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GROMYKO REPUDIATES LETTER OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN KISSINGER AND JACKSON ON SOVIET EMIGRATION Says U.S. Received No Soviet Assurances

WASHINGTON, Dec. 18 (JTA)--A repudiation by Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko of the Oct. 18 letters of understanding on Soviet emigration practices exchanged between Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger and Sen. Henry M. Jackson (D.Wash.) was made public tonight by the Soviet official news agency Tass. The repudiation, which says the Kissinger-Jackson exchange created a "distorted impression" of the Soviet position, was contained in a letter from Gromyko to Kissinger dated Oct. 26, when Kissinger was in Moscow.

The Gromyko letter said the Soviet government had given no assurances to the U.S. on easing emigration procedures and it expected American restrictions on trade with the USSR to be lifted unconditionally.

There was no immediate comment from U.S. Administration officials about the Gromyko letter. There was no indication as to why the Gromyko letter was released at this time. There was, however, some speculation that it was released as an answer to Egyptian Foreign Minister Ismail Fahmy's demand several days ago that Israel freeze its immigration for the next 50 years. Fahmy's statement was seen by some here and in Israel as a request to the Soviet Union to halt the emigration of Soviet Jews. The speculation was also that the release of the Gromyko letter at this time serves to smooth the way for the upcoming talks in Cairo between President Anwar Sadat and Soviet Communist Party Secretary Leonid I. Brezhnev.

Emigration Is Internal Policy Of USSR

The Tass release of the Gromyko letter came five days after the Senate approved the Trade Reform Bill giving the Soviet Union most favored nation status in return for what Kissinger had said were assurances that the emigration of Jews and other Soviet citizens would be eased.

Gromyko's letter said that in contacts with the U.S. on the emigration issue, the Soviet side had "underlined that this question relates totally to the internal competence of our State.... Tass is authorized to state that leading circles of the Soviet Union flatly reject as unacceptable any attempts from whoever they may come, to intervene in the internal affairs that are entirely the concern of the Soviet State and no one else," the Tass release stated.

Gromyko's letter to Kissinger said that Soviet "explanations" of their views on emigration had been characterized in the U.S. as "some sort of assurances and even almost obligations from our side about the...departure of Soviet citizens from the USSR. Some figures were even cited relating to the supposed number of such citizens, and the expected increase of this number in comparison with past years is also being talked about."

The Gromyko letter claimed that Kissinger had been told by the Soviet Union that in fact there was "a tendency toward a decrease in the number of persons wishing to leave the USSR and

seek permanent residence in other countries."

The letter referred to "artificially created complications" around U.S.-Soviet trade agreements and observed, "There is only one basis on which Soviet-American relations in general and commercial and economic relations in particular can be built successfully.... This is full equality of the sides and non-interference in each other's internal affairs."

Kissinger, in his final appearance before the Senate Finance Committee earlier this month prior to its approval of the Trade Reform Bill, stated that the understanding with the Soviet Union on the emigration issue had to be taken on "faith." He told the Senators that if he were to say specifically that an agreement had been reached, the Soviets would repudiate it. He made no mention of the Gromyko letter written nearly two months earlier.

(Reactions to the letter came swiftly from Congressional and Jewish supporters of Soviet Jewry. See P. 3 for separate story.)

U.S. MAINTAINING RECONNAISSANCE TO DETECT DISENGAGEMENT VIOLATIONS

By Helen Silver

WASHINGTON, Dec. 18 (JTA)--State Department spokesman Robert Anderson disclosed today that the United States maintains its own reconnaissance to detect possible violations of the disengagement agreements on the Golan Heights and in Sinai but was bound not to make their findings public. He refused to confirm or deny whether U.S. reconnaissance had found any violations.

He said the American reconnaissance operation was agreed to by the parties to the disengagement agreements which are also bound to keep the results confidential. He noted that "there are UN mechanisms to handle this matter so it is appropriate to let these organizations work."

Anderson said he assumed the U.S. knows that Israeli Defense Minister Shimon Peres has advised the UN of disengagement violations on the Golan Heights and also mentioned violations in the Sinai "which have been rectified." Replying to a question, Anderson said he did not know, but would try to find out, who pays for the U.S. reconnaissance operation and whether Congress gets the results on a regular or periodic basis.

