

# JTA daily news bulletin

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## BOMB EXPLOSION IN BUS TERMED WORST TERRORIST INCIDENT IN TWO YEARS

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Feb. 15 (JTA)--A bomb explosion that wrecked an Egged bus last night killing two of its passengers and injuring 46 was described by police today as the worst incident of terrorist sabotage in Jerusalem in almost two years. The dead were identified as Katriel Blumenfeld, 42, the father of six children, and Yossi Weismann, a student at the Hebron yeshiva. Both lived in the Geula quarter, a neighborhood inhabited by Orthodox Jews, where the bus was operating when the blast occurred.

The Palestine Liberation Organization in Beirut claimed credit for the outrage. Police issued a warning today of possible new attempts at sabotage aimed at buses. No arrests related to last night's incident were reported.

According to police, the bus left its departure point in the northern district of Ramat at 9 p.m. last night more crowded than usual for that hour. It was passing through the Geula quarter when a bomb explosion ripped through the rear part of the bus injuring almost all of the more than 50 passengers aboard. Five of the injured were still in serious condition today. Most of the others were released from the hospital by midnight last night.

Police said that attempts at sabotage occur almost every week in Jerusalem but explosive devices are detected and detonated harmlessly. The last serious incident occurred on April 28, 1976 when a bomb concealed in a paint can exploded in downtown Jerusalem killing two policemen and injuring five other persons. Two persons died last November as a result of a terrorist act.

## U.S. AIRCRAFT SALES TO ARABS SEEN AS UPSETTING MIDEAST AIRPOWER BALANCE

By Yitzhak Shargil

TEL AVIV, Feb. 15 (JTA)--The American decision to sell combat aircraft to Egypt and Saudi Arabia while providing Israel with roughly only half the planes it has requested, would have serious ramifications for the balance of airpower in the Middle East, Israeli military sources said today. The sources said that if Israel ever entertained any ideas of abandoning the three military air bases it has established in Sinai, it would have to reconsider such a move if the Saudians and Egyptian air forces are strengthened.

According to the sources, it is clear that the American planes would extend the air strike power of both Egypt and Saudi Arabia, placing more Israeli targets within their range. Military analysts pointed out that the F-15s earmarked for Israel and Saudi Arabia have a range of 2800 miles, the F-5Es for Egypt have a range of 1600 miles and the F-16s for Israel have a range of 2000 miles. If such a situation were to develop, the strategic importance of the Sinai air fields and their place in Israel's defense network would be greatly increased.

The air fields are located at Sharm el-Sheikh at the southern tip of the Sinai peninsula, at Etzion, near Eilat, and at Eitam, near El

Arish in northern Sinai.

The Sharm el-Sheikh base is essential to protect navigation through the Straits of Tiran. The Etzion field offers protection against warplanes based on the Saudian shores of the Gulf of Aqaba and the Eitam field is an advance base to protect southern Israel from air attack, the military sources said.

They also noted that the Israeli Air Force which, according to foreign sources, has tripled in size since the Yom Kippur War, cannot be deployed at air fields within Israel's pre-1967 borders and requires much wider air space simply to maneuver. The supersonic F-15, for example, requires a range of 40 miles just to close in on an enemy and that alone demonstrates Israel's need for the Sinai air fields, the sources said.

## PERES TO EGYPT AFTER PASSOVER

JERUSALEM, Feb. 15 (JTA)--Shimon Peres, chairman of the Labor Party, said last night he had accepted Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's invitation to go to Egypt and will be doing so after Passover. Sadat extended the invitation during his meeting with Peres in Salzburg, Austria last weekend.

The Labor Party leader met yesterday with Premier Menachem Begin to brief him on his meeting with Sadat. Peres said the Egyptian leader told him that Israel and Egypt had reached a point of no return and could only move forward to a settlement. "I was under the impression that Sadat insists that negotiations should continue," Peres reported.

He expressed his belief that Sadat now wants to reach agreement on a declaration of principles regarding the West Bank which would allow King Hussein of Jordan and representatives of the Palestinians to join the negotiations at a later stage. Peres said he believes Sadat wants to resolve the West Bank issue before settling the differences with Israel over Jewish settlements in Sinai.

## BEGIN, WHO IS TO MEET WITH CARTER NEXT MONTH, URGES PRESIDENT TO RECONSIDER PLANS TO SELL JET FIGHTERS TO ARABS

By Gil Sedan and Yitzhak Shargil

JERUSALEM, Feb. 15 (JTA)--Premier Menachem Begin told the Knesset today that he has accepted an invitation to meet President Carter in Washington next month. The invitation was conveyed to him by U.S. Ambassador Samuel Lewis this morning. Begin made the announcement as the U.S. Administration's declared intention of selling combat aircraft to Egypt and Saudi Arabia aggravated the rift between Washington and Jerusalem over Israeli settlements in the occupied Arab territories.

