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BENTSEN CALLS ON ADMINISTRATION TO PROTEST AGAINST ARAB BOYCOTT

NEW YORK, Feb. 23 (JTA)--Sen. Lloyd M. Bentsen (D, Texas), who last week announced his candidacy for the Democratic nomination for the Presidency, called today upon the Administration to "speak up now" in public protest against the serious economic threat to Israel posed by the Arab economic boycott. In remarks prepared for delivery tonight at the 67th annual award dinner of Bnai Zion, the American Fraternal Zionist Organization, Bentsen stated, "Never has Israel been more threatened--politically, militarily and economically."

He said there seem to be too few in this country who realize the dimensions of the economic threat to Israel. "But our own experience with inflation, recession and the Arab oil boycott should serve to emphasize the fact that an economic threat can be as dangerous as a military threat to a nation's natural security," Bentsen stated.

He said that of great concern to him, in particular, "is the widening Arab economic boycott against Israel. I believe that it is high time the United States protested publicly and formally what amounts to a state of economic belligerence. No military or political settlement will bring peace to the Middle East or insure Israel's survival unless there is also a cessation of the economic warfare being waged against Israel by the Arab nations."

Intentions Must Be Proven By Actions

Bentsen's address, released earlier in the day, was scheduled for delivery to an estimated 1600 people at the New York Hilton Hotel who gathered tonight to pay tribute to Herman Z. Quttman, Bnai Zion's executive vice-president and national secretary who was the recipient of the 1975 America-Israel Friendship Medal for his 40 years of service and in recognition of his contributions to the furtherance of the Zionist movement, the cause of Israel and the promotion of American-Israeli friendship. New York State Supreme Court Justice Abraham J. Multer, president of Bnai Zion, presented the medal to Quttman.

Bentsen, who urged the U.S. government to "speak up now, and address itself not just to the military situation but also to the equally serious economic threat against Israel," also urged the Arab nations, in particular Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, "to make a concrete showing of good faith," asserting that "promises of non-belligerency are meaningless," and noting that history is full of wars originating in non-aggression pacts, the Senator declared:

"Let President Sadat prove his good intentions by developing an economic relationship with Israel. Why not start slowly, gradually with cultural exchange, with educational exchange? Why not continue with Cairo-Tel Aviv air service, a lifting of customs restrictions against those who have travelled to Israel?"

During the medal award ceremony, messages of greetings to Quttman came from President Ford, Vice-President Nelson A. Rockefeller,

Israeli President Ephraim Katzir, Premier Yitzhak Rabin and New York Governor Hugh L. Carey. In response, Quttman noted that throughout the current century the cry for freedom on the part of the Jewish people has struck a responsive chord in the hearts of decent and moral people everywhere only "when our own people themselves had first taken the initiative and rose in massive action to obtain justice."

500 BEDOUINS ENDANGERED BY FLASH FLOODS AIDED BY ISRAELI ARMY UNITS

TEL AVIV, Feb. 23 (JTA)--Israeli Army units, aided by helicopters, rescued some 500 Bedouin tribesmen endangered by flash floods in northern Sinai yesterday. The massive rescue operation was mounted as torrents of water accumulated from heavy rains, roared through the El Arish region destroying everything in its path.

The wall of water was described as being hundreds of yards wide and at least four yards high as it over-ran the banks of the Wadi Arish, a dry river bed. Similar torrents, created by unprecedented rain storms in Sinai and the Negev, stranded tourist buses and private vehicles on roads between Eilat and Sharm el-Sheikh. All persons were brought out safely by helicopters and heavy army vehicles.

But at least 10 Bedouins are believed to have died in the floods. Two bodies were spotted today being carried by swift currents to the Mediterranean Sea. The Bedouins and their livestock took refuge in hilly regions as the waters inundated their camp sites. Army rescue teams landed by helicopters had to coax the frightened nomads to slip rubber tires under their arms so that they could be lifted into the hovering aircraft.

