

# JTA daily news bulletin

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## BEGIN RECEIVES FRIENDLY LETTER FROM SADAT LEADING TO SPECULATION THAT THE TWO LEADERS MAY MEET AGAIN

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, March 2 (JTA)--Premier Menachem Begin said today that he would reply early next week to a letter from President Anwar Sadat of Egypt delivered this morning by U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Alfred L. Atherton. The contents of the four-page letter were not disclosed but it was reportedly written in a friendly tone and concerned the current efforts to draft a joint declaration of principles by Israel and Egypt.

The letter was the first personal contact between Sadat and Begin since their Christmas Day meeting at Ismailia and led to speculation that it might lead to another meeting between the two men. But Begin, after conferring with Atherton this morning, said only that there was still a basis for continuing the present negotiations.

Atherton, who arrived here unexpectedly from Cairo last night, also met with Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan and was to meet with Attorney General Aharon Barak later today. He is scheduled to go to Amman Friday, presumably for another attempt to persuade Jordan to enter the Israeli-Egyptian peace process. Atherton is expected to return to Cairo next Tuesday with Begin's reply to Sadat.

Begin and other Israelis have expressed hope in recent days that direct peace talks would be resumed with Egypt instead of the indirect contacts maintained with Atherton as intermediary. But Egyptian Foreign Minister Ibrahim Kaamel observed yesterday that the next move did not depend on Israel or Egypt but on the Americans.

## WEIZMAN BARS GROUP OF 50 PEOPLE FROM SETTLING THEMSELVES IN SINAI; BEGIN ASKED TO RULE ON VALIDITY OF ORDER

By Yitzhak Shargil and Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, March 2 (JTA)--Premier Menachem Begin was called on today to rule on the validity of an order by Defense Minister Ezer Weizman barring a group of 50 settlers from establishing themselves at Kadesh Barnea in Sinai, about 40 miles southeast of El Arish. Weizman issued his instructions to the Military Governor last night, only hours before the settlers, members of a Labor-oriented moshav movement, were to occupy the site which has been under preparation for some time.

His order triggered an indignant protest from Agriculture Minister Ariel Sharon who said he first learned of it from the news media and contended that Kadesh Barnea was not a new settlement but an existing one. He asked Begin to overrule the Defense Minister. Begin's only comment today was that "there is a Cabinet resolution on the issue and everything will be ok."

He was referring to the Cabinet's decision Sunday to maintain the status quo with respect to settlement policy. The Cabinet said there would be no new settlements in Sinai but a "thickening" of existing ones. Weizman apparently issued his orders on the basis of the Cabinet position.

The Kadesh Barnea site was approved for settlement by the previous government and an

advance party has been preparing the land in the area for the past seven months. Arye Nehamkin, secretary of the moshav group, also maintained that it was not a new settlement. However, he said, his organization is not the Gush Emunim and "if the government decides that we have to leave we shall do so."

## BILLS OPPOSE UN PALESTINE UNITS

By Joseph Polakoff

WASHINGTON, March 2 (JTA)--Both Houses of Congress currently have legislative proposals to stop U.S. participation in the United Nations General Assembly's recent decision to establish a special unit to spread information about "Palestinian rights." Rep. Abner Mikva (D. Ill.) introduced a companion bill in the House yesterday to a previous measure in the Senate proposed by Sen. J. Harrison Williams (D. N.J.).

"The alleged purpose of the UN unit would be to observe the international day of solidarity with the Palestinian people," Mikva said in the House. "In reality, however, the organization would disseminate messages of hatred against the State of Israel and its inhabitants. Such propaganda can only complicate and possibly jeopardize the sensitive peace negotiations now being conducted in the Middle East," he said.

According to Mikva, "the newly formed group may be viewed as an extension of the UN Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People." This committee is composed of 23 member states, 19 of which have no diplomatic relations with Israel. "Clearly, both the old committee and the new unit will result only in a further erosion of the respect for the impartiality of the United Nations," Mikva said.

He stated the new special unit will "reflect the views" of the Palestine Liberation Organization "as did its predecessor, the Palestine Committee," and the PLO remains a terrorist organization committed to the destruction of the State of Israel by any means available to its members. "The unit began to operate formally yesterday."

