



KISSINGER SAYS U.S. WILL STAND BY ITS MIDEAST COMMITMENTS; STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS IS FINISHED

By Joseph Polakoff

WASHINGTON, March 25 (JTA)--The House Foreign Affairs Committee voted 26-6 today to go into executive session to hear Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger's report on the breakdown of the negotiations for the Egyptian agreement in Sinai and the future outlook in the Middle East. Kissinger had specifically requested that the committee session be held behind closed doors because of the delicacy of the situation in the Middle East resulting from the collapse of the second-stage talks and the assassination today of King Faisal of Saudi Arabia.

Before the room was cleared of spectators, however, Kissinger told the committee that America will stand by its commitments, will work for any reasonable solution of the Middle East crisis and would consult with other nations. "The U.S. cannot wash its hands of the problem," the Secretary stated. He conceded, however, that "the step-by-step process no longer can be pursued, at least in the same pattern."

He said that the settlement process in the Middle East will now be enlarged and the Middle East problem will go "from a local to a global basis and from bilateral to multi-lateral" negotiations. While Kissinger did not elaborate on this in the public portion of his testimony, he was believed in some quarters to be alluding to the involvement of the Soviet Union and possibly even the People's Republic of China in a Middle East peace-making process.

Kissinger told the committee that now is "not a time to assess blame on any party in the negotiations" for the failure of the negotiations. He repeated that "all parties made a serious effort" but "for a variety of reasons...did not take the final step to make agreement possible."

The roll-call vote to shut off public discussion by the Foreign Affairs Committee was taken on a motion by Rep. Leo Ryan (D., Calif.) after Rep. William Broomfield (R., Mich.) urged a closed session which the State Department had, in fact, requested yesterday. Committee chairman Thomas Morgan (D., Pa.) polled the 32 committee members present. The six who voted against a closed hearing were Reps. Benjamin Rosenthal (D., NY); Robert Nix (D., Pa.); Donald Fraser (D., Minn.); Lester Wolfe (D., NY); Mike Harrington (D., Mass.); and Don Bonker (D., Wash.).

Raps Statements Blaming Israel

Rosenthal objected bitterly to the cut-off of public discussion. "We are on the verge of a national debate concerning the Administration's reassessment of policy in the Middle East," he said, adding that what has caused this can be attributed to statements of the Secretary. Reading from dispatches in today's New York Times and Washington Post, Rosenthal charged that while the Administration was insisting in public that it was not assessing blame for the breakdown of the second-stage talks, privately it was attributing responsibility to the "short-sighted" attitude of Israel.

Alluding to press reports that U.S. officials on

Kissinger's plane returning from the Middle East left the impression that Israel brought the blame for the breakdown on itself, Rosenthal observed that "The American public is being told Israel is responsible for the breakdown of negotiations. In a large sense, the damage has already been done." He decried the fact that "one party gets the advantage reaching the media and the American public."

Ryan said, however, that it was "a good idea for us to question the Secretary on what he said and the President said in executive session at this time." He said "changes are necessary in U.S. policy because changes are occurring." Broomfield said "The President is not casting blame on any of the parties but is pressing for new talks." He told Kissinger that he hoped the House would join the Senate in "saluting your efforts in the Middle East."

Kissinger told the committee members that the foreign policy of the U.S. "cannot be a purely partisan effort and the Administration will cooperate fully in developing a bi-partisan, indeed a non-partisan policy."

COURT REJECTS STERN'S APPEAL

NEW YORK, March 25 (JTA)--Dr. Mikhail Stern, the Vinnitsa doctor sentenced to eight years in prison on bribery charges, lost his appeal today in the Ukrainian Supreme Court in Kiev, the National Conference for Soviet Jewry reported. Dr. Stern's son, August, who is in the United States under NCSJ auspices to seek help for his father, said "My father is innocent. He is being punished because of my brother's and my desire to emigrate to Israel. The Soviet government is trying to make an example of my father because he is a much beloved and respected physician. I appeal to all Americans to ask Soviet authorities to return my father to me."

