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CABINET UNANIMOUSLY APPROVES

BEGIN'S MEETING WITH CARTER

By Barbie Zelizer

JERUSALEM, Feb. 28 (JTA) -- The Cabinet today unanimously approved Premier Menachem Begin's forthcoming trip to the U.S. at a special session convened following President Carter's personal invitation yesterday to the Israeli Premier. The government, however, ruled out any discussions between Begin and the Egyptian Prime Minister Mustapha Khalil.

"I will leave tomorrow for the U.S.," Begin said, "in order to better clarify Israel's stand to President Carter and his staff. I have no intention of meeting with Premier Khalil, in the event that he is also in Washington. At this point, such a meeting would be detrimental to the negotiating process." He added that Israel would reject any American attempt to pressure it into changing its stand.

Begin said that the Egyptian stand as presented at Camp David ministerial-level meetings last week constituted "a serious radicalization of posture," which contradicted both the Camp David agreements and the significance of a peace treaty. The latter, the Premier noted, could easily become a "war treaty and in war, one does not need treaties, only cannons."

Three issues apparently form the basis of Egypt's hardened stand. They include: the idea of linkage -- Cairo is apparently now demanding that autonomy on the West Bank become an integral part of the peace agreement with Egypt; exchange of ambassadors -- Cairo is again unwilling to commit itself in writing to the exchange of ambassadors with Israel; status of the treaty -- Cairo is not willing to grant the treaty preference over those previously signed between Egypt and other Arab countries.

Says Peace Is More Important Than Prestige

Not all Cabinet members, however, were in agreement over the hardening of the Egyptian stand: Defense Minister Ezer Weizman, who, along with Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan, voted against the majority yesterday, said today that the differences of opinion between Israel and Egypt were not great and that no hardening had taken place. Weizman cautioned that time was working against Israel, and that "we must struggle over peace, not over prestige."

Dayan, for his part, expressed satisfaction that Begin was going to the U.S. "I am happy that the Premier is going to the U.S., and hope that this will bring forth a continuation of the negotiating process, not only with Carter but with Sadat as well," he said. The Foreign Minister added that he did not see any implications as to the future of his role in the government due to yesterday's Cabinet decision. He also noted that he would not be accompanying the Prime Minister to Washington.

Speaking for the opposition, Labor Party Secretary Haim Barlev criticized yesterday's decision by the Cabinet. He contended that as long as Khalil was authorized by the government of Egypt, Israel should take up the challenge to meet with him. "It is not a hardening of the Egyptian stand which prompted the Israeli

refusal," he said today on Israel Radio. "Rather, it was considerations of prestige. We're forgetting that diplomacy should not be conducted as if it were within the framework of interpersonal relationships."

Begin plans to spend time in New York conferring with American Jewish leaders there and to attempt to clarify the Israeli stand to the American public through the mass media.

CARTER'S INVITATION TO BEGIN SEEN AS VINDICATING CABINET'S DECISION

By Yitzhak Shargik

TEL AVIV, Feb. 28 (JTA) -- President Carter's invitation to Premier Menachem Begin to come to Washington for bilateral discussions of the issues blocking a peace treaty with Egypt was widely viewed today as a vindication of yesterday's Cabinet majority decision that Begin could not accept Carter's earlier invitation to a summit conference without the participation of President Anwar Sadat.

Deputy Premier Yigael Yadin said the Cabinet's 14-2 vote was justified by what developed later. He maintained that if the Cabinet had not vetoed Begin's participation in an incomplete summit gathering, Carter's telephone call from Washington inviting him for private talks would not have materialized.

The Cabinet's resolution left the door open by authorizing Begin to go to Washington to meet with Carter. The President's invitation came just hours after Begin's detailed letter explaining his government's position was delivered to the State Department by Israeli Ambassador Ephraim Evron.

A Most Difficult Decision

Begin was reported to have told aides yesterday that rejection of Carter's first invitation was one of the most difficult decisions of his career. The prevailing mood in Israel is that it was necessary if a "real peace" is to be achieved.

The tendency is to blame the American attitude for Egypt's refusal to compromise with Israel on outstanding treaty issues and, in fact, to submit even tougher demands during last week's ministerial-level talks at Camp David between Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan, Egyptian Prime Minister Mustapha Khalil and Secretary of State Cyrus Vance. It was learned that one of Egypt's new demands was for the immediate establishment of self-government in the Gaza Strip.