## BEN ELISSAR WARNS THAT EGYPT IS COUNTING ON U.S. TO PRESSURE ISRAEL

MIAMI BEACH, Fla., March 2 (JTA)--The Israeli leader who headed the first peace delegation to Cairo declared here today that "President (Anwar) Sadat now counts on America to exert pressure on Israel." Dr. Elio Ben Elissar, director general of the Prime Minister's Office, said he believes that Egypt's negotiating position has "actually become tougher following Sadat's visit to the United States a month ago."

Ben Elissar, who arrived in this country last night for his first American visit, made these assertions at a press conference here, prior to his address this evening before 900 U.S. and Canadian Jewish leaders launching the worldwide Israel Bond campaign in 1978. This year's campaign centers around the celebration of Israel's 30th anniversary.

At his press conference, Ben Elissar said that during Sadat's recent visit with President Carter and State Department officials, the Egyptian President set out "deliberately to involve the U.S. on his side" and succeeded in having Washington adopt an attitude "in favor of Egypt's original position,

which has brought about a hardening of its stand on the crucial issues."

#### Raps Planes Sale To Saudi Arabia

Ben Elissar also criticized the prospective sale of F-15 U.S. fighter planes to Saudi Arabia. "If you want to make a contribution to the peace-making process, you don't furnish arms to harden the position of the other side," he said. The Israeli official was absolutely convinced, he added, that sophisticated planes sold to Saudi Arabia were intended to be used against Israel and not for the defense against any threat from Iraq.

The supply of such advanced weapons to the Saudis, according to Ben Elissar, "would upset the Middle East arms balance and change the outlook of Israel on the problem of its security." In the past, he said, Israel's defense system was based on a formula in which "quality was relied upon to make up for a lack of quantity." He pointed out that if F-15 planes are sold to Saudi Arabia, Israel would "lose the advantage of quality."

Ben Elissar called upon the United States and American Jews to accelerate "their support for Israel at the present real turning point in our history."

Sam Rothberg, general chairman of State of Israel Bonds, who presided at the evening dinner at the Kónover Hotel, told the assembled guests that "the building and development of Israel must go on regardless of headlines about the ups and downs of the peace negotiations. Our solidarity and our unity are being put to the test once again."

#### ISRAELI MILITARY CIRCLES CONCERNED OVER U.S. PLANES SALE TO SAUDIANS By Yitzhak Shargil

TEL AVIV, March 2 (JTA)—Israeli military circles are expressing concern that American F-15 fighter planes, if sold to Saudi Arabia, would be deployed at the fast-growing Saudi air base at Tabuk on the Gulf of Aqaba, only 150 miles from Eilat and 250 miles from Jerusalem. The American jets, considered the best aircraft of their type in the world, could reach any point in Israel without refueling and would also threaten the Israeli air base at Etzion in northern Sinai.

Since the Carter Administration has proposed the sale of 60 F-15s to Saudi Arabia, Israel's military planners are considering the possibility that that country may become a confrontation state in another Arab-Israeli war. Consequently, the planners say, Israel must revise its entire defense strategy and provide for a deterrent capacity against a hitherto inactive sector.

Meanwhile, Israel Air Force Commander Gen. David Ivri left for the U.S. yesterday on a two-week visit. He will meet Pentagon officials and will be the guest of the General Dynamics Corp., manufacturer of the F-16 fighter, one of the aircraft types Israel is to receive from the U.S. Ivri may fly one to evaluate its performance.

#### SPORTS OFFICIALS TO AID ISRAEL WITH INTERNATIONAL SPORTS FEDERATION By Haskell Cohen

TEL AVIV, March 2 (JTA)—Two of the world's foremost authorities in international sports met here with Israeli officials during the past few days to try to reassure the sports fraternity here that they would be doing everything in their power to aid Israel in their difficulties with international sports federations.

Dr. Joao Havelange of Brazil, the head of the International Football Association, here to add

his presence to the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the Israeli Soccer Federation, advised this writer, "Although Israel has been forced out of the Asian Soccer Federation, I will do everything possible to have them admitted to the European Confederation."

Israel has been voted out of the Asian Soccer Federation due to the duplicity of Japan which combined with the Arab League and countries beholden to Arab countries for oil. As a result, the local football fraternities are disturbed as to where its teams will be playing on an international level. Havelange, in a lengthy speech delivered in French to the Israelis, assured them he would help them overcome difficulties which have arisen.