No Quarrel With Peres' Estimate

Meanwhile, Defense Department spokesman William Beecher said today that he "would not quarrel" with Israeli Defense Minister Shimon Peres' statement in the Knesset yesterday that Syria has received more than 300 aircraft and 1000 tanks and missiles from the Soviet Union. While indicating that those figures were probably accurate, Beecher said Peres' claim that there were 3000 Soviet military personnel in Syria may be a little high. "There are certainly more than 2000," he said.

ISRAEL CHARGES EGYPTIAN VIOLATION OF DISENGAGEMENT ACCORD

By Yitzhak Shargil

TEL AVIV, Dec. 18 (JTA)--Israel charged today that Egypt has violated the disengagement

agreement in the same manner as Syrian violations—by introducing more weapons than permitted into the limited armaments zone. According to Israeli sources, the Egyptians have introduced 12-130 mm. artillery pieces into the zone in addition to the 36 permitted under the disengagement accord with Israel. Egyptian soldiers are also continuing the construction of missile launching sites in the limited forces zone, the sources said.

There was no report, however, that a formal complaint has been lodged by Israel with the UN against the alleged Egyptian violations as was the case with similar violations by Syria. The latter has placed 90 tanks in the limited forces zone where a maximum of 75 is permitted and has also positioned 130 mm. artillery in the zone.

Terror War May Be Intensified

Defense Minister Shimon Peres said today that Egypt was trying once again to follow the policy it sought to achieve before the present disengagement accord was reached, an Israeli withdrawal in exchange for nothing in return from Egypt. Addressing Labor Party members of the Moshavim group, Peres warned that Israel may face an intensification of the Arab terror war, resulting from competition among the various terror groups and the financial and moral support these groups get from Arab countries.

Peres also cited statements from remote Arab countries that they would send arms and manpower to fight against Israel. He added Israel would not be idle in the face of such proposals from Arab countries whose leaders may think they are secure from Israeli retaliation. Peres was understood to be referring to Iran which, according to a Teheran newspaper, will give full support to the Arabs if there is a new Mideast war. Peres also said that the Western world was now providing two-thirds of the arms sent to the Arab states. He said that included supplies from Britain, France and the United States.

Actions Seen As Provocations

It was reported today that the Syrians are massing heavy snow removal and de-icing equipment preparatory to clearing the road they built on Mt. Hermon which Israel says was completed after the disengagement agreement and in violation thereof. The Syrians apparently intend to keep the road to the strategic summit of the mountain clear in all weather.

An Austrian contingent of the United Nations Disengagement Observers Force (UNDOF) has abandoned most of its positions on Mt. Hermon due to severe weather conditions. Israeli circles expressed surprise since the weather has been excellent for the past two days and the Austrian troops are equipped with snow tractors.

Some sources here said today that the reported Syrian and Egyptian disengagement violations represented a concerted action by Cairo and Damascus to see how far they can go to provoke an Israeli response and to maintain tension on the disengagement lines.

TERRORIST BASE RAIDED

TEL AVIV, Dec. 18 (JTA)—Israeli forces and terrorist gangs traded blows on the northern frontier late last night and early this morning. Helicopter-borne Israeli commandos raided Majdal el-Zun village in southern Lebanon, destroyed six buildings used as terrorist refuges and took two prisoners back to Israel for questioning. There was a brief exchange of fire in the village but no Israeli casualties were reported during the operation.

Shortly after the raid into Lebanon, terrorist infiltrators lobbed hand grenades and fired bazooka rockets into the guest house at Kibbutz Hanita in Western Galilee. The building was empty and no casualties were reported. Israeli forces are combing the area for the terrorists.

The commando raid on Majdal el-Zun was described as a preventive action against terrorist infiltration. The village has been a jumping-off point for terrorist assaults on Israel. The six buildings demolished by Israeli forces were used as resting places for the terrorists and their occupants were terrorist collaborators. Two of them, one aged 23 and the other 45, were taken back to Israel.

The attack on Hanita occurred shortly before dawn. Israeli security circles assumed at first that the rockets were fired from behind the Lebanese border but later investigation indicated that terrorists had broken through the security fence and approached the kibbutz perimeter only a few yards from the border.

Hanita is one of the pioneer kibbutzim in Western Galilee. Founded in 1936, it gained fame in later years as the home of former Defense Minister Moshe Dayan and of Israel's present Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Yigal Allon. Both men were members of Haganah in their youth and stood guard while Hanita, originally a tower-and-stockade settlement, was built overnight during the period of Arab uprisings in Palestine. (By Yitzhak Shargil.)

