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BEGIN SAYS ROW WITH U.S. WILL NOT OVERSHADOW THE FRIENDLY RELATIONS

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Feb. 16 (JTA)—Premier Menachem Begin told visiting American-Jewish journalists today that Israel's disagreements with the United States over settlements in the occupied territories would "not overshadow the friendly relations between the two countries." Meeting with delegates to the convention of the American Jewish Press Association here, Begin said the U.S. and Israel can agree "not to agree" on the settlements issue.

According to Begin, the settlements are legal under international law because they were established on territories conquered in a war of self-defense. "The U.S. holds that the settlements are illegal under terms of the Geneva Convention that spells out the rights of an occupying power."

Begin expressed hope that his meeting with President Carter in Washington early next month would be as friendly and successful as their earlier meetings. The date of his departure is expected to be announced shortly. Meanwhile, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Alfred Atherton will return to the Middle East Monday to resume his efforts to get Israel and Egypt to agree on a joint declaration of principles so that peace negotiations between them can continue.

(Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan, who is on a fund-raising tour in the United States, had a two-hour lunch today at the State Department with Secretary of State Cyrus Vance. Afterwards he paid a "courtesy call" on President Carter. See separate story P.3.)

CARTER'S INVITATION TO BEGIN TO COME TO WASHINGTON SEEN AS MOVE TO HELP OFFSET INTENSE ISRAELI CRITICISM

By Joseph Polakoff

WASHINGTON, Feb. 16 (JTA)—President Carter's unexpected invitation to Israeli Premier Menachem Begin to visit Washington next month and the State Department's declaration avowing continued Israeli-American friendship were seen here today as measures to help offset intense criticism in Israel and in Congress against the proposed sale of U.S. war planes to Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

The White House denied that the invitation was linked to the proposed sales, saying that "the thought" for the invitation was there prior to the announcement of the sales. But it was revealed at the State Department that the Israelis had been told about the proposed sales previously and were very unhappy about it.

Criticism of the proposed aircraft sales is based on fears that the Middle East balance of power is being altered and that Israel, as a result, is in a weakened position. The Carter Administration continued to declare, however, that the balance is not impaired and that the decision to go ahead with the sales is "firm" if Congress approves.

State Department spokesman Kenneth Brown said yesterday, "I am afraid we cannot make available" the Department's study to demonstrate that the regional balance of power is not affected.

Asked if the American public must accept on faith the Carter Administration's position that the balance is being maintained, Brown replied, "This is our considered judgement."

Asked about Begin's request to the U.S. to reconsider its decision to sell war planes to Saudi Arabia and Egypt, Brown said the "decisions were carefully considered." He said, "We have explained our decision to Israel. We hope in the days ahead as our consultations proceed, the reservations being expressed about the decision will be answered."

Meanwhile, William Brock, chairman of the Republican National Committee, charged today that Carter's decision to sell warplanes to Egypt and Saudi Arabia "eliminates the United States from its role of honest broker" in the Israeli-Arab peace negotiations. He described the sale as another in a series of "major blunders" by the Carter Administration "that serve only to lessen the prospect for Middle East peace." He urged Congress to block the sale.

NO POISONED ORANGES FOUND

MONTREAL, Feb. 16 (JTA)—After a two-day search, the nine inspectors appointed by the National Board of Health failed to find any contaminated oranges among the 60,000 cases of Israeli oranges unloaded in the port of Halifax, the Board of Trade said today. The inspectors conducted a check of the oranges yesterday and Tuesday as a result of poisoned Israeli oranges having been discovered in several European cities earlier this month. In the same cargo there were 90,000 cases of Jaffa oranges destined for Philadelphia. Sources here said these cases would be inspected on arrival in the U.S. (By Michael Solomon)

NEW APPROACH TOWARD ILLEGAL HOUSES: BUILT BY ARABS ON STATE-OWNED LAND

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Feb. 16 (JTA)—The Israel Lands Administration has changed its tactics with regard to illegal houses built by Arab villagers in Galilee on State-owned land without obtaining government permits. Instead of bulldozing them, it is leasing the land to the Arabs who readily admit they are getting "a real bargain."

