

ISRAELI MILITARY COMMITTEE MEMBERS RETURN FROM CAIRO; TAMIR AND SKELETON STAFF TO REMAIN UNTIL TALKS RECONVENE

By: Yitzhak Shargil

TEL AVIV, Jan. 23 (JTA)--Members of the Israeli military committee mission in Cairo returned to Israel this afternoon in an Air France Boeing 747 which also brought back scores of Israeli media correspondents and television and radio technicians who had been covering the military committee talks in the Egyptian capital. Gen. Abraham Tamir, who was a member of the Israeli negotiating team headed by Defense Minister Ezer Weizman, was instructed to remain in Cairo after the Cabinet decided yesterday to postpone Israel's return to the military talks.

Tamir heads a skeleton staff of 15 Israeli officers who will maintain whatever contacts are necessary with the Egyptian military committee while the talks are in suspension. Tamir told the departing Israelis at Cairo Airport that he would serve as senior representative of the Israeli military mission until the talks are reconvened.

The Israelis were seen off at the airport by two ranking Egyptian officers, Gen. Taha el-Maghdoub, secretary of the Egyptian Defense Council, who was a member of the negotiating team, and the chief of Egyptian military intelligence. Their presence at the airport was seen as a friendly gesture by the Egyptians.

According to the returnees, the Egyptian officers repeatedly told them their departure was only a matter of procedure and "you will come back soon." They also tried to play down attacks on Israel in the Egyptian press, including a reference to Premier Menachem Begin as "Shylock" which the Premier took as an anti-Semitic insult to all Jews. The generals said it was a mistake to use such words and insisted they were never used officially.

U. S. TRIES TO CONTINUE PEACE PROCESS

JERUSALEM, Jan. 23 (JTA)--Assistant Secretary of State Alfred Atherton met separately today with Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan and Defense Minister Ezer Weizman and American sources here said they expected him to fly to Cairo before the end of the week as part of the ongoing effort by the U. S. to keep the peace process alive.

In his talks today, Atherton was reportedly still dealing with "the declaration of principles" which had almost been agreed upon last Wednesday just before President Anwar Sadat of Egypt abruptly suspended the joint Israeli-Egyptian political committee talks in Jerusalem. The American compromise formula--"Palestinians to participate in the determination of their own future"--was the basis of the near-agreement in the political committee.

Informed sources said that Washington wants to put the finishing touches on the declaration and then use it at the right moment as an opportunity incentive to both sides to resume negotiations. American officials told reporters they intend to carry on their efforts away from the media, believing that now is the time for practical

activity. Therefore, few details of the American diplomatic effort in the coming days are expected to be revealed.

BEGIN TELLS KNESSET ISRAEL IS READY FOR RENEWAL OF TALKS WITH EGYPT ON PRINCIPLES OR ON BILATERAL ISSUES

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Jan. 23 (JTA)--Premier Menachem Begin told the Knesset today "We have left the door definitely open for further negotiations" with Egypt. He said that Israel was ready for a renewal of the political and military talks, suspended last Wednesday when President Anwar Sadat recalled his negotiators from Jerusalem, and to continue negotiations for a joint declaration of principles or on "bilateral issues."

But Begin said this could occur only if the atmosphere "improves" and there are "no more insults against the honor of the Jewish people which we are here to protect and defend."

Begin's address to the Knesset was conciliatory in tone and generally free of polemics. But he called Sadat's suspension of the political talks "unjustified," especially as an agreement on a declaration of principles was almost concluded. He accused the Egyptians of renegeing on the extent of the demilitarized zone in Sinai which, he said, he and Sadat had agreed to at their private talks in Jerusalem in November. He denied press reports that he had apologized to Egyptian Foreign Minister Mohammed Ibrahim Kaamel for delivering a political speech at a social dinner here last week.

Begin also said he was "shocked" by Sadat's remarks published in the Egyptian magazine October after the Jerusalem talks were broken off. And he lashed out repeatedly against what he called "a most virulent campaign of vilification against Israel and its government" launched by the Egyptian press.

He devoted a large part of his speech to reciting quotations from several Egyptian newspapers which he called "a repetition of what we used to read in 'Der Sturmer,'" the Nazi organ of the Hitler regime.

However, the Premier added, "If we see in the days ahead that there are no more such attacks there will be no obstacle to (Defense Minister Ezer) Weizman's going to Cairo" to resume the military committee talks. The return of the Israeli military team to Cairo was postponed by a decision of the Cabinet yesterday.