#### Will Try To Remove Sanctions

The other international sports figure, Adrian Paulen of Holland, head of the International Track and Field Federation, likewise has indicated he will cooperate fully in its quest. Paulen advised this writer:

"If the people running the Asian games, upcoming next year, persist in their efforts to deprive Israel of participating in international Olympic committee approved games, I for one, shall make every attempt to have the sanction for games removed just as soon as it is determined definitely that the people here will not be permitted to perform. We were successful in the past when this situation arose, particularly with the Mediterranean games which has now become past history. There is no reason whatsoever why Israel should be driven out of competition with its neighbors on the Asian continent. We cannot countenance this type of discrimination."

It so happens Paulen was visiting Israel at the same time as the Dutch national team which performed against the Israeli soccer eleven team, last Wednesday. The Israelis gathered to fete both sports luminaries at a cocktail party and felt immediately relieved after the words of comfort were uttered by these international leaders in soccer and track and field.

#### SEPHARDI PRESIDENT INDICATED

JERUSALEM, March 2 (JTA)—The next President of Israel will be a Sephardi, Premier Menachem Begin told a meeting of the Likud Executive, thus agreeing with the views of Finance Minister Simcha Ehrlich, Housing Minister Gideon Patt and Moshe Nissim, all members of the Liberal Party wing of Likud.

Begin's announcement earlier this week, however, disappointed many members of the Liberal Party who had hoped that Dr. Elimelech Rimalt, a Liberal Party leader, would be the Likud candidate for the Presidency. Fear was expressed that if no appropriate candidate is found in the Sephardi community it would become too late to ask Rimalt to present his candidacy. The Presidency was promised to the Liberals after a Herut Knesseter, Yitzhak Shamir, became Knesset chairman. The term of President Ephraim Katzir expires in May. The President of Israel is elected by the Knesset by secret ballot.

TEL AVIV (JTA)—The government is taking measures to compensate farmers and Bedouin tribesmen in the Negev for losses suffered in the worst drought to hit that region in seven years. About 400,000 dunams of wheat was declared a total loss due to lack of rain and some 120,000 dunams of crops planted by Bedouins were also ruined.

## CARTER HOPES HIS MEETINGS WITH BEGIN WILL HELP RESOLVE MIDEAST CONFLICT

By Joseph Polakoff

WASHINGTON, March 2 (JTA)--President Carter said today that he hoped his meetings with Israeli Premier Menachem Begin here March 14-15 will lead to "some agreement" between Israel and Egypt, Jordan and "the Palestinian Arabs that live on the West Bank" that will be a prelude to "ultimate resolution" of the Middle East conflict.

Carter spoke in response to a question during a nationally televised news conference at the National Press Club. He was asked what he hoped to accomplish in his third meeting with Begin in 10 months. In his reply, the President appeared to warn the Begin government not to "abandon" United Nations Security Council Resolution 242 which the U.S. considers applicable to the West Bank as well as to Sinai and the Golan Heights.

"Abandonment of 242 would put us back many months or years," Carter said. He also expressed hope that Begin and President Anwar Sadat of Egypt will resume their personal negotiations with the U.S. as "intermediary."

Carter noted that he communicated with Begin "frequently by letter, diplomatic messages and occasionally by phone." He also observed that Israeli Defense Minister Ezer Weizman will be in Washington next week "to consult with me" and other U.S. officials.

### Looking For Some Common Ground

The President said, "We are looking for some common ground" on which "Egypt, Jordan, Israel and the residents of the West Bank can agree." He noted that Gaza "had an affiliation" with Egypt and the West Bank with Jordan and both are occupied by Israel.

"We ought to search out at the top level of government, some resolution of the differences of specifics relating to Sinai and also a statement of principles related to the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip," Carter said, "hoping at that time that Egypt and Jordan and the Palestinian Arabs that live on the West Bank will be satisfied to conclude, perhaps, some agreement and proceed with further negotiations later, leading to ultimate resolution of the issue based on UN 242."

The President said that "one of the crucial elements of any progress in the Middle East is cleaving to the commitment that UN Resolution 242 is a basis to continue negotiations and resolution" of the problem. "Abandonment of 242 would put us back many months or years. So this is what I hope to accomplish with the Prime Minister--to frankly discuss with him my previous agreement and discussions with President Sadat to encourage direct negotiations to be resumed and to reach common ground based on advice given me" by Secretary of State Cyrus Vance and the special U.S. emissary in the Middle East, Assistant Secretary of State Alfred L. Atherton.

