

JTA daily news bulletin

Published by Jewish Telegraphic Agency / 165 West 46th Street - New York, New York 10036

Vol. XLVI - 62nd Year

Monday, March 19, 1979

No. 54

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

A FINE BALANCE OF COMPROMISES

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, March 18 (JTA) -- Now that the dust has settled a little behind "Air Force One" and the leaks have disclosed, little by little, virtually everything that was agreed upon during President Carter's dramatic mission to the Middle East, it is possible to make an accounting of who conceded what to whom.

The bottom line turns out to be that there was a delicate balance of compromises, mostly proposed by the United States, and accepted by the parties under the intense psychological pressure engendered by the President's massive personal involvement.

The Carter trip to Cairo and Jerusalem must be viewed together with Premier Menachem Begin's visit to Washington a week earlier. Together they comprise the final phase of the 16-month peace process. The final phase began with five issues unresolved. These were: Article VI, paragraph 2; Article VI, paragraph 5; the linkage side-letter, the oil issue; and the exchange of ambassadors question.

New Formulations Proposed

For three days, nothing moved at the White House talks between Carter and Begin. But on Sunday, only hours after each leader had made a public statement saying there was no progress, the U.S. proposed new formulations on the Article VI issues and on the side-letter. Begin immediately seized upon them, telling the President that he would submit them to his Cabinet at once and implying that he would add his strongly positive recommendations.

On the side-letter, the U.S. proposal was that the "target date" of 12 months apply only to the parties' attempts to reach agreement between them on autonomy, not, as heretofore proposed, to the actual holding of the autonomy elections. The elections, the U.S. proposal said, were to be held as soon as possible thereafter with no specific target date set.

For Begin, this was a distinct advance. His consistent argument against a target date for holding elections had been that it would make the peace treaty contingent upon the cooperation of the Palestinians, the people who are to vote in the elections. Now, with the target date applicable only to Israel-Egyptian negotiations on autonomy, this objection was removed.

An 'Agreed Minute' Proposed

On Article VI, paragraphs 2 and 5, the U.S. proposed, in place of the various letters and interpretative notes that had been drafted during the past two months, a single "agreed minute" that would read as follows:

"The provisions of Article VI shall not be construed in contradiction to the provisions of the Framework for Peace in the Middle East agreed at Camp David. The foregoing does not derogate from the provisions of Article VI (2) which reads as follows: 'The parties agree to fulfill in good faith their obligations under this treaty, without regard to action or inaction of any other party, and independently of any in-

strument external to this treaty'."

The "agreed minute" continued: "It is agreed by the parties that there is no assertion that this treaty prevails over other treaties or agreements, or that other treaties or agreements prevail over this treaty. The foregoing does not derogate from the provisions of Article VI (5) which reads as follows: 'Subject to article 103 of the UN Charter, in the event of a conflict between the obligations of the parties under the present treaty and any of their other obligations the obligations under this treaty will be binding and implemented.'"

The 'Agreed Minute' Weakened

In Cairo, Carter found a basic Egyptian willingness to accept these formulations in principle. But the Egyptian officials insisted on small but significant changes. In the side-letter, they demanded only that the holding of elections be set to take place "expeditiously." On Article VI, they demanded that the words "does not derogate from" be replaced, in both sections of the "agreed minute," with the words "shall not be construed as contravening."

This small amendment clearly does a great deal to weaken the effectiveness of the "agreed minute" from Israel's standpoint: "Does not derogate from" means clearly that the Article VI (2) or VI (5) as the case may be, is not to be weakened or superseded by the statement made in the "agreed minute." "Shall not be construed as contravening" is the classic phrase used in international agreements to blur over a case of clash or conflict between provisions.

Carter, in Jerusalem, pressed Israel to accept the Egyptian amendments. The Cabinet spent hours arguing over "does not derogate" and "shall not be construed as contravening." Legal officials carefully explained to the non-expert ministers what was at stake here.

In the event, five ministers abstained when Begin put the issue to a vote, attaching his own positive recommendation. The identities of the five is instructive: three were the consistent hardliners Haim Landau, Zevulun Hammer and Yitzhak Modai. The other two were Shmuel Tamir and Moshe Nisim, the only professional lawyers in the Cabinet. Both men had led the long fight over Article VI and they were not entirely happy with the solution that was being proffered.