Only two Cabinet members voted against the majority decision, Dayan and Defense Minister Ezer Weizman. Both have been more closely involved in the negotiations with Egypt and the U.S. than any other member of the government except Begin. Both felt that Begin should have accepted Carter's first invitation to meet with him and Khalil at Camp David but for different reasons.

Differences In The Cabinet

Weizman dismissed the view that such a meeting without the participation of Sadat would be demeaning for Israel because Khalil is not Egypt's top political authority. Weizman noted that Begin had many meetings with Carter's special Ambassador to the Middle East, Alfred Atherton, and no one considered it an insult.

He recalled that for more than 30 years Israel has sought to sit down at the negotiating table with the Egyptians. "Isn't Mustapha Khalil

an Egyptian delegate?" Weizman asked. But the Defense Minister stressed the practical need to revive the stalled peace talks. He expressed the belief that the more extreme positions presented by the Egyptians were not serious enough to undermine the prospects of reaching an agreement.

Dayan for his part, agreed with the Cabinet majority that Egypt's attempt to link autonomy on the West Bank and Gaza directly to a peace treaty contradicted the agreements reached at Camp David last September. But he thought that from a tactical point of view, Begin should have accepted Carter's original invitation in order to remove the impression that Israel was blocking the peace process.

Some circles in Jerusalem hinted that Dayan should resign. They said that if a minister finds himself at odds with the Cabinet over issues that fall directly within his jurisdiction, he should "draw the necessary conclusions." But in an interview published today in Davar, Dayan declared: "I shall not resign. There was no question of principle over which I should resign. The government simply did not accept my opinion. The time will come when I am proven to have been on the right side."

Although Carter said yesterday that he might invite Khalil or Sadat to join himself and Begin if the situation warranted, Begin's aides stressed that the President had mentioned no such possibility in his telephone conversation with Begin. "Carter spoke only about private talks with him," Begin's personal aide, Yehiel Kadishai, said today.

PREPARING FOR THE CARTER-BEGIN SUMMIT

By Joseph Polakoff

WASHINGTON, Feb. 28 (JTA) -- The United States and Israeli governments were clearing the way today for the momentous meeting Thursday night at the White House between President Carter and Premier Menachem Begin that may seal the fate of the Camp David frameworks which are now in deepest trouble.

White House and State Department sources, following Carter's news conference announcement yesterday that Begin would be meeting with him, informed selected reporters that the two-man summit was the President's rescue effort of his diplomatic initiative in the Arab-Israeli conflict, and crucial to his foreign policy generally.

The President's personal commitment to an Egyptian-Israeli agreement was evidenced in his discussion in various ways yesterday and last night. Informed sources, both pro-Carter and anti-Carter, appeared to agree that the President would seek to induce Begin -- some call it pressure, others persuasion -- to move much closer to the views of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and preserve the Camp David frameworks and Sadat's power in Egypt.

The duration of the Carter-Begin summit meeting and the other participants were undetermined. Carter was scheduled to go to California this weekend but that trip has been cancelled. The President cancelled a dinner meeting in Los Angeles which was being seen as a failure anyway, from an attendance standpoint, while a rival dinner was scheduled with a paid newspaper advertisement critical of Carter's Middle East policies.

Desperate Gamble By Carter

Two sets of facts outlined sharply the differences between Carter and Begin. One deals with the Carter approaches. The President twice

this week took what are considered desperate gambles to save his extensive investment in the Mideast peace effort.

One was his announcement Sunday that he would be meeting with Begin and Egyptian Prime Minister Mustapha Khalil before even consulting Begin about it. This rankled Israelis and their friends in the United States, for it was seen as humiliating Israel in putting Sadat on a level above Begin. The second Carter gamble was inviting Begin to come to Washington to meet with him alone without apparently closing gaps in their views beforehand.

Carter spoke yesterday at least three times in defense of his view that the gaps between Egypt and Israel are minor. He told Congressional leaders, in effect, at the White House that the differences were small potatoes. Before television cameras, the President said "some progress" was made last week at Camp David at the ministerial meeting and that he did not share the view that the Egyptian demands in a treaty with Israel would make the Camp David accords "meaningless."

