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U.S. ENVOY SAYS THERE MAY BE A MEETING SOON BETWEEN BEGIN, CARTER

Describes U.S.-Israeli Relations As Warm

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Feb. 14 (JTA)—U.S. Ambassador Samuel Lewis told newsmen, after a meeting with Premier Menachem Begin this morning, that there may be a meeting between Begin and President Carter in the weeks ahead. But arrangements for such a meeting were not finalized. The American envoy also said that the prospects for progress in the Middle East peace-making process were "promising."

In that connection, he noted that Assistant Secretary of State Alfred Atherton "will be returning very shortly to resume his mission to try to help complete work on a statement of principles" that Israel and Egypt could agree upon.

Lewis' meeting with Begin today was his second since Saturday night when tensions were high between Israel and the U.S. on the issue of Israeli settlements. While Lewis refused to comment on the substance of that dispute today, he described U.S.-Israeli relations to reporters as "close, warm, friendly and constructive." He said "I have never believed that close and friendly relations preclude misunderstandings and disagreements—and we have them." He added, however, "but there has certainly been nothing fundamentally changed about the strength of this relationship."

Begin indicated that he would respond personally in a scheduled Knesset debate tomorrow on the state of U.S.-Israeli relations. He is expected to use the occasion to further de-escalate the dispute over settlements.

Hoping Rancor Will Subside

Meanwhile, officials here are hopeful that the Carter Administration will utilize the presence of Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan in the U.S. to mollify Israel in the current dispute over settlements and the Palestinian question. Dayan is to meet with Secretary of State Cyrus Vance in Washington on Thursday. This will present the Administration with an opportunity to take the sting out of its conflict with Jerusalem, circles here said today.

It is believed that both the U.S. and Israel hope that when Atherton returns to the Middle East next week, public rancor will subside and Atherton will be able to continue his efforts to obtain Israeli-Egyptian agreement on a "declaration of principles."

But for the time being, Israel still regards Vance's remarks last Friday that Israeli settlements in Sinai violate international law and should not exist as representing an important change in American policy. According to Israeli officials there is a world of difference between claiming that the settlements are illegal, as the U.S. has done in the past, and saying that they should not exist.

The former merely means that the U.S. cannot extend de jure recognition to the settlements but the latest statement by Vance implies that the settlements must be dismantled, sources here pointed out.

VATICAN NEWSPAPER RAPS ITALIANS AND ABOVE ALL JEWS, FOR REFUSING TO FORGIVE FORMER NAZI WAR CRIMINAL

By Ben Tobias

VATICAN CITY, Feb. 14 (JTA)—The Vatican newspaper, Osservatore Romano, sharply criticized Italian survivors of Nazi brutalities, "above all members of the Jewish community," for refusing to forgive Nazi war criminal Herbert Kappler who died in the West German town of Soltau last Thursday. Kappler, 70, was serving a life sentence for the war-time reprisal slaying of 335 Italians, 70 of them Jews, when he escaped from a Rome clinic last Aug. 15 and was smuggled out of Italy. He was being treated for terminal cancer at the time.

In a front page editorial yesterday, the Vatican organ accused the survivors of lack of "flexibility." It referred to "Those who felt most directly joined to the victims by blood or spiritual solidarity: relatives, survivors, supporters of an atrociously trampled-on civil law and above all the members of the Jewish community."

According to the editorial, "a large number of those involved seem to have lacked the moral strength to overcome themselves and forgive.... It is here that, as Christians and citizens, we feel we cannot praise that final inflexibility."

The Vatican paper maintained that the basic question was, "If even the worst, most inhuman and hateful persecutor should not be given the chance of a final conversion, the right to a liberating redemption and, in any case, to human mercy." Noting that Kappler was dying when he was smuggled out of the hospital by his wife, Anneliese, it said that the lack of vigilance by his guards was "understandable."

About 200 mourners and an unofficial honor guard attended the former SS colonel's burial in Germany. Four of them gave the Nazi salute. An unidentified man at the graveside shouted, "You acted on orders. You did what every German officer would have done."

U.S. TO PROVIDE ISRAEL, EGYPT, SAUDI ARABIA WITH FIGHTER PLANES; ISRAEL'S REQUESTS ARE CUT BY SOME 50 PERCENT

By Joseph Palakoff

WASHINGTON, Feb. 14 (JTA)—The Carter Administration announced today that it will provide Israel with 15 F-15 and 75 F-16 jet fighter planes, 50 F-5 fighters to Egypt and 60 F-16s to Saudi Arabia over the next "several years," subject to Congressional review as required by law.

