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BEGIN RESPONDS TO SADAT'S LETTER; SAYS SPIRIT OF THE LETTERS SHOWS BOTH SIDES WANT TO RESUME NEGOTIATIONS

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, March 5 (JTA)--Premier Menachem Begin has written a personal letter to President Anwar Sadat of Egypt in reply to the letter he received from Sadat last Thursday. It was delivered to a U.S. Embassy official this evening, presumably to be telexed to Assistant Secretary of State Alfred L. Atherton who flew from Amman, Jordan, to Cairo tonight and is due to meet with Sadat tomorrow.

The content of the Begin-Sadat exchange has been kept secret. Begin told newsmen, however, that the "spirit" of the letters shows that both sides want to renew direct contacts "within the framework of the political and military committees." Begin reportedly drafted his letter after consultations with several senior Cabinet ministers. It was discussed at today's Cabinet meeting where the ministers reportedly reached certain "conclusions" after a political discussion that lasted over two hours. The "conclusions" were not disclosed.

Begin told reporters afterwards that he wanted President Carter, with whom he meets in Washington next week, to be the first to hear of these "conclusions." He said, however, that they did not mean Israel was changing the terms of its original peace proposals for Sinai and the West Bank "for the present." Cabinet Secretary Arye Naor said no votes were taken at today's session, indicating that no controversial issues were brought up.

Atherton is expected back in Israel on Tuesday. It is expected to be his last visit in the current round of shuttle diplomacy before he returns to Washington for the Carter-Begin meetings.

DAYAN PROPOSES ABOLISHING WEST BANK, GAZA MILITARY GOVERNMENTS AND IM- PLEMENTING BEGIN'S SELF-RULE PLAN

By Yitzhak Shargil

TEL AVIV, March 5 (JTA)--Surprisingly little attention was given here over the week-end to Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan's proposal that Israel abolish the military government on the West Bank and Gaza Strip and unilaterally implement Premier Menachem Begin's peace plan offering "self-rule" to the Arab inhabitants of those territories.

Dayan made the suggestion at a political forum, known as "Bama," which met here Friday. He insisted he was not announcing a new government plan but was merely offering food for thought. Dayan will accompany Begin to Washington next week for meetings with President Carter.

The Foreign Minister said that his proposal was intended to give the Arabs freedom to administer their own affairs as long as it did not threaten Israel's security. He said it stemmed from the basic conception that Israel does not want to rule 500,000-600,000 Arabs on the West Bank and 400,000 in the Gaza Strip indefinitely as an occupying power. "We want to abolish the mil-

itary government and find some kind of framework which will meet our basic security and ideological needs," he said.

According to Dayan, Israel's security demands the continued existence of military bases in both territories and measures against terrorist activities. However, he said, the Arabs should be allowed to administer their own health, education, agriculture and other systems. Israel should offer them assistance, he said, adding: "We should tell them, if you want the Agriculture Ministry's aid we'll gladly help you. If they say no, let them grow their own sesame seed and that's that. The same attitude should be applied to health services and others."

Dayan said the plan should be implemented in accordance with the clause in Israel's peace plan that concerns self-rule: "But, since we cannot force election of an administrative body by the Arabs, we can alter basically, if not abolish, the military government's rule. The Arabs would then have more freedom than they had under the Ottoman rule, the British rule, the Jordanian regime or the Israeli military government," Dayan said.

WEIZMAN TO MEET WITH CARTER, TOP ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS THIS WEEK

By Yitzhak Shargil

TEL AVIV, March 5 (JTA)--Defense Minister Ezer Weizman left for the United States today for meetings with Administration officials relative to Israel's weapons needs and, it now appears likely, with President Carter himself. Weizman's trip comes at a time of increasing strain between Israel and the U.S. over Premier Menachem Begin's settlement policies and the U.S. proposal to sell military aircraft in a single package to Israel, Egypt and Saudi Arabia. (See related story from Washington, p.3)

Against that background, concern was expressed in circles here that the Carter Administration may be trying to create a split in the Israeli government leadership on the basis of Weizman's moderation in contrast to Begin's unbending position on the settlements issue.

