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ISRAEL WILL NOT CARRY OUT SCORCHED EARTH POLICY IN EVACUATED AREAS

By Yitzhak Shargil, JTA Tel Aviv Correspondent

KILOMETER 101, Jan. 20 (JTA)—Israel has promised Egypt that it will not carry out a scorched earth policy in the area west of the Suez Canal that it will evacuate under the disengagement agreement signed here Friday. Chief of Staff, Gen. David Elazar told military correspondents last night that he had made that pledge to the Egyptian Chief of Staff, Gen. Mohammed Gemassy, as a gesture of Israel's good faith and its interest in seeing the restoration of normal civilian life along the canal banks.

There was nothing in the agreement covering the condition in which Israel would leave the area it has occupied since the second week of the Oct. Yom Kippur War. But Gemassy had asked him to leave roads and other installations in good repair when they met to sign the accord at this UN checkpoint, Elazar said. He said that he had replied that the area suffered in the war but that Israeli forces would do no purposeful damage before withdrawing.

According to reliable sources, the Egyptians have been informed through U.S. Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger that all movable military equipment on the west bank of the canal has already been removed. Fixed military installations such as the airfield at Fayid and all civilian facilities will be left intact apart from the damage they suffered during the war.

The three-page disengagement agreement signed by Elazar and Gemassy and counter-signed by UNEF Commander Gen. Ennio Silasvuo will go into effect Jan. 28. Israeli and Egyptian military teams will spend this week, starting today, in arranging the details. The separation of forces will be carried out in stages and will take 40 days to complete, Elazar disclosed. He said that only the future will tell if the agreement becomes an historic milestone. If both sides observe it to the letter it will be a good agreement and may open the road for a better future for all nations in the region, Elazar said.

Demobilization Follows Disengagement Accord

The agreement calls for both sides to scrupulously observe the cease-fire on land, sea and air and to refrain from all military or paramilitary action against each other; the establishment of three zones—one on the east bank of the Suez Canal to be occupied by Egyptian forces, a buffer zone beyond that occupied by forces of the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF), and a third zone extending from the eastern end of the UN area to the Mitla and Gidi passes to be held by Israeli forces; permission by Israeli and Egyptian air forces to operate up to their respective lines without interference from the other; and troop limitations by both sides in their respective zones subject to inspection by UNEF as before, including the attaching of Egyptian and Israeli liaison officers to UNEF.

The number of men and the quantity and type of military equipment to be retained by Israel and Egypt in their respective zones is governed by a separate accord, the text of which has not been published. (See separate story) The agree-

ment also stipulates that neither Egypt nor Israel regard this as a final peace agreement but as "a first step toward a final, just and durable peace according to the provisions of Security Council Resolution 338 and within the framework of the Geneva conference."

Elazar said the disengagement would permit the release of Israeli reservists. He said only a limited number would be released before the separation of forces is carried out in toto, after which some 40,000 men would be released in the first stage of demobilization.

DUTCH LABOR PARTY ASKS USSR TO HELP RESOLVE ISSUE OF POWS IN SYRIA

AMSTERDAM, Jan. 20 (JTA)—The Labor Party has asked the Soviet Union to use its influence with Syria to help resolve the Israeli prisoner of war issue. The number of Israeli POWs in Syria is believed to be a little over 100, but many reports indicate that many of them may have been tortured or killed by the Syrians.

Syria has refused to release a list of its POWs and to allow Red Cross inspection of POW camps. Labor Party Chairman Andre van der Louw told the Soviet Ambassador he is asking the Soviet Union to intervene. "because I appreciate the positive role your government is playing in bringing about Israeli-Egyptian negotiations, and am convinced you will understand our view that the cloud created by the Israeli POWs in Syria must not threaten the peace climate in Geneva."

POWER FAILURES DARKEN ISRAEL

JERUSALEM, Jan. 20 (JTA)—The lights went out all over Israel this afternoon as hard pressed power stations gave in to enormous pressures from the elements and from consumers suffering from a bitter cold wave. Another freezing storm hit many parts of the country and Jerusalem was whipped by gales and hail and snow forecast to night for high ground areas. The electric company said its main power station at Tel Aviv had lost part of its power leading to a chain of other failures around the country. Telex and telephone lines were down in many cities causing traffic tie-ups and near chaos. Repair men were making strenuous efforts to return things to normal before more storms recurred.

