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RABIN: STILL NO DECISION ON

TALKS PRIORITY WITH EGYPT, JORDAN

JERUSALEM, Aug. 12 (JTA)--Premier Yitzhak Rabin said this weekend it was still too early to decide if Israel would hold talks first with Egypt or with Jordan as the next stage of the peace process. In an army radio interview, the Premier said he preferred to postpone this decision until after the Arab leaders had ended their round of talks with Administration officials in Washington. He said the U.S. was not trying to influence the decision at this time.

"Egypt would be preferable as a leader in any serious advance to settlements, but...there may be changes," Rabin said. One change which could alter the preferability, he indicated, would be a change in Jordan's partial settlement proposals. King Hussein's current idea for an Israeli pullback from the Jordan River was unacceptable, Rabin stressed.

The Premier said Egypt and Syria were carrying out the military aspects of the disengagement accords, but Syria especially was lagging in the implementation of the civilian aspects, upon which there had been firm understandings at the time of signing. While there was some resettlement in the area returned by Israel to Syria in the Golan, the town of Kuneitra itself remained unrestored. Syria had declared that it wanted to wait upon future developments before rebuilding Kuneitra, Rabin recalled.

Rabin warned again of the danger of a new "eastern front" arising against Israel at Syrian instigation and comprising Syria, Jordan and Iraq.

ISRAEL CATEGORICALLY REJECTS ROLE

IN DOWNING OF UNITED NATIONS PLANE

By Yitzhak Rabin

UNITED NATIONS, Aug. 12 (JTA)--Israel today "categorically rejected" Syrian attempts to involve it in the crash of a United Nations plane over Syrian territory last Friday in which nine Canadian members of the UN Emergency Force were killed. In a letter to Secretary General Kurt Waldheim, Israel's UN Ambassador Yosef Tekoah characterized as "a sheer fabrication" Syria's contention that Israeli Air Force jets had penetrated Syrian air space at the time the UN plane went down.

According to the Syrian version, the UN plane was hit by Syrian missiles fired at invading Israeli aircraft. Tekoah called the Syrian claim "a transparent and futile attempt to involve Israel in this tragic disaster for which Syria alone is responsible."

The allegation that Israeli planes had penetrated Syrian air space at the time the United Nations plane was downed "is a sheer fabrication which is categorically rejected," Tekoah stated in his letter to Waldheim. "The Israel Defense Forces spokesman has already announced that there was no Israeli aerial activity in the area when the United Nations aircraft was shot down by the Syrian armed forces," Tekoah said.

Discrepancy Noted By Observers

The Israeli denial appeared to be supported by a discrepancy noted by observers here today

between the Syrian report of the incident and the report by the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO). According to the Syrian account, Israeli planes raiding Lebanon appeared over Syrian territory at 1 p.m. local time Friday, the time the UN plane was shot down.

The UNTSO report, however, placed the Israeli sortie over Lebanon at 3 p.m. local time, two hours later. A UN spokesman could not explain the discrepancy. He said an investigation was underway by the UN as well as by Canadian authorities. Tekoah requested that his letter be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly and the Security Council.

FORD TELLS SADAT HE HOPES

U.S.-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS WILL

DEVELOP FURTHER IN CAUSE OF PEACE

WASHINGTON, Aug. 12 (JTA)--President Gerald Ford has pledged that his Administration will follow up diplomatic efforts in the Middle East "with the same vigor" as the previous administration. He made the pledge in a message to President Anwar Sadat of Egypt in which he said that the achievement of peace in the Middle East would remain one of the foremost aims of U.S. foreign policy, sources here reported today.

"I also hope that relations between our two countries will further develop and expand for the interest of our two peoples and their joint benefit and for the restoration of a just and permanent peace in the Middle East area," the President's message to Sadat said. Ford also renewed the invitation of former President Nixon to Sadat to visit the U.S.

Ford's message was reported following the arrival here last night of Egyptian Foreign Minister Ismail Fahmy for Middle East talks with Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger. Fahmy and Kissinger held the first of a series of meetings here today. It was announced that the Egyptian Foreign Minister will meet with Ford Wednesday for a working luncheon. The White House also announced that Ford will meet King Hussein of Jordan Friday to discuss moves toward a Middle East peace. Hussein is in the U.S. on a private visit.

