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CONCERN MOUNTS THAT EGYPT MAY USE REOPENING OF CANAL AS PRETEXT FOR MILITARY ACTION AGAINST ISRAEL

By Yitzhak Shargil

TEL AVIV, April 21 (JTA)--Israeli political and military circles are taking a serious view of the possibility that Egypt may use the reopening of the Suez Canal on June 5 as a pretext for military action in Sinai aimed at driving Israeli forces beyond artillery range of the waterway. Arab military commentators have predicted that President Anwar Sadat may send as many as five divisions across the canal before it is officially reopened to commercial shipping, Israeli sources said today.

Sadat would attempt to justify his move by the need to protect ships using the canal from possible Israeli attack. Hisham Abdallah, a military commentator writing in the Lebanese newspaper Al Clad, said recently that Egypt's economic plans for the Suez Canal zone would be endangered as long as Israeli forces remain in the Gidi and Mitla Passes that are within artillery range of the canal; therefore, it is logical to assume that the Egyptians will open military action to push the Israelis from the passes, Abdallah wrote.

Israeli military sources say that the Egyptians have the ability to move large military forces across the canal in a matter of hours without seriously interrupting maritime traffic. They are considering the possibility that President Sadat may send troops into the limited forces zone on the east bank of the canal shortly before the June 5 opening date and precipitate skirmishes with Israeli forces. This, of course, would be a major violation of the January, 1974 disengagement accord.

JEWISH FIRMS PLAYING MAJOR ROLE IN FRANCE'S PARTICIPATION IN THE USSR'S INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

PARIS, April 21 (JTA)--Jewish companies are playing a major role in France's participation in the Soviet Union's industrial development. An accord signed last week on the 50th anniversary of the Vneshtorgbank--the Soviet bank of exterior commerce--was led by Lazard Freres of Paris. The agreement was a \$250 million loan by a group of Western banks to Soviet industry. The group of banks included the Banque Nationale de Paris, the Morgan Guaranty Trust of New York, the Royal Bank of Canada of Montreal, the Credit Suisse, and others, to a total of 45.

Visitors to the 1980 Moscow Olympics will have a choice of four spanking new de luxe hotels three in Moscow and one in Leningrad, which will be built by the Paris company, Finatec S.A. Finatec is a subsidiary company of Lazard Freres. As for the construction of 100 other hotels planned by the Soviet government to be built by 1980, a Jewish contractor by the name of Jean-Claude Aaron, will be responsible for overall planning of the architecture and subcontracting.

U.S. SAYS NO PRECISE DATE SET FOR GENEVA CONFERENCE

WASHINGTON, April 21 (JTA)--The State Department said today no precise date has been

fixed for the Geneva-conference. A Department spokesman said the conference date is "part of the reassessment now going on." Spokesman Robert Anderson also said that he does not believe a date was discussed in the talks between Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger and Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin two weeks ago, but he recalled Dobrynin as saying considerable preparations would be needed for it.

Meanwhile, a report here said that Israeli Foreign Minister Yigal Allon would approach Kissinger at their meeting today at the State Department on a possible meeting in Washington soon between Israeli Premier Yitzhak Rabin and President Ford. One source said the Israelis were thinking of a June meeting. (See separate story on meeting today between Kissinger and Allon.)

Meanwhile, Dobrynin was at the Capitol today lunching with members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. It is believed that Southeast Asia, Soviet-American trade and the Middle East were discussed.

ALIYA FIGURES PLUMMET

JERUSALEM, April 21 (JTA)--Aliya figures for the first three months of this year were fifty percent of those for the same period last year, the Central Bureau of Statistics announced this week. The overall figure for January to March was 4800 compared with 9600 for the same period last year. The Bureau said the main cause was the drop in Soviet aliya--from 5700 to 2400--a drop which began early in 1974 and has grown consistently. The total number of olim who came to Israel in 1974 was 32,000--a 42 percent drop in the 1973 figure--16,800 of them were Soviet olim, compared with 33,500 Soviet olim who came in 1973.

