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RABIN ANNOUNCES ISRAELI THINNING OF TROOPS, WEAPONS IN SINAI

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, June 2 (JTA)--Premier Yitzhak Rabin announced today that Israel would voluntarily and unilaterally undertake a substantial thinning out of its troops and weaponry in Sinai to coincide with the reopening of the Suez Canal this Thursday. He said he hoped Israel's action would contribute to a lessening of tension in the area and demonstrate to Egypt and the world Israel's sincere desire to make progress toward peace. He stressed that the move did not "replace the existing disengagement" nor was it a "substitute for the continuation of efforts to achieve a further agreement between Israel and Egypt." He conceded that it involved "a measure of risk."

The Premier made his announcement to the press directly following a special Cabinet meeting. He said the moves would be implemented before the canal reopens officially to navigation, provided that the disengagement accords continue to be observed on a basis of reciprocity.

Israel's new "gesture" in the direction of easing tensions and furthering peace negotiations came as President Ford and President Anwar Sadat of Egypt were winding up two days of meetings in Salzburg, Austria and a little more than a week before Rabin's meeting with Ford in Washington. Rabin insisted, in reply to reporters' questions, that the decision was not taken as a result of information arriving from Salzburg. He said it was an independent and unilateral move "based on our assessment that Israel should do something--involving a measure of risk--to demonstrate our contribution in light of the canal's reopening, towards pacification of the region." He denied that the decision was intended to influence the Ford-Sadat meeting in its final rounds.

Kissinger Calls Move 'Constructive'

(At a press conference in Salzburg today after the conclusion of the Ford-Sadat meetings, Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger described Rabin's announcement as "a constructive move" clearly intended to ease "possible Egyptian concern" that the Suez Canal would be in range of Israeli artillery. He added, however, that "no unilateral step can be decisive, but it is helpful." At another point, Kissinger observed that the Israeli announcement is "unrelated to the settlement issue but can have an effect." The Secretary's reaction to the Israeli move appeared to be that while it was highly welcome as a tension-easer, it was not a major development in the perspective of an overall Mideast settlement.)

(In London, Israel's announcement was welcomed by the British government today and widely praised in the news media. A Foreign Office spokesman said, "We welcome the Israeli move which can only improve prospects in the search for a lasting peace settlement in the Middle East." Most observers here saw the Israeli move as having a positive impact on the situation in the Middle East.)

Initial reaction among political observers here favored Rabin's move but deplored its timing. They contended that the announcement would have had a considerably greater impact had it been made just before the Ford-Sadat meeting in Salzburg.

An Israeli "gesture" related to the reopening of the Suez Canal was not unexpected here. Rumors of such a move have been abroad in Jerusalem for the past six weeks and the idea was vigorously espoused by Defense Minister Shimon Peres, by some army commanders and especially by former Defense Minister Moshe Dayan who urged it at several public forums recently. Although Rabin himself was rumored to have had doubts, an aide to the Premier told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency today that Rabin had "never opposed the idea."

Details Move

Rabin explained in detail today exactly what the move involved in military terms. The measures include: reducing by half the number of tanks within 30 kilometers of the canal. Under the January 1974 disengagement agreement with Egypt, Israel was permitted to keep 30 tanks within a 20 kilometer "limited forces zone" east of the canal; reducing by half the number of soldiers within the limited forces zone. Under the disengagement accord, Israel was allowed to keep 7000 soldiers in the zone. They will now number no more than 3000.

Israel will also remove all artillery within a distance of 32 kilometers of the canal. Under the disengagement agreement, Israel was allowed six artillery batteries of six guns each in the limited forces zone. There was no limitation of artillery east of that zone provided that the guns were kept beyond range of the waterway. Rabin announced that Israel would also remove all of its ground-to-air and ground-to-ground missiles--except anti-tank missiles--from a 40 kilometer strip east of the canal. The disengagement agreement stipulated no anti-aircraft missiles within 30 kilometers of the canal.

Rabin described the reopening of the Suez Canal as "an important constructive development" which Israel hoped would serve the interests of all maritime nations and which, he stressed, was part of the disengagement agreement with Egypt. He said Israel "trusts that an atmosphere of tranquility will prevail in the area of the Suez Canal and the Gulf of Suez." Asked if Israel now expected that Egypt would permit its cargoes transit through the canal, Rabin said "We hope and expect all the elements of the disengagement to be carried out." Passage for Israeli cargoes was included in the January 1974 disengagement agreement.

