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CABINET UNANIMOUSLY REJECTS VANCE'S STATEMENT ON ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS

By David Landau and Yitzhak Shargil

JERUSALEM, Feb. 12 (JTA)--The Cabinet today unanimously rejected the views expressed by U.S. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance over the weekend that Israeli settlements in Sinai are contrary to international law and should be removed and that there should be a "homeland for the Palestinians" on the West Bank "linked to Jordan." (See separate story on Vance.)

Premier Menachem Begin personally read the Cabinet's statement that bristled with portents of a new crisis between Jerusalem and Washington. Its main point was that Vance's remarks, in response to questions at a State Department press conference Friday, were in "complete contradiction" to what President Carter told Begin at their meetings in Washington last Dec. 16-17 when Begin presented Israel's peace plan.

The statement, which expressed its "regret and protest," also reiterated Israel's contention that a "Palestinian homeland" would inevitably become a base for the destruction of the Jewish State and that "no political goal" can move Israel to accept it. The statement urged the U.S. to "reconsider its position in light of the positive talks held between the President and Prime Minister last December." (See P. 3 for full text of Cabinet statement.)

Begin stressed, after reading the statement, that it had been supported unanimously by the ministers. Cabinet Secretary Arye Naor told newsmen later that the text was drafted after a 2 1/2-hour Cabinet session and as a result of the debate on the Vance statement and the overall political situation. He said the Cabinet sat as a Ministerial Security Committee, the proceedings of which, under law, are classified secret.

Begin, Lewis Have Frosty Meeting

The strong Cabinet reaction was not unexpected. It followed a frosty meeting last night between Begin and U.S. Ambassador Samuel Lewis. What was to have been a briefing from Lewis on the Carter-Sadat summit talks at Camp David, Md. last week, became, according to reports, an angry stand-off with Begin expressing consternation over Vance's words and Lewis defending the Secretary of State.

Observers noted that when the usually affable American envoy left the Premier's residence after a session that lasted nearly three hours, he appeared grim and would say nothing more than "good evening" to the waiting newsmen. In the past, Lewis has never failed to chat with reporters when emerging from high level meetings.

The Cabinet statement reflected Israel's growing fear that Egyptian President Anwar Sadat succeeded all too well on his visit to Washington to marshal the U.S. Administration's support for Egypt's position on the crucial issues of settlements and the Palestinians. Israel is also casting a nervous eye on Egypt's and Saudi Arabia's requests for American arms as well as its own shopping list. Carter has yet to present to Congress his recommendations for U.S. weapons sales to Middle Eastern countries for the coming year.

Conciliatory Moves By Israel

In light of those factors, Israel was reported to have made conciliatory moves to avoid deepening the rift with Washington. A radio report this evening that Defense Minister Ezer Weizman ordered work stopped on settlement projects in and outside of the Rafah salient in northern Sinai brought no official denial. The report said such work going on in the El Arish region in the guise of "oil drilling" was ordered stopped by Weizman.

It was also reported that Jewish National Fund and World Zionist Organization settlement department officials and workers have been ordered by the defense authorities to cease all further earthworks.

At his evening briefing for reporters, Naor refused to say whether the settlement work had been discussed at the Cabinet meeting earlier in the day. He observed that radio reports on settlement matters were not always reliable but carefully declined to question the reliability of the reported work halt in Sinai. Agriculture Minister Ariel Sharon's office would say only all settlement work in that area had been carried out with the approval of the Cabinet.

Israel's reported suspension of settlement work in Sinai brought an immediate, favorable response from the U.S. American sources were quoted as saying that the government's action will remove some of the difficulties from the road to resuming peace negotiations.

Today's Cabinet statement was in essence a reiteration of Begin's oft-repeated claim that Carter had found his peace plan fair and equitable and that the U.S., until recently, raised no objections to the continued presence of Israeli settlements in Sinai which was part of the plan. The Cabinet also claimed that Israel's settlement policy was "legitimate" and "in full harmony with international law." It conceded, however, that the U.S. has a different viewpoint.