It was learned, meanwhile, that Egypt is seeking U.S. food items worth \$750 million, including 980,000 tons of wheat under the American "Food for Peace" program. Officials said this would be more than the \$742 million budgeted by the U.S. for the purpose. Apart from the wheat, the Egyptian request included supplies of oils and tallow. The list, a tentative one, was submitted last week to Agriculture Secretary Earl Butz by Egyptian Ambassador Ashraf Ghorbal. A communique issued by former President Nixon and President Sadat in Cairo last June said the U.S. would give priority to Egypt's need for agricultural goods.

GENERAL MOBILIZATION PRACTICE DUE

JERUSALEM, Aug. 12 (JTA)--A mobilization practice involving reserve soldiers from all military units and all areas of the country will be held shortly. Defense Minister Shimon Peres unfolded plans for the practice--intended to test new call-up arrangements--to the Cabinet yesterday. The mobilization will be announced over radio and television and through newspaper ads. It will last 24 hours. The mobilization date was not disclosed.

Peres said overseas ambassadors and the United Nations staff would be informed before the practice so that foreign governments—including Arab governments—would not become alarmed. He also told the ministers of an approach to him by the chairman of the Israel Students Union and his committee offering to start a campaign to encourage students to volunteer for an extra year of army service as professional soldiers.

The student leaders proposed that such volunteers be guaranteed stipends, job placement priorities, and other benefits awarded by the government last year to students mobilized during and after the war for long stretches—after they finish their additional, voluntary year of service.

The Cabinet instructed the relevant ministers—Education, Defense, Justice, Labor—to examine the offer, and expressed its appreciation at the student leaders' initiative.

REPORT RUSSIANS WARN ARAFAT OF IMMINENT ISRAELI ATTACK ON ARABS

PARIS, Aug. 12 (JTA)—French-language newspapers in Beirut said today that the Soviet Union has warned of an imminent Israeli attack on the Arabs. The warning came from the Soviet Ambassador to Lebanon, Sarvar Azimov, to Yasser Arafat, head of the Palestine Liberation Organization, according to the newspaper L'Orient-Le Jour. The paper said Azimov told Arafat that "he had information in his possession which indicated an imminent Israeli attack on Arab countries."

Another newspaper, Le Soir, said the Russian envoy put Arafat on guard against an Israeli attack and urged him to speed up "the creation of a Palestinian state." Azimov was quoted by the Beirut paper, An-Nahar, as saying he feared Israel might soon attack "one or more of the Arab fronts and the Palestinian refugee camps in order to freeze the Middle East peace efforts and obstruct the resumption of the Geneva peace conference." According to the Beirut reports, Soviet and Arab sources confirmed that Azimov met with Arafat but refused to comment further.

ORTHODOX JEWS PRESENT PLANS FOR SETTLEMENT IN TOWN OF SHILO

JERUSALEM, Aug. 12 (JTA)—A group of Orthodox would-be settlers at Shilo, ancient site of the temporary sanctuary during the period of Joshua and the Judges, met yesterday with a senior aide to Minister-Without-Portfolio Yisrael Galili to give him their plans for an industrial kibbutz on the site. The aide, Arnan Azaryahu, told the JTA the group would meet with Galili later this week once he had studied their plans and proposals.

If Galili thought their ideas feasible from an economic standpoint, it would then be for the Ministerial settlement committee, which Galili heads, to rule on the political advisability of settlement in Shilo, Azaryahu said. Shilo is on the Ramallah-Nablus Road, some 25 kilometers north of Jerusalem. The settlers had impressed him as "sincere and serious," Azaryahu said, and they did not seem intent on defying government opposition to their plan—but rather on persuading key ministers and officials of its worthiness.

The would-be settlers—some 20 families and several dozen bachelors—mostly belong to the "Emunim" section of the National Religious Party, a section closely affiliated to the NRP

"Young Guard." "Emunim" claims it has applicants ready to settle throughout Judea and Samaria, and it has prepared plans for a string of new settlements stretching across the mountain ridges from Jerusalem north to Afula.

ISRAELI ATHLETES DUE IN TEHRAN

TEL AVIV, Aug. 12 (JTA)—The Israeli Olympic Committee will field a 59-member team of athletes at the Asian games opening in Teheran Sept. 1. The contingent approved by the committee today includes 48 men and 11 women. They will compete in track and field events, swimming, weight lifting, fencing, sharpshooting, soccer and basketball. Chaim Wein, chairman of the Ninth Maccabiah Games, has been invited by the Asian Games Organizing Committee to attend the tournament as an official guest.