BOARD OF DEPUTIES AGREES TO JOIN WJC

LONDON, Jan. 20 (JTA)—The Board of Deputies of British Jews, by a 224-28 vote today, agreed to join the World Jewish Congress. The vote, at a special meeting, approved the recommendation of the Board's executive committee to accept the invitation from Dr. Nahum Goldmann, WJC president, to join the WJC. Dr. Goldmann, in a letter of March 26, 1973 which was later ratified by the Congress, gave written assurance that the British group would not lose its independence. The WJC has been seeking to get the Board of Deputies as one of its affiliates since 1936. (See complete story in tomorrow's Bulletin.)

NIXON LETTER ON ARMS REDUCTION SIGNED

By David Landau, JTA Jerusalem Bureau Chief

JERUSALEM, Jan. 20 (JTA)—Premier Golda Meir and President Anwar Sadat of Egypt both

signed identical letters from President Nixon Friday detailing the reduction of their respective armed forces in the context of the disengagement agreement signed by the chiefs of staff of the two countries at Kilometer 101 Friday. This was disclosed today in an exclusive story appearing in the Jerusalem Post which also revealed the existence of secret accords between Israel and the U.S. on one hand and Egypt and the U.S. on the other, the contents of which, however, are known to both sides. The Nixon letter, which will not be published, and the secret accords stand out as examples of the adroit diplomacy employed by U.S. Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger during his week of shuttling between Jerusalem and Aswan that culminated in the disengagement and arms thinning agreements.

According to the Post, Nixon wrote the letters on Kissinger's advice. They met Israel's demand that Egypt make its undertaking to reduce forces directly to Israel and at the same time allowed Egypt the appearance of making its undertaking to the United States since it had refused to give Israel any direct pledges on actions inside its own territory. Though the text of the Nixon letter will not be officially published--details of the arms reduction provisions have already found their way into the U.S. and the Mideast press. No details whatever of the secret accord are allowed to be published although Kissinger made certain that Israel and Egypt both know the contents of the other side's secret accord with the U.S. The secret U.S.-Egypt accord is understood to include a pledge by Egypt to prepare the Suez Canal for reopening and to restore normal commercial and civilian life to the canal-side towns.

The Israel-U.S. secret accord refers to U.S. help in ensuring that both sides adhere to the terms of the disengagement, the Jerusalem Post reported. Observers here feel the Geneva conference will in effect lie fallow until early March, when, according to schedule, the disengagement agreement with Egypt will have been fully implemented. At that time new working groups will be set up by Israel and Egypt at Geneva to discuss various aspects of an overall peace settlement. Israel will insist on early definition of "the nature of the peace" which it sees as vitally affecting all other terms including the border question. By "nature of peace" Israel means whether a final settlement is to be little more than an armistice--or whether, as Israel hopes, it will pave the way to full diplomatic, commercial, cultural and tourism relations in the course of time, as befits two neighboring countries living at peace.

Meanwhile, the next item on the immediate agenda is possible disengagement talks with Syria. To investigate this possibility Kissinger traveled to Damascus today--and was back here briefly tonight with a report on President Hafez Assad's readiness or not to release names of Israeli POWs and allow Red Cross visits. These are sine qua non for Israel if there is to be any disengagement discussion with Syria. Kissinger in his many hours of talks here last week stressed repeatedly that his impression of Sadat was that he honestly wanted to lead his country to peace and prosperity. The more he met and talked with the man, said Kissinger, the more he was convinced of his sincerity, of his wish to go down in history as the builder of Egypt's prosperity and economy.

Most Israelis appear to be willing to go along with Kissinger's view and with that of Defense Minister Moshe Dayan and Deputy Prime Minister Yigal Allon who both say that Sadat seems to be aiming at peace rather than war--and imply that he ought to be given the chance to prove himself, which this agreement gives him without prejudicing Israel's vital security interests. The UN role in peacekeeping is not an altogether heartening phenomenon after the 1967 experience. But many people go along with Foreign Minister Abba Eban and Allon who say that the 7000-member UNEF force is protection against sudden or surprise Egyptian aggression. Apparently the force will be removable only at Security Council behest. People here are hoping--for this has not been said--that Israel got undertakings from Kissinger that the U.S. would veto such a move if Israel opposed it.