Begin, replying to motions in a Knesset debate on the state of U.S.-Israeli relations, urged Carter to reconsider his plans to sell 80 F-16 jet fighters to Saudi Arabia and 50 F-5 fighters to Egypt. He claimed that the proposed sales were a threat to the "security of Israel and the process of negotiations."

He described the American response to Israel's request for more warplanes as "partial" and expressed hope that additional aircraft would be forthcoming after Defense Minister Ezer Weizman visits Washington to negotiate Israeli military purchases. The U.S. announced yesterday that it would provide

Israel with 15 F-15 fighters in addition to the 25 it already has and 75 F-16s. Israel had asked for 25 more F-15s and 150 F-16s.

Stressing his view that military aircraft sales to Egypt and Saudi Arabia posed a grave threat to Israel, Begin said: "In the name of the majority in this House, I appeal to President Carter to reconsider his decision to supply offensive weapons to Egypt and the most sophisticated planes to Saudi Arabia." He added: "Israel has knowledge that Saudi Arabia has already promised a certain Arab state that those planes will be at its disposal in the event of a new war against Israel." The Premier did not identify the Arab state.

Begin did not elaborate on the Israeli-U.S. controversy over settlements. He expressed disappointment with the American position enunciated by Secretary of State Cyrus Vance last Friday but observed that the two countries agreed to disagree on the settlements and that it has not affected their basic friendship.

"There have in the past been serious differences with the United States but we overcame them and we will overcome the current ones because of the special friendly relations between Israel and the U.S. emanating from common interests and the real love of the majority of American people for Israel," Begin said.

#### Warning By Landau

The U.S. aircraft sales announcement brought a blast from Begin's newly appointed Minister-Without-Portfolio Chaim Landau of Herut. Addressing the opening of the 18th Congress of the Maccabi World Union in Tel Aviv last night, Landau declared: "Whoever delivers sophisticated arms into the hands of Israel's enemies not only is putting peace off and delaying the chances of dialogue but actually brings fire into this region, the real danger of yet another explosion."

Landau claimed that the decision to sell combat planes to Egypt and Saudi Arabia would stiffen their attitudes. "What we need is negotiations, not from arsenals filled with sophisticated arms, but true negotiations, not from the peak of pyramids but standing on solid, realistic ground."

#### VANCE DENIES U.S. TILTING TOWARD EGYPT; CLAIMS PLANE SALE TO EGYPT WOULD HELP ITS TALKS WITH ISRAEL

By David Friedman

NEW YORK, Feb. 15 (JTA)--Secretary of State Cyrus Vance strongly denied last night that the United States was siding with Egypt in Middle East negotiations. "We are not tilting in favor of anybody," he said in an interview on the Public Broadcasting Service's "MacNeil/Lehrer Report."

Vance said the U.S. was trying to maintain an "objective" position in order to help the Egyptians and Israelis negotiate a settlement although "we expressed our views" when Washington felt this would be helpful in advancing talks.

The Secretary, who earlier in the day announced that the U.S. will sell Israel, Egypt and Saudi Arabia fighter aircraft, rejected the Israeli view that the sale of the 50 F-5 fighters to Egypt will harm the Mideast peace negotiations. He said that it would enhance the negotiations. He noted that Egypt had come to the U.S. for arms after it had lost its principal supplier, the Soviet Union.

At the same time, Vance also rejected Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's charge that the supply of U.S. arms to Israel makes Jerusalem intransigent in negotiations. Vance said that providing Israel

with the weapons it needs gives Jerusalem "self-confidence," enabling it to negotiate a settlement. Israel is to get 15 F-15s and 75 F-16s, according to Vance's announcement, about half what it asked.

Vance refused to agree with the questioner that the proposal to sell the F-5s to Egypt and 60 F-16s to Saudi Arabia has been made easier by an American public opinion that is shifting from all-out support from Israel to one that looks with more favor on the Arabs, especially Egypt. But he conceded that it would have been more difficult to make the same proposal last year. However, he noted that a year ago there were no negotiations between Israel and Egypt.

#### Sees Good Progress In Negotiations

On the negotiation itself, Vance said "considerable progress" had been made on the military talks between Egypt and Israel and "good progress" on the political talks. He said the only one of the list of principles that had not been agreed upon by the two sides concerned the West Bank, Gaza and the "intertwining Palestinian question."