DAYAN SAYS VANCE IS 'TAKING SIDES' WITH EGYPT IN HIS CRITICISM OF ISRAEL

By David Friedman

NEW YORK, Feb. 12 (JTA)--Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan said today that Secretary of State Cyrus Vance was "taking sides" with Egypt in his weekend statement criticizing Israel. He said if Vance was not speaking for himself alone but for the Carter Administration then the "Administration is taking sides," too.

Dayan's remarks were made on NBC-TV's "Meet the Press" in response to a question about the statement issued by the Israel Cabinet earlier today rejecting Vance's charges that the Israeli settlements in the Sinai are illegal and should be removed.

The Israeli Foreign Minister said that perhaps the Administration felt it had to give Egyptian President Anwar Sadat more support after his visit to Washington. But he said if Vance, who he was scheduled to meet in Washington this week, was taking sides it would not make the Secretary's job as a mediator easier.

Dayan stressed that the Israeli peace plan, which he said President Carter found to be "satisfactory," included Israel keeping its settlements in the Sinai. When questioned whether the President had ever used the word "satisfactory," Dayan said

he was not at liberty to give the exact word but "we had the President's blessings for the plan."

The Israeli peace plan was a package which included retention of the settlements, the three Israeli airfields in the Sinai, and Sharm el-Sheikh as well as proposals for Egyptian and Israeli troops, Dayan pointed out. He said Sadat was given this plan with the understanding that he would make a counter offer and then negotiations would begin. "Everything is negotiable," Dayan stressed.

But, he added, the Sinai settlements were not the major obstacle to a settlement but Egyptian demands that Israel withdraw from the West Bank and Gaza with a Palestinian state being created there. "I don't think this will ever be accepted in Israel," he said.

Dayan said that Israel felt that it must always have some troops in the West Bank and Gaza to protect Israel's security. He said the Israeli peace plan provided for this with minimal interference in the every day life of the local Arabs.

Right To Set Up Military Bases

The Foreign Minister declared that Israel has the right to set up military bases anywhere in the occupied areas. He said he promised Carter last September that for a year no new civilian settlements would be established except within the confines of the military bases. But Dayan stressed the right of Israelis to live on the West Bank. "We are not foreigners on the West Bank," he said. He said that just as every Bedouin has a right to buy land and build a house there, so do Jews.

Columnist Rowland Evans told Dayan that U.S. aid amounts to some \$700 for each Israeli annually even though the U.S. itself has such problems as unemployment and blighted cities. He asked whether this did not make it incumbent on Israel to listen to the American view.

Dayan replied that Israel must decide for itself on its security. "I don't think that we ever asked you to fight for us, that you fought for us, or that we should rely on you taking care of us. So when it comes to our lives and security we have to decide how we are going to defend our country."

U.S. ISSUES MOST FORCEFUL STATEMENT ON ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS

By Joseph Palakoff

WASHINGTON, Feb. 12 (JTA)--In the most forceful U.S. statement yet on the long-festering settlements issue, Secretary of State Cyrus Vance called on Israel Friday to cease settlement activities and dismantle settlements in the Rafah salient of the Sinai bordering on the Gaza Strip, as Egypt is demanding.

Israel's security, Vance declared, "can be taken care of within the framework" of United Nations Security Council Resolution 242 and "withdrawal from occupied territories." He tempered the statement with the view that the settlements problem is to be resolved by "the parties" in negotiations.

Vance was responding to numerous questions at his news conference on the settlements that began with one asking whether withdrawal from the occupied areas would "tamper with or decrease Israel's security." In keeping with the current U.S. policy, the Secretary did not mention "minor adjustments" on Israel's borders that President Carter had recommended but which have never been made explicit by the United States.

The Vance statements came after Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan, in an interview on ABC-TV

with commentator Barbara Walters, declared that "we are abiding to every word that we have promised" to the U.S. leaders "and that's it. We are not doing anything that we did not promise, and we are doing just what we have promised to the President." He added, "if the Americans support the Arab objections" to the settlements, "then we just differ, we do not agree with it."

Major Campaign By The Administration

With a major campaign being waged by the Carter Administration among friends of Israel in Congress and the American Jewish community to help President Anwar Sadat of Egypt at this "crucial" time in Middle East negotiations, Vance was asked "What is it you would like" the Congressmen and American Jews to say to Premier Menachem Begin of Israel and "what can Israel do to contribute to peace--disband the settlements" in Sinai and other areas?