GERMAN LEADER'S MEETING WITH ARAFAT ASSAILED BY JEWS, NON-JEWS

BONN, Dec. 18 (JTA)—The meeting between Dr. Gerhard Schroeder of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), chairman of the Bundestag Foreign Policy Committee, and Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasir Arafat in Damascus is to be raised tomorrow in the West German Parliament by the Social Democrats. While rumors circulated today in Bonn that the meeting was arranged with the knowledge and approval of the Bonn Foreign Office, the Central Council of Jews in Germany has joined the Jewish community in West Berlin and CDU-CSU opposition circles in condemning Schroeder's initiative.

The Council of Jews has sent written protests to Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, CDU Chairman Helmut Kohl, and CDU floor leader Karl Carstens, who yesterday said Schroeder would be asked to account for his meeting with Arafat when he returns tomorrow to Bonn. The Council of Jews said Arafat could not be regarded as a discussion partner for Schroeder. The PLO "had ordered terror attacks in West Germany, and had trained German terrorists," the Council said.

Schroeder has already informed the CDU that his talks with Arafat were "necessary" to get to know the views of all sides in the Middle East. He told a West German news agency that the decisive thing in his eyes was to get "a lasting, just and constructive peace, and many difficulties still lay ahead."

Schroeder's meeting with Arafat has also been criticized by the Israeli Embassy in Bonn. A spokesman said the meeting did not serve peace in the Middle East. Arafat was the head of an organization that "carried the banner of international terror and whose declared aim was the elimination of the State of Israel." The head of the Jewish community in West Berlin, Heinz Galinski, said Schroeder could be "tolerated no longer as chairman of the Bundestag Foreign Policy Committee."

SUPPORTERS OF SOVIET JEWRY REACT TO GROMYKO'S LETTER

NEW YORK, Dec. 18 (JTA)--Supporters of Soviet Jewry reacted swiftly today to the Gromyko letter released by Tass in Moscow this evening repudiating any understanding between the U.S. and the USSR on Soviet emigration practices. Stanley H. Lowell, chairman of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry, expressed "shock and consternation" in a statement released in New York today.

Members of the Senate-House Conference Committee currently resolving differences in their respective versions of the Trade Reform Bill indicated that the Jackson Amendment will remain in the legislation and that Moscow will have to comply with the terms of the understanding on emigration or forego U.S. trade benefits. Under the legislation, President Ford has 18 months to determine whether the Russians are complying.

Lowell stated: "We assume that Secretary Kissinger will pick up the 'hot line' between Washington and Moscow to obtain prompt clarification. First reports indicate that this (Gromyko's letter) is a total rejection of the entire basis upon which the Congress and the Ford Administration contemplated passage of the Trade Reform Act." He added that Kissinger had asserted that assurances of harassment would be ended, as spelled out in the Kissinger-Jackson letters, by Gromyko in his meeting with Kissinger and Soviet Ambassador Anatoly F. Dobrynin at his meeting with Ford and Kissinger.

Congressmen Say Letter Is Meaningless

Sen. Russell Long, chairman of the Senate-House Conference Committee, brushed off the Gromyko letter today. "I don't pay any attention to what the Russians say anyway," he told newsmen. He said the Tass announcement "doesn't affect me one way or the other." A similar reaction was given by Sen. Abraham Ribicoff (D.Conn.) who with Sen. Henry M. Jackson (D.Wash.) and Sen. Jacob K. Javits (D.N.Y.) played a key role in negotiations with President Ford and Kissinger on Soviet emigration practices.

"It's meaningless at the present time," Ribicoff said, meaning that the Gromyko repudiation will not affect U.S. expectations expressed in the Jackson Amendment. He recalled that Kissinger appeared before the Senate Finance Committee Dec. 3 "and at that time he indicated that what was worked out was satisfactory to the Soviet Union." One Congressman said the Soviet announcement may have been intended for internal consumption.

Jackson said he was not concerned over the Gromyko letter which he speculated was "probably in the face-saving category." But he said it was "important to see the contents of the letter and to get the full and true meaning of it." Asked if he had any evidence that the Russians were tightening restrictions on Jewish and other emigration, Jackson replied that "everything has been to the contrary." He noted that the trade bill had adequate safeguards on the emigration issue in its present form.