Speech Is Conciliatory

It was clear to observers that Begin's prepared text had undergone some last minute softening, possibly at the insistence of some of his more moderate coalition ministers. And the speech he delivered was, in some instances, even softer than the prepared text given to newsmen in advance.

But Begin spoke bluntly, nevertheless. He rejected out of hand, Sadat's demand in the Egyptian Parliament Saturday for total Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories and his warning that Egypt would not tolerate Israeli settlements in Sinai after a peace settlement was reached.

Begin said he had made Israel's position on the settlements clear to Sadat on various occasions, including Israel's insistence that the settlements continue to be administered and defended by Israel.

after Sinai is returned to Egyptian sovereignty. He noted that the Ismailia summit talks had not broken up over that issue but rather that he and Sadat had exchanged their differing views in a "most civilized and cordial" manner.

He insisted that when he and Sadat met privately in Jerusalem the Egyptian leader had pledged the total demilitarization of Sinai beyond the Gidi and Mitla passes. "We based our peace plan on that," Begin told the Knesset. "The passes are 180-200 kilometers away from the international boundaries. However, Gen. (Mohammed) Gamassy (the Egyptian War Minister) proposed to Weizman a different line from which the demilitarization would begin—a line only 40 kilometers from the border. The disparity therefore is 140-160 kilometers. That disparity is for us a world of difference. Sinai was the base of aggression five times in 30 years. This can never be again."

Begin added: "We shall stand firm on the crucial principle of total demilitarization of the Sinai from the passes to the border. This was President Sadat's clear pledge to me. There must be credibility in negotiations between us. Let not the Egyptian General Staff deny this pledge. I call upon him to instruct his General Staff to abide by his undertakings."

Takes Issue With Sadat's Speech

Begin took sharp issue with Sadat's speech to his Parliament Saturday. He denied Sadat's charge that Israel said negotiations would take five years and rebuked him for saying that Zionism had "taken over alien land in Palestine." Denying that he made any apology to Kaamel, Begin said no apology was called for. He claimed that political speeches were accepted practice on such occasions and that it had been his "national duty to react to Kaamel's demand for full withdrawal and the return of Jerusalem."

Begin reserved his bitterest invectives for the Egyptian press. He quoted the Egyptian journalist Aniss Mansour, writing in the semi-official Al-Ahram on Jan. 3: "Drinking coffee together (with Israelis) proves nothing. One can also have coffee in a zoo.... Sitting with Jews is to sit with the world's speculators of every generation.... Bargaining, trickery and calculations of profit and loss are part of their character and they are incapable of changing. The dream of Zionism is a philosophy of Nazi Hitlerism...."

He quoted Mustafa Amin, in Akhbar el Yom, Cairo's largest daily, after the Ismailia summit: "Begin should thank God he was not beaten up by members of the Egyptian delegation in Ismailia.... The meeting was not with representatives of the State of Israel but with Shylock the arms merchant (sic) in the well-known story by Shakespeare...."

Begin said he was particularly angered by the remark attributed to Sadat in October magazine that "Israel is like a man who says to another: 'I would like you to sleep so I can murder you.'"

MAJORITY OF ISRAELIS OPPOSED TO WITHDRAWAL FROM OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Jan. 23 (JTA)--By very substantial majorities, Israelis are opposed to total withdrawal from occupied territories even "in exchange for peace treaties with the Arab states," oppose abandoning the settlements in northern Sinai and believe Premier Menachem Begin is doing a good job, according to the results of a national poll published by the Government Press Office yesterday.

The poll, conducted among the Jewish urban adult population by the Hebrew University's Center for Applied Social Research, showed Israelis to be almost unanimous in their opposition to talks with the Palestine Liberation Organization or the establishment of a Palestinian state. According to the responses, 87 percent ruled out the PLO as a negotiating partner and 91 percent rejected a state for the Palestinians.

The poll was conducted just before the Israeli-Egyptian political talks were broken off last Wednesday by President Anwar Sadat. The crucial issues in those talks were Israeli withdrawal, particularly the fate of settlements in the Rafah salient and other parts of Sinai and the Palestinian question. But 71 percent of the respondents would not agree to total withdrawal "in exchange for peace treaties" and 72 percent opposed leaving the Rafah settlements outside the sphere of Israeli sovereignty.