Last night, at a State Dinner in the White House honoring the nation's governors, the President said it is "almost disgusting" how close Israel and Egypt are to a peace treaty but how far apart they continue to be.

"If these talks (with Begin) open up opportunities for improvement, I have no doubt that Sadat will be here immediately to resume negotiations," Carter said at the dinner. He added that both Egypt and Israel "yearn so deeply for peace and we have absolutely insignificant differences that are now creating insurmountable obstacles."

Carter's Contentions Disputed

Key Senators, however, disputed Carter's contention. Some noted that the intensified pan-Arab and Islamic views now spreading throughout the Middle East could lead Egypt into rejoining the rejectionist Arab states unless sufficient progress is made by Israel on the West Bank to grant ever-increasing rights and authority to the Palestinians there. In the absence of this, they observed, Egypt's support from moderate Arab states might be disrupted and she could find herself even more isolated than now. This, in addition to other flash points in the Mideast, also led some Senators to believe that Israel is clearly reasonable in being wary about giving up its strongholds in Sinai.

"That makes minor wording differences in the treaty very major indeed," one Senator said, who asked that his name be withheld because he did not wish to publicly dispute the President. "Everybody knows off-treaty issues are bigger than the treaty issues between Israel and Egypt," another Senator said. The Middle East is more dangerous now than at the time of the Camp David meetings in September, he said, because of the Iranian situation and the clear support of the Palestine Liberation Organization by the Islamic revolutionary authorities in Iran.

Sen. Jacob K. Javits (R.N.Y.), the Senate Foreign Relations Committee ranking minority member, said that the Egyptian-Israeli situation is "very tense and ticklish." He said he was "appalled that we should be having problems with Sadat on his coming to Washington when we were so generous and strong in our support of him. I cannot understand it. The President must have both leaders here. It is in the highest interest of the United States and in their interest to get this agreement signed."

Sen. Richard Stone (D.Fla.), chairman of the Foreign Relations Middle East subcommittee,

said "although it can be said that the differences in wording that separate Egypt and Israel are relatively minor, the differences in impact are very major because of the heightened risks caused by the Iranian situation and the increased pan-Arab pressure. The underlying dangers have increased and both parties are clearly re-examining the basis of the progress so far in the light of the increased danger."

Sen. Adlai Stevenson (D-Ill.), who is considering running next year as a third-party candidate for President, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that "I have always been concerned that if Israel gave up the Sinai and the Egyptian government changed, Arab solidarity would be strengthened by oil and by events such as now have happened in Iran that would bring Egypt back into a stronger united Arab camp."

But, he added, "it would not be the end of the world. That may mean we would get back to a more hopeful process. Camp David postponed war but it also postponed peace." Stevenson explained that he never held much hope in the step-by-step approach to a Middle East peace and that "sooner or later, we would have to get back to the hard work of diplomacy."

GOREN WARNS ABOUT BECOMING TOO COMPLACENT ABOUT MIDEAST PEACE

NEW YORK, Feb. 28 (JTA) -- Israel Chief Rabbi Shlomo Goren warned Israel and its supporters in the United States not to become too complacent in the expectation of a Middle East peace agreement. "Peace has still not come to Israel," he said, "and we must prepare ourselves for any eventuality."

"Instead of just hoping for peace," Goren stated, "we have to go back to our former ways and that includes self-sacrifice in building the economy, defending the nation and preparing for an uncertain future."

The Chief Rabbi made these statements yesterday at an expanded meeting of the Greater New York Rabbinic Cabinet of State of Israel Bonds at the Fifth Avenue Synagogue, which was attended by more than 60 leaders of the Orthodox, Conservative and Reform Movements in the New York metropolitan area.

Goren said that it is important for Jews throughout the world to fight for Israel politically and financially as individuals and as part of the Jewish community. In the United States, he emphasized, Jews must demonstrate to President Carter that they support Israel and are willing to make sacrifices to defend its integrity.

Goren said that he perceived a change of attitude toward Israel in the White House in recent months. In view of this new development, he stated, "if Jews all over the world remain united, with one heart, no power on earth will be able to diminish our rights in the whole of Israel." He added, "If peace comes without giving away vital areas in Israel it will open a period in the area that I would consider the beginning of the salvation of Israel and the Jewish people. This would be considered the start of the Third Commonwealth of the Holy Land."