PERCY URGES FACE-TO-FACE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN ISRAEL, ARABS

Urges Efforts For Pre-Geneva Arrangement By Joseph Polakoff

WASHINGTON, April 21 (JTA)--Sen. Charles Percy (R.Ill.) urged "face-to-face negotiations" between Israel and the Arabs and warned, in a report he submitted today to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, that "a very real danger exists" of a fifth Arab-Israeli war this year unless "significant negotiating progress is made in the near future."

The 91-page report, prepared for the committee of which Percy is a member, also urged that "efforts for a pre-Geneva arrangement--either partial or total--be accelerated and pursued on an urgent basis" because the "suspension" of the step-by-step negotiations conducted by Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger "raises the specter of further stalemate at Geneva."

The Senator's report also took cognizance of the huge U.S. military sales to Saudi Arabia and warned that "Saudi military effectiveness therefore must be considered in the balance of forces in a future Arab-Israeli conflict."

Saudi Discrimination A Concern

Percy, who angered Chicago Jewish leaders by advocating that Israel communicate with the Palestine Liberation Organization following his recent 23-day, 12-nation tour of the Middle East, also

observed in his report that "One issue of specific concern relating to growing Saudi Arabian-American relations is the Saudi discrimination against individuals of Jewish faith or firms doing business with Israel."

In that connection, Percy wrote, the American government should not sanction or cooperate with such discriminatory practices. He added that "if the joint (Saudi-American) Economic Commission is to operate, then it must be with the best available talent, the best firms and the best products without discrimination on the basis of race, color or creed." (See separate story on the joint commission.)

Percy's report was prepared, in part at least, following the breakdown of the Israeli-Egyptian negotiations conducted by Kissinger last month. The Senator stated: "Much as I admire the diplomatic skills of Henry Kissinger, I came away from the Middle East concerned that all the confrontation states were relying too heavily on the United States to make peace in their area of the world. Ultimately, only the parties directly involved can take the steps, demonstrate the good faith, create the good will, and make the concessions which are required for a lasting settlement of their differences."

Growing U.S. Involvement In Saudi

Regarding the Saudi Arabian boycott of Jews and companies doing business with Israel, Percy's report observed that "U.S. support of Israel is a major dilemma in Saudi foreign policy" and "America's close ties to Israel do present a problem but they have not hindered growing U.S. commercial commitments or direct involvement of Americans in Saudi government projects. In fact, U.S. official involvement in Saudi Arabia is significant and is expected to grow."

Percy observed further that with the U.S. engaged in huge military sales programs with Iran and Saudi Arabia, "Iranian forces and equipment will not be used against Israel but the probabilities are high that Saudi forces will war with Israel if the Middle East conflict breaks open again. Saudi military effectiveness therefore must be considered in the balance of forces in a future Arab-Israeli conflict."

DISCLOSE SIMON SIGNED STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF U.S. WHICH CONCEALED ANTI-JEWISH BIAS BY SAUDI GOV'T.

NEW YORK, April 21 (JTA)--The American Jewish Congress has called on Treasury Secretary William E. Simon to repudiate a statement which he signed on behalf of the United States which, according to the AJCongress, endorses by "euphemistic concealment" the anti-Jewish discrimination practiced by the government of Saudi Arabia. A spokesman for the AJCongress told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency today that the statement was adopted last June 8 by the joint U.S.-Saudi Arabian Commission but remained "unpublicized" until now. The statement was released to the AJCongress by what the spokesman described as a highly reliable source.

In a letter to Simon, AJCongress President Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg cited the statement relating to manpower training in Saudi Arabia by American experts in collaboration with Saudi counterparts which stipulates that the programs "would be sensitive to the social, political and religious contexts of Saudi Arabia."

This requirement, Rabbi Hertzberg stated, represented an "implicit understanding that the Saudi Arabian government will not be obliged to deal with, accept or recognize American citizens

whom it finds objectionable on any of these grounds. The provision then, would seem to be no more than euphemistic concealment of an agreement to accommodate the religious bias of the Saudi Arabian government and, more precisely, to exclude qualified Jews from participation in these projects."