PANOV'S DEMONSTRATE OUTSIDE SOVIET EMBASSY ON BEHALF OF POLSKY

LONDON, Aug. 12 (JTA)—Valery and Galina Panov demonstrated outside of the Soviet Embassy this morning in behalf of their "very old and dear friend" Dr. Viktor Polsky, the Soviet-Jewish scientist and activist facing prosecution in Moscow on trumped-up charges of reckless driving.

The two former members of Leningrad's Kirov Ballet, who won their freedom to emigrate from Russia earlier this year, joined placard-carrying members of the Women's Campaign for Soviet Jewry who were marching outside the Embassy despite a driving rain storm. The Panovs, who immigrated to Israel, are visiting London to express thanks to the many Britishers who supported their two-year struggle for exit visas. They will resume their ballet careers at the Mann Auditorium in Tel Aviv Nov. 2 and will perform later in London.

Valery Panov told reporters that as soon as he learned of the demonstration for Polsky he and Galina decided to join it. Asked if he would consider entering the Embassy to present a personal plea, he replied, "That is a very complicated question. Unexpected and dramatic things can happen in Soviet Embassies."

RABIN: READY TO RETURN TERRITORIES TO ACHIEVE PEACE WITH ARAB STATES

COPENHAGEN, Aug. 12 (JTA)—Israeli Premier Yitzhak Rabin said in a newspaper interview here that Israel "is ready to negotiate and surrender territories to achieve a true peace with the Arab states." He ruled out, however, the possibility of Israeli withdrawal to the pre-Six-Day War borders in a Mideast peace settlement.

"Israel wants a true peace, with agreement and mutual concessions and fulfillment of mutual claims on all sides," he told the Danish weekly "Weekend Berlingske Aften" in an interview this weekend. The Israeli Premier also indicated his country is prepared to accept the establishment of a military-controlled area between Jordan and Israel.

Rabin expressed concern about Syria's continued extreme anti-Israel stance despite the Israeli-Syrian disengagement accord. He said Syria's position was being strongly backed by the Soviet Union and warned that renewed hostilities between Syria and Israel is "a dangerous possibility." Turning to Europe, Rabin said he hoped the Europeans would increase their purchase of Israeli products to help even up the trade balance between Europe and the Jewish State.

ISRAEL FACING LABOR TROUBLES

TEL AVIV, Aug. 12 (JTA)—Israel is facing an avalanche of labor troubles a labor official warned last night. Eliezer Molk, secretary general of the

Haifa Labor Council said dissatisfaction was growing among industrial workers as prices and taxes continue to rise. "It is no secret that an embittered worker cannot produce the same as a satisfied one," Moik said. He noted that since the government has levied higher taxes on overtime and night shift pay more employees are refusing extra work.

Hillel Seidel, a coalition MK wrote to Premier Yitzhak Rabin last night urging him to convene a joint meeting of labor, management and the government to tackle the mounting economic problems. Seidel, a member of the Independent Liberal Party, proposed a total freeze of prices, wages, taxes and private earnings for one year to prevent the economic situation from deteriorating further.

The most serious aspect of the problem is the continuing rise in the prices of almost all commodities and services. Price hikes occur so rapidly that shoppers in supermarkets often find three different prices stamped on goods. Further price rises are expected on locally produced commodities since the Minister of Commerce and Industry agreed to calculate the latest wage increases in the final price.

Taxes are becoming increasingly burdensome and the prospects are for more. The mayors of the three largest cities--Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and Haifa--have formed a "club" to try to solve the financial problems besetting all municipalities. Local deficits run into many millions of pounds and unless relief is forthcoming in the form of government subsidies the mayors say they will have to impose new municipal taxes or cut vital services.

Meanwhile, the business sector is objecting vigorously to a government plan to freeze bank loans as a measure against inflation. Because of the liquidity crisis, merchants and manufacturers have been taking loans at high interest rates in order to keep their operations going. The government wants to freeze loans for a three-month period. Mark Mosheovich, president of the Manufacturers Association has warned the Finance Minister and the Governor of the Bank of Israel that Israeli industry would collapse if the credit freeze plan is approved.

MRS. MEIR REVEALS SHE SOUGHT MEETING WITH SADAT

JERUSALEM, Aug. 12 (JTA)--Former Premier Golda Meir revealed here today that she had gone to "a certain country" and held 14 hours of talks with its President, Premier and Foreign Minister, who told her they were confident that President Anwar Sadat sought an Egypt-Israel meeting at the top level. She agreed at once, saying this was the happiest news she had heard in years. Technical arrangements were made for further communications to set the meeting. Her hosts said a firm answer should come through from Cairo within 10 days--but nothing further was ever heard.

