



daily news bulletin

Published by Jewish Telegraphic Agency, 165 West 46th St., New York, N.Y. 10036
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Vol. XLI - 57th Year

Wednesday, January 16, 1974

No. 11

ISRAELI OPTIMISTIC DISENGAGEMENT ACCORD WITH EGYPT IS WITHIN REACH

By Gil Sedan, JTA Jerusalem Correspondent

JERUSALEM, Jan. 15 (JTA)—Well placed Israeli sources are optimistic that a disengagement agreement with Egypt is within reach despite many difficulties that remain to be resolved, the Jewish Telegraphic Agency learned today. That view was indicated after eight hours of meetings between Israeli officials and U.S. Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger and his aides who have been shuttling between Jerusalem and President Anwar Sadat's Aswan residence for the past two days in an intensive effort to narrow the gap between the two parties. State Department spokesman George Vest, a member of Kissinger's entourage, described today's talks as a "very detailed discussion which has moved to a more concrete phase." He did not elaborate.

Kissinger returned from his latest round in Egypt late last night and conferred with Foreign Minister Abba Eban until the early hours of this morning. Later this morning he conferred again with Eban, Defense Minister Moshe Dayan, Chief of Staff David Elazar and Israel's Ambassador to the U.S. Simcha Dinitz. He attended a working lunch with the Foreign Ministry staff at Eban's residence. Kissinger also paid a visit to Premier Golda Meir who is still confined to bed with a viral infection. She is being kept informed of all developments. Kissinger and his party will return to Egypt tomorrow instead of tonight as originally planned. There was no indication here how long his Aswan-Jerusalem trips would continue but it appeared that Kissinger is determined not to leave the area before the two parties reach an agreement. Vest disclosed that Kissinger is in regular telegraphic contact with President Nixon but refused to comment on reports that Nixon had instructed him to remain in the Middle East until an agreement is reached.

Yesterday's United Nations announcement in Cairo that the Israeli-Egyptian military disengagement talks in Geneva would not resume until Jan. 25 indicated that at least 10 more days have been allotted to Kissinger's "shuttle diplomacy." Kissinger returned to Jerusalem from Aswan last night with what were described as maps and other documents detailing Egypt's views on disengagement. These were Sadat's response to the detailed Israeli proposals conveyed to him yesterday by Kissinger. The Cabinet convened in special session late tonight at Mrs. Meir's home to draft Israel's response to the latest Egyptian proposals. Officials were tight-lipped about the meeting.

The talks here have been conducted under a heavy veil of secrecy and it is not known in what ways or to what extent the Egyptian disengagement proposals differ from those of Israel. One source indicated that the differences lie in the timetable for carrying out the various phases of disengagement. They are said to revolve around the question of whether an Israeli withdrawal from the Suez Canal should precede or follow an Egyptian commitment to thin out its forces on the east bank of the canal or an Egyptian pledge not to renew hostilities and maintain a true cease-fire. Israel has insisted that its withdrawal be accompanied by a reduction of Egyptian armaments along the canal. The Egyptians apparently demand an Israeli first move. But informed sources here believe the Egyptians may be prepared eventually for some kind of mutual disengagement although they will not sign a written undertaking to that effect. The sources pointed out that Egypt lifted the blockade of the straits of Bab el Mandeb in that manner. The blockade was removed although it was not specifically mentioned in the six-point Israeli-Egyptian cease-fire agreement signed last Nov. 11.

Israeli sources said there was no cause for concern over Egypt's refusal to accept the Israeli plan presented to them by Kissinger. As one official put it, "They were not necessarily expected to. The Israeli plan was intended to serve mainly as a basis for discussion and it certainly served this purpose." Meanwhile a joint Israeli-American working group was scheduled to meet this evening to discuss "details of various elements of arrangements to be set up," according to State Department spokesman Vest. The arrangements were believed to deal with patrolling and inspection of the disengagement process. That group is to report later tonight to a larger joint working group headed by Kissinger and Eban. U.S. officials expected the large group to work late into the night and continue their work tomorrow morning. Kissinger was expected to fly back to Aswan before noon tomorrow.

GUR APPOINTED COMMANDER OF SYRIAN FRONT; WILL NOT RETURN TO GENEVA

TEL AVIV, Jan. 15 (JTA)—Maj. Gen. Mordechai Gur, head of the Israeli military team that has been negotiating for a disengagement agreement with the Egyptians at Geneva, has been appointed commander of the Syrian front, it was announced here today. Defense Ministry sources indicated that Gur would not be returning to his Geneva assignment but there was no immediate announcement of who would replace him there.

