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RELATIONS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND AFRICAN STATES MAY BE THAWING

By Tuvia Mendelson

JERUSALEM, Nov. 29 (JTA)--A thawing in relations between Israel and the African states appeared today to be one of the outcomes of Premier Yitzhak Rabin's attendance of the 13th conference of the Socialist International in Geneva last week. Rabin, who returned to Israel early this morning made special mention of his talks in Geneva with President Leopold Senghor of Senegal.

He stressed that it was the first official meeting between an Israeli Premier and a Black African head of state since the Yom Kippur War when most African governments severed diplomatic ties with Israel. Rabin did not disclose details of the meeting. He said they had exchanged opinions and estimations but did not deal "with concrete matters."

Other sources in the Israeli delegation returning from Geneva said that Senghor told Rabin the African states had not cut off all relations with Israel but merely suspended them "temporarily." According to these sources, further "contacts" can be expected between Israel and the African countries.

Meanwhile, it was learned that former Chancellor Willy Brandt of West Germany, the newly elected president of the Socialist International, and Premier Mario Soares of Portugal have accepted Rabin's invitation to come to Israel in February for the Labor Party conference. Other European leaders expected to attend as guests of the party, include West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt and Chancellor Bruno Kreisky of Austria.

WAR AND PEACE ON THE SEE-SAW

By Yitzhak Shargil

SDE BOKER, Nov. 29 (JTA)--Foreign Minister Yigal Allon said here today that the new Riyadh-Cairo-Damascus axis poses the most seipitous threat of war for Israel but also contains glimmers of prospects toward peace. He reiterated that Israel is ready for direct peace talks with no preconditions but will never accept dictates from the Arabs or any outside power. He proposed a mutual agreement with Lebanon to maintain peace and security in the border area.

Allon made his remarks at the traditional Nov. 29th Luncheon of the Editors Committee of the Israeli Press, held here in connection with a commemorative gathering to mark the third anniversary of the death of former Premier David Ben Gurion. Ben Gurion made his home in this desert village. The luncheon was held at the Negev University which he helped to found.

Allon said the new alliance between Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Syria is now the dominant coalition in the Middle East. Its combined military and economic power comprise a danger for Israel should they decide to follow the path of war, he said. While Israel is prepared to face such a threat, it cannot afford to underestimate it.

On the other hand, Allon said, the three-power axis may take the political path while retaining the military option as a means to pressure or coerce Israel to accept a political solution on Arab terms. He observed, however, that only a

strong coalition of Arab states could sit down with Israel to talk peace.

Ready To Go Ahead With Peace Talks

Allon stressed that Israel was ever ready to proceed with peace talks. The lull in diplomatic activity, largely because of the Lebanese civil war, was not of Israel's making and, in any event, is about to end, he said. He declared that if Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, who has been talking peace to the news media but not to Israel, wants to test Israel's readiness to negotiate, "let us meet." The same applies to any Arab leader interested in genuine negotiations instead of propaganda statements, Allon said.

Allon added that the fact that Israel will hold national elections next year was no obstacle to beginning peace talks now. "Let the people of Israel know what this government intends and let them vote," he said.

With respect to Lebanon, Allon said, "We are interested in and we suggest that we reach as soon as possible an arrangement with the competent government of Lebanon to secure calm and order along the border. Let the Lebanese be responsible for security on their side of the border and the Israeli army will ensure the same on the Israeli side."

Allon said he was convinced that all sections of the Lebanese nation are interested in a peaceful border. It should be of special interest to President Elias Sarkis as he forms a new Lebanese government, the Foreign Minister asserted. He added that so far Syrian forces in Lebanon have not crossed the "red line" or rather they have not ignited a situation that would cause Israel to respond.

U.S. AVOIDS COMMITTING ITSELF TO ANY SUGGESTED MIDEAST PEACE FORMULA

By Joseph Polakoff

WASHINGTON, Nov. 29 (JTA)--The United States continued today to avoid becoming publicly committed to any suggested formula for approaches towards peace in the Middle East or to become involved openly in resolving the situation in southern Lebanon which contains threats to Israel's security.