That view was given some credence by President Carter's unexpected announcement during his nationally televised news conference last Thursday that Weizman would be meeting with him. The Israeli defense chief said he was unaware that such a meeting was scheduled and no official invitation had been received from the White House by the time of his departure this morning.

But circles here noted Carter spoke of meeting with Weizman only a week before Begin and Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan are due in Washington for meetings with the President in which Weizman is to participate. They noted that it is not customary in the diplomatic world to so honor a Defense Minister and even more unusual as the Carter-Weizman meeting will precede the President's meeting with the Premier.

See Move Toward Cleavage

Circles are wondering whether the Carter Administration is attempting to explore the possibility of introducing an element of cleavage at the top level of Israel's government through Weizman's more moderate stand. They noted that President Anwar Sadat

of Egypt has lavished praise on the Israeli Defense Minister who was, until the peace talks broke down, the most popular Israeli personality in Egypt.

The test, some say, will be Weizman's attitude toward the aircraft package deal. The Administration is expected to try to gain his approval. But Weizman told reporters at Ben Gurion Airport today that one of his main tasks in Washington would be to fight the package. In fact, he said he regarded the proposed sale of advanced F-15 fighter planes to Saudi Arabia to be a serious threat to Israel. "As long as there is no peace agreement we have to regard Saudi Arabia as one of the confrontation states," he said.

Weizman left with his wife, Uma. He was accompanied by Prof. Pinhas Sussman, Director General of the Defense Ministry and his military secretary, Col. Ilan Tehila. The Defense Minister will spend two days in New York and go to Washington Tuesday. He is due to meet with U.S. Defense Secretary Harold Brown and is expected to ask the U.S. to increase its military assistance to Israel from \$1 billion to \$1.5 billion for fiscal 1979.

Settlement Activity Halted

Meanwhile, as Weizman was en route to the U.S., the Defense Ministry ordered a halt to settlement activity at Nebi Sallah, one of the military encampments in Samaria on the West Bank where a group of Gush Emunim settlers have located themselves. The settlers said the ministry has forbidden them to develop adjacent lands for agriculture. Gush spokesman Zvi Slonim promised an "all-out" campaign against the government's settlement policy.

Observers here believe this latest incident will further enhance Weizman's image as the toughest minded "dove" in the Begin Cabinet when he meets with U.S. officials in Washington.

LABOR PARTY LEADERS WARN BEGIN ON HIS INTERPRETATION OF RESOLUTION 242 By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, March 5 (JTA)--Legders of the opposition Labor Party warned Premier Menachem Begin's government last night that its interpretation of Security Council Resolution 242 to exclude the West Bank and Gaza Strip as areas for territorial compromises, ran counter to the interpretation by all previous Israeli governments. That view was emphasized by two former Premiers, Golda Meir and Yitzhak Rabin, and former Justice Minister Haim Zadok, at a Labor Party political forum.

Resolution 242, adopted by the Security Council on Nov. 22, 1967 as the basis for an eventual peace settlement, calls for "withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories of recent conflict." Begin indicated recently that he does not consider it applicable to the West Bank because, except for Britain and Pakistan, no country ever recognized Jordan's sovereignty over the area from 1948-67.

But the Labor Party leaders maintained that every Israeli government since 1967 has acknowledged that the resolution requires withdrawals from the West Bank although Israel rejects the Arab interpretation that 242 demands total withdrawal from all occupied territories.

Mrs. Meir warned that any shift from the accepted interpretation could doom current Mid-

east political negotiations. She recalled that when she was in office she made no secret of Israel's interpretation "and nobody thought otherwise." Zadok noted that Begin himself, then in the opposition, agreed that 242 called for withdrawals on all fronts. Rabin said Israel's interpretation remained unaltered until now.

The subject, which has created a new source of friction between the Begin government and the United States, was reportedly discussed at today's Cabinet meeting which was officially described as a political debate. The Cabinet also discussed the deadlock in U.S. efforts to persuade Jordan to join the Israeli-Egyptian peace process, the debate over the Carter Administration's proposal to sell combat aircraft to Israel, Egypt and Saudi Arabia in a single package and President Anwar Sadat's personal letter to Begin, which was delivered to Begin last Thursday by U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Alfred L. Atherton.