The Geneva negotiators have held six sessions, their last over a week ago, and were to have met again today. It was announced yesterday, however, that further talks have been put off until Jan. 25, apparently in view of U.S. Sec-

retary of State Henry A. Kissinger's current efforts to engineer a top level Israeli-Egyptian agreement on disengagement. The Egyptian negotiators in Geneva returned to Cairo yesterday. The Israeli team which has been home for a week postponed its departure for Geneva when the suspension of the talks was announced.

Sources here said that the military talks at Geneva depend solely on the outcome of Kissinger's present mission. Both Israel and Egypt agreed to the ten-day postponement and the official viewpoint in Israel is that there is no need for the military talks as long as Kissinger is dealing personally with the basic problems.

There was no indication from official sources as to why Gur was returned to active military duty at this time. Prior to his appointment as chief

Israeli military negotiator in Geneva he had served as military attaché in Washington and before that had commanded Israel's northern front.

Gur replaces Maj. Gen. Itzhak Hoffi who commanded the Syrian front during the Yom Kippur War and has now been assigned to General Headquarters as Chief of Operations. Another top level shift in the army announced today was the appointment of Maj. Gen. Avraham Adan, an armored corps commander, to command of the southern front that includes most of Sinai and the front with Egypt on both banks of the Suez Canal. He replaces Maj. Gen. Israel Tal who has been reassigned to General Headquarters where he previously served as Deputy Chief of Staff.

KISS-AND-TELL DIPLOMACY

TEL AVIV, Jan. 15 (JTA)—Israelis tend to hide their emotions in public while Arabs are prone to display their feelings. And thereby hangs a tale. U.S. Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger told Israeli leaders that Arabs are smoother than Israelis when they greet foreign diplomats, or, at least, Kissinger. The Secretary, who was in good spirits during a reception given in his honor by Defense Minister Moshe Dayan and his wife, explained why he "was selling out Israel." The 100 guests at Dayan's home listened eagerly. "You know why I am selling you out? Because in every Arab capital I am met by the Foreign Minister who welcomes me with loud kisses on both cheeks. But here Abba Eban has never given me the least little kiss." One wag at the party whispered: "Maybe that's because Eban is really a Litvak."

DEFENDANT IN BOUSHICKI TRIAL RETRACTS EARLIER STATEMENTS

OSLO, Jan. 15 (JTA)—A defendant in the Boushicki murder trial, now in its second week, yesterday retracted earlier statements to police interrogators. Danish-born Jew, Dan Aerbel, 33, told a crowded courtroom here that his earlier statements were "incorrect, illogical and stupid." Aerbel claimed under police questioning shortly after his arrest last summer that the official Israeli intelligence organization Mossad was behind the July slaying of Moroccan waiter Ahmed Boushicki at Lillehammer in eastern Norway. "I only said this because I thought I would get help from Israeli diplomats," Aerbel told the court.

Norwegian police sergeant Steinar Ravlo was called as a witness to confirm Aerbel's statements under questioning. "Aerbel asked me several times to call a number at the Israeli Defense Ministry and ask for 'Mikko,'" Ravlo testified. "He told me the whole affair could be settled quietly through diplomatic channels," Ravlo said. Aerbel admitted spying on suspected Arab terrorists in Norway, and told the court he thought an "illegal organization" was responsible for Boushicki's death.

Six persons are on trial for the Boushicki murder, which according to the prosecution was carried out by an official Israeli counter-terror group. All six are charged with espionage and conspiracy to commit murder. They face maximum sentences of life imprisonment if convicted. The six Boushicki defendants are also wanted for questioning by police in Rome and Paris in connection with other terror slayings.

A Rome Magistrate's Court has released the

names of 14 persons, including the six defendants in the Boushicki case, who are wanted in connection with the murder of Palestinian leader Wail Abdel Zuaiter in Rome in Oct. 1972. One of those wanted is Edouard Laskier, alias "Mike," who, other defendants testified in court here last week, was the person on whose orders they acted. The prosecution dubbed Laskier as the leader of the 15-man team sent to Norway. Laskier and the others believed involved in the Rome affair are still at large.

RIVLIN: USSR'S SUPPORT OF KISSINGER ENHANCES U.S. EFFORTS IN GENEVA

NEW YORK, Jan. 15 (JTA)—Ambassador David Rivlin, Israel's Consul General in New York, told a conference of area Jewish leaders yesterday that U.S. efforts to bring about a settlement at Geneva between Israel and Egypt were enhanced by what appeared to be the Soviet Union's support of Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger's role as mediator. The meeting was called by the newly-formed Ad Hoc Emergency Actions Committee for Israel, a metropolitan area Jewish leadership group. Jacob Stein, chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, presided. The meeting was attended by some 100 leaders of local affiliates of Presidents Conference member organizations.