The U.S. "remains committed to maintain the peace process" in the Middle East, State Department spokesman Frederick Brown said today after noting that over the past several weeks "a number of participants" have expressed comments on the "need for new moves" in the area.

Saying it is "probably premature to comment" on the proposals, Brown noted that "we agree such moves are desirable" and "we are staying in very close contact with the governments involved." However, he indicated the U.S. is avoiding comments on the statements by Egyptian President Anwar Sadat or Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and others.

Brown's remarks came when he was asked for the U.S. view on Rabin's weekend statement at the Socialist International Conference in Geneva suggesting a conference on Middle East problems on the model of the Helsinki conference of 1975.

Brown said that the U.S. is "not making any

proposals" for resolving the situation in southern Lebanon regarding Israel's warnings that it will not tolerate Palestinian terrorists or Syrian military in that area from which the Palestinians staged raids on Israeli settlements. Brown said the U.S. is not "conveying" any proposals or assurances but is only making sure the viewpoints of the parties involved are clearly understood. He also said that the U.S. is supporting Lebanese President Elias Sarkis' establishment of authority throughout Lebanon.

15,000 ENGINEERS ON STRIKE

JERUSALEM, Nov. 29 (JTA)--About 15,000 engineers went on strike today to protest the stalemate in the wage negotiations. They warned that if there is no progress by the end of the week they would call a general strike of unlimited duration.

Despite the strike, no disturbances were reported in the operation of public services. But continuation of the strike could have increasingly negative repercussions on the economy. Workers in so-called "vital" services observed back-to-work orders, but their striking colleagues said they would not allow them to work, even if it meant violating the law. "We are simply desperate," said Gustav Badian, secretary of the engineers union.

Efforts continued, meanwhile, to avoid a crisis in the medical services if physicians carry out their threat of a mass walkout on Dec. 1 if wage negotiations fail.

FEINSTEIN CALLS FOR METHODOICAL MASS ADULT TORAH STUDY PROGRAM

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J., Nov. 29 (JTA)--"Unless the adult Jew studies Torah to tie his roots to Sinai, there is little hope that he will not succumb to the barrage of secular influences that surround him," Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, the dean of Mesivta Tifereth Jerusalem and chairman of the Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah (Council of Jewish Sages), told 3000 delegates at the Agudath Israel 54th national convention at the Sheraton Deauville Hotel here.

The renowned Torah scholar urged that Agudath Israel's Adult Torah Study program, Torah education network, engage upon a block-by-block program to methodically cover Jewish neighborhoods to organize home-study courses for Jews. "The single source of strength to keep the Jew alive today even more than in previous generations when the societal inroads were not as pervasive as today, is the study of Torah which cannot be substituted by gimmicks or flash effects," he declared.

Rabbi Moshe Sherer, executive president of Agudath Israel of America, called on Premier Yitzhak Rabin to oust Education Minister Aharon Yadin because "Yadin insists upon placing young Jewish Israeli exchange students in non-Jewish homes in the U.S., thus pouring oil in the fires of assimilation and intermarriage."

Sherer denounced Yadin for stating in the Knesset last month, in reply to a demand by an Agudist Knesset deputy that the Israeli students should be transferred to Jewish families, that "the Education Ministry had requested the gentle American families not to provide the youngsters with non-kosher food."

Sherer also reported that the American Agudath Israel organization will in its 55th year undertake to "harness the huge manpower resources of yeshiva graduates nationally for a con-

sciousness raising program among the Jews; to vastly expand the religious and social services provided by Agudath Israel with a unique Torah flavor."

Debate On Joining JCRC

A heated debate took place on the issue as to whether Agudath Israel should join the newly formed New York City Jewish Community Relations Council. The controversy centered around the fear that providing the New York City Jewish populace with a permanent representative voice on which the large percentage is non-Orthodox, the unique halachic position of the independent Orthodox Jewish community will be watered down and lose its independence.

The protagonists rejected this argument by pointing to the veto clause on religious issues in the Jewish Community Relations Council bylaws. The entire issue was transferred to the highest rabbinic authority of the Agudath Israel movement, the Council of Jewish Sages, which after conducting hearings will render a ruling, binding the entire organization.