CAPTURE OF VILLAGE IN SOUTH LEBANON SEEN AS SYRIAN-BACKED OPERATION By Yitzhak Shargil

TEL AVIV, March 5 (JTA)--The capture of the predominantly Moslem village of Maroun A-Rass in south Lebanon by a unit of the Al Saiqa terrorists late last week is viewed in Israel as basically a Syrian-backed operation. Sources here noted that since Israel has warned against any move by the Syrian army south of the Litani River the Syrians used the Damascus-backed terrorist organization to do the job.

Authoritative sources in Israel pointed out that Syria wanted the village because of its strategic importance. It is located on the highest hill near the Israeli border with an excellent view of such Israeli settlements as Avivim, Baram and Ir On.

The Christian soldiers who guarded the village were outnumbered by the Al Saiqa terrorists, according to residents who fled to the Israeli border last Thursday night. The terrorists also captured an Israeli tank and troop carrier given to the Christian soldiers by the Israelis.

The villagers, who were provided with food and shelter near the Israeli border Friday and yesterday, said the terrorists were neither Palestinians nor Lebanese but appeared to be Syrians. The refugees said the terrorists massacred all the Christian soldiers and raped women in the village.

The capture of the village has demoralized Christians in south Lebanon. Many question why Israel did not do anything to prevent the village from falling into the hands of the terrorists. An Israeli military spokesman, meanwhile, last night denied a news agency report in which the terrorists charged that Israeli gunboats shelled two villages along the south Lebanon coast.

STATE DEPARTMENT LOGIC By Joseph Polakoff

WASHINGTON, March 5 (JTA)--The State Department insisted Friday that the U.S. commitment to supply Israel with advanced military equipment under the second Sinai accord does not obligate Israel to approve U.S. sales of weapons to other countries.

Asked then why the Carter Administration is demanding that Congress accept the entire package of aircraft to Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Israel, or the proposals will be withdrawn in their entirety if Saudi Arabia is left out, the Department said, "circumstances change, the commitment to Israel

remains." Département spokesman Hodding Carter said he did not know of "any quid pro quo" in the U.S. commitment to Israel in 1975. The U.S., he said, stands by the commitment but it has "no itemization, no numbers," and, he added, since 1948 "seven billion dollars worth of commitment has been maintained."

In a jibe at Israel's concern over Saudi Arabia's construction of an air base at Tabuk, near the Red Sea, from which F-15s could fly over Israel's port of Eilat within 10 minutes, Carter said: "In that part of the world, there are lots of places in ten minutes of each other and that goes in all directions."

Carter acknowledged concern among Senators over the proposal to package the sale to Israel, Saudi Arabia and Egypt but he said the Administration "put them together because all three should go forward together."

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

IMPLICATIONS OF WEIZMAN'S VISIT

By Joseph Polakoff

WASHINGTON, March 5 (JTA)—Israeli Defense Minister Ezer Weizman's arrival here Tuesday has suggested speculations that it will mark a climax in the present impasse over the Carter Administration's aircraft package for Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Israel, but international observers here see deeper purposes and implications in the visit.

The importance of Weizman's visit to the Administration is underlined by President Carter's surprise announcement that he himself would meet with Weizman, a fact the Israeli Embassy first learned by watching the President's televised news conference last Thursday. It is unusual for the President to see a Defense Minister, let alone announce it publicly to the world.

While Weizman has often visited Washington, this is his first visit as Defense Minister since Premier Menachem Begin was elected 10 months ago. Weizman's schedule here is not yet completed, but it includes several talks with Defense Secretary Harold Brown and other Pentagon administrators, Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, and, on Thursday, separate sessions with the House and Senate armed services committees.

Will Review Security Needs

The Israeli Embassy has indicated that Weizman's major purpose is not to discuss the aircraft package sale but to review with the Carter Administration Israel's general security needs over the next 10 years. While the package deal holds an important place in the conversations, the principal discussion, it is said, will center on how the U.S. sees the military outlook over the next years. How Washington reacts to Israel's views also will go far to an understanding on both sides as to the talks that will come next week when Begin and Carter meet for talks at the White House March 14 and 15.