Israel reportedly had requested 25 more F-15s and 150 F-16s, a single-engine aircraft that is lighter and less efficient than the F-15. President Anwar Sadat of Egypt has also reportedly asked for F-16s but, at least in this submission to Congress, Egypt will not receive any. The estimated price tag for all the planes to the three countries was put at \$4.8 billion. (See related story P. 3.)

(Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan, who was in Los Angeles today, reacted negatively to the Administration's proposed aircraft sales. He said the decision to provide combat jets to Egypt was premature and should have been held up until a peace agreement was reached between Israel and Egypt. He felt it would have a bad effect on Israel's security. Asked if he thought the Mideast

balance of power would be upset, Dayan claimed "the balance is against us anyway, even before this. There is no question about it.")

The decision to sell the aircraft to the three countries was announced by Secretary of State Cyrus Vance in a press statement in which he also explained the rationale behind the proposed sales to each of the countries.

He said the Administration will begin the "official process of informing and consulting with the Congress" next week but the "formal notifications will not be submitted until after the Easter recess" next month in order to give Congress "an opportunity to review fully the proposed sales." Congress has veto power over the transfer of U.S. weapons abroad.

Vance pointed out in his press statement that the sale to Israel of the sophisticated, twin-engine F-15s, rated as the world's best plane of its kind, is in addition to 25 F-15s previously sold to Israel.

The sales to the three countries "will be consistent with the President's global arms transfer policy and will be within the dollar value ceiling that he has established," Vance said. "All of these sales are directly supportive of our overall objectives in the Middle East," he added. He said the aircraft will help Israel, Egypt and Saudi Arabia "to meet their legitimate security requirements, will not alter the basic military balance in the region and will be consistent with the overriding objective of a just and lasting peace," Vance said.

Rationale For Sales Explained

This is the first time the U.S. is providing Egypt with combat aircraft. It previously had supplied Egypt with 20 C-130 transport planes. It is also the first time the U.S. has lumped together in one package for consideration by Congress, its intentions of military supply to Israel, Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

Vance's press statement said, "Our commitment to Israel's security has been and remains firm. Israel must have full confidence in its ability to assure its own defense. This means Israel must be able to plan for the continued modernization of its air force." He added that the President's decision on these sales "give particular emphasis to these points."

The Secretary said, "Egypt, too, must have reasonable assurance of its ability to defend itself if it is to continue the peace negotiations with confidence." He pointed out that when Sadat altered his country's relations with the Soviet Union, "he lost his major source of military equipment." To help Sadat's military position, the U.S. and Britain have approved plans to refurbish Egypt's aging fleet of Soviet-made MIG fighters. Sadat, while in Paris this week, is reported to have made arrangements with France to purchase Mirage fighter planes.

Vance noted in his statement that "Saudi Arabia is of immense importance in promoting a course of moderation in the Middle East--with respect to peace-making and other regional initiatives--and more broadly in world affairs, as in petroleum and financial policy," Vance said. He said "The Saudi government has a legitimate requirement to modernize its very limited air defenses"

PERES PREDICTS ISRAEL AND EGYPT WILL ACHIEVE AN INTERIM ACCORD

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Feb. 14 (JTA)--Shimon Peres, leader of the Labor Alignment, predicted here yes-

terday that Israel and Egypt will eventually reach an accord despite the wide differences between them, but it will be an interim agreement rather than an overall settlement. Peres made his remarks to the international convention of the Labor Zionist movement attended by 199 delegates representing Israel and 18 other countries. He did not refer to his two-hour meeting with President Anwar Sadat of Egypt in Salzburg, Austria over the weekend.

However, Peres warned that there was no chance to achieve peace without interim agreements. He said the policy adopted by the former Labor-led government which resulted in the two interim agreements with Egypt in Sinai was still valid today. This is so, according to Peres, because the problems between Israel and Egypt are not bilateral but of a general Arab nature.

He said Egypt was under an especially heavy burden because it must negotiate with Israel and at the same time face the Arab rejectionist front which refuses to negotiate with Israel.