KISSINGER SAYS NO FINAL ANSWERS REACHED BY FORD AND SADAT

By Joseph Polakoff

WASHINGTON, June 2 (JTA)--Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger expressed the view today that "perhaps" the momentum can be resumed toward progress in Middle East peace negotiations in light of Israel's announced move to thin out its forces in Sinai. President Ford's just concluded talks with President Anwar Sadat of Egypt and Ford's talks next week with Israeli Premier Yitzhak Rabin in Washington.

Kissinger made his remarks at a press conference in Salzburg, Austria, immediately following the conclusion of two days of talks between Ford and Sadat. The press conference was viewed by reporters here via television monitors at the State Department.

Kissinger stressed that "no final conclusions" were reached during the five separate Ford-Sadat meetings over a period of 30 hours and that "no dramatic announcements could be made since the decisions involved many other parties." He described the Ford-Sadat talks as "very constructive" but emphasized that they "were not intended to reach any precise conclusions for an immediate negotiation."

He said the talks "provide the basis for useful talks with the Israelis" but that "we didn't discuss details of a final settlement." He also said "We have not taken an American position on an overall settlement.... We are not pushing any one approach. As the President and I have stated repeatedly, we are prepared to go to a Geneva conference. But whatever approach is promising, we will pursue it... no avenue will be excluded," the Secretary said.

Waiting For Talks With Israelis

He said, "The U.S. will not commit itself until the meeting with the Israelis," and that the Egyptian side did not preclude any approach. He indicated that no Egyptian proposal would be put before Israel when Ford meets with Rabin. Kissinger also said that there was "no question" that the Geneva conference will have to be reinstated, but "we have to reserve judgement until we've had other discussions."

Kissinger said the purpose of the Ford-Sadat talks was not for the two heads of state to get into detailed negotiations for an agreement between Israel and Egypt or an overall peace settlement. The intention was to permit the two leaders the opportunity to explore the roads to peace, he said. He said that "perhaps there will be an American suggestion" after Ford's talks with Rabin.

SADAT WELCOMES ISRAELI MOVE

NEW YORK, June 2 (JTA)--President Anwar Sadat of Egypt said in an NBC television interview in Salzburg today that Israel's decision to thin out its forces east of the Suez Canal "is a very encouraging act" which he welcomed "because it is a step toward peace and they should not fear peace." The Egyptian leader, who just concluded two days of talks with President Ford in Salzburg, said "When I opened the (Suez) Canal I wanted to say to Israel and to the whole world that I don't fear peace. I am ready to work out peace."

FORD, SADAT AGREE TO KEEP MOMENTUM GOING

By Edwin Eytan

SALZBURG, June 2 (JTA)--President Ford and President Anwar Sadat of Egypt concluded their two-day meeting here today with the decision to speed up the diplomatic momentum in the Middle East and to start negotiations in one form or another. Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger said at a press conference this afternoon that the two Presidents had discussed all possible approaches and that "no avenue was excluded."

Ford and Sadat met on five separate occasions here in less than 30 hours and reportedly considered the two main options for the resumption of peace talks; renewal of Kissinger's step-

by-step approach or a search for an overall settlement. Diplomatic sources here believe the odds are weighted heavily in favor of a rapid renewal of Kissinger's "shuttle diplomacy" in the Middle East.

President Ford made it clear, when he addressed the press today that all alternatives are still being considered and that the period of reassessment of American Middle East policy is not yet concluded. American sources here said Ford will inform Israeli Premier Yitzhak Rabin of his conversations with Sadat and will present the Israeli leader with the two options when they meet in Washington next week. The sources believe Rabin will probably opt for a renewal of Kissinger's mission suspended last March.

Whatever the final result of the American reassessment, Ford made it clear that the U.S. will not tolerate a stalemate in negotiations or a freezing of the status quo. Kissinger, whose press conference provided an epilogue to the Ford-Sadat talks, said there was no question that the Geneva peace conference will have to be reconvened at some point. "We have always said this and we have not changed our minds," he said.