In response to a question dealing with the recent upheaval in Iran, Goren asserted that "the religious revival in Iran goes together with hatred of Israel and Judaism. This may grow to be a new type of anti-Judaism. The entire Jewish world should take steps to stop this anti-Jewish wave that comes from the same group of individuals that is fighting the State of Israel."

and sending their gangs to terrorize our people."

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN ISRAEL PROBED IN AN ALL-DAY SEMINAR

By Malvica Samuelson

LONDON, Feb. 28 (JTA) -- More than 100 British businessmen took part yesterday in an all-day seminar on investment opportunities in Israel amid claims that Britain is beginning to lose some of its traditional anxiety about the Arab boycott.

Top Israeli industrialists told the seminar, organized by the Anglo-Israel Chamber of Commerce, that British investors should make better use of Israel's skilled labor force, low wage levels, and access to the European and American markets.

Although no new investment is expected immediately, the organizers said that the conference itself is a sign of the changing climate about Israel investment. When the Anglo-Israel Chamber of Commerce called a similar conference a year ago, it attracted only 15 participants and was held in secret.

The keynote of the conference was the economic implications of the Israeli-Egyptian peace negotiations, should they succeed. Dr. Eliezer Sheffer, Deputy Governor of the Bank of Israel, called on the United States to pool its aid to Egypt and Israel into a joint development fund embracing both countries. Although peace would not bring immediate economic benefits, it offered prospects for such schemes as joint development of the Gulf of Eilat as an international tourist attraction, he said.

Among participants were three of Britain's four leading banks, nationalized industries and large companies like Courtaulds, the textile manufacturers, and Glaxo, the pharmaceuticals manufacturer.

A NEW ISRAEL FILM UNDER ATTACK

AMSTERDAM, Feb. 28 (JTA) -- A documentary film with a strong anti-Israel bias, due to be screened on national television March 11, has aroused angry protests from the organized Dutch Jewish community and the three congregational branches of Judaism in Holland. The 90-minute film, titled "The Place of the Stranger," was previewed for the press yesterday under the auspices of The Netherlands Ministry of Culture which had subsidized its production.

The film was made by a young Dutch Jew, Rudolph van Duijn Berg. Demands that it be banned or that the most controversial sequences be deleted were rejected by the Ministry on grounds that the protesters had not even seen the film.

But the Ashkenazic congregation in Amsterdam may seek a court order to delete a sequence that was made in its synagogue last May at services celebrating the 30th anniversary of Israel's independence and the synagogue building's 50th anniversary. The congregation says it was not aware of the anti-Israel nature of the documentary when it granted permission to film the services.

The synagogue sequence focuses on the sermon delivered by Ashkenazic Chief Rabbi Meir Jost which it interprets as fiercely nationalistic and anti-Palestinian. Earlier, a Dutch court rejected an appeal by a Jewish journalist, Hermann Bleich, to order deletion of a sequence in which he was interviewed without knowledge, he says, of the film's nature. The documentary depicts Israel as a strongly militaristic state that created the Palestinian refugee problem and has caused great suffering to Palestinians on the West Bank, Gaza and in south Lebanon.

SPECIAL INTERVIEW

KEDAR: ECSTATIC ABOUT AMERICAN JEWRY

By Yitzhak Rabi

NEW YORK, Feb. 28 (JTA) -- Yosef "Paul" Kedar, Israel's Consul General in New York for the last seven months, sounds ecstatic when asked to describe his impressions of the American Jewish community. "It has been a revelation," Kedar said in an interview with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. "The size of it, the power, the warmth, the commitment and affection to Israel on all levels. This is a very heart-warming thing to discover," Kedar said.

He also said that he found among Jews here commitment to the idea of remaining Jewish and upholding the centrality of Israel in Jewish life. "Those Jews I have met expressed their love and warmth for Israel, but at the same time they expressed concern about how to assure Jewish continuity and how to maintain Israel as the focal point of Jewish life," Kedar said.

He said that in his view there is a "complementary effect" between American Jewry and Israel. "The American Jewish community is a very generous Jewish diaspora. Its support for Israel is complementary. Israel is not just another Jewish community in distress -- Israel is a product of the whole Jewish people." At the same time, Kedar pointed out, Israel, in return helps maintain Jewish continuity. But despite the enormous support, financial and otherwise, given Israel by American Jewry, Kedar stated that "I would prefer to have the six million (American) Jews in Israel."