Vance said he still stood by his statement last Friday that Israeli settlements in the Sinai were illegal and should not exist. But he stressed that he also noted that the future of these settlements had to be worked out by Egypt and Israel through negotiations. He said he had often stated this publicly as well as privately to the Israelis.

However, the Secretary refused to comment on whether he agreed with the Israeli position that the settlements were necessary for Israeli security. He said it would be "inappropriate for me to comment."

Vance noted that he will be discussing the Mideast situation with Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan tomorrow and that Assistant Secretary of State Alfred Atherton will be returning to the Mideast next week to try to help negotiations resume. He said that he is considering naming Atherton as an "Ambassador-at-Large" so that he can concentrate on the Mideast negotiations while someone else would be appointed to handle his important duties as Assistant Secretary for Near East and South Asian Affairs.

#### JEWISH LEADERS RAP SALE OF PLANES

NEW YORK, Feb. 15 (JTA)--Jewish leaders today criticized the Carter Administration for its decision to sell fighter planes to Egypt and Saudi Arabia as an unwise and unwarranted move.

Rabbi Alexander Schindler, chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, said "We deeply deplore and strongly oppose" the sale. "The only purpose of such sale can be to encourage continued Arab refusal to negotiate in good faith with Israel. We urge Congress to veto this unwise, unwarranted and dangerous step."

Theodore Bikel, chairman of the American Jewish Congress national governing council, said the sale compromises the Administration's avowed role as mediator in the Arab-Israeli conflict. "We are deeply concerned that these arms may be used in another Egyptian war of aggression against Israel should current peace talks break down." As regards arms for Saudi Arabia, Bikel stated, "such combat material is likely to be used for deployment against Israel. Saudi Arabia has no need for these arms except for belligerent purposes against the Jewish State."

Rabbi Joseph Sternstein, president of the Zionist Organization of America, termed the sale to Egypt and Saudi Arabia as "morally, politically

and even militarily unjustifiable. It is contrary to the interests of peace and a setback to the current negotiations. It is morally unjustifiable, for the arms would be used against Israel, an American ally; politically unjustifiable, for it would alter the balance of power; and militarily unjustifiable, for Egypt is not threatened and Saudi Arabia cannot absorb the arms."

This afternoon 35 members of Betar staged a sit-in at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations to protest the sale of planes to Saudi Arabia and Egypt. A Betar spokesman said 15 of the protesters were arrested but released shortly afterwards. A small delegation met with Deputy Ambassador James Leonard to explain Betar's opposition to the sale.

#### SOLONS SAY THEY WILL SUBJECT PLANE SALE DEAL TO THOROUGH SCRUTINY

By Joseph Polakoff

WASHINGTON, Feb. 15 (JTA)--Senate and House leaders on foreign affairs said today they will "thoroughly scrutinize" the Carter Administration's proposed sale of the most advanced and powerful fighter bombers to Saudi Arabia and an unprecedented U.S. flow of lethal weapons to Egypt, beginning with warplanes.

Reaction at the Capitol ranged from outright rejection to doubt on the wisdom of the Administration's proposals to provide warplanes to Saudi Arabia and to Egypt. No voice was raised in support of the Administration's program which Congress has the power to veto.

The Carter Administration, the Jewish Telegraphic Agency was informed at the Capitol, has decided on the three-country package as a tactical means to force through its proposals in Congress. If the proposal for any one of the three countries is rejected, the Administration has indicated it will withdraw the entire package.

The purpose is to prevent pro-Israeli Congressmen from approving the Israeli allotments while reducing or eliminating those for the two Arab states with which the Carter Administration has been cultivating ever more friendly relations while cooling relations with Israel.

#### Hearings May Not Begin Till April

Hearings by the Senate Foreign Relations and the House International Relations Committees, which will be the first Congressional panels to consider the proposals, have not been scheduled. Key members, however, indicated they will not begin until after Congress returns from its spring recess April 2.

With 10 of the Senate Committee's 15 members having warned the Administration last month in two letters not to go through with the delivery of the F-15s to Saudi Arabia, the Administration has apparently decided to challenge the Committee's judgement and is prepared for a confrontation on the whole matter of U.S. military support in the Middle East and its motives.

Sen. Clifford Case (R.N.J.), who along with Sen. Frank Church (D.Idaho) and five other Democratic Committee members, wrote to Secretary of State Cyrus Vance on Jan. 24 in opposition to the Saudi program, said today the proposed sale to both Saudi Arabia and Egypt "opens up a whole new arms sales equation which will have to be thoroughly investigated" by the Committee. "In particular," Case added, "there are serious questions" as to whether the proposed sale to the Saudis "does not exceed that country's legitimate defense requirements."