A case in point is the village of Iskal in lower Galilee, with a population of 5000. Over the years the local residents built some 300 houses without permits leading to repeated conflicts with the Lands Administration. In three instances, the government sent in bulldozers to raze the houses. But that only increased the bitterness. Recently, the Lands Administration reached an agreement with the village council. It legalized the buildings retroactively and leased the land to the villagers at 1970 rates which are relatively cheap.

Ahmad Abdul Rahman Assad, a building contractor, will have to pay the Lands Administration about 11,500,000 for the land on which he built his house 13 years ago. "Assad is pleased with the deal." "When I built this place I knew it was illegal. Now I am paying for it," he said. He will also receive permits to build additional houses on the leased land for his children.

The Mayor of Iskal, a known sympathizer with the Rakah Communist Party, feels the villagers

have won a victory. "What we did was actually an illegal settlement," he said. "We simply forced the government into the agreement." The Land Administration has leased about 25 percent of the land to the village council for public purposes. A new mosque is under construction and a new road is being built at government expense amounting to IL 1.2 million.

News of the "bargain" traveled fast in Galilee. Yaacov Vakin, director of the Lands Administration, will meet this weekend with representatives of other Arab and Druze villages in Galilee to work out similar deals. The government's generosity is limited by one major condition: the total cessation of illegal buildings. There are estimated to be some 5000 illegal dwellings in Galilee. Arab families live in single-family homes. In contrast, most of the Jewish population in Galilee lives in apartment buildings.

JUDGE ORDERS COURT MARTIALS FOR FOUR WHO HELPED IN THE ESCAPE OF EX-NAZI

By Ben Tobias

ROME, Feb. 16 (JTA)--A captain and three guards will face court martials for the escape of Nazi war criminal Herbert Kappler, who killed 335 Italians, including 70 Jews, a Rome military judge decided today.

Kappler, who was Gestapo chief in Rome during World War II, died eight days ago in West Germany where he resided after his wife, Annelese, smuggled him out of Rome's Celio military hospital last Aug. 15. He was being treated at the time for terminal cancer and was serving a life-prison term for the reprisal slayings at Rome's Ardeatine caves. The Italians were executed after partisans killed 32 Nazi storm troopers.

Examining Judge Col. Fabrizio Gentile ordered court martials on charges of gross disobedience and failure to supervise their prisoner for Capt. Norberto Capozzella and constables Luigi Salso, Oronzo Pavone and Giuseppe Giovanelli. All are in the paramilitary Carabinieri police force and subject to military law. Gentile said Kappler's wife lowered his body from his ward window to aides waiting in a car below.

ZIONIST CONGRESS CONVENES NEXT WEEK

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Feb. 16 (JTA)--The 29th World Zionist Congress will convene Feb. 20 and continue until Feb. 28. It is the first Congress in six years and the first gathering of world Jewry since the historic visit of President Anwar Sadat of Egypt to Jerusalem last November, the Yam Kippur War and the Likud victory last May. These events will be reflected in the deliberations. More than 2000 people, including 560 delegates with full voting rights, from 40 countries throughout the world will be at the Congress.

Avraham Schenker, head of the World Zionist Organization department of organization and information, told a press conference here yesterday that this Congress, contrary to previous Congresses, included not only representatives of Zionist parties but also representatives of other Jewish organizations.

He noted that for the first time, delegates of four world Jewish organizations, whose combined membership exceeds four million, will be participating. These movements, which recently joined the WZO, are the Reform and Conservative Movements, the Sephardic Federation and the World Maccabim. Schenker also said that the Congress,

the supreme governing body of the Zionist movement, will meet this time with a more democratic basis than those which preceded it.

More than 1,200,000 Jews from all over the world, excluding Israel, took part in the membership count which took place in the months prior to the Congress. He rejected criticism that the Congress was no longer functional and emphasized that this was the only way to recruit world Jewry for a purpose other than fund-raising.

Composition Of Delegations

The change in the makeup of the Congress is reflected in the following figures: approximately 175 to 177 of the delegates will be from Likud, compared to 130 in the previous Congress; the World Confederation of United Zionists will have 105 to 110 delegates; the Zionist Labor Movement will have 95 to 96 delegates, compared to 161 previously; Mapam will have 26 to 27, compared to 33.

The Religious Zionist Movement will have 77, compared to 88; WIZO, 20, as in the previous Congress; the Democratic Movement for Change, 26; Independent Liberals, 4, compared to 13 previously; Sheli, 4; the Association of Reform Zionists of America (ARZA), 9; the French List of North Africans (Ziona), 3; miscellaneous, 3 to 4. Some 190 of the delegates are from Israel and 152 are from the United States. In addition, the Civil Rights Party will have 2 delegates.