Vance replied that "we have been talking to various members of Congress and various individuals here in the United States to bring them up to date on what has been taking place with President Sadat so that they can understand the actual condition of the negotiations at this point and the obstacles and problems that remain in order to make continuing progress in the talks." Vance then added that "as a result of the talks with Sadat he will persevere in the talks" and "the door to peace remains open."

Vance noted he will meet Dayan Feb. 16 in Washington to discuss the Sadat visit and "the key points to be dealt with"--the settlements and the West Bank and Gaza Strip that are "intertwined" with the Palestine question: "These two problems must be overcome if there is to be progress," Vance said. For that reason, he observed, Assistant Secretary of State Alfred Atherton will be returning in about two weeks to the Mideast to get the Egyptian Israeli political committee talks resumed. Sadat suspended the talks Jan. 18.

Asked specifically if the U.S. would like Israel to agree to close down the settlements in Sinai and the West Bank and where the U.S. stands on internationalization and a referendum on the West Bank's future, Vance replied that regarding the Sinai settlements, "we believe all these are contrary to international law and therefore should not exist." He added, "This, however, is a problem that has to be resolved by the parties. They have to negotiate it themselves."

Regarding the West Bank, Vance referred to the U.S. call for a "homeland for Palestinians" that should be linked to Jordan. "The possibility of an interim arrangement covering a period of years in which the parties would have a chance to work out details "in a West Bank-Gaza-Palestinian settlement," he said, is a "formula" that "should receive most careful consideration of the parties." The Secretary ruled out the suggestion of a Begin-Sadat-Carter summit "at this particular moment" as not necessary, but he said "we remain totally flexible."

JERUSALEM (JTA)--Sixty-four persons were injured, one fatally, in a series of traffic accidents on rain-slick highways near here Friday. Five of the injured were still hospitalized Sunday in serious condition. Hanna Barestovski, a tourist from Argentina, was killed in a two-car collision. The worst accident was a full-speed, head-on collision between a bus and a truck. Fifty passengers and the drivers of both vehicles were injured.

TEXT OF CABINET STATEMENT

JERUSALEM, Feb. 12 (JTA)—Following is the full text of the Cabinet statement read to reporters by Premier Menachem Begin:

"The government of Israel expresses its regret and protest over the statement made by Secretary of State Cyrus Vance at a press conference Feb. 10. The Secretary declared: With respect to the Sinai settlements we have said that we believe that all of these settlements are contrary to international law and that therefore they should not exist.

The Cabinet registers the fact that the latter part of this statement is in complete contradiction to remarks made by the President of the United States to the Prime Minister on Dec. 16 and 17, following the Prime Minister's presentation to the President of the Israelis' peace plan.

In presenting this plan to the President, the Prime Minister included a specific reference to the continuous existence of the settlements within a United Nations zone and an Israeli defense contingent for their protection. During the course of the exchange in the White House not only was no reservation whatsoever made with regard to this reference, but the plan as a whole was received with a positive reaction.

Israel Stands By Its View

The government of Israel stands by its view that the Israeli settlement program is in full harmony with international law and that it has always been legal, legitimate and essential. The United States holds a different viewpoint. However, no communication was transmitted to us, even during the seven weeks after having forwarded, on Dec. 27, the full text of the peace plan in writing to the government of the United States, that the settlements should not exist.

Immediately after having made this part of his statement the Secretary added that: This however is a problem that has to be resolved by the parties. They are going to have to negotiate it themselves.

Obvious Contradiction In Terms

We face here an obvious contradiction in terms between taking sides by a mediator and his advice to conduct negotiations. With regard to the areas of Eretz Israel, Judea and Samaria, the Secretary of State announced that there should be a homeland for the Palestinians and that it should be linked to Jordan.

Whatever the theoretical assumptions and interpretations, there is absolutely no doubt whatsoever that this plan would lead, in reality, and unavoidably, to the establishment of a Palestinian state ruled by the terrorist organizations as the front-line spearhead of a potential military alignment of Jordan, Syria, Saudi Arabia and Iraq.