The Issues Of Olim And Yordim

What are the reasons that American Jews do not contribute a significant number of olim to Israel? he was asked. "The image of Israel today is such that it does not encourage aliyah," Kedar said. "In a way we have not created in Israel a society that we wanted to create. Israel faces social difficulties, economic difficulties and even difficulties in defining to itself what its ideals are. Therefore, it is difficult to project those ideals to others. Apparently we are not projecting the right image since 1967. But of course, there have been many, many achievements in Israel..."

To attract American Jews to Israel, Kedar said, "we should find our own way based on our particular genius, our resources and our possibilities." He said that Israel can offer "the realization of the Zionist dream of a just Jewish society."

Kedar, a sabra who was born in 1925 in Neveh Zedek, the first Jewish suburb of Jaffa, was asked what he thought about the estimated 200,000 Israeli yordim in North America. He responded by emphasizing that he feels that bringing the yordim back to Israel is as important as attracting olim.

"Recently I met with a group of yordim here and one sentence I heard really hurt. One of the yordim said: 'The first year we were here Israel was close to our hearts, the next year less and a year later even less. The longer we stay here the distance between us and Israel is growing.'"

"I am not sure," Kedar added, "that we gave sufficient thought to how to maintain the centrality of Israel in the lives of the Israelis here. I think that any yord, that any Israeli who could live in Israel but lives here is a cause of sorrow and a loss to the State of Israel."

Kedar maintained that the reasons that caused so many Israelis to leave their country still exist

but stressed that the yordim cannot change things in Israel from abroad. "They must return to Israel and change things from within," he declared.

Turning to the issue of the information services the Consulate provides about Israel, Kedar said that a great deal of work and effort is devoted to disseminating "Israel's message" at any suitable occasion and in different forms. He said the Consulate is now striving to project Israel's image but with less emphasis on politics, stressing Israel's achievements in education, culture and science. He also contended that the American Jewish media does not give sufficient coverage to cultural events concerning Israel, but tends to dwell on political events.

CAMPAIGN TO PROMOTE JERUSALEM DAY

NEW YORK, Feb. 28 (JTA) -- A major campaign to promote Jerusalem Day May 24 throughout the United States has been launched, it was announced by Rabbi Joseph Sternstein, president of the American Zionist Federation. "On that day, cities across the country will rename a main thoroughfare Jerusalem Street, he said. "This will be a major public effort and will be preceded and supported by an ongoing petition campaign directed toward official United States recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel," Sternstein stated.

According to Carmella Carr, AZF executive director, "Over 20 cities have already been contacted and their initial response to the concept was very enthusiastic." Sternstein noted that the May 24 event is just a first step. "It is our intention to make Jerusalem Day a regular part of the community calendar," he said.

Sternstein stressed that the success of this undertaking "will demand the full cooperation of the organized American Zionist and Jewish community." The May 24 program, he added, is part of an international effort to demonstrate world Jewry's unqualified support for Jerusalem. "The centrality of Jerusalem in Jewish life throughout the ages is an undisputed fact," he said, "and we must muster all of our support, influence and determination to ensure that unified Jerusalem remains under Israeli administration."

SHALOM FROM MOSCOW

NEW YORK, Feb. 28 (JTA) -- Despite official harassment and the banishment of a major teacher, Dr. Joseph Begun, to Siberia, the unofficial teaching of Hebrew is very much alive in Moscow, according to the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry and Union of Councils for Soviet Jews. It is estimated there are 30 marim (teachers) and 500 talmidim (pupils) of Hebrew in the capital.

Hebrew teachers gather every other week for their own meeting. Both teachers and pupils are planning to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Hebrew as a modern language during the second week of March, which coincides with the second anniversary of Anatoly Shcharansky's arrest.

Meanwhile, Avital Shcharansky, Anatoly's wife, has arrived in the U.S. for a speaking tour under the auspices of the UCJSJ, with the cooperation of the SSSJ. She will also consult with scientists and legislators. Mrs. Shcharansky will seek to renew American efforts for her husband's release. She said the two years since her husband was arrested "have been an ordeal for both me and Anatoly's parents in Moscow. We have not heard from him for two months and his parents were recently refused their half-yearly visit with him."