However, 60 percent believed that no new settlements should be established in the occupied areas at this time while 40 percent thought the government should go ahead with new settlements even while peace talks were underway.

Asked "What concessions do you think Israel should make in exchange for a peace agreement with Jordan?" only five percent opted for total withdrawal from the West Bank; 28 percent favored withdrawal from a substantial part of that territory; 44 percent were for withdrawal from a small part; and 23 percent were opposed to any withdrawal. On a related issue, 42 percent thought a national election or referendum should be held "before a real decision on the peace map is taken" but 58 percent thought that was not necessary.

Begin was described as doing his job "very well" or "well" by 68 percent of the respondents; 21 percent rated his performance "quite well"; nine percent "not very well" and two percent "not well at all." Significantly, 46 percent said the government's peace plan was "definitely clear" to them while 54 percent said it was "not clear."

CHURCH, DINITZ SAY PEACE TALKS BETWEEN ISRAEL, EGYPT STILL ALIVE

TUCSON, Ariz., Jan. 23 (JTA)--Sen. Frank Church (D., Idaho), the ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and Israeli Ambassador Simcha Dinitz told a national conference of 350 Jewish leaders here that the prospects for peace in the Middle East had not been irreparably damaged by the events of the past few days. Addressing the Plenary Session of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council, which began yesterday, they both noted that the road ahead was going to be very challenging for all involved.

Church pointed out that an absolutely fundamental change had taken place in the whole context of Middle East affairs when President Anwar Sadat visited Jerusalem. This act had eliminated the single most fundamental obstacle to the peace-making process, implicitly recognizing Israel as a nation and a neighbor. Equally important, he said, was the fact that face-to-face negotiations had been acknowledged as the most viable means of achieving the desired end.

The current setback showed that it was "a race that must be called back to the starting line and commenced anew," he said. He conceded that the differences between the two sides represented an enormous gap, "but the context in which they are offered, negotiations in good faith, offer great hope."

Church vigorously reasserted that the U.S.

and Israel are firmly in agreement on two points. Firstly, an independent Palestinian state at this stage would be a base for war against Israel, aligned with the Soviet Union and acting as a destabilizing agent of Soviet foreign policy. This would clearly be a danger to all regimes in the Middle East, and was unacceptable, he said. Secondly, the PLO had rightly been condemned by President Carter as a body with whom it was not possible to make peace.

The Senator drew applause for his views on the future status of Jerusalem, saying "it is my view that this city of beauty and peace must never again be divided." He thought that if ways can be found for the other questions to be resolved, the status of Jerusalem would also be soluble.

Whatever happened, Church considered that the appropriate role of the United States was to support any kind of forum in which problems could be meaningfully discussed face-to-face. The major search must be for credible security measures, he said. Bilateral guarantees had failed the Israelis at crucial moments in the past. "In short, U.S. guarantees, however sincerely undertaken, cannot substitute for the real thing."

Dinitz shared the puzzlement of the entire world at the abrupt decision of Sadat to suspend the talks of the political committee in Jerusalem last Wednesday. Speculating on the reason for the move, he thought it was a ploy to get U.S. leverage on Israel. "Nothing can come about through outside pressure. This cannot succeed. That is why we are sorry if this is the strategy," he said.

Noting that a change in the Egyptian attitude had been forming at least 10 days before the meeting in Jerusalem, Dinitz cited a deterioration in the tone of the Egyptian press, then by spokesmen of the government, and then by Sadat himself. In this connection, he explained yesterday's Israeli Cabinet decision not to participate in the military committee talks slated for Cairo. "The military talks cannot even move one inch unless there is a political understanding," he said. "Even with our desire for peace, we have some sort of self-respect. When Sadat called us 'little clever merchants' and 'Shylocks,' why should we send people to Cairo to be thrown back again or insulted?"

STATE DEPARTMENT SAYS ISRAEL, EGYPT INDICATE NEED FOR COOLING OFF PERIOD

By Joseph Polakoff

WASHINGTON, Jan. 23 (JTA)--The State Department said today that the United States infers that both Egypt and Israel want the rhetoric to be lowered and that the U.S. chief Middle East expert, Assistant Secretary of State Alfred Atherton, will remain indefinitely in the Mideast to help advance the settlement process in the Egyptian-Israeli committee meetings in Cairo and Jerusalem. Department spokesman Hodding Carter said "directly or indirectly" both Egypt and Israel have suggested that "an intermediate cooling off period of an indeterminate amount of time is what the situation requires."