SPECIAL TO JTA

WORLD'S SMALLEST TORAH BOUGHT

By William Saphire

NEW YORK, Feb. 16 (JTA)--Peter Ehrenthal, president of Moriah, a Manhattan firm specializing in Judaica, says he has just purchased the world's smallest Torah. The parchment is 2 1/2 inches high and the hand-written text is 1 3/4 inches high but clearly legible without the aid of a magnifying lens, Ehrenthal told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency today.

He said the miniature was acquired for the firm by his son at an auction at the Southby Gallery in London this morning for \$25,000. The price included a sterling silver filigreed Ark 9 3/4 inches high. The Torah itself stands 4 1/2 inches from top to bottom of the scroll handles and is contained in green velvet cloth with silver braid and the Hebrew letters Koff and Toff.

Ehrenthal said he is satisfied that it is the smallest Torah extant though he believes Southby was not aware of that fact. The Southby catalogue described it only as a "small size" Torah and Ark. According to Ehrenthal it originated in Austria, probably in the early 19th Century. An inscription refers to "Yaacov, son of Rabbi Meir Landau," who was the original owner but may or may not have been the craftsman, he said. He estimated that it took the scribe 5-10 years to complete the sacred text.

Ehrenthal believes that despite its tiny size the Torah had a practical use. He said such miniatures were commissioned by pious Jews as gifts for their rabbis to be used while traveling. Ehrenthal said he has not decided whether to place it on sale or add it to his private collection of Judaica. He did not exclude the possibility of lending it to a museum.

HERZOG RAPS SADAT'S MEDIA CAMPAIGN

NEW YORK, Feb. 16 (JTA)--Israel is now being faced with a major public relations offensive by Egypt focused on the United States and

U.S. Jewry "in a blatant attempt to achieve negotiations by ultimatum," Chaim Herzog, Israel's Ambassador to the United Nations, told an assembly of Northeast Israel Bond leaders at UN Headquarters yesterday.

The Bond group met with him at a luncheon to launch the 1978 campaign of the Israel Bond Prime Minister's Club and Ambassador's Society of Trustees. Sam Rothberg, general chairman of Israel Bonds, announced that \$1,750,000 in Israel Bonds was subscribed by the 70 persons present.

Herzog said that the Sadat media campaign was aimed at forcing the United States to become directly involved and to bring pressure on Israel for one-sided concessions, instead of conducting "free and open negotiations without prior conditions," as Israel advocates. In explaining Israel's stance on the occupied territories, Herzog stressed that Israel's concern and determination was that they "never again be used as a springboard for attack." He indicated that Israel was ready and willing to bargain away most of the "occupied lands," but only in exchange for security from future attacks.

DAYAN, VANCE MEET FOR 2 HOURS; VANCE REAFFIRMS U.S. FRIENDSHIP FOR ISRAEL; DAYAN SAYS STRAINED RELATIONS REMAIN

By Joseph Polakoff

WASHINGTON, Feb. 16 (JTA)—Secretary of State Cyrus Vance and Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan exchanged cordial remarks and reaffirmed the traditional U.S.-Israeli friendship after a two-hour working lunch at the State Department today. But Dayan indicated that the problems which have arisen to give U.S.-Israeli relations a strained atmosphere remain unresolved.

After meeting with reporters in the State Department's diplomatic lobby, Dayan, accompanied by Vance, went to the White House to pay a courtesy call on President Carter.

The President's meeting with Dayan, which lasted 30 minutes, was described by the White House as "friendly and candid." The White House gave no details of the meeting but said Carter told Dayan he was looking forward to Israeli Premier Menachem Begin's visit to the U.S. on March 14-15. After his meeting with the President, Dayan held a press conference where he said Israeli Defense Minister Ezer Weizman will be in Washington March 6-7.

Vance addressed Dayan as "an old friend" and said they had discussed a number of matters relating to the peace negotiations and "steps that are going to be taken" when U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Alfred Atherton returns to the Middle East Monday to resume his mediating task.

Vance said, "We have reaffirmed our commitment to the peace process and the need to move forward." He said the questions discussed with Dayan included a declaration of principles which he described as "an important step in the peace process."