Carter added: "I believe personal discussion will be good. I would much prefer personal discussion to be carried out between President Sadat and Prime Minister Begin. But in the absence of that possibility at this moment, we hope to restore it and act as intermediary."

## VANCE AGREES TO SHORT DELAY ON FINAL U.S. DECISION TO SELL PLANES TO MIDEAST

WASHINGTON, March 2 (JTA)--Secretary of State Cyrus Vance agreed today to a consensus among a majority of the Senate Foreign Relations

Committee that the Carter Administration delay for a short time a final decision on its controversial sale of combat aircraft to Israel, Egypt and Saudi Arabia. The Senators suggested a delay in the formal presentation of the \$4.8 billion package to Congress at least until after President Carter's meetings with Israeli Premier Menachem Begin here March 14-15.

Appearing before the committee which is conducting hearings on the U.S. foreign aid program for fiscal 1979, Vance was told by its chairman, Sen. John Sparkman (D-Ala.), that he "would very much hope that Congress would not be rushed into judgement" on the package proposals in view of the numerous pressures upon it such as the Panama Canal treaties ratification.

Sparkman suggested that the Administration should not expect the Senate to jump to conclusions and reminded Vance that in view of Begin's visit shortly, much could happen in the next few weeks that may alter the Middle East picture.

Vance noted, in reply to the Senators, that the Administration has already given Congress ample notice of the package. He said the Administration feels it is "important to go forward promptly" with the sales. He warned that Egypt and Saudi Arabia could acquire their needs from other suppliers if "Israel is much better off if the Arabs buy from us."

## HELICOPTERS TO ARABS FROM BRITAIN

LONDON, March 2 (JTA)--Two British companies have concluded a deal to supply helicopters to the Cairo-based Arab military industries organization. They are Westland Aircraft Company, which manufactures the Lynx helicopter, and Rolls Royce, which supplies the engines.

It is reported that a token number of helicopters will be supplied directly to Egypt. But it is also planned to establish an assembly plant at Helwan in Egypt, which could bring the total number of helicopters supplied to 200, worth an eventual 400 million Pounds Sterling.

The Arab military industries organization is financed by Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Egypt. It was established in the wake of the 1973 Yom Kippur War with the aim of making the Arab states less dependent on outside suppliers for arms and spare parts. Under an earlier 40 million Pounds Sterling deal, involving the British Aerospace Corporation, another Egyptian assembly line is producing swingfire anti-tank missiles.

The Arab military industries organization also plans to establish assembly lines in countries other than Egypt. At a meeting in Abu Dhabi last week, the military industries organization decided to set up a company for production of military electronic equipment in Saudi Arabia in cooperation with American concerns.

According to this week's "Arabia and the Gulf," the new Saudi venture reflects disapproval of the organization's Egyptian orientation on the part of the Arab oil states. The prestigious magazine adds that the military organization still faces substantial difficulties and that despite a paper capitalization of \$1.04 billion, it is under-financed. (By Maurice Samuelson.)

PARIS (JTA)--The builder of the French Mirage, the Dassault Company, denied Thursday American reports that Egypt has bought 46 Mirage F-1s in recent weeks.

**ZIONIST CONGRESS CALL TO JEWISH WORLD**

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, March 2 (JTA)—The 29th World Zionist Congress, at its closing session yesterday, called on the Jewish world to intensify Jewish and particularly Hebrew education and on the Jews of Israel "to strengthen and maintain the Zionist vision." The call added: "Israel is the heart of the nation and its lifeblood is aliya."

Following are excerpts from the resolution adopted: "The 29th Zionist Congress, meeting in Jerusalem, reaffirms the identification of the Jewish people with Zionism, both in thought and deed, on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the Zionist movement and the 30th anniversary of the State of Israel.

"We recall the words of our founder, Dr. Theodor Herzl at the first Zionist Congress in 1897: 'Zionism is a moral, lawful, humanitarian movement, directed towards the long yearned-for goal of our people,' and we reject the willful distortion of our goals spread by enemies of the movement and of the Jewish people.

"In pursuing its objectives, Zionism has striven to create a new set of circumstances, which would revolutionize the condition of the Jewish people by establishing a sovereign Jewish State and a spiritual and cultural center in the land of Israel. At the same time we are building a society from which other people and nations derive inspiration from its embodiment of Jewish ideals of justice and morality.