Stanley H. Lowell, NCSJ chairman, said "All Americans must be shocked at this decision. Dr. Stern is innocent. Perhaps the Russians believe that Americans no longer care. We will show them how wrong they are. The National Conference for Soviet Jewry will mobilize all its resources, including the National Medical Committee, on his behalf. We have cabled Mrs. Stern to tell her we are with her on this tragic day." The NCSJ said there was a possibility that Dr. Stern could appeal the conviction to a higher court in Moscow but that prospects for a reversal were poor.

DINITZ; FAISAL'S ASSASSINATION SHOWS THAT ISRAEL, IN PURSUIT OF PEACE, IS FORCED TO DEAL WITH UNSTABLE REGIMES

WASHINGTON, March 25 (JTA)--Israeli Ambassador Simcha Dinitz said today that the assassination of King Faisal of Saudi Arabia was a reminder that in its pursuit of peace in the Middle East Israel must deal with regimes where instability and assassinations are "rather the rule than the exception."

The Israeli envoy was in the midst of an interview on the CBS Television Network's Morning News when a bulletin announcing the assassination of King Faisal by a nephew, said to be mentally deranged, interrupted the program. Ambassador Dinitz was asked later by Hughes Rudd to comment on the assassination and its possible

repercussions on Middle East peace efforts. "It is too early to judge because we don't quite know what forces stood behind this man (the assassin) and whether he was really deranged--or a part of a plot," Dinitz said.

"But be it as it may," Dinitz added, "I think as far as we are concerned, a democracy in the Middle East, as Israelis, we must be doubly sure and doubly careful as we enter into any agreement, that we are dealing with the countries which are not changing the regimes by the normal democratic process as you and we recognize. And that may explain sometimes why we have to be so careful as we undertake commitment, and as we accept commitment, from our neighbors in making agreements and in advancing in our--trying to advance toward peace."

Dinitz noted that as far as Israel is concerned, King Faisal "was not a man of peace" but a man who said that one million Arabs should give their lives in a holy war to destroy Israel.

(Meanwhile, there was no immediate official reaction in Israel to Faisal's assassination. Government officials commented that the assassination is fresh evidence of the instability of Arab regimes and additional proof that Israel must maintain a firm policy toward those governments. They contended that the instability of the regimes bolstered Israel's refusal to accept further Sinai withdrawals without specific and open moves by Egypt toward more peaceful relations with Israel.)

SAPIR URGES UNITY BEHIND ISRAEL

JERUSALEM, March 25 (JTA)--Inhas Sapir, chairman of the World Zionist Organization and Jewish Agency Executives, called on world Jewry to stand united behind Israel and mobilize a world-wide information campaign to explain Israel's position with regard to the failure of Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger's latest Middle East peace efforts.

In a statement to the WZO Executive here, Sapir said Israel was entering a period of trial. Its efforts to achieve a settlement with its neighbors have been unsuccessful. In this hour of trial, the Jewish people of the world must be united and unlimited in their support for Israel, Sapir said. He observed that Israel's real strength depended on continuous growth and in that connection urged all Jewish and Zionist organizations to promote immigration to Israel, to build the State "together with us."

JEWISH LEADERS LAUNCH CAMPAIGN TO EXPLAIN ISRAEL'S POSITION

NEW YORK, March 25 (JTA)--American Jewish organizations began an effort today to explain Israel's position in the suspension of negotiations by Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger for a second Egyptian-Israeli Sinai withdrawal accord.

In statements to the various news media, leaders of the organizations said the evidence indicated Egyptian refusal to agree formally to non-belligerency with Israel was the key factor in the breakdown of the talks. Stressing Israel's continued readiness to negotiate in good faith, the leaders expressed the hope that the halt in the talks was a suspension and not a breakdown, and that United States support for Israel's security would continue unabated.

The statements were issued by Mrs. Faye Schenk, president of the American Zionist Federation; Mrs. Charlotte Jacobson, chairman of the American Section of the World Zionist Or-

ganization; Mrs. Rose E. Matzkin, president of Hadassah; Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations; Bertram H. Gold, executive vice-president of the American Jewish Committee; Judge Paul Ribner, commander of the Jewish War Veterans; and Dr. Judah J. Shapiro, president of the Labor Zionist Alliance.