About 500 Bedouins were brought to hospitals and schools in El Arish township where they were given first aid and hot food. Military government officials operated kitchens and nurseries and the Red Cross sent 2000 blankets for the rescued Bedouins. The rains ended today but many low-lying areas remained under water. A large number of livestock is presumed to have been lost in the floods.

TERRORIST GANG FOILED

TEL AVIV, Feb. 23 (JTA)--A Palestinian terrorist gang that attempted to enter Israel last night was foiled by an Israeli patrol in the area of Shetula in Upper Galilee. In the ensuing gun battle, one of the terrorists was killed. There were no Israeli casualties. The dead terrorist was carrying a personal weapon, a loudspeaker and pamphlets in Arabic, Hebrew and French. The pamphlets, which carried the signature of the Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, demanded the release of a number of imprisoned terrorists. According to the Israeli patrol, the terrorists seemed to be on a mission of capturing hostages in order to force the release of their compatriots.

MOUNTING CONCERN IN ISRAEL OVER U.S. GUARANTEE OF SECURITY

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Feb. 23 (JTA)--Premier Yitzhak Rabin has expressed Israel's mounting concern

that proposals for a U.S. guarantee of Israel's security--possibly in the form of a formal defense pact--is predicated on a withdrawal by Israel to its pre-June 1967 borders, boundaries that Israel regards as insecure and indefensible.

The "trial balloon" of such proposals--literally "floated" when a senior American official disclosed them to reporters aboard Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger's plane enroute from Zurich to Paris last week--is also viewed here as a signal that Kissinger's return visit to the Middle East next month will be his last attempt at step-by-step diplomacy and will be followed by the reconvening of the Geneva peace conference, probably in mid-summer.

Substitute For Defensible Borders

Soberly assessing these developments in a radio interview Friday, Premier Rabin said: "Those who propose a U.S.-Israel defense pact or U.S. guarantees see them as a substitute for defensible borders, for Israel's capacity to defend itself....I would on no account want a situation to be created in which those proposing a defense treaty intend a substitute for defensible borders."

Initial reports of the briefing on Kissinger's plane put the idea of guarantees in the context of an interim or second-stage agreement between Israel and Egypt in Sinai--meaning an American commitment to see that both sides observe the terms of such a limited agreement.

But State Department spokesman Robert Anderson, briefing reporters in Washington last Thursday, indicated that the guarantees were contemplated in the framework of an overall peace settlement between Israel and all of its Arab neighbors. That, in fact, was the burden of Kissinger's own exposition to Israeli Ambassador Simcha Dinitz at their luncheon meeting in Washington yesterday.

To Rabin and other Israeli leaders, this reflects the American Administration's active preparation for resumption of the Geneva conference, whatever the outcome of Kissinger's next--and almost certainly his last--try at step-by-step shuttle diplomacy in the Middle East.

The scenario now envisaged by the most knowledgeable Israeli observers is a resumption of the Geneva conference at which the two superpowers, U.S. and USSR, serving as co-chairmen, will each put on the table its own detailed and specific proposals for an overall settlement in the Mideast. There is no question here but that the Soviet Union's plan will be based on Moscow's long-standing policy in favor of total Israeli withdrawal from all Arab territories and the establishment of a Palestinian state.

Rogers Plan Still Alive

But the American plan is not expected to be much less onerous, from Israel's viewpoint than the Russian one. This will inevitably bring to the fore the long latent dispute between Washington and Jerusalem over the future boundaries of the Jewish State.

Israelis have never deluded themselves that the so-called Rogers Plan, expounded by former Secretary of State William P. Rogers in 1969, which called for only "insubstantial" border changes, is not still the basis of American Mideast policy. The Rogers Plan was in fact the Nixon plan and was most certainly endorsed by Kissinger's National Security Council, Israelis believe.

In effect, it was merely a re-statement of the basic position adopted by the U.S. during the

Administration of President Lyndon Johnson--that Israel's future borders must not "reflect the weight of conquest." That American policy, though lying fallow for years, is very much alive and has been carried over into the Ford Administration, the Israeli observers say.