He said Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, who meets with President Carter at the White House tonight regarding the situation, has "hopes" that in "the immediate future discussions in one form or another which is being undertaken by the political committee--specifically item one--the question of overall principles--can be resumed. How the form that resumption would take or how it might go forward frankly is a matter yet to be determined."

With Egypt having suspended the political talks in Jerusalem and Israel postponing a decision whether to reenter the military talks in Cairo, Carter was asked when the Cairo talks would resume. He noted that Israeli Defense Minister Ezer Weizman will be coming to the U.S. Thursday and that while Weizman could go to Cairo before then he thought that was not likely.

With reference to the presence of Atherton in Jerusalem, Carter said he was "left out there for a reason" so that he would be "useful" to advance both the political and military talks. There is no time limit or travel plans for Atherton and he is available to go to Egypt, the spokesman said. When a reporter asked whether a press report that Egyptian President Anwar Sadat may visit Washington, the spokesman said "there is no plan and no request" for a Sadat visit.

ISRAEL WILL NOT WITHDRAW FROM GOLAN

By Yitzhak Shargil

KATZERIN, Golan Heights, Jan. 23 (JTA)--Residents of this new town in the central Golan Heights which was dedicated today on Tu B'Shvat, the Jewish Arbor Day, were pleased to hear from an official government spokesman that Israel will not withdraw from the Golan.

"I was asked by the Premier to relay to you, people of the Golan Heights, people of Katzerin, that the Israeli government has resolved never to withdraw from the Golan Heights," Construction Minister Gideon Patt told the 100 families already settled in Katzerin and people from other Golan settlements attending the ceremony.

Patt pledged that "with this resolute spirit, we shall act to ensure that the Golan Heights will actually be, what we and you all want it to be. All development plans for the Golan Heights will continue."

The Minister was given the key to the new town to take to Premier Menachem Begin, who had planned to attend the ceremony but had to be in Jerusalem instead to address the Knesset. Golan settlers, including many from the Druze community, asked Patt to relay to Begin their demand that Israel annex the Golan.

Katzerin is located near the site of an ancient village of the same name where excavations have unearthed a synagogue and other traditional Jewish items. Plans call for it to be the urban center of the Golan by the end of the decade, with some 5000 housing units.

The Gush Emunim used Tu B'Shvat to mark the groundbreaking of their own township, Shiloh in Samaria, by planting some trees there. The Ministry of Defense, which had refused to grant the Gush permission for the ceremony, apparently decided to overlook it. But Education Minister Zevulun Hammer, who reportedly said he would attend, did not show up, nor did any other representative of the government.

There were also tree plantings in the town of Yamit in the Rafah salient, and in the Jordan Valley. Throughout Israel thousands of school children, the elderly and new immigrants participated in traditional tree planting ceremonies under the auspices of the Jewish National Fund. Planting ceremonies will continue throughout the week.

BRUSSELS (JTA)--A group of 136 prominent Belgian mathematicians addressed an appeal to Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev asking him to intervene on behalf of imprisoned Jewish activist Anatoly Shcharansky.

AMERICAN ORT APPROVES RECORD BUDGET OF \$52,553,100 FOR 1978

NEW YORK, Jan. 23 (JTA)—A budget of \$52,553,100 for operation of ORT programs in 24 countries during 1978 was approved by the American ORT Federation at its three-day 56th Annual National Conference meeting here at the Hotel Americana. Of this record expenditure, \$25,367,000, almost 50 percent, has been allotted to the ORT vocational network in Israel by a convention which had for its theme: "Israel's 30th Anniversary and 30 Years of ORT in Israel."

The budget, presented by Harold Friedman, who was re-elected to the presidency of the 150,000 member organization for a fourth term, called for a greatly enlarged program in France to cost \$15,683,400 which is expanding its services to this community of over 600,000, the great majority of recent North African origin.

The 600 delegates also voted allocations of over \$1 million to three countries: Italy, \$1,715,600; Iran, \$1,141,900; and Argentina, \$1,073,600. A total of \$2,047,600 is anticipated for expenditure among Jewish day schools and ORT vocational and technical schools in eight Latin American countries.

Peak Number Of Trainees

Friedman announced that enrollment in all ORT facilities around the world in 1977 was 83,000, an increase of some 8000 trainees this year. This peak number of those served includes 65,503 in Israel.