International observers believe Weizman will be tempted to agree to the aircraft package proposal by an Administration offer of providing Israel 50 additional F-16 planes or perhaps 10 more F-15s—bringing the commitment to 125 of the F-16s and 25 F-15s. Israel had asked for 150 F-16s and 25 F-15s, but the Administration basically cut Israel's request by almost 50 percent.

There is speculation here, however, that this would be insufficient to move Israel into accepting the aircraft package proposal but it was held

possible that Israel might agree if, in addition, the U.S. finally agreed to Israeli-American co-production of the F-16 with Israel having rights to sell the aircraft on the international market. The U.S. blocked the Israeli contract with Ecuador on the Kfir plane Israel manufactures, because, it said, Latin American countries should not have such sophisticated aircraft.

Continued Opposition Seen

However, it was said here in highly informed circles, that whether the Israeli government is coaxed into dropping its opposition to the aircraft package, the American Jewish community's leadership will continue to oppose it. One source said: "The community's leadership has no uncertainties about this package. It will continue to protest, particularly the sale of the F-15s to Saudi Arabia at this time because it regards such sales as profoundly against U.S. national interests. Delivery of these aircraft to the Saudis undermines the Middle East balance with countries other than Israel and this could lead easily to the outbreak of war."

To undercut the American Jewish community's leadership, it is also said, Administration officials are attempting to court American Jews to assume alternative leadership which would not strongly oppose the package deal and become "a rubber stamp" to approve U.S. Middle East policies.

"Some in the Administration," a well placed source said, "are building up a strong arm against Israel and seek a double division—split the Jewish community and split the community from full support of Israel."

LABOR SUSPENDS ANTI-GOVERNMENT CAMPAIGN TILL BEGIN RETURNS FROM U.S.

TEL AVIV, March 5 (JTA)—The Labor Party has decided to suspend its political campaign against the Likud-led government of Premier Menachem Begin until after Begin returns from his visit to the U.S. for meetings with President Carter next week. However, Labor Alignment chairman Shimon Peres, told a party meeting at Eilat today that Labor must strengthen its ranks because Likud is repeating the mistakes of the past Labor regime and is making new mistakes of its own.

Former Premier Golda Meir also stressed the need for Labor to strengthen its ranks in face of the adverse political and economic situation created by the Likud government. She and Peres flatly rejected a demand by Labor's moshavim group to break the alignment with Mapam. The moshavim group contends that the partnership with Mapam prevents the Labor Party from making its own decisions.

CORRECTION

An article in the March 3 News Bulletin (P.3) on Secretary of State Cyrus Vance incorrectly attributed remarks to Sen. John Sparkman (D. Ala.), chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. The remarks were made by Sen. Frank Church (D. Id.) who will become chairman of the committee upon Sparkman's retirement next year.

GENEVA (JTA)—Mowaffak Allaf, Syria's Ambassador to the United Nations in New York and Ambassador to the UN in Geneva from 1968-1974, has been appointed deputy director general of the UN office here.

ABRAMOVITCH CHARGED WITH-PARASITISM

TORONTO, March 5 (JTA)--Pavel Abramovitch, a Moscow Jew who has been seeking to emigrate to Israel since 1971, was charged with parasitism last Thursday, the Canadian Committee for Soviet Jewry said it learned yesterday. The Committee said that Abramovitch has a job but has refused to answer questions about his work. He also teaches Hebrew part-time.

The Canadian-Committee has also learned that 12 Jewish women seeking emigration visas, who were called in to meet with the head of the Ovir last week, were all refused permission to leave the USSR. Two of the women, Dina Beilin and Natasha Rosenshtein, were told to bring additional information at a later date. One woman, Clarissa Vilenskaya, was denied permission because her parents objected on moral grounds. Yelena Dubinskaya was told she was rejected because one of her relatives works at a job in which he knows military secrets. She was not told who the relative is, according to the Committee.

Meanwhile, the House of Commons decided Thursday to ask the Soviet Union to permit a Canadian observer to attend the upcoming trial of Anatoly Shcharansky, the Soviet Jewish dissident. The House also unanimously endorsed a request by a Conservative MP, Douglas Roche, from Edmonton, that the Canadian government renew its offer to grant Shcharansky immigration status.