While the step-by-step approach of Kissinger enabled both Washington and Jerusalem to shelve their basic differences on territories, the return to Geneva is sure to highlight them, it is felt here. It was to take the edge off the developing confrontation that Kissinger ordered a State Department study of U.S. guarantee options which would be offered to Israel as compensation for its withdrawal to virtually the pre-June 1967 lines, Israeli circles believe.

See Struggle Against U.S. Policy

Rabin's remarks Friday were seen as the first shot in a battle against the American policy trend which could develop into the most bitter political struggle in Israel's history. Israeli opinion, by and large, rejects the concept of guarantees as a substitute for Israel's ability to defend itself. Even Meir Payil, dovish leader of the leftist Moked faction in the Knesset, warned over the weekend that Israel must retain its ability of self-defense at all costs and that no guarantees could replace that ability.

On the other hand, there is a widespread feeling among Israeli politicians of all persuasions that contractual American undertakings could be useful in ensuring Israel's security. Some analysts, including former Foreign Minister Abba Eban, say American guarantees would be welcome to counter or deter Soviet involvement or threats of intervention in the area. It was recalled recently that Yigal Allon, now Israel's Foreign Minister, had suggested several years ago that while the idea of U.S. guarantees should be approached with caution, it should not be rejected out of hand.

This ambiguity of feeling only adds to the perplexity many Israelis feel. There is also puzzlement over why Kissinger chose to unveil the guarantee study to newsmen during a flight over Europe but failed to bring the subject up during his lengthy conferences with Israeli leaders in Jerusalem only a few days earlier. The subject of guarantees did not figure in Kissinger's latest talks here, at least according to Israeli government sources.

UN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION'S CONDEMNATION OF ISRAEL ASSAILED AS HYPOCRITICAL BY RABBI

By Joseph Polakoff

WASHINGTON Feb. 23 (JTA)--The United Nations Human Rights Commission's action last Friday calling on Israel to release Archbishop Hillarion Capucci from prison and charging Israel with desecrating Moslem and Christian holy sites was assailed Friday as "hypocritical" and "further compromises the United Nations' role as a guarantor of human rights and an agency of international peace."

Rabbi David Saperstein, associate director of the Religious Action Center of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the Central Conference of American Rabbis, denounced the Commission's decision and asked religious and political leaders to join in preserving the integrity and dignity of the UN by demanding an immediate reversal of the decision. He urged "a reversal based on truth and justice rather than pressure from oil-rich Arab countries."

Capucci, Rabbi Saperstein said, "although clearly anti-Israel and long-suspected of actions sym-

pathetic to the Arab terrorists, was nevertheless given complete freedom of speech and action during his years in Israel. Only upon being apprehended while using his clerical privileges to smuggle into Israel arms and explosives for terrorists, and after a public trial in which he was accorded the full legal rights given to every Israeli, was he sentenced to jail."

Rabbi Saperstein added: "As of this time, all fact-finding missions to Israel have contradicted the Commission's stand on holy sites under Israeli control. Those sites in Israel and the occupied territories which Israel permits to be run by the religious orders which worship there have never been kept as well, or as open to all people, as they have been by Israel."

U.S. Voted Against Both Resolutions

The United States was the only nation among the 32 members of the Commission to vote against both resolutions. The resolution charging Israel with violating the "basic norms of international law" in the administered areas was approved 22-1, with nine abstentions. The resolution accused Israel of violating the 1949 Geneva convention on the protection of civilian war victims, and with "deliberate destruction and devastation" of Kuneitra on the Golan Heights.

The resolution called on all nations to act to make Israel stop "all acts and policies aimed at colonizing and changing the physical character and demographic composition of the occupied Arab territories."

The demand for the release of Capucci was contained in the second resolution, which accused Israel of desecrating Moslem and Christian shrines. The resolution was adopted by a vote of 21-6, with five abstentions. Joining in opposition with the U.S. were France, Britain, West Germany, Italy and The Netherlands. All five abstained on the first motion, as did Austria, Costa Rica, Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic.

