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75 SENATORS FROM 45 STATES URGE FORD TO STAND 'FIRMLY WITH ISRAEL'

By Joseph Polakoff

WASHINGTON, May 21 (JTA)--Seventy-five Senators representing 45 states urged President Ford today to stand "firmly with Israel" in America's best interests by helping keep Israel militarily strong and economically viable and supporting its search for peace in future negotiations.

The appeal, contained in a letter to the President as he was about to personally enter the Middle East political arena in meetings with President Anwar Sadat of Egypt and Israeli Premier Yitzhak Rabin next month, was linked to the expectation of Congress that it will receive "within the next several weeks" the President's foreign aid requests for the coming fiscal year. "We trust," the Senators wrote, "that your recommendations will be responsive to Israel's urgent military and economic needs."

The signatories--50 Democrats and 25 Republicans--included most of the Senate's leaders of both parties. They comprised the largest number of Senators ever to sign a letter to the President or the Secretary of State on behalf of Israel since the 1967 Six-Day War.

Special significance was attached to the fact that all 10 of the freshman Senators--including Dale Bumpers (D, Ark.) who defeated former Senate Foreign Relations Committee chairman J. William Fulbright in last year's primaries--joined in signing the letter. The signatories also included Sen. George McGovern (D, SD), who has been praised by the Palestine Liberation Organization as the highest U.S. official to meet with the PLO. They did not include, however, Sen. Charles Percy (R, Ill.) who did not meet with the PLO but has urged Israel to communicate with it.

Congressional Support For Israel Intact

The letter nevertheless was a definite sign that reports of an erosion of support for Israel in Congress were grossly exaggerated. The Senators urged Ford to "make it clear, as we do, that the United States, acting in its own national interests, stands firmly with Israel in the search for peace in future negotiations, and that this premise is the basis of the current reassessment of U.S. policy in the Middle East."

They pointed out that while the suspension of the U.S. effort for a second stage Israel-Egyptian interim agreement is "regrettable, the history of the Arab-Israel conflict demonstrates that any Israeli withdrawal must be accompanied by meaningful steps toward peace by its Arab neighbors."

The letter implicitly criticized the Administration's refusal to enter into any new arms commitments to Israel pending the outcome of its reassessment when it noted that "withholding military equipment from Israel would be dangerous, discouraging accommodation by Israel's neighbors and encouraging a resort to force."

The Senators stressed that "a strong Israel constitutes a most reliable barrier to domination of the area by outside parties" and "given the recent heavy flow of Soviet weaponry to Arab

states, it is imperative that we do not permit the military balance to shift against Israel." The letter was originally sponsored by Sen. Jacob K. Javits (R, NY) and 18 co-sponsors--12 Democrats and seven Republicans. They will hold a news conference tomorrow to discuss their appeal to the President.

Previously, the largest number of Senators to petition Administration officials on Israel's behalf was in August, 1970 when 73 wrote to former Secretary of State William P. Rogers urging an end to the delay in sending Phantom jets to Israel during the Suez crisis that year. Last Dec. 9, 71 Senators wrote to Ford to support Israel's opposition to the PLO after Yasir Arafat's appearance at the United Nations.

ISRAEL RAPS ARAB CRITICISM OF EEC-ISRAEL TRADE PACT

BRUSSELS, May 21 (JTA)--The Israeli Embassy here published its reaction today to Arab criticism of the Israeli-European Economic Community (EEC) trade agreement. The information committee of Arab embassies in Brussels severely criticized the Israel-EEC accord in a communique issued after the signing May 11.

The Arab communique, the Israeli communique stated, fits into the usual line of conduct of the Arab countries, aimed at exercising pressure and blackmail over countries and international organizations by trying to dictate to them the attitude to assume towards Israel.

The Israeli communique also underlined the position taken by Israel, as stated at the signing of the accord by Israeli Foreign Minister Yigal Allon, that all states in the Middle East will be encouraged to freely exchange their knowledge and technology and forming economic integration as a factor for peaceful co-existence. Allon's statement that the EEC's maintaining close ties with Israel and with her neighbors could contribute to the construction of such a regional and inter-regional economic structure, was also included in the communique today.