Already today this alignment has at its disposal nearly 6,000 tanks, over 1,100 fighter aircraft, and more than 42,000 heavy guns. Israel, under such conditions, would find itself nine miles from the sea and a situation would thus be created of mortal danger to its very existence. No political goal, whatever it be, can move Israel to place almost all its civilian population within the range of an enemy's fire and endanger the very existence of a Jewish State.

We wish to point out that it was only after the Israel peace plan, in both its parts, obtained the moral support of the United States that the government decided to send its delegation, composed of the Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister and the

Defense Minister to Ismailia in order to bring the plan to the knowledge of the government of Egypt.

The Cabinet expresses its hope that the government of the United States will reconsider its position in the light of the positive talks held between the President and the Prime Minister in Dec., 1977, in connection with the Israeli peace plan."

(Begin refused to answer questions about the statement and Cabinet Secretary Arye Naor also refrained from elaborating on it at his evening briefing.)

PERES, SADAT IN TWO-HOUR MEETING

JERUSALEM, Feb. 12 (JTA)—Shimon Peres, leader of the Labor Alignment, met with President Anwar Sadat of Egypt for two hours in Salzburg, Austria yesterday. He told Israeli correspondents later that Sadat said he had "gone too far" along the road to a peace settlement with Israel to pull back now. Sadat himself told reporters, "I am determined to pursue the road to peace with all vigor" but declined to say when the suspended Egyptian-Israeli negotiations will be resumed.

Peres said in interviews with the Israel Army Radio and Yediot Achronot that he had detected some new moderation in Sadat's positions but there are still "many mountains and hills" to be crossed before peace is achieved. Peres stopped in Salzburg on his way to Vienna to attend the Socialist International conference which opened there today.

His meeting with Sadat was arranged by Chancellor Bruno Kreisky of Austria. It was his second encounter with the Egyptian leader since their brief talk when Sadat visited Jerusalem last November. Peres told reporters that his meeting was approved by Premier Menachem Begin and that he would brief Begin on it fully when he returns to Israel.

CONTROVERSIAL FILM WILL BE ON TV

JERUSALEM, Feb. 12 (JTA)—The controversial film Hirbet Hiza will be shown on Israel television tomorrow night, just a week after Education Minister Zevulun Hammer banned it on grounds that it served Arab propaganda interests. The Israel Broadcasting Authority voted 18-6 tonight to override Hammer despite protests from Herut and the National Religious Party.

Hirbet Hiza is based on a popular novelette by Samech Izhar (Smilansky) which depicts the dilemma of Israeli soldiers who banished Arabs from their village during Israel's war for independence in 1948. Although fictional, it is based on actual incidents. It was about to be broadcast last Monday night when Hammer exercised his authority to have it cancelled pending a review by the full Broadcasting Authority. His action brought charges of censorship and violation of free speech.

Although several Cabinet ministers endorsed Hammer's ban at today's Cabinet meeting, the final decision, under the law, rests with the Broadcast Authority. * * *

JEL AVIV (JTA)—Israel stands to lose between \$20 million to \$30 million in citrus sales as a result of some poisoned oranges that were found two weeks ago in several European cities. Knesseter Gad Yaacobi, chairman of the Knesset's Economic Committee, said Sunday following a meeting with Citrus Marketing Board officials. There is, he reported, a considerable reduction in orders for Israeli citrus fruit from Britain and West Germany, two countries in which poisoned oranges were found. The other country, in which five children suffered food poisoning after eating some oranges, was Holland.

STATE DEPARTMENT HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT CRITICAL OF ISRAELI HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICES IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

By Joseph Polakoff

WASHINGTON, Feb. 12 (JTA)--The State Department's second annual report to Congress on human rights in 105 countries receiving U.S. aid in some form gave Israel a mixed review while issuing high marks to Egypt and President Anwar Sadat.

The 426-page report, required by law and published by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House International Relations Committee, glossed over Saudi Arabian customs of justice, notes improvement in Syria under President Hafez Assad, observes that Lebanon's government has thus far been unable to reassert its authority throughout the country, and that Jordan is "politically stable." Communist countries, except Yugoslavia, were not reported on.

Israel, within its national borders, the report said, is "a full-fledged parliamentary democracy whose standards and administration of justice are comparable to those of the United States and the other Western democracies."