The resolution on violations of international law was sponsored by Cyprus, Ghana, India, Pakistan, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Yugoslavia and Zaire. The other resolution was sponsored by Cyprus, India, Pakistan, Senegal, Zaire, Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Tunisia and Turkey.

Israel Charges Allegations Are Fantastic

Israel, which is not a member of the Commission, could not vote but could reply. Eytan Ronn, the Israeli representative, sitting as an observer, assailed the "fantastic allegations and accusations so steadily voiced against Israel." He said the fact was that "the situation in the administered territories is better than any sensible man of goodwill could reasonably expect or even hope for in the face of permanent incitement to hatred, hostility, violence and terror surging from Arab capitals."

Ronn said the Commission, dominated by countries friendly to the Arabs, was being used for political propaganda. He said the war crimes charge was based on "irrelevancies blown up to monstrous proportions, fictitious allegations made to look like proven atrocities." After the meeting, Ronn was reported to have said the matter of Capucci was a criminal case outside the Commission's jurisdiction and that Israel would ignore the Commission's demand for his release.

SOLARZ: SYRIAN JEWS LIVING IN STATE OF TERROR; MOST OPPRESSED COMMUNITY

NEW YORK, Feb. 23 (JTA)--Rep. Stephen J.

Solarz (D,NY), a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee who has just returned from a visit to Syria, and three other Mideast states, said here that the Jewish community in Syria is living in "a state of terror" and that Syrian Jewry is "the most oppressed Jewish community in the world."

Addressing a press conference called by the American Jewish Congress, Solarz, who met with Syrian President Hafez el-Assad, declared that he brought up the question of Syrian Jewry during a two-hour discussion with Assad and that he (Solarz) suggested that Assad permit a small number of Jews to leave Syria to reunite with members of their families in other countries.

Assad Rejects Emigration Of Jews

According to Solarz, Assad replied negatively and said that no member of the Jewish community would be granted permission to leave Syria, explaining that if Syria permitted emigration of Jews, Syria would not be in a position to put pressure on the Soviet Union not to permit emigration of Soviet Jews to Israel.

Solarz, who is the first Jewish Congressman to meet with Assad, said that only after the Syrian President personally intervened, was he allowed to tour the Jewish ghetto in Damascus and to attend service at Frange Synagogue there. The Congressman said that throughout his visit to the Jewish ghetto, he was accompanied by three Syrian government officials. He said that while he was in the synagogue, none of the 16 men participating in the services approached him. He said that because of the presence of the Syrian officials, he did not approach any of the worshippers or ask them any questions.

Mike Wallace Show Rapped

Referring to a recent program on the CBS-TV network in which Syrian Jews were interviewed by Mike Wallace, Solarz said that Wallace did not "have the sensitivity to the delicacy of the position" of those interviewed, who were surrounded by Syrian officials.

The Congressman also visited Egypt, meeting with President Anwar Sadat; Jordan, where he met with King Hussein; and Israel, where he met with Premier Yitzhak Rabin and Foreign Minister Yigal Allon. Solarz, who also discussed the Mideast situation, said that his impression was that a solution could not be found to the conflict as long as the Arab states continue to refuse to provide Israel with offers that will have "sense and a substance of security" in them for Israel. He presented these views to a press conference last Friday.

BOMB DEFUSED IN JERUSALEM MARKET

JERUSALEM, Feb. 23 (JTA)--A home-made explosive device was found in a bag of vegetables and defused without causing any damage in the Jerusalem open-air Mahane Yehuda market this evening. Police, called to the scene by a wary stall-holder suspicious of a bag left standing on a street corner, held a large crowd back as sappers disconnected an electric timing device from a box containing three kilos of gunpowder. Another device was defused last Friday at the Central Bus Station. Others have been found in various parts of this city but almost all have been dismantled before they could explode.

ALBANY, N.Y. (JTA)--State Attorney General Louis J. Lefkowitz has started a probe into reported pressures from Arab sources on New York securities firms.