TWO MORE ORTHODOX GROUPS ASSAIL REFORM, CONSERVATIVE JEWISH LEADERS

NEW YORK, Jan. 20 (JTA)--Two more Orthodox groups have assailed American Reform and Conservative Jewish leaders for criticizing the demand by Israel's National Religious Party that the Law of Return be amended according to halacha as the price for joining a coalition government. Rabbi David B. Hollander, president of the Rabbinical Alliance of America, said the criticism against the Orthodox in Israel "is the best possible proof that the disqualification of the Conservative and Reform spiritual leaders as rabbis is fully justified."

Furthermore, he asserted in a statement issued here, "If rabbis oppose the authority of the halacha they effectively disqualify themselves not only as rabbis but also as faithful Jews since they stand guilty of leading many well intentioned Jews away from Judaism." Rabbi Hollander defended the conditions demanded by the Israeli Orthodox parties as "in full conformity to the democratic process."

In a separate statement, Rabbi Bernard Bergman, a member of the presidium of the World Religious Zionist Organization, rejected the contention that "goyour" (conversion) to

Judaism need not be according to halacha. He noted that the term "goyour" has no meaning nor existence outside halacha. "To say, therefore, as these Reform and Conservative rabbis are saying that goyour need not be in accordance with halacha is not only preposterous, it is meaningless," Rabbi Bergman said. "Can a rational person say that we can practice Jewish law but not in accordance with the provisions of Jewish law? Can a court of law be asked to rule not in accordance with the provisions of the law?"

Rabbi Bergman further expressed astonishment and dismay at the attack by the American Jewish Congress against the religious law and fundamental tenets of the Jewish faith. "This unwarranted interference by a political organization into strictly religious matters," he said, "must be strongly rejected and condemned."

NEW YORK (JTA)--District One, B'nai B'rith, comprising New York State and the six New England States, announced a petition campaign on behalf of the Israeli POWs held in Syria. It has launched a vigorous drive to obtain a quarter of a million signatures addressed to Kurt Waldheim, Secretary General of the United Nations. The District is canvassing with the aid of its B'nai B'rith Youth units and its men's lodges and women's chapters.

SHARON ASSAILS DISENGAGEMENT TERMS

TEL AVIV, Jan. 20 (JTA)--Gen. Ariel (Arik) Sharon, the Likud leader, charged today that Israel has given up its most important defense line in Sinai--the ridge of a hill some 10 kilometers from the Suez Canal where Israeli forces successfully contained the Egyptian attack at the outset of the Yom Kippur War at the cost of hundreds of casualties. "This line is now in Egyptian hands," Sharon told some 200 Israeli and foreign reporters at a press conference at which he denounced--not the principle of disengagement--but the terms of the disengagement accord that Israel agreed to.

Only a few hours earlier, Sharon had announced his retirement from active military service "to fight on another front" meaning the political one. Sharon, one of the founders of the Likud non-Labor alignment was elected to the Knesset in the Dec. 31 elections. The Likud leader, who led Israeli forces to their major triumph of the Yom Kippur War--the breakthrough to the west bank of the Suez Canal--said today that the Egyptians received everything they had hoped for by the disengagement agreement.

The agreement eliminated the Israeli threat against Egypt by providing for Israeli evacuation of the canal's west bank, Sharon said, adding he didn't consider that position a permanent one but it was an important card Israel could have made better use of it. The Egyptians also benefit from the fact that the canal is no longer Israel's first line of defense, the general said. He warned that the return of Egyptian control of the Suez Canal would only enable the expansion of Egyptian and Soviet fleets in the Red Sea.

Sharon offered his own ideas on disengagement. He saw it as a long process linked to a step-by-step normalization of relations between Israel and Egypt including the exchange of civilian traffic and finally mutual diplomatic recognition. The Likud leader carried his anti-agreement message to some 2000 Tel Avivians including many soldiers who attended an outdoor rally despite cold winds and heavy gusts of rain.

Addressing a sea of umbrellas and posters reading "No Peace Under Missile Threats" "No One-Sided Withdrawal" and "The Alignment Leads to War," Sharon alleged that the agreement was not disengagement but the withdrawal of a victorious army by a defeated government. Other speakers at the Likud rally included Menachem Begin of Herut; Elimelech Rimalt of the Liberal faction, and Shmuel Tamir of the Free Center. Tamir charged, "Without even American pressure, the government made concessions to the Egyptians and the Russians."

KISSINGER RETURNS FROM SYRIA; BUT WITHOUT LIST OF ISRAELI POWs

JERUSALEM, Jan. 20 (JTA)--U.S. Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger returned here briefly tonight to report to Israeli officials on his talks over the weekend in Jordan and Syria. After 90 minutes of meeting with Foreign Minister Abba Eban, Defense Minister Moshe Dayan and Deputy Premier Yigal Alon, Kissinger was airborne once again, this time on his way back to Washington with a stopover in London.