See Detente As Undermined

In Washington, B'nai B'rith president David M. Blumberg said that if Gromyko's letter "is not mere propaganda aimed at placating the Arabs on the eve of Communist Party chief Leonid Brezhnev's visit to Cairo, then the Soviets have bargained in bad faith and reneged on their assurance

es to Secretary of State Kissinger." Moreover, Blumberg added, "they have undermined detente itself."

He said the trade bill had been passed on the assumption that 60,000 Soviet immigrants would leave next year and "that figure was not pulled from the air. It was realistically based on assuming that the Soviets would end their policy of obstruction and harassment of the applicants for visas to leave the country." But, Blumberg added, "if the Gromyko statement is Soviet policy and practice, then the Soviets may be sure that the trade concessions will not be permitted by Congress."

WITNESS REFUTES TESTIMONY THAT STERN TOOK BRIBE TO KEEP HIM OUT OF ARMY

LONDON, Dec. 18 (JTA)--The prosecution of Dr. Mikhail Stern of Vinnitsa suffered a setback yesterday when a witness refuted the testimony of his mother that the Jewish physician had accepted a 200 ruble bribe to certify that the youth was unfit for military service. Jewish sources in the Soviet Union reported today. The young man said that as far as he knew, Dr. Stern had nothing to do with his exemption from military service. He testified that the factory where he worked had secured his exemption because he was considered indispensable.

Later, a four-man commission of experts appointed by the court testified that the youth in question was indeed unfit for military service. Dr. Stern said he had never seen the man before. According to reports from Jewish spectators permitted in the courtroom, the prosecution case seems to be built on the testimony of coached witnesses. Seventeen witnesses for the state so far have retracted testimony damaging to Dr. Stern who is accused of accepting bribes and procuring illegal drugs for patients in return for payment. The 18th witness was the woman who alleged the bribe.

Meanwhile, Dr. Stern's sons, Viktor and August, have refused to withdraw their complaint against a KGB agent who searched their father's home before he was arrested last May. Both have been threatened with prosecution for slander unless they retract their charge that a KGB man surnamed Kravchenko had told them that the search was ordered because Dr. Stern applied for a visa to go to Israel.

The Stern brothers lodged their formal complaint with the Chief Prosecutor of the Soviet Union, Roman Rudenko and were later summoned by the Vinnitsa deputy prosecutor who threatened them with a slander action, Jewish sources reported. They said they would not withdraw their charges under any circumstances.

MRS. MEIR VISITS FORD

WASHINGTON, Dec. 18 (JTA)--Former Premier Golda Meir met today with President Ford in the Oval Office of the White House. Also present at the meeting were Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger and Israeli Ambassador Simcha Dinitz. Mrs. Meir, looking relaxed and rested, was greeted by Ford who told her, "You look beautiful." Kissinger immediately added, "Obviously because you don't work 18 hours a day now." The former Premier said that on her current visit she has been able to see many people she has not seen for a long time. Tonight Kissinger will host Mrs. Meir at a black-tie dinner at the State Department at which many members of Congress and Jewish community leaders are expected to attend.

BEYOND THE HEADLINES**NEW JDC HEAD: NEW-ERA?****AN INTERVIEW WITH JACK WEILER**

By Jack Siegel

NEW YORK, Dec. 18 (JTA)—Jack D. Weiler, the newly-elected chairman of the Joint Distribution Committee, said in an interview with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that the JDC will continue its ongoing programs but will seek to help Jews in other countries as well. Faced with conditions external to JDC, such as inflation and the enormous requirement for aid within Israel itself, Weiler said this has not affected the basic work of the JDC.

He characterized the sixty-year-old relief agency as one faced with huge "priorities," such as where to go and whom to help first and for this, the present budget of just under thirty million is hardly enough. He reminded this interviewer that in 1947 the JDC operated on a budget of \$71 million to facilitate the rescue and rehabilitation of Jews surviving the Holocaust. Today, however, a major concern in this area is the human needs of Jews coming out of the Soviet Union.

Of these there are three classes. Those who are enroute to Israel and are in Rome. They are housed and fed. Likewise those leaving the Soviet Union for other countries. However, Jews who have emigrated from the Soviet Union for Israel and then left Israel, receive no relief from JDC. Weiler emphasized that relief and transit are major JDC emphases and that concentration must be kept to workable programs with no political side effects.