The Jewish leaders urged all Jewish communities and organizations to consolidate their stand in the face of serious trials that lay ahead and to initiate a vigorous information campaign along all sections of the public to inform them of Israel's just position. In addition they praised the role of the United States and particularly Secretary of State Kissinger's untiring efforts to help achieve a second-stage agreement between Egypt and Israel.

PATRIF EXPLAINS ISRAEL'S LAG IN PRESENTING ITS VERSION OF THE BREAKDOWN IN MIDEAST NEGOTIATIONS

JERUSALEM, March 25 (JTA)--Premier Yitzhak Rabin's advisor on mass communications, Dan Patrif, admitted today that Israel had lagged behind Egypt in presenting to the world its version of the unsuccessful negotiations for a second-stage Sinai agreement conducted by Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger. He said, however, that this was the result of a deliberate policy on Israel's part to avoid anything that might have interfered with the progress of the negotiations while they were going on.

Patrif spoke on a radio broadcast in response to mounting criticism that Israel was losing the propaganda war to its Arab foes. Much of the criticism centered on the delay of several hours between the announcements in Washington and Cairo Saturday night that the talks had broken down and Israel's announcement and explanation of that development.

Patrif explained that Jerusalem's announcement came late because Israel wanted to avoid any "collision of ideas" with Kissinger in the mass media. He said also that the Israeli government wanted to study the texts of the announcements by the White House and by Egyptian Foreign Minister Ismail Fahmy before issuing its own and, in fact, after doing this, made certain changes in its original reaction.

Patrif rejected the argument that the Egyptian propaganda drive was more successful than Israel's. He said that Egyptian statements on the negotiations failed to achieve their objectives because many were simply untrue. He quoted one foreign newsman as describing the Egyptian Foreign Minister as a "liar."

Nevertheless, many observers here believe a satisfactory statement by the Israeli government should have been available to the media the moment the final decision was taken to suspend the talks so that Israel's version would have received equal exposure with the statements of Fahmy and Kissinger. (By Gil Sedan)

KISSINGER DENIES THAT ADMINISTRATION IS CONSIDERING AID CUTS TO ISRAEL

By Joseph Polakoff

WASHINGTON, March 25 (JTA)--Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger denied today that the Ford Administration was considering sharp cuts in aid to Israel and said Israel had nothing to fear from President Ford's order for a formal reassessment of American policy in the Middle East.

Emerging from a closed session of the House Foreign Affairs Committee where he had just given the committee members a detailed briefing on the latest Mideast developments and the outlook for the future in that region, Kissinger told reporters:

"Our policy of reassessment is directed toward developing the best policy of peace in the Middle East and Israel can't possibly have anything to fear from an attempt to bring peace in the Middle East."

Asked if he feared that sharp cuts in aid to Israel would provoke another clash with Congress which has already opposed Administration policies in Indo-China and Cyprus, Kissinger replied, "Nobody said anything about sharply cutting aid to Israel."

The issue of aid to Israel, which has requested \$2.5 billion from the U.S. for the next fiscal year, arose following the collapse of Kissinger's latest efforts. The announcement that Ford has ordered a full-scale reassessment of U.S. policy in the Middle East was regarded in some Congressional quarters as a veiled threat that aid might be withheld from Israel unless it adopted a more flexible position in peace negotiations. The reassessment was announced after the breakdown of talks for which the Ford Administration reportedly holds Israel mainly responsible.

Not Assigning Blame

But the State Department re-emphasized today that it was not assigning blame to either side for the failure of the second-stage talks. Department spokesman Robert Anderson made that point today after reports circulated here that Kissinger had informed governments in the Middle East that he gave full credit to Egyptian President Anwar Sadat for seeking a compromise but was silent on Israel's position.