No Substitute For U.S. Mediation

A reporter asked Dayan if anything has happened in the last 10 days to cause him to doubt that the U.S. can play the role of honest broker and mediator in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Dayan replied, "I still believe, as in the past, that the U.S. is to go on in the role of mediator, not only between the parties but with the parties to achieve peace." He said "there is no substitute" for the U.S. and without it, there cannot be any progress.

Asked if the Carter Administration's proposed

sale of combat aircraft to Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Israel has changed anything in the American-Israeli relationship, Dayan said that the proposed sales "and other things are of much concern to us but that does not mean we don't want to go ahead" with the peace negotiations with the U.S. as "mediator between Israel and the Arab countries."

Dayan declined to comment on the State Department view that Saudi Arabia is not a confrontation state opposing Israel. He noted that Begin and Weizman will "deal with the matter" during their visits here. Asked if he was able to iron out any of the problems between Israel and the U.S., such as the settlements issue, Dayan replied, "Not really." He added that what took place in his discussion with Vance today should not be made public.

Israel Ready For Declaration Of Principles

At a crowded press conference at the Washington Hilton Hotel after meeting with Carter, Dayan said that Israel is ready to agree to a declaration of principles with Egypt in general terms but that preconditions such as full withdrawal and a Palestinian state "are negative" and Israel will not agree to them.

Dayan emphasized that President Anwar Sadat of Egypt has not made any conditions for sitting down to talk with Israel. He said that in the next few months, King Hussein of Jordan will have to decide whether he will join Sadat in negotiations without preconditions. If he does, Dayan said, "we can overcome the problems between us and Jordan, us and the Palestinians and us and Egypt." If Hussein will not join, Sadat will have to decide whether "he is going to make a separate peace or forget the whole thing," Dayan said.

Asked if he thought U.S. support for Israel was eroding in view of the proposed aircraft sales to Egypt and Saudi Arabia and the American condemnation of Israeli settlements, Dayan said: "I do believe, to my regret, that the decisions causes us deep concern. We are very upset about them." He noted, for example, that Israel has to ask why the Saudis are building an air base at Tabuk on the Gulf of Aqaba, only 10 minutes flight from southern Israel. He said the aircraft proposed for sale to the Saudis "could cover Israel's skies without refueling."

No Erosion In Support Of Israel

Asked whether there was any erosion in support of Israel by Americans over the settlements, Dayan replied that among the people he met in the Jewish communities he did not find any erosion in support of Israel. "Some did not understand or agree on some points like settlements, but there is no erosion whatsoever."

Dayan said he preferred to have discussions with American Jews rather than have the "Jewish community follow Israel right or wrong." He said he preferred hard questions because that deepened the relationship. * * *

JERUSALEM (JTA)—Meir Zorea, the hawkish ex-general who quit the Democratic Movement for Change (DMC) several weeks ago, resigned his Knesset seat Wednesday and said he was through with politics. His departure was significant because Zorea is one of the few persons to give up a Knesset seat after bolting the party on whose ticket he was elected. DMC leader Yigael Yadin hailed his move as a "courageous decision."

CONGRESS ASKED TO APPROVE ECONOMIC, MILITARY AID TO EGYPT AND ISRAEL

By Joseph Polakoff

WASHINGTON, Feb. 16 (JTA)--The Carter Administration asked Congress Tuesday to approve \$957 million in economic assistance for Egypt and \$790 million for Israel for the fiscal year beginning next Oct. 1. The ratio for the two countries is about the same as in the current year.

In addition to this economic aid, the Administration requested \$1 billion for Israel to finance military purchases for the coming year, the same as in the present fiscal year. This is in accordance with the Israeli-American agreement in connection with Israel's evacuation from the Sinai areas now reoccupied by Egypt.

Of the economic aid, security assistance for Egypt totals \$750 million and for Israel \$785 million. Egypt will also get \$206.6 million in Food for Peace commodities and \$400,000 for military training. Israel is earmarked for \$5.4 million in Food for Peace.

Jordan is to receive \$93 million in economic security assistance, \$50 million towards construction of the proposed Jordan Valley dam that also affects Israel, Syria and the West Bank, \$8.7 million in Food for Peace, \$45 million in military assistance, \$2 million in military training, and \$85 million in military financing.