Among the resolutions passed at Agudath Israel's convention was a demand that no financial pressure be applied by Jewish agencies against Soviet emigrants who opt in Vienna for going to a country other than Israel. "Regardless of the negative aspects of Russian emigrants making use of Israeli visas to seek their haven in other countries, discriminating against these persons violates every Jewish tradition," the resolution declared.

HOLLAND SAYS NO TO THE PLO

AMSTERDAM, Nov. 29 (JTA)--A spokesman for the Dutch Foreign Ministry, reacting to reports that following the opening of a Palestine Liberation Organization office in Brussels, the PLO would shortly also open an office in The Netherlands, said that no such request had been made by the PLO. The standpoint of the Dutch government on this issue remains unchanged, he said. Netherlands Foreign Minister Max Van Der Stoep some time ago, replying to a parliamentary question, stated that the Dutch government will not allow the PLO in The Netherlands as long as the organization does not recognize the right of Israel to exist.

ARTHUR MILLER TO VISIT JERUSALEM

JERUSALEM, Nov. 29 (JTA)--Playwright Arthur Miller is expected to arrive in Jerusalem in two weeks time with his wife. Miller will write a book about Jerusalem and his wife will take the photos for the volume. During his two-week stay, Miller will be Mayor Teddy Kollek's guest while in Jerusalem and will also meet Israeli writers and artists. An English theater group from Rehovot will present one of Miller's plays at the Jerusalem Theater.

JERUSALEM (JTA)--Some 1500 high school students in 18 schools in the Matte Yehuda region near Jerusalem will begin this week an educational project on "Jews in the United States." The project, sponsored by the International Cultural Center for Youth in Jerusalem, in conjunction with the Ministry of Education and Culture and the regional council, is the first of its kind in Israel. Its purpose is to impart to students a better knowledge of American Jews, their history and their cultural background.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES WAR BY OTHER MEANS

By Murray Zuckoff

NEW YORK, Nov. 29 (JTA)--For the first time since the birth of Israel in 1948, the Arabs are conducting a propaganda campaign in the West that appears to be highly successful. Their so-called peace offensive makes them seem reasonable, enlightened and, above all, deeply devoted and dedicated to peace with Israel. They seem to have taken a propaganda morsel from the favorite recipe of television's famous personality, Morris the cat, and stopped pulling their finicky act.

Israel, by contrast, is made to appear intransigent and recalcitrant, resisting at every turn to avoid what the Arabs, especially Egypt, claim to be a serious proposal of peace. The cause of the Jewish State's continuing and consistent search for peace is not being helped by one-sided media reports, by U.S. Congressmen on jaunts in the Middle East who report upon returning home that Egyptian President Anwar Sadat has embarked on a "new" policy or by some Israeli politicians searching for platforms as they prepare to run in next November's general election.

The media seems to be deliberately reporting only one element of the Arab peace offensive while either ignoring or minimizing the bellicose statements. The media has also been one-sidedly depicting the Palestine Liberation Organization as a revamped peace-oriented group.

The media, for example, failed for the most part to report that even as Sadat was coolly telling a group of Congressmen that he is ready for peace with Israel, he also announced that he would ask the U.S. for additional military hardware just in case Israel decided to get huffy. And while the media was beguilingly reporting about the PLO's "new image" at the United Nations, it for the most part failed to report that at the same time a leading PLO official was saying in Paris that his organization intends to step up activities inside Israel in a "war of liberation."

Nor has the media and some of the returning Congressmen consistently related the Arab peace offensive with their intransigent organized hostile anti-Israel positions at the UN, UNESCO and other world forums in which they participate and where they are certain of winning their points by the existence of an automatic majority voting in their favor regardless of the issue.

The Role Of Economics

But there is, in fact, more to the peace offensive than the media's juggling of news, the Congressmen's apparent seduction by the siren calls of the Arab propagandists and the belated criticism by Israeli politicians of Israel's caution but who were themselves leaders of the anti-Arab peace pack before announcing their electoral hopes.