According to a report in the Washington Post, Kissinger sent the message to 30 countries "in the Middle East region" explaining the breakdown in very general terms. The Jewish Telegraphic Agency asked the State Department whether any part of that report was true. Anderson replied that Kissinger did communicate with a number of governments, but said, "I repeat, there is no question of placing blame on either side" and that "both sides made a serious effort" for a compromise.

When Anderson was pressed to say whether the message actually did give credit to Sadat and was silent on Israel, he said he could not confirm that point one way or another. When he was asked, "Then that part is wrong?" he replied, "I would assume so." Kissinger was to meet late this afternoon with Israeli Ambassador Simcha Dinitz and with the Egyptian envoy, Ashraf Ghorbal. Anderson said the meetings with the envoys was at their request.

DINITZ SAYS GENEVA IS

'NOT A PLACE FOR MAKING PEACE'

WASHINGTON, March 25 (JTA)--Israeli Ambassador Simcha Dinitz said today that the Geneva conference was "not a place for making peace" and expressed hope that the American initiative for a Middle East settlement will be renewed "in one way or another" despite the suspension of negotiations for a second-stage Israeli-Egyptian agreement in Sinai.

Dinitz, who was interviewed today by Bruce Morton and Hughes Rudd on the CBS-TV's "Morning News," said, "We have never said that we are afraid to go to Geneva, although we were always mindful that out of Geneva nothing substantial can come. Geneva is nothing but a mini-UN. It's a place for declarations, not a place for making peace." Dinitz made those remarks only hours after Israeli Premier Yitz-

hak Rabin had told the Knesset in Jerusalem that Israel was prepared to seek peace through any possible means "including through the Geneva conference."

Dinitz said on the CBS interview, "We still believe that the best prospect for peace is to renew the American initiative in one way or another. We believe that the Americans are the ONLY ones who can push the cause of peace because they are the only ones who really have" the necessary influence "on Israel and Egypt in order to advance toward peace."

He said that while Israel owes much to the United States "and we value and appreciate very much the efforts of the Secretary of State and the American government," Egypt also "received tremendously from the United States...in the last seven months, more than they received from the Russians in the seven years that preceded the war. So there is no reason why Egypt too should not help us together to divide the initiatives and we are standing ready at any point to continue our march to peace."

View Of Reassessment

The Ambassador said he did not know yet "how to interpret" President Ford's order for a major formal reassessment of U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East. He said that if the President means a general reassessment, "that is not only legitimate, but is absolutely expected after a setback that was caused by Egypt's refusal for the negotiations."

He added, however, "If the meaning of it is that this reassessment is vis-a-vis Israel--which I don't believe that this is the meaning of it--then, of course, we don't feel that we should be the one to be singled out for the failure of the negotiations after we have made generous proposals absolutely rejected by Egypt."

Dinitz said he was "very encouraged by the words of the President yesterday that America will continue to search ways and means to advance the cause of peace." He also said he did not believe the role of Kissinger has ended, although "maybe the little diplomacy is ended for a while, maybe new ways should be found."

DISPARAGING REMARKS DENIED BY ATTACHE

JERUSALEM, March 25 (JTA)--Daniel Nestor, the economic and commercial attache at the United States Consulate in East Jerusalem, denied to the Jewish Telegraphic Agency today that he had made remarks disparaging to Israel at a recent meeting with West Bank Arab businessmen in Ramallah.

According to press reports here, Nestor said at a Ramallah Chamber of Commerce meeting that the West Bankers soon will not need Israeli permits to conduct business "because Israel will have nothing to say in these matters." Nestor also allegedly advised the Arab merchants to do business directly with American firms rather than through Israeli or Jordanian firms and suggested that they open their own office in the U.S. to encourage American investments on the West Bank.

Nestor told the JTA that he had said nothing of a political nature to the Ramallah Chamber of Commerce. He said he had merely informed the Arab merchants of the trade opportunity program offered by the U.S. Department of Commerce which promoted contacts between American and overseas businessmen. "My job is simply to explain the services and to promote the trade," Nestor told the JTA.

The Jewish Telegraphic Agency management and staff wish all its readers a happy Passover.