JERUSALEM SATISFIED WITH GENEVA DELAY

JERUSALEM, May 21 (JTA)--Officials here have broadly welcomed the results of the meeting in Vienna between Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger and Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko, commenting favorably on the fact that the two men seem to have approached the Mideast issue at a slow and steady pace. The decision to delay the resumption of Geneva talks until the early autumn was "the proper thing to do" an official here said. Geneva would need much careful preparation and the build-up to it could not be hurried, he added.

The official said upcoming Mideast developments would now focus on the meetings between President Ford and President Anwar Sadat and Ford and Premier Yitzhak Rabin next month--an apparent hint that Israel still hoped for American-orchestrated progress towards a partial settlement with Egypt. The official stressed that the UNEF and UNDOF mandates--due to lapse again July 24 (assuming the Syrians extend the present UNDOF mandate till then) would have to be renewed again--preferably for a six-month period, to facilitate the resumption of Geneva talks in a relaxed atmosphere.

ISRAEL PROBING MEANING OF EGYPT'S TROOP REDUCTION ON SUEZ CANAL

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, May 21 (JTA)--Israeli officials are speculating over whether the recent reduction of Egyptian forces east of the Suez Canal represents a deliberate easing of tensions on the eve of the official reopening of the waterway and President Anwar Sadat's meeting with President Ford; or whether it is a tactical military move preparatory to a massive crossing of the Suez Canal by Egyptian troops and armor now deployed on its west bank.

Whatever Cairo's intentions, the Egyptians have withdrawn a considerable portion of the 7000 troops, 36 cannons and several dozen tanks they are entitled to keep east of the Suez Canal under terms of the January, 1974 disengagement agreements with Israel.

This move, over the past few days, was contrary to the expectation in Israeli military circles that the Egyptians intended to beef up their forces in Sinai coincidental with the canal's reopening, even to the point of violating the disengagement accords. Cairo was expected to use the pretext of protecting the waterway from attack by Israeli artillery deployed on a line west of the Mittle and Gidi Passes and within easy range of the canal. Defense Minister Shimon Peres said last week that Israel welcomed the reopening of the canal and would not interfere with shipping using it.

Dayan Suggests Conciliatory Gesture

Meanwhile, former Defense Minister Moshe Dayan, to the surprise of many, has proposed that Israel make a conciliatory military "gesture" to coincide with the official reopening of the Suez Canal June 5. Dayan, generally regarded as "hawkish" in his views, said at a Labor Alignment political debate last night that Israel could thin out its line facing the Suez Canal by pulling back some of its heavy artillery, though infantry troops manning the lines would remain in place.

Such a gesture apparently has been under discussion behind the scenes in government circles for the past few weeks. Peres is known to have favored it initially but Premier Yitzhak Rabin was opposed. It is not believed, therefore, that there will be any lowering of Israel's military profile in Sinai. Peres' assurances to the Egyptians that Israel has no intention of interfering with Suez Canal traffic is considered sufficient to allay any genuine fears the Egyptians may have.

Not Discounting Egyptian Move

But Israeli circles are not discounting the possibility that the Egyptians pulled back troops and armor from the east banks of the canal in order to form a powerful striking force that could re-cross the waterway without seriously interfering with maritime traffic.

Military correspondents who toured the Sinai front yesterday were able to see the heavy fortifications and military road system the Egyptians have built east of Suez which are capable of serving the five Egyptian divisions now deployed just west of the canal.

The Egyptians have also prepared the earthwork foundations for seven bridges that can be thrown across the canal within minutes to carry troops and armor into Sinai and then removed to allow ships to pass. At the same time, however, the Egyptians are continuing to rebuild

their war-damaged cities in the Suez Canal zone and the civilian population is returning.

D'ESTAING SAYS ISRAEL SHOULD GET ARMS IF SHE IS THREATENED

By Edwin Eytan

PARIS, May 21 (JTA)--President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing defined today what he considered the best kind of Big Power guarantees to Israel: an automatic commitment to step up the delivery of military equipment should there be a shift in the military balance of power in the Middle East or if Israel's existence is endangered.

The French President made those remarks in a conversation with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency's European Bureau Chief during a formal luncheon at the Elysee Palace attended by several dozen French and foreign newsmen to mark the first anniversary of the President's election to office.

The best guarantee is to give a country the means to defend itself, the French leader told the JTA. He said no country could be sure of obtaining the military equipment it needs without a guarantee and cited Egypt's precarious situation after the Soviet Union halted arms shipments to Cairo last year as an example.