He said economic conditions in the United States as in Israel are a matter of anxiety to the work of JDC and that, while devaluation in Israel has been helpful, the inflationary process has eaten into any benefits resulting from it.

Will Seek Innovative Activity

Asked whether there was any "fat" in the JDC budget, in view of the intense concern in the States today about such matters, he said there couldn't be especially since it was functioning on a financial level much lower than earlier years. He said it was important, nevertheless, to maintain basic functions and cited proudly the medical staff working for JDC in its various installations as part of the total attention given to JDC beneficiaries.

Weiler ranged over the variety and geography of JDC's programs, and when asked how the JDC made up its budget, he said it was done by the Executive Committee. The actual monies JDC then receives come from the United Jewish Appeal in this country and from special funds in other countries.

Some communities are able to take care of their own, like the German Jews, but he said there would be an examination of the JDC program for wider and perhaps more innovative activity such as in countries where JDC at the moment is not officially acceptable. Weiler said also he intended to make on-the-spot visits to key and unusual JDC installations from which he will report directly through the media rather than only assembling a report for later circulation. Meanwhile, he pointed out, JDC aid to the bodies and souls of Jews continues at the same concentrated pace.

ISRAEL BONDS RAISES \$1.7 MILLION

NEW YORK, Dec. 18 (JTA)—Philip Chasin, director of the Greater New York Committee for

State of Israel Bonds for more than two decades, was honored for "forty years of service to the Jewish community," at an Israel Bond dinner at the Waldorf-Astoria which resulted in sales of more than \$1,700,000 in Israel Bonds. An audience of 360 Jewish communal, civic, religious and political leaders attended the tribute to Chasin Monday night.

Speakers included Yosef Tekoah, Ambassador of Israel to the United Nations; Michael Arnon, president and chief executive officer of the Israel Bond Organization; Jack D. Weiler, secretary-treasurer of State of Israel Bonds and dinner chairman; Stephen Shalom, general chairman of the Israel Bond drive in New York and other notables. Chasin was honored for his "executive leadership and a career of inspiring devotion to Israel."

WELFARE MINISTRY URGES CHECKING GROUPS SEEKING CONTRIBUTIONS

JERUSALEM, Dec. 18 (JTA)—Warm-hearted Jews who are often approached by emissaries from so-called welfare institutions in Israel to make a financial contribution should write to the Welfare Ministry before making such a contribution. The Ministry announced this week that recently there have been many complaints of people who had been asked to make a contribution to institutions whose existence is doubtful. The Ministry publishes a bi-annual guidebook listing recognized welfare institutions, and it advises all potential contributors to write the Department for Public Institutions, 8 King David Road, Jerusalem, to find out whether their money goes to a worthwhile cause.

ARGENTINE MUSIC CRITIC WITHDRAWS FROM PARTICIPATION IN UNESCO

BUENOS AIRES, Dec. 18 (JTA)—Jorge D'Urbano, secretary general of the Argentine Academy of Arts, has informed UNESCO that he will no longer participate in its programs unless Israel is included in UNESCO activities on a basis of equality with all member countries.

D'Urbano, a music critic, wrote to UNESCO that he was withholding an article it had requested him to write on Latin American music in protest against UNESCO's recent exclusion of Israel from the activities of its European region. He said that he "considers it paradoxical that an international cultural organization casts aside a country that represents one of the most ancient cultures and civilizations."

He said that UNESCO "thus exhibited a manifestly political attitude inconsistent with its objective. I have no other means to express my strongest protest against this incongruity than by withdrawing by collaboration with UNESCO in every field as long as Israel does not participate in its activities on an equal level with all member countries," he wrote.

JERUSALEM, Dec. 18 (JTA)—The Jewish National Fund has completed groundwork for the establishment of "Etzion Gimmel," a new settlement to be situated 2.5 kilometers north of the Etzion Bloc, between Jerusalem and Hebron. Work on preparing the infrastructure for the first 24 houses began in July with the blazing of a road from the Bloc to the new site. JNF officials said this road was only a temporary approach, and that later a wider road would be built linking Etzion Gimmel to the other settlements in the Bloc.

There will be no Bulletin dated Dec. 25 due to X-mas, a postal holiday.