AAJE TO STUDY WHY FEW JEWISH WOMEN HAVE TOP POSITIONS IN JEWISH SCHOOLS

NEW YORK, March 5 (JTA)--The American Association for Jewish Education (AAJE) has undertaken a nationwide study to determine why so few women teachers in Jewish schools advance to administrative and executive positions.

"The study was initiated in light of the fact that while women comprise the vast majority of teachers in Jewish schools, less than 10 percent of them are engaged as principals, supervisors and education directors," said Arthur Brody, president of the AAJE. "We want to attract more women into leadership positions in Jewish education. To aid our efforts, it is important to know whether the paucity of women in such jobs is attributable to career limitations they place upon themselves, or if de facto discrimination exists in the Jewish educational hierarchy."

Will Survey Some 1000 Women

The study will survey a representative group of some 1000 women teachers in congregational and day schools of all denominations throughout the country.

It will inquire if they have ever considered, applied for or occupied administrative positions and whether they have been discouraged from entering these areas. In addition, it will seek to ascertain if applicants who were rejected for such jobs believe discrimination was the major reason, and whether those who held and then left supervisory posts were accepted by their male colleagues.

At the same time, the AAJE will probe other possible reasons for the disproportionate representation of women in teaching as against administration, such as insufficient training and experience, conflicts with family life and obligations or their own personal preference to remain in the classroom.

The study is being conducted by the AAJE's Department of Statistical Research and Information under the supervision of Dr. Murray Rockowitz and Dr. Gerhard Lang, director and consultant, respectively, of the department. They will analyze data with respect to such variables as Jewish and general education, teaching experience, age, marital status, husband's employment and ideological identification. Findings of the study are expected to be released this spring.

BLUM NAMED NEW ISRAELI UN ENVOY

JERUSALEM, March 5 (JTA)--Prof. Yehuda Blum, of the Hebrew University Law Faculty and an expert on international law, was named by the Cabinet today as Israel's new Ambassador to the United Nations. He will take over from Chaim Herzog next summer. Blum, 46, was born in Czechoslovakia. He has written many articles and papers on Israel's position in international law.

The Cabinet also approved the appointment of Yosef Kedar, a career military officer, as Consul General in New York. Kedar, 53, was a military aide to Premier Golda Meir in 1969-70 and served as a military attache in several capitals abroad. His most recent assignment was as head of the Israeli military mission in Paris from 1970-73, after which he left the government.

Also named by the Cabinet today was Benjamin Navon, information counselor at the Israeli Embassy in Washington, as Counsel General in Los Angeles. Navon, a career diplomat, was formerly a Foreign Ministry spokesman in Jerusalem.

ABRAHAM ADOLF BERMAN DEAD AT 72

TEL AVIV, March 5 (JTA)--Funeral services were held here today for Dr. Abraham Adolf Berman, a leader of Polish Jewry and one of the organizers of the Warsaw Ghetto, who died last night at the age of 72. Born in Warsaw, he was the head of the Psychological Institute there. During the Nazi regime he took care of homeless Jewish children. After the war, Berman was a member of the Polish Parliament and headed the Jewish Central Committee. Arriving in Israel in 1950 he became a Knesset member on the Mapam ticket but was ousted from the party when he and the late Dr. Moshe Sneh founded Maki, a split off from the pro-Moscow Rakah Communist Party.

OPPOSES AIRCRAFT TO EGYPT

STATEN ISLAND, N.Y., March 5 (JTA)--U.S. Rep. John M. Murphy (D.N.Y.) charged tonight that the prospective sale of U.S. F-5E fighter bombers to Egypt "would constitute a serious disruption to the delicate balance-of-arms situation between Israel and the Arab nations." He told a State of Israel Bond dinner in his honor here that it is "totally inconsistent to escalate our arms movements while at the same time discussing peace through de-escalation." The eight-term Congressman was presented with Israel Bonds' Menorah Award for his "long-standing endeavors in behalf of Israel's economic security and peace-seeking efforts in the Middle East." More than 400 religious, business and Jewish communal leaders attended the dinner, which was sponsored by the Council of Jewish Organizations of Staten Island. Rep. Jim Wright (D.Texas), House Majority Leader, praised Israel for proving that democracy still works.