Giscard d'Estaing, who seemed well informed on the subject, said he was sure that UNESCO would relent in its anti-Israel position before the next session of its General Assembly two years hence and that Israel will find itself in one of the geographical groupings from which it was excluded by UNESCO resolutions adopted in Paris last year.

The President refused to be drawn into any discussion of the status of the Palestine Liberation Organization which claims to represent the Palestinian people. However, he told the JTA that the main reason for Israel's former anger with France was the latter's insistence that no peace settlement can be concluded in the Middle East without Palestinian participation. He indicated that Israel's position has changed somewhat and is now a bit closer to France's. He did not elaborate.

RABBIS HOLD PRAYER CEREMONY ON STEPS OF NATION'S CAPITOL

By Joseph Polakoff

WASHINGTON, May 21 (JTA)--Representatives of boards of rabbis from a dozen Eastern cities, wearing yarmulkas and tallisim and from time to time embracing a Torah, invoked blessings today on American governmental leaders and urged them to maintain America's "historic commitments to support the democratic State of Israel."

Standing on the Capitol's west steps, facing the Washington and Lincoln Memorials, and under a broiling midday sun in Washington's high humidity, the rabbis, many of them aged, read psalms and sounded the shofar in what was described as an unprecedented ceremony.

Rabbi Harold H. Gordon, executive vice-president of the New York Board of Rabbis, which had organized the rabbinic mission to Washington, said he was "quite sure" that this was the first time such a Jewish prayer vigil was held at the Capitol. The New York Board said in a statement that it is "deeply concerned over the mounting pressures directed by our government at the State of Israel."

"The basis for these concerns," it said, is the U.S. reassessment of its Mideast policy, granting of arms to Jordan during this period "even while Israel is denied the opportunity for discussions relative to new arms shipments, the

labeling of Israel as intransigent and the simultaneous characterization of Egypt as moderate although it was Egypt that refused any meaningful political concessions in return for the enormous concessions that Israel offered."

A score of members of Congress visited the rabbis during the vigil. Rabbi Jacob Goldberg of the Fort Tryon Jewish Center in Manhattan and head of the New York Board's Israel Committee, presided over the vigil. Following it the rabbis visited members of both Houses of Congress.

**AJCONGRESS WARNS IT WILL BRING
SUIT AGAINST COMMERCE DEPARTMENT
UNLESS NAMES OF U.S. FIRMS COMPLYING
WITH ARAB BOYCOTT IS MADE PUBLIC**
By Sheryl Anne Gura

NEW YORK, May 21 (JTA)--The American Jewish Congress warned today that it might bring suit against the U.S. Department of Commerce under the Freedom of Information Act unless the Department makes public the names of American firms complying with the Arab boycott of Israel. The Department of Commerce considers this information "confidential" but its disclosure could facilitate public pressure on complying companies, AJCongress Executive Director Naomi Lévine said at a press conference here today.

At the same time, the AJCongress reminded the Ford Administration today that there are eight federal statutes of long standing that the President could invoke to foil the Arab boycott pressures "now being directed at American companies and American citizens." The eight statutes were listed in a 29-page memorandum "to the President of the United States" circulated to reporters at the press conference.

Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg, AJCongress president, said these statutes "already make illegal many aspects of the Arab boycott operating in the United States today" and that "strict enforcement of these laws would make a major contribution to restoring the principle of free trade and protecting the rights of American citizens."

New Anti-Boycott Legislation Expected

The AJCongress also said that it expects new legislation aimed against the Arab boycott to be introduced by a bi-partisan group of Senators before the end of this month. The proposed measures would make it illegal for an American company to refuse to deal with any country with which the U.S. has diplomatic relations because of the foreign policy of a third country; and would prohibit discrimination by any company on grounds of race, religion and sex in any of its commercial operations.

The latter was described as an expansion of the Civil Rights Law aimed at companies that might refuse to hire or promote Jews as a condition of doing business with an Arab country.

The laws already on the books that can be invoked against the Arab boycott are: the Export Administration Act; the Federal Trade Commission Act; the Shipping Act; the Bank Secrecy Act; the Securities and Exchange Act; the Federal Deposit Insurance Act; the Foreign Investment Study Act; and the Sherman Anti-Trust Act.

Rabbi Hertzberg said, "We believe that President Ford and his Administration are deeply concerned with problems of discrimination and boycott. In the President's public declarations and in the most recent economic agreement signed with Israel, our government has reiterated America's opposition to any restrictive trade practices that result from boycott and religious

discrimination."