The fact is that the Arab confrontation states, especially Egypt, are waging a peace offensive abroad but at the same time retaining a war stance at home in order all the better to keep both options open. There is no question but that the confrontation states and the PLO want and need peace at this time in contradistinction to opting for peace with Israel as a sovereign Jewish State. All of Israel's neighbors and the PLO are either in political or economic trouble.

The key, however, to the Arab peace offensive -- both by the confrontation states and some of the oil-rich countries -- in relation to Israel and in

terms of inter-Arab rivalries is one of economics. The search for foreign markets for investing petro-dollars and the search for foreign investments in their own economies is stymied by a continuing war atmosphere. Neither the outward flow of investment capital nor the attraction of foreign investments is possible as long as the economies are geared for war and national budgets are tied up in military overkill. Nor are investment flows in and out of these countries feasible as long as instability and uncertainty prevails.

In addition, the Arabs are beginning to realize that they cannot maintain a top-heavy military establishment without a highly developed economic base. Developing and supporting such an establishment is very much like trying to build a skyscraper on stilts. Another basic factor is the presumption on the part of the Arabs that the new Administration in Washington will be less willing to continue a policy of excessive expenditures for Mideast military spending in view of the perspective outlined by President-elect Jimmy Carter that the focus must be on America's domestic needs.

In short, the oil-rich states are now in the same position as the Western nations; invest or die. Their economies are literally choking to death with an excess of petro-dollars that cannot be siphoned off by buying sprees of mansions, yachts and automobiles. These dollars must find profitable investment markets. The confrontation states must reorganize their tattered economies and cannot hope to do so without foreign loans and investments. For this they need stable economic and political systems that do not threaten foreign investors with either economic chaos or revolutions.

Promises Of New Markets

Two events especially, in the past several weeks, confirm the economic basis for the peace offensive. One was the Arab-European business cooperation symposium at Montreux, Switzerland last month. The other was the visit last week to Paris by Lawrence R. Klein, one of Carter's closest economic advisors.

The Montreux conference, attended by 1600 bank presidents, bankers, manufacturers, consultants and traders from 40 countries, was organized by the European Management Forum and sponsored by 100 West European and Middle East banks. David Baird, reporting on this conference for the Belgium-based bi-weekly magazine, "To The Point International," noted that "cooperation was the keynote" of the meeting.

This was illustrated by the variety of schemes put forward, including the creation of a technological development bank, owned and financed by nationals and governments of developing countries with surplus financial resources; a Euro-Arab investment company, shares to be held by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and the European Economic Community; and a committee open to all enterprises interested in Arab-European business which could help broaden business prospects.

Eager To Aid Sagging Economies

Baird noted: "With so much money floating around -- investable surpluses from the oil states is expected to be more than \$45 billion this year -- everyone had an interest in making the year a success." In addition to this investable surplus, the European countries are eager to get some of this to help bolster their own sagging

economies, knock Japan out of the competitive market and hopefully enhance their own competitive stance in the Arab world against the encroachment of American investments.

Burhan Dajani of Jordan, secretary general of the Union of Arab Chambers of Commerce, made it clear in an interview with the Belgian magazine when he stated: "I would say that the Arab is less suspicious of the European than ever before.... It is with the Americans that we have a problem, because here we have a complicated situation (economically and politically).... But I think the Europeans stand a very good chance of winning the confidence of the Arabs."

From the European point of view, Lord Seldon, advisor to Britain's Midland Bank, summed up the problem of the continent by stating: "There is a growing realization by the Arabs that, without proper cooperation with the West, particularly Europe, they will not be successful.... Unless we can find the right platform for cooperation, our own economies will suffer, and probably the world economies as a whole."

Klein, whose visit to Paris coincided with an important meeting of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, at which 24 member nations from Europe, North America and developed Asia were dealing with prospects for 1977, noted that the U.S. had to "take a leadership role" in the struggle to improve economic prospects by pumping at least \$10 billion back into the economy. This was undoubtedly a cue to European financiers that the U.S. is not about to tie up its financial resources in foreign military ventures which help the economies of arms manufacturers but drain the total economic structure of profitable ventures, internationally, since war materiel is neither investable capital nor a long-range investable market.