Sen. Jacob Javits (R.N.Y.) said today that he was looking to see "whether there is a connection respecting the timing of these sales in view of the stalemate in the Egypt-Israel negotiations and the U.S. position on Israeli settlements."

Sen. Daniel Moynihan (D.N.Y.) and Rep. Clarence Long (D.Md.), chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, voiced what appeared to be the sentiments of a large number of their colleagues in opposing the sales. Moynihan said the Saudi sale was "especially disturbing." He said he was sure Congress will veto the deal because of the potential threat to Israel. Long said he has sworn to do everything in his power to stop the sale to the Arab states.

Rep. Lee Hamilton (D.Ind.), chairman of the House Subcommittee on the Middle East, told JTA that "Congress ought not to be stampeded" into action on the proposals, a position shared by other members of the House International Relations Committee led by Rep. Clement Zablocki (D.Wis.). Rep. Lester Wolff (D.N.Y.) announced yesterday he would propose that Congress block the sale.

#### A Facet Of Congressional Scrutiny

One of the facets of the Congressional scrutiny is how serious the Administration is in providing the 60 F-15s to Saudi Arabia which would give that country alone a 3-2 advantage over Israel in that category of armament.

Capitol Hill sources said that in view of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's recent Washington visit and his public relations campaign, and Saudi Arabia's oil and wealth, the Administration may be seeking to ingratiate itself diplomatically with Saudi Arabia and Egypt and leave it to Congress to pare down or eliminate the sales and thereby take responsibility for reactions from Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

The possibility of a Saudi threat to impel Congress to go along by hiking oil prices or reducing the oil flow is well understood at the Capitol.

Rep. Jonathan Bingham (D.N.Y.), a member of the House International Relations Committee, who met with President Carter at the White House today, cautioned in comments to JTA that "we've got to keep our eye on the main ball and the main ball is peace in the Middle East." He added: "What I don't like is crossing the line from non-lethal to lethal weapons. Once you sell lethal weapons, where is the end of it?" Until now the U.S. sold only C-130 transport planes to Egypt.

#### HOME OF EGYPTIAN FIREBOMBED

WASHINGTON, Feb. 15 (JTA)--The Jewish Community Council of Greater Washington today deplored the violence against an Egyptian employee of the World Bank. Calling the incident "a reprehensible attempt to make a political statement," Council president Bernard S. White said in a press statement: "The organized Jewish community believes that resorting to such tactics can only harm the mutual efforts of all peoples of conscience and good will for peace."

Hussein Mustafa, 54, an engineer who works for the bank, said he was asleep with his wife and their 10-year-old son in their home in nearby suburban Bethesda, Md., when he was awakened by a noise at his door. When he went to the area he found a burning can that had contained gasoline. The Montgomery Fire Department said the damage was about \$200, mainly to the front door. No one was hurt.

## WORLD JEWISH POPULATION IS 14,259,525; U.S. HAS ESTIMATED 5,775,935 JEWS

NEW YORK, Feb. 15 (JTA)--The world Jewish population is estimated at 14,259,525, according to the American Jewish Year Book, whose 1978 edition is being published this month. This figure represents an increase of about 115,000 from the previous year. The United States, with approximately 5,775,935 Jews, has the largest Jewish population in the world.

The Year Book is published jointly by the American Jewish Committee and the Jewish Publication Society of America. Its editors are Morris Fine and Milton Himmelarb. Martha Jelenko is the executive editor. The world Jewish population estimates were compiled by Leon Shapiro, Professor of Russian and Soviet Jewish History at Rutgers University. The U.S. figures were supplied by Alvin Chenkin, research consultant, Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds.

After the United States, countries with the largest Jewish population are: Israel, 3,059,000; Soviet Union, 2,678,000; France, 650,000; Great Britain, 410,000; Canada, 305,000; and Argentina, 300,000. Forty-seven percent of world Jewry is in North, Central and South America, 29 percent in Europe, 22 percent in Asia; 1.5 percent in Africa, and 0.5 percent in Australia and New Zealand.

### Jews Are 2.7% Of U.S. Population

In the United States, Jews comprise 2.7 percent of the total population. Among the Jewish population figures for U.S. cities listed in the Year Book's tables are: Greater New York, 1,998,000; Los Angeles, 455,000; Philadelphia, 350,000; Chicago, 253,000; Miami, 225,000; Boston, 170,000; Washington, 120,000; Bergen County (NJ), 100,000; Essex County (NJ), 95,000; Baltimore, 92,000; Cleveland, 80,000; Detroit, 80,000; San Francisco, 75,000; St. Louis, 60,000; and Montgomery County (Md.), 53,335.