Concrete Example Cited

As a concrete example, Rabbi Hertzberg's letter noted that Saudi Arabia will need some 6000 physicians by 1980 to staff two new hospitals in Jidda and Riyadh, and that two American firms--the Whittaker Corp. of California and the Hospital Corporation of America--had contracted to operate the new facilities and would presumably recruit additional physicians in the U.S.

"We have no doubt that none of the 2000 doctors already on the staff of the King Faisal Hospital is Jewish and that none of the 6000 doctors whom the Saudi Arabians now intend to recruit will be Jewish," Rabbi Hertzberg wrote. "We are certain that all Jewish candidates will be excluded because of the 'religious contexts in Saudi Arabia.' We submit that U.S. collaboration in promoting any program thus permeated with religious bigotry is incompatible with fundamental American tenets and traditions and inadmissible on the part of any government agency," Rabbi Hertzberg wrote.

He suggested that American members of the Joint Commission make clear to the Saudi Arabian government "that the United States will not participate in joint efforts in which the rights of any of our citizens are compromised or reduced because of Saudi Arabian demands."

Rabbi Hertzberg urged that "instead of a unilateral guarantee that all programs of the joint U.S.-Saudi Arabian Commission shall be 'sensitive to the social, cultural, political and religious contexts of Saudi Arabia,' our country's representatives must insist upon a corresponding and commensurate requirement that these programs be equally responsible to the traditions and practices of our country."

LIFE-STYLES ARE BEING CHANGED BY JEWISH FEMINIST MOVEMENT

WASHINGTON, April 21 (JTA)--The feminist movement is changing the style of Sabbath and holiday services among American Jewish college students as an increasing number of women take on roles and ritual traditionally reserved for the male, B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundations reported yesterday. At campus services, it is not uncommon for a woman to be counted in the minyan, serve as cantor, read from the Torah or chant the Haftarah, and otherwise assert an equality in religious practices, a Hillel survey of its campus installations disclosed.

Among the more militant innovators, Jewish coeds at Boston and Brown Universities exclude males from their all-feminine Sabbath service. The service itself is patterned on Orthodox ritual. At Brown, two of the students revised the siddur with new verses and translations which "speak to us as women!" Their use of a female pronoun for the deity, they said, was to emphasize that "there are distinctly female aspects of God that men and women should consider." Similarly, a Haggadah rewritten to cite the role of women in the Exodus was used last month by 75 University of Pennsylvania coeds for their women-only seder.

The survey found many religion-minded feminists on campus actively expressing dissatisfaction with the status of women in many matters of Jewish law. The growing trend toward egalitarian worship, the survey noted, began about 10 years ago at the

University of Chicago and is now prevalent on campuses across the country. It is strongest at New England colleges, less pronounced in the south.

Combines Radicalism, Traditionalism

Rabbi Norman Frimer, Hillel's national director, described the trend as a "unique combination of radicalism and traditionalism." An Orthodox adherent, Rabbi Frimer said that while he personally found many of the innovations theologically unacceptable, they were "sociologically affirmative" in terms of strengthening the Jewish community. The prodding by women, he said, "is not only a search for feminism and equality but equally an aspect of their quest to experience and express a total Jewishness."

Members of Hillel's national commission, at their annual meeting here, agreed that the use of Hillel facilities for such departures from custom was appropriate, conforming to B'nai B'rith's policy of "encouragement to all of the religious options in Judaism." The survey noted that in the past Jewish women lacked "adequate training" to assume leadership roles in worship, a circumstance that has since changed. At Brandeis University and other schools, women's groups have organized to teach other women how to read from the Torah and perform other religious roles.

Rabbi Albert Axelrad, Hillel director at Brandeis, reported that the egalitarian Sabbath services on his campus are also drawing families from nearby communities. At the University of Chicago, said Rabbi Daniel I. Leifer, the shared roles for men and women are taken for granted. The service is Conservative-oriented and "heavy on Hebrew." At UCLA, women are involved as teachers, preparing other women for a belated Bat Mitzvah.

Rabbi Joseph A. Polak, Hillel director at Boston University, strongly endorses the feminine thrust on his campus. He describes its exclusive-for-women congregation as an Americanization of the "viebershul" (wives' synagogue) of 18th and 19th Century Europe.