No Specific Recommendations Expected

He indicated that the reassessment process will come to an end after the Ford-Rabin talks June 11-12 but he did not expect President Ford to make specific recommendations then but rather the President will state his general point of view. He termed Israel's decision to thin out its forces east of the Suez Canal a positive move but added that he did not expect an Egyptian response because the Israeli move came in response to Egypt's decision to reopen the canal. This phase seems now to be closed, Kissinger said. (See separate story on Kissinger press conference.)

Kissinger confirmed at his press briefing that the U.S. will grant economic aid to Egypt. He said the exact sum was not known as the President will ask for credits for the Middle East only after the end of the reassessment period.

Observers here agree that a result of the Ford-Sadat meeting will be closer contacts and consultations between Cairo and Washington from now on. The two leaders are reported to have established a close and warm relationship. Ford and Sadat were seen leaving Austrian Chancellor Bruno Kreisky's dinner last night arm in arm and an American spokesman said that he could remember only another such instance--when Ford met Soviet Communist Party Secretary Leonid Brezhnev in Vladivostok last year. The two Presidents have also invited each other to Cairo and Washington and Egyptian sources here say that Sadat's invitation was an official one.

Ford and Sadat, standing side by side in pouring rain, gave a brief press conference here this afternoon in the courtyard of the Salzburg Palace where they had held their working sessions. Ford confirmed they had taken into consideration all of the circumstances that are necessary for any agreement, whether step-by-step or a comprehensive one. He said the considerations were on the broadest basis.

When asked what the possible influence the letter by the 76 Senators will have on his final decision, he said that the reassessment has been conducted with the help of a great many suggestions from experts of both political parties in the United States. He said he did not consider these suggestions as being pressure. He added that when the reassessment is concluded, "I will submit a plan at the appropriate time."

ZIONIST ACTION AND DEVELOPMENT EBAN SEES SUPPORT FOR HIS VIEWS

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, June 2 (JTA)--Abba Eban has emerged from the Labor Alignment's "political debate" satisfied and encouraged. The debate clearly showed, he says, that he is not "an eccentric loner" within the Labor movement, a "maverick" in his questioning of the government's peace policy. The views which he stated in the first session of the debate were echoed by veteran Mapam leaders, by some ex-Ahdut Ha-avodah members, and by several members of ex-Mapal including Pinhas Sapir.

Political pundits have calculated that almost half of the thirty-odd speakers who took part in "the great debate" sided with Eban in his call for the government to draft an overall peace plan now, and to draft its territorial provisions dovishly.

Eban believes his own outspoken criticism of the government was the cause or at least the catalyst of the decision to hold the debate. And the debate, he says, was thoroughly beneficial. With all speakers deliberately avoiding polemics and personal recriminations, it was conducted on a consistently worthwhile level. What had at one stage threatened to degenerate into a personalized feud between himself and the Premier developed instead into a sincere effort by the ruling political party to examine its policies with a view, perhaps, to rethinking them.

Debate Should Continue

Eban notes that many observers saw him as the focus of the doveish camp which evolved during the debate beyond the former dove-hawk demarcation lines, and certainly transversed the old factional divides within the Labor Alignment. He believes that the continuation and intensification of the debate is inevitable as the "moment of truth" inexorably approaches. Many observers see him taking a leadership role in the ongoing evolution of the enlarged doveish bloc.

Eban points out that his tactical--as distinct from long-term strategic--criticisms of the government's present policy were shared by more than half of the participants in the debate. Former Defense Minister Moshe Dayan, for instance, who does not share Eban's minimalist views on borders, agreed with him nevertheless on the need for the government to seize the political initiative and break out of its present doing-nothing posture, Eban remarks. Many of those defending the government's tactics were in fact members of the Cabinet, who share responsibility for them and could hardly have been expected to speak otherwise, Eban points out. The current Israeli position, Eban says, is that "we have nothing more to offer on an interim settlement and do not wish to discuss at this stage an overall settlement."

He expects that an intensive effort will be made during the Ford-Rabin talks next week to investigate what chance there is for resuscitating the interim settlement talks--and believes that an interim settlement will in fact be attained soon. He expects President Ford and Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger to press Egypt to soften--at least cosmetically--the position it adopted at the time of the suspension of the Kissinger shuttle in March. Israel would then be pressed to produce modifications in its own position which would make a settlement possible.