In Europe, including Asiatic USSR and Turkey, there are 4,158,870 Jews. Of these, 2,678,000 are in the Soviet Union. Figures for other European countries include:

Austria, 12,000; Belgium, 41,000; Bulgaria, 7,000; Czechoslovakia, 12,000; Denmark, 7,500; France, 650,000; Germany, 33,000; Great Britain, 410,000; Greece, 6,000; Hungary, 80,000; Ireland, 4,000; Italy, 38,500; Netherlands, 30,000; Poland, 6,000; Rumania, 60,000; Spain, 9,000; Sweden, 16,000; Switzerland, 21,000; Turkey, 27,000; and Yugoslavia, 6,000.

Estimated population for major centers of Jewish concentration in the Americas, outside the United States, include: Canada, 305,000; Argentina, 300,000; Brazil, 150,000; Uruguay, 50,000; Mexico, 37,500; Chile, 27,000; Venezuela, 15,000; Colombia, 12,000; and Peru, 5,200.

In Asia, the only major centers of Jewish population, except for Israel, are Iran, 80,000; and India, 8,000. In Africa, there are substantial numbers of Jews only in South Africa, 118,000; Ethiopia, 28,000; Morocco, 18,000; Tunisia, 7,000; and Rhodesia, 3,800. There are 70,000 Jews in Australia, and 5,000 in New Zealand.

### HISTADRUT CONFAB REPORTS PASSING \$50 MILLION MARK FOR PROGRAMS IN ISRAEL

MIAMI-BEACH, Feb. 15 (JTA)--The 12th annual Histadrut Economic Conference for Israel opened Sunday at the Fontainebleau Hotel under the auspices of the Israel Histadrut Foundation

with a report that the Foundation had passed the \$50 million mark in long-term commitments to the health, educational and social welfare programs of Histadrut in Israel. The report was given by Sol Stein, president of the Foundation which he established 18 years ago as an adjunct of the Israel Histadrut campaign.

In a seminar Monday, Dr. Zvi Dinstein, Economic Minister of Israel to the United States and Canada, explained the new economic policy instituted by the government of Premier Menachem Begin as one that aimed "to let economic processes determine their own course with minimal government interference."

Dinstein, who also served as Deputy Minister of Finance under previous Labor governments and is a former Knesset member, stated that Israel has a \$2.75 billion annual trade deficit of which \$1 billion was for civilian expenses, while the major share was due to military expenditures. These deficits, he said, can possibly be reduced by normal developments within three to five years. Israel has open markets for goods and services and must find investments for its industrial infrastructure; he said. Israeli agriculture is highly developed and hundreds of Israeli experts are helping developing countries to increase their food supply.

While the goal of the policy is to foster an economy free of government interference, the results will depend on the degree of private investment and initiative, Dinstein said. He noted that Egyptian President Anwar Sadat might be prompted to seek peace with Israel now before Israel achieves total economic self-sufficiency and becomes stronger in its negotiating stance.

Dr. Judah J. Shapiro, president of the National Committee for Labor Israel, in the keynote address to the 1500 participants at the conference, described the Middle East as "an arena of contention between the superpowers." He added that in the American view Israel was not "a sentimental bastion of democracy but an aircraft carrier from which the United States may have to conduct its campaign in the area."

### YIDDISH, ARABIC NEWSPAPERS JOINTLY HAIL EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI PEACE EFFORTS

BUENOS AIRES, Feb. 15 (JTA)--Neuva Presencia, a weekly Spanish-language supplement of the Yiddish daily Die Welt, and As Saalam, an Arabic daily, have published a joint declaration hailing Israeli-Egyptian peace efforts in the Middle East. It was signed by staff members of both publications who described themselves as "Argentine newspapermen descended from Arab and Jewish immigrants" and called for harmony and brotherly cooperation between the Arab and Jewish communities in Argentina.

The declaration, which was re-printed in the major dailies, Clarin and La Opinion, expressed hope that Arab-Jewish hostilities in the Middle East "shall forever be buried by history in that key part of the world. The recent Egyptian-Israeli talks developed at the highest level towards getting a just peace for all peoples in that region, a transcendental fact observed with admiration and which nobody can ignore."

Referring to the setback in direct Israeli-Egyptian peace negotiations, the signatories expressed the view that it was the "product of circumstantial differences that, we do not believe, are definitive." (By Carlos Radbil)

REMINDER: There will be no Bulletin dated Feb. 20 due to Washington's Birthday.