ALLON, KISSINGER INDICATE GAP REMAINS BETWEEN U.S., ISRAEL ON STEPS TO MIDEAST SETTLEMENT

By Joseph Polakoff

WASHINGTON, April 21 (JTA)--Israeli Foreign Minister Yigal Allon met with Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger for more than three hours during a working luncheon at the State Department today. Both indicated afterwards that the gap remains open between Israel and the U.S. on how to proceed toward a Middle East settlement.

Meeting reporters in the State Department lobby, Allon and Kissinger made brief statements displaying cordiality and spoke in the future tense of studies to be made by both countries of the situation. Allon said "Each party will study possibilities toward peace" and "all options are open." He expressed the hope that they will "coordinate the views and steps in the future" because "I truly believe that there are joint basic interests in the Middle East between the U.S. and Israel."

Allon denied that "a crisis" existed between the two countries but conceded that there are "some misunderstandings which can be straightened out and should be done." He said he was travelling across America for the United Jewish Appeal and "gladly accepted a suggestion from my old friend, Dr. Kissinger" for an "opportun-

ity" to discuss views.

Kissinger described his talks with Allon as "constructive" and said that each country would study "how to revive the momentum toward peace." Neither diplomat answered questions as Kissinger escorted the Israeli Foreign Minister to his waiting car. Kissinger said later that he did not know when Israeli Premier Yitzhak Rabin might visit Washington. There had been reports that Rabin would come to Washington in June to see President Ford.

HUNGER STRIKES SPREAD

CLEVELAND, April 21 (JTA)--Hunger strikes and demonstrations in support of the fast being conducted in Moscow by Jewish activist Vladimir Slepak and his family are spreading to major cities in the United States and Canada. Here in Cleveland, 35 people marched in front of City Hall during the lunch hour, including seven members of the Case-Western Reserve University Jewish Student Coalition who are fasting in sympathy with the Slepaks. Among the demonstrators were Mayor Ralph Perk and Earl Williams, director of Community Relations for the city, who is a leader of the Black community here.

In Cincinnati, about 70 local Jews began a hunger strike last night and today were joined by the mothers of Mark Nashpitz and Boris Tsitlonok, the two Moscow Jewish activists who have been sentenced to five years in exile after demonstrating for visas. A spokesman for the Cincinnati Hunger Strike Committee said 8-10 people are committed to continue the fast as long as the Slepaks do.

The Toronto Group of 35, a group of Jewish women activists in support of Soviet Jewry, organized a dusk-to-dawn hunger strike today. Several dozen women, some of them with children, marched in front of the Ontario Provincial Parliament. They conducted a silent vigil and distributed literature to passersby. In New York, 10 friends of Slepak, all students, began a sympathy hunger strike yesterday in front of the Metropolitan Museum of Art as an exhibition of ancient gold pieces on loan from the USSR opened.

Slepak, his wife, Maria, and their 22-year-old son, Aleksandr, began their hunger strike April 13, the fifth anniversary of their applications for visas to emigrate to Israel. Aleksandr though very weak, is continuing to work since he is the only one in the family with a job. Slepak has waited longer than anyone else in Moscow to emigrate.

UNESCO CONDEMNED BY UN ASSOCIATION

NEW YORK, April 21 (JTA)--A floor fight during the biennial convention here of the United Nations Association of the United States forced a vote declaring that the association "unreservedly" condemned the "blatantly discriminatory actions" of UNESCO general conferences against Israel. The 91-71 vote last Thursday also deplored the "politicization" of UNESCO and called on the U.S. government "to exert every effort to bring about a reversal of the discriminatory actions against Israel." In one of those actions, a UNESCO conference voted to bar Israel from membership in UNESCO's European grouping.

The vote overturned a 9-1 vote of the association's substantive issues committee last Wednesday which while condemning UNESCO anti-Israel decisions, criticized the U.S. Congress for cutting off the \$19 million annual appropriation to UNESCO and urged restoration of the funds, according to William Korey, of B'nai B'rith, one of the organizations affiliated with the association. Korey, the only Jewish representative on the committee, led the floor fight, with other Jewish representatives joining.