Rivlin said the USSR needed a link between the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf and was therefore particularly interested in plans to re-open the Suez Canal. On this score, he continued, Israel would insist that any agreement on the separation of forces include the principle of free navigation for Israeli shipping in the Suez Canal, plus the restoration of civilian life in the Egyptian cities along the canal.

In his remarks, Stein outlined a series of proposed actions to be undertaken in New York in support of demands that Syria publish a list of Israeli war prisoners and permit the International Red Cross to visit them. Representations to the United Nations and the Department of State will be included in these plans, Stein said.

Yehuda Hellman, executive director of the Presidents Conference, reported on his recent visits to European Jewish communities and his conversations with their leaders attending the World Conference of Jewish Organizations (COJO) meeting in Zurich, Switzerland. On Hellman's recommendation, the meeting voted to send a telegram of "solidarity and commonality of concern" to the Jewish community of Great Britain, which he said was confronted by a strongly pro-Arab government policy and whose leaders were threatened with physical attack. He praised the "courage and determination" of Edward Sieff, London Jewish philanthropist and Zionist leader, who survived an assassination attempt last month by an unidentified assailant believed to be an Arab terrorist.

HUNGARIAN WEEKLY RAPS QADDAFI FOR HIS POSITION ON ISRAEL

BUDAPEST, Jan. 15 (JTA)—Libyan President Muammar el-Qaddafi's extreme position on Israel has been sharply criticized by one of Hungary's major weeklies. According to "Magyaror Szag," "Qaddafi speaks about Israel in a manner which cannot be accepted by any normal nation today."

That observation, appearing in one of the most important publications of an East European Communist bloc state, has contributed to a growing feeling in some circles that a softening of the Communist line toward Israel is emerging, possibly at Soviet instigation. (The JTA reported from Brussels yesterday that Communist Party organs in Br-

Belgium are circulating a text, relatively sympathetic to Israel, though critical of its policies, reputed to have been written by Communists of Jewish origin.)

The Hungarian press in general expressed surprise and skepticism today over the announced merger of Libya and Tunisia. Commenting on the move, the Communist Party newspaper "Nepszabadsag" saw the union of the two North African countries as "incompatible" and described the merger as an attempt by Qaddafi to "restore his shattered authority." Another paper said that if "impatient Qaddafi should decide to impose his experience on (President Habib) Bourguiba (of Tunisia) the results would be catastrophic." The paper said that Qaddafi, who is 30 years younger than Bourguiba, "is counting on outliving him and taking over the presidency" of the merged countries.

ISRAELI POWs IN EGYPT WERE INJURED IN CAPTIVITY, HADASSAH REPORT SHOWS

JERUSALEM, Jan. 15 (JTA)--Many of the Israeli POWs who returned from Egypt suffered extensive muscle damage indicating physical injury to the captives, doctors at the Hadassah-Hebrew University Medical Center reported at the Hadassah mid-winter conference here today. Mrs. Faye L. Schenk, national Hadassah Medical Organization chairman, in presenting the report at the medical session said the Israel Defense Ministry Medical Corps is at present analyzing tests provided by Hadassah of blood samples taken from about 200 POWs two or three days after they returned from Egypt. These findings, which had been analyzed in Hadassah's Clinical Biochemistry Department, are being used as a basis for complaints to international authorities about the physical ill-treatment of the POWs.

More than 150 national leaders, representing 325,000 women in 1400 chapters and groups from the United States, including Puerto Rico, are attending the conference which began last night. Rose E. Matzkin, national president of Hadassah explained that the conference usually takes place in New York but was this year shifted to Israel.

The reason for this, she said at the opening meeting, was "to express solidarity with the Israeli people during these most trying of times." Mrs. Matzkin said that Premier Golda Meir--if she recovers from her ailment while the conference is still in session--and members of the Cabinet will be among those addressing sessions on foreign and domestic affairs, Jewish survival education and culture.

Addressing the medical session at the Medical Center in Ein Karem, Mrs. Schenk said the outstanding finding was that a large percentage of POWs were showing abnormally and persistently high serum transaminase (SGOT) activity in their blood. The high activity of this enzyme in the circulation is a symptom of extensive muscle damage--the test is used, for instance, on persons who suffer a heart attack in order to estimate the extent of the damage to the heart muscle.