Pointing out that "ORT is designed to provide the largest flow of technically adept manpower for the economic life of Israel," he warned that "the approved allocation does not correspond to the real magnitude of what is necessary, especially in view of stringent and reduced Israel government subventions."

The Arab community in Israel will be the beneficiaries of an expanded vocational educational network to be conducted by ORT, according to Max Braude, of Geneva, Director General, in a report to the delegates. The new program is being developed in accordance with a request made last week by Premier Menachem Begin, he said. Braude added that this latest initiative is in keeping with ORT activities responsive to needs of Israel in its 30-year history.

Dr. Gideon Meyer, director of Technical Studies for ORT Israel, reported that while the numbers of students in academic high schools in Israel have increased nine times in the past 30 years, those in vocational schools have increased 32 times, growing from 2500 students in 1949 to 74,000 in 1977, more than half of all Israel's high school students.

Meyer said ORT Israel is planning a new project next year for the training of academic teachers for technical education. This will be done at the new ORT School of Engineering, together with the School of Education of the Hebrew University, he said.

A new ORT vocational program in New York was announced, the Division of Technology and Business Administration of the Bramson ORT Training Center which opened in the fall of 1977. According to Bernard Wand Polak, who designed this program, it was created to respond to the changing job and career needs of Americans who were caught in the vise of new technological demands.

Discussing the emigration of Jews from the Soviet Union, Bronx Borough President Robert

Abrams said that "world opinion is the key element in whatever we can do to save the lives of Soviet Jewry." Abrams, who is chairman of the Greater New York Conference for Soviet Jewry, further stated that "it is therefore up to American Jews to continue a widespread mobilization of efforts to persuade the Soviet government to allow Jews to emigrate."

In 1977, he said, there were approximately 20,000 Soviet emigre Jews. "The number for 1978 is largely dependent on us," he stated. "If we keep up the pressure not only on Russia, but on our own government to intervene in behalf of open emigration, the figure can increase."

MISSION TO EGYPT WILL BE MADE BY THE SYNAGOGUE COUNCIL OF AMERICA

NEW YORK, Jan. 23 (JTA)—An historic mission to Egypt will be made by the Synagogue Council of America this week. Fifteen leaders of the national Orthodox, Conservative and Reform rabbinic and lay bodies of American Judaism will meet in Cairo for the first time Jan. 26- Feb. 2 with President Anwar Sadat and leaders of the Muslim and Christian Coptic faiths. The delegation will be headed by Rabbi Saul J. Teplitz of Woodmere, N.Y., president of the Synagogue Council of America.

According to Rabbi Henry Siegman, executive vice-president of the Council, "The purpose of this historic mission is to open a Jewish-Muslim dialogue. Until now, formal contacts between major faith communities have involved only Jews, Protestants and Catholics. As a result of our conversations with the Vatican and with the World Council of Churches over the past ten years, major progress has been made in Jewish-Christian relations. However, there has been virtually no contact between Jewish and Muslim religious leadership."

Sadat's historic visit to Jerusalem, and Premier Menachem Begin's response to his visit, "have opened new possibilities for a serious and fruitful encounter between Muslims and Jews," Siegman stated. "The conflict in the Middle East has been allowed to obscure the fact that Judaism and Islam share significant spiritual and cultural links. It is our hope that as a result of our visit to Egypt, both faith communities will be encouraged to draw on their respective religious traditions to help heal the wounds caused by thirty years of political conflict and hasten the day of peace."

On Dec. 7, Ashraf A. Ghorbal, Egyptian Ambassador to the United States, addressed the Board of the Synagogue Council in New York in what was considered an historic breakthrough. In response, he invited the Council to visit Cairo. Meetings in Cairo have been arranged with the Grand Imam Dr. Abdul Halim Mahmoud, Sheikh of Al Azhar University, leading Muslim university, and other Muslim and Christian leaders. The delegation also will meet with leaders of the Jewish community at the synagogue in Cairo.

In addition to Rabbi Teplitz and Rabbi Siegman, the delegation will include Rabbi Walter Wurzbarger, president, Rabbinical Council of America (Orthodox), Rabbi Stanley Rabinowitz, president, Rabbinical Assembly (Conservative), Rabbi Ely E. Pilchik, president, Central Conference of American Rabbis (Reform), and Rabbi Arthur J. Lelyveld, vice-president, Synagogue Council of America. The delegation intends to discuss with Egyptian authorities a project to identify and catalog documents and articles of Jewish religious and historical value.