New Moves To Isolate Israel

To develop a resurgence of trade on the part of the U.S. and West Europe in a virtually untapped Arab market and the concomitant need of the Arabs to find an investment market is the overriding need. Saudi Arabia, for example, plans to spend \$2.7 billion in the next five years for telecommunications alone. Tenders for a huge microwave system have been invited from 11 companies, five of them outside Europe. Saudi Arabia, therefore, cannot afford to tie up its capital in military budgets for other Arab states.

In addition, Chase Manhattan is negotiating a \$250 million loan to the Egyptian government to be shared by a number of Western banks, including Chase. This is bound to fall through unless there is a revamping of Egypt's economy that would guarantee new tax advantages, the repatriation of capital at the same rate it is brought in and the liberalization of other economic policies. Egypt cannot do this if it is geared for war. A task force of the American side of the Egypt-United States Joint Business Council, formed last year to promote U.S. investment in Egypt, might begin looking elsewhere in the Mideast for market possibilities.

Meanwhile, a number of East European governments are seeking to borrow hard currency from the oil-producing states in the Mideast to buy advanced technology. Rumania, for example, is negotiating a large loan with Kuwait and Yugoslavia earlier succeeded in obtaining credits from Kuwait.

The peace offensive, therefore, has a dual objective: to entice trade and investment and to

provide the political veneer for the Europeans and Americans to turn off to Israel. That is why it is essential for the Arabs to make Israel appear as a nation devoted to war and therefore a non-profitable market; a country which can only force American business enterprises and government to fritter away its financial resources in non-productive fields.

So while the Arabs talk of peace they are also devising new ways to further isolate Israel from the international economic community. Having fought what now appears to be a losing battle on the boycott front, the Arabs are embarking on a course of economic solidarity with the corporate giants of West Europe and America. The Arabs, stockpiled with armaments in ready against Israel, can now afford to talk of peace. But they are in effect conducting war by other means.

ANTI-ISRAEL MOVES AT UN CONTINUE

By Yitzhak Rabi

UNITED NATIONS, Nov. 29 (JTA)--The debate on the Middle East which was scheduled to begin today in the General Assembly has been postponed until Thursday. Israel, nevertheless, is continuing to come under fire in various UN committees.

A major attack on Israel is expected this week in the Special Political Committee which is discussing the report by the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices in the Occupied Territories. The committee will also take up the Syrian charge that Israel demolished the Golan Heights city of Kuneitra when the Israeli army withdrew after the Yom Kippur War.

Another aspect of Israel's administration of the occupied territories is under discussion in the Economic and Financial Committee under the title "Natural Resources in the Occupied Territories." Israel's use of natural resources, including the use of manpower, is the target of this committee.

The rights of the Palestinians will be the subject of discussion again by the General Assembly tomorrow when the issue of "Self-Determination" will be taken up after having been discussed in the Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee. Israel will also come under fire in the Political and Security Committee where an Egyptian-Iranian initiative has forced the discussion on the issue of a nuclear-free zone in the Mideast. Israel will be criticized for its refusal to sign a nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

Meanwhile, the Security Council was preparing to meet this afternoon to extend the mandate of the UN Disengagement Observer Force on the Golan Heights for another six months. Syria and Israel agreed to the extension last week.

ROBERTO FELDMAN DEAD AT 75

NEW YORK, Nov. 29 (JTA)--Roberto Feldman, dean of Jewish journalists in Peru, has died in Lima at the age of 75, it was learned here today. Feldman was editor of *Nuestro Mundo* which he founded in 1931 as a monthly magazine called *Nosotros*. During the 1930s and 1940s it was considered one of the best Jewish publications in Spanish. It later became a newspaper and several years ago Feldman changed the name to *Nuestro Mundo*. Born in the Ukraine, Feldman came to Peru in 1924. He was a founding member of the Zionist Organization of Peru and was a member of *Pealei Zion*.