In the group of POWs from Egypt with abnormal findings, the serum transaminase activity was two to ten times higher than the normal range, and thus provided objective evidence corroborating the reports of physical injury among the captives, and the individual stories of POWs about their beatings. In one very severely beaten soldier, the level of serum transaminase activity was so high that it was beyond the range

of the chart provided for the automatic analyzer and had to be repeated in a diluted specimen to obtain a valid result. High levels of serum transaminase activity in the blood can be found for up to one month after the actual occurrence to obtain a valid result.

INTERNAL CRITICISM HITS NRP

TEL AVIV, Jan. 15 (JTA)--The leadership of the National Religious Party, like that of Premier Golda Meir's Labor Party, is being buffeted by internal criticism and pressure that severely complicates the efforts by both to establish a new governing coalition. While the Laborite leaders are beset by left-leaning "doves" who advocate territorial compromise, the NRP ministers are being exhorted by their militant rightist elements to demand a broad national coalition that would include the Likud opposition which takes a no compromise stand.

The NRP militants, led by the party's "young guard" are opposed to the return of any territory to Jordan on grounds that the West Bank--Judea-Samaria--rightfully belongs to Israel because of historic and religious associations. They feel that a broad-based coalition in which Likud participated would insure against any territorial concessions. Labor argues by the same token that any government that included Likud would be a government beset by paralysis and unable to make any moves toward peace.

A group of NRP followers--professionals, scientists, scholars and some settlers from the administered territories--met here Saturday night to serve notice on the leadership that they would tolerate no back-down on the issue of a national coalition. Former MK Rabbi Moshe Tzvi Nerliwh, head of the Bnei Akiva yeshiva network, called on party members to demonstrate near NRP offices for a national unity government. He said that such a government at this time would have a religious value. Nahum Arieli, a writer, asked, "Did we give our vote to professional politicians or to people with conscience? Apparently we gave it to politicians and therefore we have to take things into our own hands."

Prof. Yehuda Don of Bar Ilan University claimed that withdrawal from the territories today meant annihilation tomorrow. He said government responsibility must be assumed by a government that represents all factions and ideas. "If the NRP leadership disappoints us again, let them know it will be the last time Israel pays for the mistakes of the NRP," he said.

3 ISRAELI SOLDIERS WOUNDED BY EGYPTIANS

TEL AVIV, Jan. 15 (JTA)--Three Israeli soldiers were wounded today when Egyptian forces opened fire with small arms and recoilless rifles south of the town of Suez, a military spokesman reported. An Israeli soldier was killed yesterday by an Egyptian sniper south of Nafisha village in the Ismailia region. Intermittent exchanges of artillery fire were reported on the Syrian front today. A military spokesman said there were no Israeli casualties and described as "fanciful" a Damascus claim that 20 Israelis were killed in the exchange. Shooting incidents were reported throughout yesterday along the Egyptian front despite heavy rains.

LONDON (JTA)--The Board of Deputies of British Jews will hold a special meeting Jan. 20 at which a recommendation of the Executive Committee, adopted unanimously for the affiliation of the Board of Deputies to the World Jewish Congress as a national participant, will be debated.

CONGRESSMAN URGES SOVIET-ISRAELI TIES

WASHINGTON, Jan. 15 (JTA)--Rep. Benjamin S. Rosenthal (D.N.Y.) contrasting the American and Soviet positions towards the nations of the Middle East, believes that Moscow should end its current state of hostility towards Israel and re-establish diplomatic relations with her. Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger, he said, "has opened a dialogue with the Arabs which is more than the Soviets have even attempted with Israel. If the Soviet Union is to be a guarantor of any settlement she cannot expect any trust or status if she continues to refuse to maintain normal diplomatic relations with Israel."

Rosenthal, chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Europe, observed in a speech Jan. 13 at the Holliswood Jewish Center in Jamaica, N.Y., that "Israel, for her part, should be able to deal with both superpowers, especially in these days of big power diplomacy."

Separation of Egyptian and Israeli forces along the Suez will "significantly lessen the chances" for renewed fighting between the two countries, he said, and enable Israel to protect herself better if Syria should resume hostilities. Despite hopes for immediate disengagement along the Suez, Rosenthal cautioned, "There is no significant evidence that Arab states are willing to make meaningful concessions."

RABBI URGES BLACK-JEWISH UNITY

NEW YORK, Jan. 15 (JTA)--Martin Luther King Day today should be utilized by Jews and Blacks as a renewal of their old working coalition in New York City for improved housing, effective schools, increased job opportunities and sensitizing a state and city government towards the needs of its minority groups.