Peres said the Labor Alignment would continue to function as an alternative to the present government but not in opposition to peace. President Ephraim Katzir tried to cheer up the Laborites who were ousted from office in the Israeli elections last May. "The present crisis is sure to pass and the Labor movement will see better days," he told the delegates.

ISRAEL WANTS GERMANY TO EXPLAIN SALE OF ANTI-TANK MISSILES TO SYRIA

By Jon Fedler

BONN, Feb. 14 (JTA)--The Israeli government through its embassy here has asked the West German Foreign Ministry to explain a \$240 million sale of anti-tank missiles to Syria by a German-French consortium, Euromissile. Foreign Ministry spokesman, Juergen Suedhoff has said Bonn has "no sympathy" for attacks on it by the Israeli press as a result of the sale, since it concerns "a bilateral, Syrian-French transaction."

Another statement, issued by the Economics Ministry, said the ban on German weapons sales to crisis areas did not mean that when such arms were supplied to other NATO countries Bonn could expect its partners not to re-sell the items. Such a ban on re-sales would bring arms sales to a halt and the German arms industry could just as well close down, the Ministry said.

Israeli newspapers criticized West Germany for not objecting to the sale, thereby adopting an "anti-Israel posture." They also said the sale violated Bonn's stated policy of not delivering weapons to crisis areas. However, Suedhoff said the government had "no legal possibility" of intervening to stop the arms delivery.

German press comment has been generally critical of Bonn's attitude. Though the liberal weekly "Zeit" scolded Israel for directing its complaints solely at Bonn rather than at France, the conservative daily "Welt" said the transaction had "re-opened old wounds. The fact that the very country in whose name Auschwitz occurred is allowing arms to be delivered to an Arab state which wishes to use them to destroy Israel is totally unbearable for Jerusalem." Bonn's reaction to Israeli criticism showed "a cold-heartedness which causes one to freeze," Welt said.

U.S. TIRED OF BEING 'MESSENGER BOY'

WASHINGTON, Feb. 14 (JTA)--President Carter believes that an Israeli agreement to a state-

ment of principles that he has outlined is essential before Egypt will sign a "separate agreement" with Israel and King Hussein of Jordan will enter negotiations for a settlement. He also said it was "very discouraging and frustrating" to be the "messenger boy between a group of leaders in the Middle East who won't even speak to each other."

Carter made these points in an interview with non-Washington editors and news directors last Friday. The transcript was made public by the White House this week.

In a volunteered statement to the group, the President said that Assistant Secretary of State Alfred Atherton, whom he described as "the chief negotiator in the Middle East," will return within a week to that area to "continue the preparation of a statement of principles that might be adequate, we hope will be adequate enough, for King Hussein to come into the discussion on the West Bank, Gaza Strip and the Palestinian question."

President Sadat, Carter continued, "has made it clear to us that there will be no signing of a separate agreement between himself and Prime Minister (Menachem) Begin unless the resolution that I have described on the West Bank with the Palestinians is concluded." The President at Aswan early last month said that the Palestinians should participate in the determination of their future.

Weary Of His Role

While saying that "we have some hopes now that we will be successful" towards agreement in the Egyptian-Israeli negotiations, Carter indicated weariness in being the intermediary between Israel and the Arab states:

"It is a very discouraging and frustrating thing to be the intermediary or the messenger boy between a group of leaders in the Middle East who won't even speak to each other. And when you carry a message from one to the other, the one who receives it doesn't like it and blames the adverse message partially on the messenger. Then when the reply gets back there is always an allegation that the United States didn't do its best to get a favorable answer. So it has been a very constructive thing just to get that negotiation (between Cairo and Jerusalem) begun."

\$4.8 BILLION PRICE TAG FOR AIRCRAFT TO ISRAEL, EGYPT AND SAUDI ARABIA

By Joseph Polakoff

WASHINGTON, Feb. 14 (JTA)--Senior U.S. officials said that the cost of the aircraft earmarked for Israel, Egypt and Saudi Arabia announced today by Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, will be \$4.8 billion. The price tag on the 15 F-15 planes for Israel is \$400 million and the 75 F-16 fighters was put at \$1.5 billion.

The 60 F-15s for Saudi Arabia will cost \$2.5 billion and the 50 F-5s for Egypt \$400 million. The officials explained the higher cost for F-15s for Saudi Arabia because the Saudis are getting the planes for the first time and the cost basis is thus higher.