Purpose Of The Dam

The Maqarin Dam, which has been discussed for 20 years, would be built on the Yarmouk River where Jordan and Syria meet. Its purpose is to regulate the irrigation in the region by controlling the river's flow. Israel draws water from the river down stream from the proposed dam site. Jordan would control the dam whose waters also would be used by Jordan proper and the West Bank.

The \$50 million requested by the Administration would be an initial contribution for the dam's construction, estimated to cost some \$600 million, the State Department told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. An international group is expected to finance the bulk of the cost, the Department told JTA.

The foreign aid program, which totals \$7.6 billion, also provides \$90 million in economic supporting assistance and \$23.9 million in Food for Peace for Syria. Lebanon is to get \$75 million in military financing and \$650,000 in Food for Peace.

Authorization hearings have already been started by the House International Relations Committee on the funding for Lebanon, Syria and Jordan. Israel's will begin about Feb. 28 and Egypt's afterward.

The hearings on authorization, which sets the program's policy and dollar ceilings, will then be held by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. The Appropriations Committees in both chambers later will take up the measures for the actual funding of the programs. Both Houses must approve both bills which also must be signed by the President before they can take effect.

GOLDMANN DESCRIBES MEETING WITH SADAT

By Edwin Eytan

PARIS, Feb. 16 (JTA)--Dr. Nahum Goldmann, former president of the World Jewish Congress, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that his meeting here with President Anwar Sadat of Egypt on Monday dealt exclusively with generalities and

carefully avoided the current Israeli-Egyptian negotiations. During the 40-minute meeting with Sadat, Goldmann was accompanied by Baron Edmond de Rothschild who heads the Israel Bonds drive in France, Sir Eric Warburg and Lord Goodman of Britain, and Leon Kahana who heads the Bonds drive in Austria.

Goldmann told the JTA that all the members of the delegation accepted Sadat's invitation as individuals, not as representatives of their organizations. He said Sadat invited him to Egypt but he will decide only in the spring, by which time peace negotiations, hopefully, will have resumed.

The Representative Committee of Jews in France (CRIF) issued a communique here saying that the delegation which met with Sadat did not represent the French Jewish community. It added that official meetings between French Jews and Egyptian officials will not take place so as to avoid interfering in the peace talks.

During his visit here, Sadat met with President Valery Giscard d'Estaing for what diplomatic sources said was to discuss the possibility of Egypt buying arms from France should the U.S. refuse to supply them. At a press conference before leaving France to meet with Pope Paul VI in the Vatican and Italian leaders in Rome on his way back to Cairo, Sadat told reporters that there can be no further meetings between himself and Premier Menachem Begin of Israel until a preliminary declaration of principles is worked out by Israel and Egypt and approved by both sides.

5 HELD ON SUSPICION OF TERROR ACTIVITY

LONDON, Feb. 16 (JTA)--Four men and a woman, all believed to be Arabs, have been arrested on suspicion of engaging in terrorist offenses in London. These include the New Year's eve bombing which killed two Syrian Embassy officials and the shooting, a few days later, of Said Hammani, the Palestine Liberation Organization's representative in Britain.

Scotland Yard's anti-terrorist squad which is investigating these and other incidents, says it is also anxious to interview other people besides those already being held. Earlier this week, leading PLO officials attended a London memorial service for Hammani. They included Shafiq al-Hout, a veteran PLO functionary from Beirut, and Issam Sartawi who, like Hammani, has engaged in talks with sympathetic Israelis.

TWO CHARGED OF NAZI CRIMES

BONN, Feb. 16 (JTA)--West Germany's central agency for processing Nazi crimes has issued charges against two elderly Germans for their participation in the mass murder of Jews in the Ukraine. The investigations, which began in 1964, show that the two, Wilhelm Westerheide, 69, and Johanne Zelle, 58, participated in the murder of 9000 Jews in the Vladimir-Wolynsk ghetto in the Ukraine in September and November, 1942.

The Jews were taken in trucks from their homes to Piatydn and shot there, in front of ready mass graves. Westerheide, as the then district commissar, is charged with being instrumental in carrying out the action and in personally shooting eight Jews whose identities are known. Zelle is alleged to have pushed the Jews together by using a riding whip as well as knocking children against a wall and throwing them from a balcony. The two are expected to face trial shortly in Dortmund.