Rabbi Hertzberg noted that the AJCongress' study suggests "additional steps that the President could take to protect American companies from Arab boycott pressure and to defend the principle of free trade and non-discrimination, which are fundamental to the American system."

Five Firms Charged

In Washington, meanwhile, the Department of Commerce charged five U.S. exporters today with failure to report that they had been asked to participate in the Arab boycott, a violation of the Export Administration Act of 1969. The Department refused, however, to disclose the identities of the companies until their cases are settled. A Department spokesman noted that it was not illegal for a U.S. firm to participate in the boycott.

SYRIA AGREES TO UNDOF EXTENSION

LATE NEWS BULLETIN

UNITED NATIONS, May 21 (JTA)--Informed sources said today that Syria has agreed to a six-month extension of the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) and informed Secretary General Kurt Waldheim to this effect. The UNDOF mandate expires May 31. The Security Council will reportedly meet here next week, either on May 27 or 28, to vote on the UNDOF mandate. Israel is on record as favoring a six-month UNDOF extension.

Based on previous voting procedures on the UN forces, the Security Council is expected to adopt a resolution extending the UNDOF mandate with a vote of 13 in favor, and two member states, China and Iraq, not participating in the vote, observers here noted. Previous reports stated that Syria was ready to extend the UNDOF mandate for only two months. In that case the UNEF mandate in the Sinai and UNDOF mandate in the Golan Heights would have expired simultaneously.

**W.H.O. WARNED AGAINST SUSPENDING
ISRAEL'S VOTING RIGHTS**

WASHINGTON, May 21 (JTA)--The World Health Organization was warned today by a group of influential Congressmen of both parties that any attempt to suspend Israel's voting privileges or rights to WHO services will lead to a loss of Congressional support for that organization. Six Senators and 45 Representatives cabled Dr. Halfdan Mahler, WHO's director-general, in Geneva, that any "such political actions" against Israel would "certainly undermine the broad support and confidence which the WHO has enjoyed in the past."

The Congressmen also pointed out that in the "light of the recent experience with UNESCO" they would not want to see any action which might diminish American support for WHO in Congress. A statement issued by Sen. Clifford P. Case (R, N.J.), one of four Senate Foreign Relations Committee members to join in the warning, observed that the committee has delayed action on legislation that would have the U.S. contribute \$29.4 million to WHO for the year beginning July 1.

Among the Senators signing the cable were Case, Hubert H. Humphrey (D, Minn.), Henry Jackson (D, Wash.), Gale McGee (D, Mont.) and Richard Schweiker (R, Pa.). Among the Representatives were House Majority Leader Thomas T. O'Neill (D, Mass.), William Broomfield (R, Mich.), Shirley Chisholm (D, N.Y.), Otto Passman (D, La.), Lee Hamilton (D, Ind.), John Anderson (R, Ill.), Philip Burton (D, Calif.), Charles Rangel (D, N.Y.), William Cohen (R, Maine) and Donald Fraser (D, Mont.).

REPORT SHOWS IMPROVEMENT IN JEWISH EDUCATION IN ARGENTINA

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, May 21 (JTA)--After years of steady decline, the state of Jewish education in Argentina is beginning to show some slight improvement, according to a report delivered by Haim Finkelstone, head of the Jewish Agency's education department, to the Agency Executive.

Six new Jewish schools had been set up in outlying areas this year as the first stage of a comprehensive education plan devised by Jewish Agency chairman Pinhas Sapir during his visit to Argentina last year, Finkelstone said. The overall figures showed an increase of 500 in the number of children enrolled at Jewish schools in Argentina. But the total figure was only 20,000, Finkelstone continued. The basic problem was a shortage of teachers, especially young teachers.

Altogether in Argentina there are some 1100 teachers of Hebrew or Jewish studies. But the profession stood low in the social and financial scale and for that reason it was attracting few new applicants.

This situation could not be corrected by the dispatch of "shlichim" (emissaries) from Israel, Finkelstone said. The shlichim could be best employed as educational advisors in the schools--but the solution must be devised by the Jewish communities on the spot. He added that "Machon Gold" and "Machon Greenberg," two World Zionist Organization teachers' training colleges in Jerusalem providing diploma courses for overseas students, could make a significant contribution in alleviating the situation.