The officials said that Egypt will get 10 of its fighters in the third quarter of this year, Saudi Arabia and Israel will receive their F-15s in the third quarter of 1981 and Israel will receive the F-16s in the last quarter of 1981. The Israelis now have about half of the 25 F-15s they had previously ordered and will have received all 25 by the end of this year.

The officials explained that Egypt requires the warplanes because Libya has Soviet MIG-23s

and Egypt cannot get spare parts from the Soviet Union for the Soviet aircraft it now has.

In addition to the reasons publicly stated by Vance on why Saudi Arabia should receive the highly-sophisticated F-15s, the officials pointed out that the oil-rich desert kingdom faces a substantial threat from Iraq which is increasing its armaments more than any other country in the Mideast. Iraq receives arms from the Soviet Union. In addition, Iraq has a formidable army, they said.

Prohibition On Training

When a reporter noted that Egyptians had trained in American aircraft held by the Saudis in the past, the officials acknowledged that the Egyptians did train on Saudi F-5s but at a time when this was not prohibited by the United States. The U.S. expressed its concern, the officials said, and Saudi Arabia ceased the training practice. This prohibition, they said, will apply to the F-15s. The Saudis will train in the U.S. prior to the delivery.

The officials were asked whether Israel will now be permitted to join the U.S. in the co-production of the F-16. They said the decision has not been made on this and further discussion will be held with Israeli Defense Minister Ezer Weizman when he comes to Washington next month.

The officials said that this is the program on aircraft for these three countries for this year. But this is not a freeze on other military hardware for them. They expressed the hope that the Congress will deal with the three requests as a package.

When they were asked about the statement by Israeli Premier Menachem Begin that delivery of U.S. warplanes to Egypt would have a negative effect on peace prospects, the officials said this was taken into account and the decision was made that the sales would not alter the military balance nor detract from the peace process, but enhance prospects. Asked if the U.S. sought a commitment from Egypt not to use the aircraft against Israel, the officials noted that Egyptian President Anwar Sadat has said he has renounced further war with Israel.

LATE NEWS BULLETIN

BOMB KILLS 2, INJURES 35

JERUSALEM, Feb. 14 (JTA)--Two people were killed and 35 were injured tonight when a time bomb exploded on a crowded bus traveling through a residential district in Jerusalem, police reported. Five of the injured were reported by police to be in serious condition. The explosion was attributed to Palestinian terrorists. Further details were not immediately available. * * *

JERUSALEM (JTA)--Despite a bomb threat hoax and a number of threatening and profane telephone calls to TV House, the screening of controversial "Hirbet Hizba" went off smoothly Monday night. After the show hundreds of viewers phoned in, according to TV officials, expressing the full range of differing opinions that have been reflected during the public debate over the film. Professional critics generally gave the film--an Israeli TV production--high marks for quality on a technical and artistic level. * * *

BEERSHEBA (JTA)--Ben Gurion University of the Negev has announced the establishment in perpetuity of a Hubert H. Humphrey Center of Social Ecology on its main campus, to honor the memory of the late Senator in a field that was his primary interest.

SPECIAL INTERVIEW THE DOWNGRADING OF CULTURE

By Maurice Samuelson

OXFORD, Feb. 14 (JTA)--One of Israel's foremost writers had accused leaders of Britain's 400,000-strong Jewish community of looking down on culture, including Hebrew culture, as something "inferior," and thus hastening the community's "degeneration."

Aharon Megged, novelist, playwright and journalist, made his outspoken attack in an interview with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency at the Oxford Center for Postgraduate Hebrew Studies, where he has spent the past eight months working on a new novel.

Praising British Jews for their warm-hearted loyalty to Israel, Megged complained that they would donate money for everything but not for culture, which they appeared to despise. He admitted that there were many talented Jewish writers and playwrights in Britain, but said that few of them considered themselves part of Jewish culture.

Praises Jewish Culture In U.S.

Comparing Jewish life in Britain with that in the United States, which he has visited several times, Megged said Anglo-Jewry was "a desert." In the United States, he noted, Jewish culture had left its imprint on the life of the whole country and had the status of a separate sub-culture. He praised the "Jewish spiritual production" going on at American universities and institutes of higher learning, where tens of thousands of scholars were involved in Jewish and Hebrew studies. In some fields, American studies had reached higher standards than in Israel, Megged said.