**Changed Course Of Jewish History**

"In the space of 80 years, Zionism has succeeded in changing the course of Jewish history. Its crowning achievement has been the foundation of the State of Israel, in which Jews once again are masters of their own destiny and act in the interest of Jews throughout the world whenever and wherever the need arises....

"The Zionist solution is predicated upon the unity of the Jewish people. Israel is the heart of the nation and its lifeblood is aliya. Aliya is the basic act of faith of the Zionist. At this time, we reach out to our brethren in the Soviet Union and Syria, rejoice in the homecoming of their vanguard and work for the full restoration of their right to be reunited with us.

"Zionism calls on all Jews to engage in an all-out effort of expanding Jewish, Hebrew and Zionist education among adults and children alike. In particular, this means the study of Hebrew. Recognizing the centrality of Israel, we call upon the Jews of the diaspora to visit Israel as often as possible and to support it through the dissemination of information, enlighten the public regarding Israel's achievements and problems and render financial assistance through investments and contributions.

"The Zionist Congress calls on Jews in Israel, who have a unique responsibility to strengthen and maintain the Zionist vision and to work for the establishment of a just and creative society, motivated by the highest ideals of the Jewish people. The Congress calls on the Jewish people in Israel and the diaspora to fully identify themselves with the Zionist movement and to work for the attainment of its noble objectives."

**CONGRESS RESOLUTION ON SETTLEMENTS**

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, March 2 (JTA)—The settlement resolution passed by the 29th World Zionist Con-

gress yesterday reflected a certain moderation relative to some of the headline speeches voiced by rightist delegates. An even more moderate version of the key resolution, proposed by the Labor Zionist Movement and the World Confederation of United Zionists, failed on a hand count by a narrow majority.

The key resolution as passed by the Congress reads (in translation): "The settlement policy of the Zionist movement should be based in the near future on the strengthening of existing settlements in Eretz-Israel, giving priority to thinly populated areas and areas vital to Israel's security, and with a view to increasing the Jewish element in the population of the area."

The Labor-Confederation amendment stressed more explicitly the need to keep to unpopulated areas and to preserve the "Jewish and democratic character of the State of Israel." It also called for "the settlement effort to be carried out taking into consideration the progress and timing of the peacemaking process." It was rejected by a vote of 233-226.

Other resolutions insisted that settlements be undertaken solely with government approval, and called on Jewish youth the world over to see in new settlements a "central challenge." The Jewish National Fund was praised for its settlement ground clearing and infrastructure work and for its efforts "to improve the quality of life in Israel" by its parks and outdoor recreational facilities.

**ELDERLY COUPLE KILLED BY EXPLOSION**

TEL AVIV, March 2 (JTA)—A man and woman in their 80s were killed yesterday when an explosion wrecked their house in the Hadar-Yossef section of Tel Aviv. Two other elderly couples in adjoining houses were injured by splinters of glass when their homes were damaged.

The dead were identified as Shmuel and Tova Alfi. One of the injured couples were identified as Alex and Ilana Lefkowitz. The third couple was only slightly injured. Police said the explosion appeared to be due to a faulty butane gas cylinder or one that was deliberately exploded. They are inclined to rule out the incident as a terrorist act and believe it was the result of an individual act of revenge. Nevertheless, several Arabs who work in the area were detained for questioning.

**MORE AMERICANS VISITING ISRAEL**

NEW YORK, March 2 (JTA)—The flow of American visitors to Israel increased by 47 percent last month, the biggest January traffic increase in the history of American tourism to Israel. Over 14,000 Americans came to Israel in January (usually a low traffic month), which followed the record million visitors from around the world who vacationed in Israel in 1977.

Commenting on the figures, Israel Zuriel, Israel's commissioner for tourism in North America, pointed out that January was the first month of the year during which the State of Israel would be celebrating its 30th anniversary, and that he was confident that the celebrations taking place in the country during the year would do much to continue to encourage more Americans to visit Israel in 1978.

NEW YORK (JTA)—The 1978 International Israel Bond Inaugural Dinner will be held in honor of Israeli Defense Minister Ezer Weizman, at the Waldorf-Astoria on Sunday, March 12, it was announced by Sam Rothberg, general chairman of the Israel Bond Organization.