said, will define at an appropriate stage its contribution to an international and regional effort for refugee settlement. He rapped Palestinian organizations such as the PLO for "being driving forces in the wave of permissive violence that has carried the effects of the Middle East war round the world." The Israeli minister stressed Israel's desire for peace and preparedness to negotiate all issues without prior conditions.

A violent Egyptian attack on Israel followed as Fahmy replied. He accused Israel of having carried out "mass murders and atrocities" enumerating a long list of Israeli "crimes" stretching from Dir Yassin to the Beirut raids against Palestinian installations there. Eban, though offered a right of reply, declined to do so. Israeli sources later said that the minister took this decision "As we are at a peace conference and not at the Security Council where we engage in verbal duels." The public part of the conference concluded as dusk fell over Geneva. The real test, delegates here said, will come when the various sides will start dealing with concrete issues such as the disengagement of forces on the Suez Canal.

#### EBAN APPEALS TO GENEVA CONFERENCE HEADS, RED CROSS CHIEF FOR ACTION ON POWS

GENEVA, Dec. 23 (JTA)--Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban appealed tonight to the President of the Geneva peace conference and the two co-chairmen asking them to use all their influence in Damascus to obtain from Syria the release of the names of Israeli POWs. Eban addressed his letter to United Nations Secretary General Kurt Waldheim, U.S. Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger and Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko before leaving Geneva tonight for Israel. Eban has also raised this issue with Gromyko when the two met Friday night at the minister's residence. The Israeli Foreign Minister called this morning on the president of the International Red Cross Committee, Roger Gallopin. Eban reiterated Israel's demands for the Red Cross to renew its interventions in Syria. It is understood that the Red Cross president assured Eban that the International Red Cross has never slackened its interest in this issue.

NEW YORK, Dec. 23 (JTA)--Leonid Zabelshensky was sentenced Thursday to a six-months term for "parasitism" after a four-day trial, the National Conference on Soviet Jewry reported. The trial was held in Sverdlovsk where the judge, on opening it, said it would last several days, an unusual duration for trials on such charges. Fears had been expressed that a more serious charge might be listed against the defendant. Zabelshensky was dismissed from his post as a lecturer at the Sverdlovsk Polytechnic Institute after he applied for an exit visa to get to Israel.