The Jewish Telegraphic Agency learned that he had not brought with him a Syrian agreement to publish the names of Israeli POWs, a prerequisite for disengagement talks with Israel. The Secretary, nevertheless, declared he had brought with him "constructive suggestions" be-

cause he had raised with President Hafez Assad possible ways of getting disengagement talks started despite the Israeli precondition. These possibilities seem to revolve around Kissinger himself in the role of middleman with perhaps Assad providing Kissinger with the POW list rather than losing face by providing it to Israel.

If a formula is found, well placed observers expect some kind of Israeli-Syrian military working group to be set up perhaps in Geneva, perhaps elsewhere to talk disengagement. The Secretary's schedule precludes another visit by him to the region for the next several weeks.

ISRAELIS, EGYPTIANS BEGIN TO WORK OUT DISENGAGEMENT DETAILS

KILOMETER 101, Jan. 20 (JTA)--Israeli and Egyptian military teams met at this UN checkpoint today to begin a week of talks to work out details of the disengagement agreement signed here Friday. Although the weather outside alternated between sandstorms and torrential rains, the atmosphere inside the UN tent was good, Israel's Chief of Staff Gen. David Elazar told reporters.

He said that next Friday Israeli forces will start their evacuation of the southern section of the area they hold on the west bank of the Suez Canal--three days before the disengagement agreement officially goes into effect. That will open the Suez-Cairo road to Egyptian traffic and relieve the town of Suez and the Egyptian Third Army Corps on the east side of the waterway which have been encircled by Israeli forces since mid-Oct. Elazar said that Israeli forces will complete their evacuation of the west bank within 28 days from Jan. 25 and the Egyptians will simultaneously thin out their forces on the east bank. The entire disengagement process is scheduled to last 40 days.

Elazar said that one of the subjects discussed at today's meeting was the return of the bodies of Israeli soldiers killed during the Yom Kippur War in areas now held by the Egyptians. The meetings will continue tomorrow. Elazar and his Egyptian counterpart, Chief of Staff Gen. Mohammed Gemassy, will meet again Thursday to sum up the arrangements made during the week by their aides.

KISSINGER TO GIVE DISENGAGEMENT DETAILS TO CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS

WASHINGTON, Jan. 20 (JTA)--Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger will inform Congressional leaders of both Houses tomorrow at the White House about details of the Israeli-Egyptian disengagement agreements, the White House announced. Unofficial reports here said that the Israeli pull-back to the passes in the Sinai may give Saudi Arabia sufficient reason to drop its oil embargo without lowering its vastly increased prices for its oil.

Meanwhile, the State Department steadfastly refused to give any details of the Egyptian-Israeli agreement or reported "understandings" between the principal parties and the U.S. The Department was pressed by newsmen to give reasons why the negotiations conducted by Kissinger have not been disclosed and why the American public is not informed on how far the U.S. government is committed to the agreement which Kissinger is generally hailed with having formulated, but termed here in some quarters as "the American proposal."

BONN (JTA)--The West German air force began Friday transporting West African troops from Senegal and Ghana to the Suez Canal zone where they will be part of the UN peace-keeping force. This involves some 1000 men and about 500 tons of arms and equipment and will last 10 days.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES: ISRAELIS ASSESS MEANING OF DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT

Reactions Run The Gamut From The Best Possible To Munich Sellout

By Yitzhak Shargil (Tel Aviv), Gil Sedan (Jerusalem)

Jan. 20 (JTA)—The pros and cons of Israel's disengagement agreement with Egypt—as viewed by the general public and Israeli political figures—emerged today. It could be summed up in the by now classic question, "Ma iyeh?" (What Now?) which has been asked by Israelis after every major development in their nation's 25-year struggle with its Arab neighbors. The question reflected uncertainty and a certain amount of suspicion inbred by the experiences of the past. But there was also considerable relief that after a week of mounting suspense the indefatigable diplomacy of Henry A. Kissinger yielded stabilization of the cease-fire that had been deteriorating dangerously, almost to the point of renewed large-scale hostilities.