Eban has all along opposed an interim settlement, mainly because he believes that such vital

assets as the Mittle Pass should be traded in the context of a more meaningful and more permanent arrangement. He still feels this way, but he says that if the government still hopes for an interim settlement--as it clearly does--it must strike out to achieve one soon and not allow the post-suspension immobility take root in the region--with all the dangers that immobility can spell.

Opposes Interim Settlement

He still believes that an interim settlement will solve nothing in the long- or even medium-range period, and therefore sees little purpose in it, beyond, perhaps, an improvement of the atmosphere at the subsequent resumption of the Geneva conference. For the conference will certainly reconvene, Eban asserts, very probably this year, whether or not there is an interim Israeli-Egyptian accord. "An interim settlement cannot provide a long period of quiescence," he says. He does not subscribe to Rabin's thesis that Israel's prime aim must be to "gain time" through the "seven lean years" ahead. "It is impossible to play for time.... We simply won't be left alone for years after an interim settlement with Egypt.... The Soviets and the Arabs will take us to Geneva soon enough...." he said.

His "impression," says Eban, is that Kissinger is similarly aware of the inevitability and imminence of Geneva, regardless of an interim settlement. The interim settlement has become in the Secretary of State's thinking, no longer a prelude to it, no longer an alternative to it. The shift is clearly detectable in his public statements during this year.

All this being so, "June 1975 is not too early for the government to tell the people that Geneva is in the offing" and to prepare its peace plan accordingly, Eban says. In his speech at Labor's "great debate," Eban outlined a 20-point list of "components of peace" which he recommended that the government demand at Geneva. Peace for the Arabs, he explained, must be a major revolution in their patterns of thought and life. Their fundamental attitude to the existence of Israel must undergo a drastic change--which must find expression in these legal, political, diplomatic, economic, social and cultural provisions which together comprise "peace" as it is understood by other neighboring nations who live side by side without hostility.

Urges 'Maximalist' Line

Israel should begin with a "maximalist" line in its peace demands Eban says. If the Arabs find the list unpalatable in its entirety, then there is logical justification in seeking a compromise--in the form of partial settlements--in which the Arabs accept some of Israel's peace demands and Israel accepts some of the Arabs territorial demands. But it is "not very intelligent" for Israel to expect the Arabs to declare at Geneva that they are ready for peace without Israel simultaneously stating its territorial demands, Eban points out.

Rabin and other ministers have argued that whatever Israel puts forward as its minimal territorial demands will be treated by the other side as maximum bargaining positions--and they conclude therefore that it would be wiser not to draft a peace plan, Eban takes cognizance of the argument, but demurs to the conclusion. He does not propose, he says, that Israel present now precisely delineated maps; but it must make clear its basic "propositions."

These, he says, should be: That territorial concessions depend in their scope on the Arabs' response to Israel's peace demands. That in the

event of some Arab response, Israel would insist on extensive demilitarization of areas returned and on changes in the 1967 lines which, while not radically changing the pre-1967 borders, would "significantly change the conditions under which we live." The aim should be to avoid annexing large areas or large populations. Israel must "stay up on the Golan"--but Eban does not define "stay up." There would have to be a relatively small change at Rafah (south of the Gaza Strip), retention of control and access at Sharm el-Sheikh (for which a juridical arrangement could be made) and Jerusalem must remain united. Even if these moderate demands were rejected by the Arabs, Eban says they would help Israel's relations with the powers and the wider world by giving the lie to the "expansionist" allegations.

Sees Support For United Jerusalem

Israel's insistence that Jerusalem never be redivided has gained much support in the world, Eban points out. The question of the holy places would have to be solved by some sort of extra-territorial arrangement. "We are committed to renounce jurisdiction over the holy areas," he recalls. Together with then-ministers Menachem Beigin and Zerah Warhaftig, he drafted, soon after the Six-Day War, a letter to United Nations Secretary General U Thant informing him of the Cabinet decision to this effect.