Mrs. Meir told the story at a luncheon in her honor by the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee. Observers immediately concluded that the "certain country" was Rumania, which Mrs. Meir visited on a sudden invitation from President Nicolae Ceausescu in May 1972.

At the luncheon, former Foreign Minister Abba Eban also stressed that the previous government had undertaken many and varied peace initiatives. When the time came for these to be publicized, he said, Israeli citizens would be surprised by their number and their variety and they would convincingly disprove accusations

that the previous government was not zealous enough in its peace efforts.

SOVIET JEWISH MARTYRS REMEMBERED

UNITED NATIONS, Aug. 12 (JTA)--Some 200 persons, including Jewish labor leaders, stood at the Isalah Wall across the street from the United Nations today, in a memorial tribute to 24 Soviet Jewish writers and community leaders who were killed by orders from Stalin 22 years ago. The memorial ceremony, sponsored by the Workmen's Circle, also protested the present plight of Soviet Jewry and appealed to the UN to help rescue those Jews who are imprisoned and harassed in the USSR.

"When the question of Jewish rights is raised in the halls of the UN, voices become mute," Harold Ostroff, Workmen's Circle president, declared. "Whether it is on the subject of El Fatah, terrorists who shoot with Soviet weapons, or on Soviet Jews who are beaten with Soviet truncheons, the whippers are invariably aimed at sweeping justice under the proverbial rug."

Bronx Borough President Robert Abrams and Stanley Lowell, chairman of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry, urged a continuation of efforts on behalf of Soviet Jews. Other speakers addressed the group in Yiddish. Margrita Polanskia, a newly-arrived Soviet artist, read two poems by Soviet Yiddish poets.

100 In Washington Meeting

A similar memorial meeting was held this afternoon opposite the Soviet Embassy in Washington. About 100 persons who comprise the regular daily vigil for Soviet Jews participated in reciting the kaddish for Stalin's victims. The participants included Arena Stage actors Halo Wines and Richard Bauer, members of the Concerned Artists for Soviet Jewry, and Herman Taube, a journalist with the New York Jewish daily, Forward. The memorial was arranged by the Jewish Community Council of Greater Washington which also appealed for support for Dr. Viktor Polesky, a Soviet Jewish activist who goes on trial in Moscow Thursday for alleged reckless driving.

SAPIR VISITS LIMA; STRESSES ISRAEL'S NEEDS

LIMA, Aug. 12 (JTA)--Pinhas Sapir, chairman of the Jewish Agency and World Zionist Organization Executives, visited Lima last week for two days. Sapir addressed the Jewish community congress taking place here and also spoke to the yishuv at large and visited the Jewish school, "Leon Pinelo," which enrolls 95 percent of the community's school children.

Sapir commented on several facets of Israel's current conditions and stressed the importance and need of aliya, stating as his target an aliya of half a million Jews during the next five years. The community congress addressed itself to the problems of education, youth, relations with Israel and organizational structure. Prof. Jaim Finkelstein, head of the education department of the Jewish Agency, attended this event, specially invited.

JERUSALEM (JTA)--The Agudat Israel Party is expected to sign an agreement shortly pledging to support the coalition government in return for assurances that the religious status quo will remain unchanged. Under the agreement the five-member Aguda Knesset bloc would specifically promise not to cooperate with Likud or the National Religious Party. But the Aguda leaders will seek the approval of their Council of Rabbinical Sages before finally signing the agreement, Israel Radio said Monday. Much opposition emerged at the current meeting of the World Aguda Executive.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES**PRELUDE TO A STORMY ERA**

By Uri Benziman

JERUSALEM, Aug. 12 (JTA)--Recently the Knesset held a long voting session on a procedural issue: the approaching negotiations between Israel and Jordan on the future of the West Bank be discussed in the plenum or in one of the Knesset committees? Four "hawkish" motions for the agenda--three of them similar--were submitted to the Speaker. Four "doveish" motions were submitted for discussion in order to oppose the "hawkish" motion. Each of the eight motions was voted on twice: first, by the regular procedure of a show of hands, and then, on the demand of several MKs, a vote count by two members, one from each side of the House.

The long and tiring procedure (which ended with the motions being moved to committee) reflected the strong emotions which the topic at issue aroused. The obedience required by members of the coalition was not kept. The voting was accompanied by shouting and interruptions. A few days later, July 26, a group of 150 youngsters, all of them Orthodox, tried to settle at Sebastia near Nablus.