Continuing, the report, which was released last Thursday, stated: "Under the military regime that governs the occupied territories, certain of the normal human rights guarantees that are taken for granted in Israel proper have been superseded on security grounds. This dichotomy poses a dilemma that will probably be resolved only in the context of a final peace settlement with their neighbors."

The 10-page section on Israel, double the space devoted to any one of Israel's neighboring countries, charged the Israelis with abuses of Arab rights in occupied territories. Israel's tactics in those areas, it said, include "the use of extreme physical and psychological pressures during interrogation," using excessive force to quell demonstrations, searching the homes of Arabs without warrants, and expelling Arab "security suspects."

Response By Israel Embassy

Following the report's issuance, the Israel Embassy issued a statement that said: "Obviously the report notes the difference between those standards applied in Israel and those which security considerations force Israel to apply in the territories under its control. Nevertheless, in spite of those difficulties, the government and the people of Israel are trying to apply the highest standards and their own perception of human rights everywhere and to everybody."

A study shows the reports are uneven in their presentations. While the report on Israel does not mention the terrorism, such as bombings employed against Israelis, the survey on Jordan notes that faced with "internal and external challenges, the government has sometimes resorted to detention without trial."

The report on Egypt is in highly optimistic terms. It praises Sadat for relaxing police state tactics. "Egyptians are enjoying civil and political freedoms to an unprecedented degree," it says. While newspaper reports and Amnesty International statements are included in the survey on Israel, it concludes the Saudi Arabia report with the sentence, "To the best of our knowledge the Saudi government has not been asked to accept outside independent investigations of alleged human rights violations."

Outlines Situation in Egypt, Syria

The Saudi report does not mention Jews specifically but said: "Visas for travel into Saudi Arabia have at times been refused by Saudi authorities on the basis of religion but such cases are now rare and limited to atheists and persons the Saudis consider to be a political or religious threat to the Saudi state."

The report on Egypt said: "Since establishment of the State of Israel, the Jewish population in Egypt has declined from about 80,000 to about 1200, mostly elderly people. The Egyptian government does not restrict Jewish emigration and relations between the Jewish community and the government are good. Egypt permits non-Israeli citizens who are members of the Jewish faith to travel freely in Egypt."

Regarding Syria's Jews, the report said: "Syria's Jewish community, today numbering some 5300 persons, was subjected to discriminatory governmental restrictions and occasional harassment throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Their religious affiliation was prominently inscribed on their Syrian identity documents, they could seldom gain admittance to Syrian universities, their businesses were not granted export-import licenses, their right to sell or otherwise transfer property was circumscribed, and they were generally denied opportunities for government employment."

"Since 1974 the U.S. has made its concern known to the Syrian government directly. From 1974 through 1976, some of the more onerous restrictions were relaxed. In a significant, positive step, the government issued a series of decrees in late 1976, and early 1977, intended to eliminate virtually all officially sponsored forms of discrimination against Syria's Jewish community except the prohibition against emigrating freely. It will be necessary to observe the implementation of these recent relaxations over a period of time before a final judgement can be made as to their effectiveness."

JACOB HALEVY DEAD AT 79

LONDON, Feb. 12 (JTA)--Jacob Halevy, for many years a leading figure in the World Jewish Congress and in British Zionist circles, died last Thursday at the age of 79. Born in Rishon le-Zion, Halevy was the youngest volunteer in the Jewish Legion in World War I.

As a student in England, he helped to found the Federation of Zionist Students. He later made his mark as a pioneer of modern Hebrew education in Britain, first with a school in Manchester and then, for many years, as founder and headmaster of Wittingehame College, Sussex, a public school which attempted to synthesize Hebrew and Jewish culture.

Halevy was a member of the World Jewish Congress' World Executive and chairman of its British section. A leading General Zionist, he was also a chairman of the British Zionist Federation.

TEL AVIV (JTA)--Israel is carefully watching the situation in Lebanon where there have been clashes between Syrian troops and Lebanese Christian soldiers. Defense Minister Ezer Weizman toured the northern border Friday and met with south Lebanese Christian leaders. Weizman reiterated Israel's support for the Christians in south Lebanon.

There will be no Bulletin dated Feb. 20 due to Washington's Birthday, a postal holiday.