On the Palestinian question, Eban endorses the "Yariv formula" which expressed willingness to negotiate with any Palestinian representation that recognizes Israel. Under its present leadership, the PLO is unlikely to come to recognize Israel, and therefore Israel must continue to oppose a separate Palestinian state on the West Bank, as long as that is the case, Eban says firmly. This policy has gained acceptance, if not approval, internationally--as witness the Kremlin's current attempts to persuade Yasir Arafat to accept Resolution 242 and thereby gain admittance to the Geneva conference.

The letter by the 76 Senators to President Ford encouraged him greatly, Eban says, adding though that personally he had never subscribed to the view that Israel's support on Capitol Hill was being eroded. At the same time, he warns that "it would be wrong to see the letter as an endorsement of a hawkish territorial policy." The letter, he says, should certainly not be seen as encouragement for immobility. Its signatories are "for a strong, robust Israel--but not for a greater Israel...."

SCHONFELD URGES ORTHODOX TO END FRAGMENTATION

FALLSBURG, N.Y., June 2 (JTA)--The head of a major Orthodox rabbinic body warned today that organizational duplication, rivalry and fragmentation threaten the future of Orthodox Judaism in the U.S.

Rabbi Fabian Schonfeld, president of the Rabbinical Council of America, told over 500 delegates at the organization's annual convention that the Council will take immediate steps to establish a permanent National Orthodox Coordinating Commission. "This Commission," he said, "will hopefully crystallize a united and articulate voice for Orthodox Judaism in the crucial policy-making agencies of American Jewish life."

The rabbinic leader added that "there is a new receptivity in Jewish life for the traditional and authentic Torah Judaism." He said, "It

would be tragic if Orthodox dissipates this historic opportunity through ideological rivalry and wasteful duplication."

"In the area of synagogue service," Rabbi Schonfeld illustrated, "three agencies overlap, namely, the National Council of Young Israel, the Community Services Division of Yeshiva University and the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations. On the college campus, several Orthodox efforts compete with one another, through Yavneh, College Youth for Torah and Lubavitch. To stimulate Jewish education, three major agencies service the same schools, namely, Torah Umesorah, the Board of Jewish Education and the National Association for Jewish Education. This pattern of wasteful duplication is destructive," the rabbi emphasized, "and in many cases proves counter-productive."

Rabbi Schonfeld was strongly critical of Israeli leadership for its failure to emphasize the Biblical, religious and historic bond which links Jewry and the Holy Land. "The religious claim as revealed in the Bible," the rabbi emphasized, "is the most persuasive argument in support of the reconstitution of the Jewish state. In negotiating with the United States and in its public relations, particularly in Christian countries, this religious linkage will more readily evoke a more responsive response."

NAACP LEADER SAYS BLACK COUNTRIES CAN BENEFIT FROM ISRAELI TIES

SOUTHBURY, Conn., June 2 (JTA)--A leader of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People stated that Black African nations must learn that they can derive greater benefits from the democratic principles of Israel than by merely identifying with the Arab states because of a color affinity.

Clarence Mitchell, director of the NAACP's Washington bureau, told members of the board of trustees of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations that "the emerging nations of the world must understand that no future exists in trying to base relationships with people purely on race or color. After all, that's what got us all in a whole lot of trouble with Hitler." Mitchell indicated that "we must make clear to the Black African nations that there is no solace in identifying with the Arabs purely because of race. There are many Black racists in America whose interests do not coincide with Blacks here."

Earlier, the UAHC reported that the decline and stagnation of synagogue membership of the past ten years has ceased and the 718 Reform temples in the United States and Canada show a one-to-two percent increase in new members for the past two years.

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler, UAHC president, stated that Watergate, the economic crisis and the American failure in Vietnam have produced a "disillusionment--people are searching for newer and more meaningful values. There has emerged a spirit of the age which is infinitely more congenial to those ideas and ideals which the synagogue enshrines."

NEW YORK (JTA)--Premier Yitzhak Rabin of Israel, who is scheduled to meet with President Ford and Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger June 11-12, will be the guest of honor at a National Tribute in New York City on Saturday evening, June 14, under the auspices of the Israel Bond Organization, it was announced Monday by Sam Rothberg, general chairman. This will be Rabin's only major public appearance in New York in behalf of a Jewish organization during his forthcoming visit to the United States.