In British universities, however, there were fewer than 100 students of Hebrew, of whom a high proportion were Gentiles. In French universities, he added, there were some 700 people studying Hebrew.

In their apathy towards culture, Anglo-Jewry's leadership merely reflected the community as a whole, Megged added. He had been told by publishers that in Britain "there is no Jewish readership," unlike the United States, where Jews were among the most avid readers and buyers of books.

Struck By Anglo-Jewry's Indifference

Megged was first struck by Anglo-Jewry's indifference towards Hebrew culture when he had served as cultural attache at the Israel Embassy from 1968 to 1971. At that time it had been his ambition to establish a Hebrew cultural center in London comparable with the French, German and Italian institutes--and with the Arab center which has been opened subsequently.

In a city containing some 200,000 Jews, including many Israelis, he had believed there would be widespread interest in a Hebrew library, exhibition hall and other similar facilities.

A committee was formed with such distinguished patrons as Lord Goodman, chairman of the Arts Council; Baroness Lee, Minister for the Arts; and Lord Olivier (Lawrence Olivier), the actor. However, to Megged's great disappointment, nothing came out of their discussions since the money was not forthcoming from Anglo-Jewry.

Admitting that there had been an increase in the number of Jewish day schools where children are taught Hebrew, Megged said that in terms of numbers their significance was marginal.

The cultural decline of Anglo-Jewry had been going on for more than a century, he believed. For

example, how many people knew that the first attempt to restore Hebrew as a modern, spoken language was made in England? More than half a century before the famous Eliezer Ben Yehuda, an English Jew, Abigail Lindo (1803-1848), had written a dictionary and a Hebrew discussion book which was still usable.

The fact that so few English Jews had even heard of this woman was another sign of their cultural degeneration, Megged concluded.

CARTER VOICES PRAYER THAT ISRAEL WILL BEGIN A NEW DECADE OF PEACE

NEW YORK, Feb. 14 (JTA)--President Carter asserted that on the occasion of Israel's forthcoming 30th anniversary, he joins "in fervent prayer that the combined effort of all those who seek a just and lasting resolution to the conflict in the war torn Middle East will be rewarded and that Israel will begin a new decade in an atmosphere of peace, tranquility and goodwill."

Carter made this statement in a message addressed to the 70th annual Award Dinner of Bnai Zion, the oldest American Zionist fraternal organization, which was held Sunday night in the New York Hilton Hotel with an audience of some 1500 persons.

The dinner, which also marked the celebration of the 30th anniversary of the State of Israel, was dedicated in tribute to Elie Wiesel, noted author, recipient of the 1978 Bnai Zion America-Israel Friendship Medal in recognition of his outstanding contributions to the efforts for strengthening the bonds of friendship between the peoples of the State of Israel and the United States.

The presentation of the medal was made by Rabbi William Berkowitz, president of Bnai Zion, who, in his address emphasized Wiesel's role as the "eloquent spokesman for the silent millions unable to give utterance to the Holocaust." In a message from Jerusalem, President Ephraim Katzir declared Wiesel as "the forceful spokesman of our people's agony in the period of the Holocaust."

RIGA REFUSNIK RECEIVES EXIT VISA

NEW YORK, Feb. 14 (JTA)--Reports out of Riga indicate that Oleg Milshtein, a biochemist who was previously refused permission to emigrate to Israel on grounds of alleged state secrets he had been exposed to at work, has received his long awaited visa and is expected to leave shortly with his wife Flora and children, according to the National Conference on Soviet Jewry. He applied for a visa 2 1/2 years ago.

A former professor at Latvian State University, Milshtein quit his post shortly before applying to emigrate. His wife, a psychiatrist, was able to continue her work while Oleg was forced to accept a position as a loader in a beer factory. The National Conference learned that during Milshtein's wait, officials from his university had told the Office of Visa Registration that they had no objection to his leaving the USSR and that he had not been exposed to any secrets.

JERUSALEM (JTA)--Premier Menachem Begin will ask Energy and Infrastructure Minister Yitzhak Moda'i to see to it that no oil drilling will take place on Saturdays in the Ashdod drilling site. Begin intervened after Agudat Israel threatened to quit the coalition if "the desecration of the Sabbath" would not cease. The Aguda claimed that despite a coalition agreement, drilling work continued at the Ashdod field.