One of the most influential commentators warned that the atmosphere created by this attempt might lead the country to the verge of civil war. About 15 MKs from the religious parties and the Likud came to Sebastia to encourage the settlers. Their visit was denounced by other MKs, including some from their own parties. The attempt led to violent demonstrations in Jerusalem and near Beersheba (at the farm of MK Ariel Sharon who supported the settlers).

Opinion in the Israeli press was divided. One could find various publicists expressing different views in the same newspapers. Those who backed the attempt to settle the West Bank town called it a patriotic step. They believed it was a real fulfillment of Zionist ideals. The commentators who opposed the operation stressed its illegality. One of the most important dailies called the settlers "invaders."

Gravity Of The West Bank Issue

The government was also divided on the issue. There were members in the Cabinet who called for immediate and forceful evacuation of the settlers. Other members supported more moderate means. They advised waiting in order to influence the youngsters to leave on their own free will.

There were signs that the differences of opinion reached the army, too. Publicists wondered how the settlers had succeeded in reaching Sebastia despite army measures designed to prevent them. Some commentators said that there had been soldiers who allowed the settlers to move to their objective, thus defying orders. There were even allegations in the press that the settlers were not stopped efficiently because Defense Minister Shimon Peres did not give explicit orders to the army. (The truth is probably different; the settlers succeeded in deceiving the soldiers and circumvented the roadblocks.)

All these expressions of suspicion, differences of opinion, ideological controversy and emotional dispute indicated how grave the issue of the West Bank will be for Israel society. The debate in the Knesset and the settlement attempt near Nablus were only a prelude. The real trouble will start once Israel begins negotiations with Jordan when a territorial compromise will become a reality.

In order to cope with such a complicated problem the nation needs a strong leadership. Without a strong and clear guidance from the leadership, confusion and anarchy may replace law and order. In order to achieve authoritative leadership, present political alignments will have to change. This is the view by many commentators and analysts as well as many Israelis.

Many Israelis believe that the present political blocs cannot exist for long. A moment will come when the party configurations will be reshuffled according to the attitude of individual politicians regarding the future of Judea and Samaria. Only then will a real decision be possible. The public analysts note, will be able to choose between two blocs: one that stands for the idea of a large Israel, and second that supports the aim of a political settlement on the basis of Israeli territorial concessions.

SPETTER APPEAL: AMNESTY REPORTS FAILURE OF A MISSION

LONDON, Aug. 12 (JTA)--Amnesty International reported this weekend on its unsuccessful attempts to intercede with the Bulgarian authorities on behalf of Dr. Heinrich Spetter, the Jewish economist sentenced to death on a charge of espionage.

Amnesty International had asked a Viennese lawyer to represent it at Dr. Spetter's appeal on Aug. 5 at the Sofia high court. The lawyer was allowed into Bulgaria and given permission to enter the courtroom just before the appeal was due to be heard. However, as Dr. Spetter was escorted in, the judges ordered that the courtroom be cleared. Amnesty's representative then asked for a meeting with Bulgaria's Prosecutor General. The meeting took place but the prosecutor proved evasive and would not undertake or disclose anything.

The lawyer then telephoned Dr. Spetter's mother, who agreed to see him. A meeting was arranged but Mrs. Spetter failed to turn up. When the lawyer tried to reach her again, he had only time to give his name before the line went dead. He took a taxi to Mrs. Spetter's home but the house was guarded by police and he was not allowed in.

Amnesty's representative returned to Vienna empty-handed and reported to the London-based organization on the failure of his mission. The outcome of the appeal is not yet known but the behavior of the Bulgarian authorities towards Amnesty has increased apprehensions.

ARABS SEEKING TRADE WITH BRAZIL

RIO DE JANEIRO, Aug. 12 (JTA)--A 40-member delegation of bankers and businessmen from seven Arab countries arrived here this weekend for two weeks to examine the possibilities of increasing trade with Brazil. The delegation, comprising representatives from Lebanon, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Jordan, Morocco and Libya, is considered by officials here to be of great import. However, diplomatic sources here say that no dramatic results are expected and that the group is not here to make investments. Since the steep increase in the price of oil, the Brazilian economy has been hard hit. Brazil has since that time sought to strengthen its ties with the Arab oil-producing nations. ***

PARIS (JTA)--France will offer Egypt substantial long-term financial loans and credit as part of the Franco-Egyptian cooperation accord the two signed here recently. ***

SOFIA (JTA)--A ceremony was held here recently to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the burning of the Kaylaka concentration camp near Pleven where Bulgarian Jews were interned.