The man in the street was suspicious because of the sorry history of past agreements with Egypt. The most bitter recollection was of the Aug. 1970 cease-fire that ended the war of attrition and was violated within hours by Egypt which began immediately to concentrate new SAM missile batteries in the Suez Canal zone. Political analysts maintained, however, that the present agreement was the best Israel could have hoped for and, moreover, it did not have much of a choice. The only alternatives they pointed out were a new war that would cost precious lives or a continued high state of mobilization seriously damaging the Israeli economy.

The major political factions in Jerusalem—with the notable exception of the Likud opposition—regard the disengagement agreement as overall favorable to Israel. Premier Golda Meir's Labor Alignment has launched a broad campaign aimed at convincing the public of this and isolating Likud. The drive began with Deputy Premier Yigal Allon's television interview Thursday night in which he stressed that, at the very least, war has been averted for a long period and a considerable number of reserve soldiers will be able to go home. The second stage of the Labor drive will be Mrs. Meir's political statement when the new Knesset convenes this week.

Allon observed that the chances of new hostilities with Egypt have been reduced to a minimum. If the Egyptians had wanted to attack Israel one more time they would have done so before signing an agreement in which the United States played a decisive role, he said. The very existence of a large United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) between the two sides, while militarily of no consequence, has considerable political significance, according to Allon. The Egyptians will not be able to launch a new attack on Israel without first removing UNEF, he pointed out. Of important political significance at home is the fact that Defense Minister Moshe Dayan, the Labor Alignment's most prominent "hawk" sees eye-to-eye with Foreign Minister Abba Eban on the advantages of the agreement. Interviewed on television Friday night, Dayan defended the agreement on grounds that it would bring about normalization of the region including dredging the Suez Canal immediately following the separation of forces.

While he conceded that Israel's new defense line—some 20 kilometers east of the canal—is not as good as the line held prior to the Yom Kippur War, Dayan said that as long as Egypt really wants peace, which he believes to be the case, the pullback is not really disadvantageous. He attributed Egypt's change of attitude to its initial achievement in the Yom Kippur War of crossing the canal and to its subsequent failure to prevent Israeli forces from breaking through to the west bank of the waterway. He justified the presence of Egyptian forces on the east bank of the canal on grounds that the rehabilitated waterway and repopulated canal-side towns needed some sort of military force for protection. The force to remain on the east side of the canal under the agreement is not a large one, Dayan noted.

Eban, who made the official announcement of the agreement on behalf of the Israeli government Thursday said the accord marked a turning point away from the cycle of wars in the Middle East and could be regarded as a first step toward a permanent peace. The separation of forces will strengthen the cease-fire without which it would be impossible to continue the Geneva peace conference, Eban said. Accompanying Kissinger to Ben Gurion Airport when he left Israel Friday, Eban told reporters he believed the agreement would prevent a surprise attack on Israel. "After all, this is its aim," he said. He stressed his hope that the agreement would have far-reaching importance internationally. U.S. Ambassador Kenneth Keating, who was also at the airport, expressed satisfaction with the agreement. "I am happy the effort has culminated in reaching the agreement and I hope this is the first stage of a process that will end in a peace agreement," he said.

Of the two political parties with which Premier Meir hopes to form a new Labor-led coalition government, the Independent Liberals, through their leader, Moshe Kol, fully endorsed the agreement. But the National Religious Party leadership remained split. The NRP's veteran ministers were inclined to accept the agreement as the best way out of a difficult situation. But the party's "young guard," headed by Knesset members Zevulun Hammer and Yehuda Ben Meir, rejected it. The pro-Moscow Rakah Communist faction welcomed the agreement as a first step toward implementing Resolution 242. But Likud remained adamantly opposed and is clearly seeking to rally public opinion against the government.

Menachem Begin, head of Likud's dominant Herut faction, accused the government of having agreed to a unilateral withdrawal. He accused the ministers of having been taken in by Kissinger's "whirlwind nocturnal negotiations" because their senses were blurred by lack of sleep. He likened Kissinger's formula to that of another U.S. Secretary of State—the late John Foster Dulles—who forced Israel to pull out of the Sinai in 1956 without peace. Shmuel Tamir, head of Likud's Free Center faction, said his party was not opposed to disengagement but to the conditions that went with it. He said that by pulling back to the Mitla and Gidi passes, Israel gave up the most important internationally strategic areas it ever occupied. "We gave up all this territory without coming nearer to peace even an inch," Tamir said. "We are now witnessing the Mideast Munich of 1974." The Israeli press for the most part supported the agreement. Maariv, however, adopted a wait-and-see line, while Yediot Achronot attacked the agreement Thursday but has since withheld comment.