Rabbi Balfour Brickner, director of the New York Federation of Reform Synagogues, stated that there are a number of leaders in both communities ready and sufficiently "courageous" to establish old ties since they see this "continued isolation as being indeed suicidal and detrimental for the future of New York City." The Federation is an affiliate of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, national body of 715 Reform synagogues in the U.S. and Canada.

Rabbi Brickner felt that New York City, once the most liberal, tolerant and open city in America, in recent years has become "a community of isolated withdrawn communities, characterized more by polarization and hate than by cooperation and understanding." He called upon Black and Jewish businessmen, religious and secular leaders to establish "a working relationship as we once did for civil rights under Dr. King." Rabbi Brickner indicated that he had already set up a number of such private meetings.

As a first step, he said, both groups must begin opposing those among the Black and Jewish communities still seeking "separatism and withdrawal" and to explore common working projects in local communities for both. "Let us begin to meet with one another in each and every discipline to establish the atmosphere where the new coalitions may be realistically and effectively created," Rabbi Brickner stated.

SOVIET JEW GETS 2-YEAR JAIL SENTENCE

NEW YORK, Jan. 15 (JTA)--Mark Lutskier, a 24-year-old math student from Kiev, has been sentenced to two years' imprisonment for draft evasion as a result of his attempts to obtain an exit visa, the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry reported today. The SSSJ said it learned from a telephone call to Kiev that Lutskier was expelled

from Verohesh University in the Ukraine when he applied for a character reference, the first step in the visa process.

He left Kiev for Kutaisi in Soviet Georgia to apply for a visa there inasmuch as visas are more readily granted to Georgian Jews, the SSSJ said. But Soviet authorities sent him a draft notice. His efforts to appeal the notice led to his recent trial and sentence, according to the SSSJ. They said the telephone connection with Kiev was cut off before additional information could be obtained.

ISRAEL BONDS RECORD SALES FOR 1973: MORE THAN HALF A BILLION DOLLARS

NEW YORK, Jan. 15 (JTA)--Sam Rothberg, general chairman of the Israel Bond Organization, has announced that the sale of Israel Bonds in 1973 produced a record-breaking total of \$502,137,550. This figure compared with \$271 million in Israel Bond proceeds in 1972 and \$217 million in 1967, the year of the Six-Day War. "We are confident that the new consciousness of the scope of Israel's needs in this period of great decision will be reflected in new levels of community participation in the Israel Bond program in the coming year," Rothberg said.

Special tribute was paid by Rothberg to the Jews of Canada who, under the leadership of Allan Bronfman, president of the Israel Bond campaign in that country, sold an extraordinary total of \$45,226,650 in Israel Bonds in 1973 as against \$24,458,000 in 1972. Rothberg announced that more than 500 leaders from various communities in the U.S. and Canada are preparing to leave for Israel at the invitation of Premier Golda Meir to take part in an extraordinary conference on Israel's massive economic needs in the aftermath of the Yom Kippur War.

The Prime Minister's International Israel Bond Conference, which will meet in Israel from Jan. 27 to Feb. 2, will hear reports from top government leaders on the country's financial situation and hopes for peace. This conference will inaugurate a new one billion dollar Bond issue to be known as the Reconstruction and Development Loan, biggest issue of Bonds ever floated by the State of Israel.

POLICE SEARCHING FOR 2 MEN BELIEVED TO BE ARMED WITH PORTABLE ROCKETS

BRUSSELS, Jan. 15 (JTA)--Belgian police are searching for two men believed to be armed with portable rockets and traveling in a stolen car, a French Citroen DS model, carrying false Belgian license plates with the number VD-651, a police spokesman said. It is not known if the men are carrying a Soviet-made SAM-7 missile. Recent press reports here say the police have been looking for several SAM-7 missiles believed to have been brought into Belgium recently. Other reports say, and the government has confirmed, that some western-made ground-to-air missiles have disappeared from a military depot "somewhere in Europe." The police description of the two men indicates one is a tall, blond "European type," and the other, a small "Arabic type" with black hair.

AMSTERDAM (JTA)--The Dutch labor broadcasting company "Vara," in a recent television program devoted to the plight of Israeli POWs in Syria, rapped the "Paris Match" feature alleging that the prisoners are in satisfactory condition. The TV program questioned the credibility of the French journalist's conclusions based on interviewing seven Israeli POWs of 100 or so believed to be in Syria. The program also rapped Syria for its failure to agree to an exchange of POWs or to allow Red Cross inspection of POWs in Syria.