VIKTOR STERN TOLD HE MUST LEAVE USSR BY JUNE 15

NEW YORK, May 21 (JTA)--Viktor Stern, son of Dr. Mikhail Stern who is currently serving an eight-year prison term in the Soviet Union, has been told by the authorities that he must leave the USSR by June 15, the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry reported today. The SSSJ also reported that Mikhail Varnavitsky, son of the "top activist" in Leningrad, Israel Varnavitsky, has received an exit visa. Mikhail's father, who suffers from a severe heart condition, and his mother, have been denied an exit visa, the SSSJ reported.

CONSECRATE FIRST NEW SYNAGOGUE SINCE TURN OF CENTURY IN NEW YORK'S EAST MIDTOWN AREA

NEW YORK, May 21 (JTA)--The new Sutton Place Synagogue and Jewish Center for the United Nations was consecrated in ceremonies last Sunday, marking the construction of the first Jewish sanctuary in the city's east midtown area since the turn of the century, center officials said. They noted that with the recent completion of the Catholic Center for the UN and the Protestant Church Center, the new building will be a living symbol of the three faiths' equality in America.

In addition to housing community facilities for the east midtown-Manhattan area, officials expressed hope that the new building will serve as an international landmark for Judaism, a home of hospitality to persons related to the UN and a research center for those concerned with international affairs. It is also hoped the synagogue will be a meeting place for the exchange of views between Jewish leaders and a research center to further understanding among co-relig-

ionists for the UN.

The new \$1.5 million structure is located in the same spot where the old Sutton Place Synagogue stood for 74 years. Originally it was known as Congregation Orach Chayim and later as Beth Hamidrash before becoming the Sutton Place Synagogue in the 1940's. The synagogue's central location in the city and the establishment of the UN brought a large number of visitors to its religious services, among them the late Israeli Prime Ministers Ben Gurion and Levi Eshkol, officials recalled. Sunday's dedication ceremonies were attended by U.S., UN and Israeli dignitaries. Rabbi David Kahane is the spiritual leader of the congregation.

KLUTZNICK NAMED BY FORD TO 17-MEMBER COMMITTEE TO RESETTLE VIETNAMESE REFUGEES

CHICAGO, May 21 (JTA)--Philip M. Klutznick, internationally prominent Jewish community leader, has been named by President Ford to a newly-created 17-member advisory committee to resettle Vietnamese refugees. The committee will be headed by John Eisenhower. Klutznick is a member of the board of the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago and was elected chairman of the executive committee of the World Jewish Congress at its recent international meeting in Israel. A former U.S. representative to the United Nations Economic and Social Council where he held the rank of ambassador, he is presently honorary international president of B'nai B'rith.

NEW LUBAVITCHER DIVISION IN VENEZUELA

NEW YORK, May 21 (JTA)--Merkos L'inyonei Chinuch, the educational arm of the Lubavitch movement, has announced the opening of its new regional office in Caracas, Venezuela. This is the third Lubavitch office in South America. The others are in Buenos Aires and Sao Paulo. Appointed to head this new division is Rabbi Moshe Perman, 26, born in Israel. He studied in Lubavitcher seminaries in Kfar Chabad and New York, and received his ordination in New York. Assisting him will be his wife, Chaya, formerly of Toronto.

This new division will be involved in all matters of Jewish concern in Caracas and throughout Venezuela, and will reach out to Jewish communities in surrounding countries as well. Merkos L'inyonei Chinuch, which has one of the world's largest publication houses of Jewish literature, has published a large assortment of Jewish literature in Spanish for distribution in Spain, Argentina, and Mexico, and will now be made available in the Jewish communities of Venezuela.

RABBI HENRI SCHILLI, 69, DEAD

PARIS, May 21 (JTA)--Rabbi Henri Schilli, director of the French Israelite Seminary, died last night in his home. He was 69. Rabbi Schilli finished his studies at the seminary in 1931, and held posts as secretary general of the Paris Consistory, director of the Jewish Chaplaincy in the French army, and chaplain of concentration camps in France during World War II. He was also one of the founders of the French-Jewish Scouting Organization. He became director of the Israelite Seminary in 1951.

BUENOS AIRES (JTA)--The General Zionist Federation of Argentina and the Buenos Aires Kehilla have elected new officers. Saul Patrick was named president of the General Zionists, and Dr. Mario Gorenstein, president of the Kehilla.