After the vote, Israeli sources maintained that the amended formula still gave Israel its minimal requirement: the ability to argue in the event that either paragraph is called into question, that the peace treaty is not legally linked to the Camp David framework (Article VI - 2) or that the peace treaty takes priority over Egypt's inter-Arab commitments (Article VI - 5).

But they conceded that beyond that, the "agreed minute" as finally formulated, restored the vagueness and ambiguity that were inherent in the original drafting of the two paragraphs.

Focus On Other Issues

Having obtained Israel's agreement to the Egyptian amendments on the side-letter and Article VI, Carter focussed all his attention on the oil and the ambassadors issues. As it turned out, the exchange of ambassadors, 10 months after the treaty signing, was linked in Cairo's thinking to the issue of the "phased withdrawal" from Sinai, i.e., Israel's

readiness or reluctance to supply Egypt in advance with a schedule for its gradual evacuation of the western part of Sinai over the coming nine months.

A third unresolved issue that threatened to torpedo the talks at the 11th hour was Egypt's demand for a "liaison presence" in the Gaza Strip.

On this last point, Carter believed -- rightly -- that he had made significant headway when, in Washington the week before, Begin had indicated to him that Israel would, after all, be willing to cooperate in the establishment of the proposed Palestinian autonomy in Gaza as a first stage, prior to its eventual establishment on the West Bank. This was not, yet, a formal Israeli Cabinet position. But the President knew that if Begin had aired it, it would be backed by the majority of his ministers.

This was true, but did not mean, as the President apparently hoped, that Israel would agree to an Egyptian "liaison presence" in the Strip. Begin and the ministers flatly opposed this, maintaining that it was the thin end of the wedge and would bring about an eventual return of full Egyptian control of the strategically important Strip.

During the Cabinet session that lasted through Monday night into Tuesday morning, there was a detectable softening on the "phased withdrawal." But the position on the oil and the "liaison" remained frozen when the President and the Premier sat down to breakfast Tuesday morning.

Begin Takes Crucial Step

It was then that Begin took final stock of the situation, with all its overwhelming strategic and political cruciality, and resolved to offer a concession on the oil in exchange for Egypt's dropping of the "liaison in Gaza" demand. Israel would accept, he told Carter, a specific undertaking, attached to the treaty protocols, that Egypt would regard it as a regular oil customer, under normal market conditions.

Since that fateful day last Tuesday, there has already been a good deal of "rewriting history" here in Jerusalem, with several of the players seeking to arrogate unto themselves larger roles than they actually had in the drama. Perhaps these various individualistic versions are to be expected when so many ministers were involved in the negotiations.

But they should not be allowed to contravene -- or derogate from -- the fundamental fact that Begin took his political future in his hands, and -- at the critical moment -- offered the required concession, going beyond established Cabinet positions, which made the treaty a reality. It was Begin who conducted these negotiations -- and therefore the credit -- and the blame, if there is to be any -- go to him.

THREAT ON THE EASTERN FRONT

By Yitzhak Shargil

TEL AVIV, March 18 (JTA) -- Israeli military circles have warned against a new threat on the eastern front, once an Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty is signed, that may explode into hostilities involving the combined forces of Syria and Iraq. Reports from various Arab capitals today indicated that those countries are pooling their military strength on a large scale.

Tensions were heightened by Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasser Arafat's warning in Amman yesterday that "the whole Middle East will explode if Sadat signs the pact" with

Israel and his thinly veiled assassination threat against Egyptian President Anwar Sadat.

The Syrian government's official newspaper, Tishrin, warned yesterday that a peace treaty between Israel and Egypt would leave no choice but war to the confrontation states, Syria and Iraq. The Kuwaiti daily, Al-Siyassa, reported yesterday that three Iraqi divisions have entered Syria in the past few days under their recent agreement to establish a joint military command. Israeli military circles claimed that Iraq and Syria are secretly speeding up their agreement to counter a peace treaty. According to the Israelis, the agreement calls for Iraqi units to be stationed in Syria in support of Syrian forces facing Israel.

Arafat Sounds Warning

Arafat met with King Hussein of Jordan yesterday at the Ma'raq air base to discuss possible action against the peace treaty. They reportedly agreed to resist attempt "to liquidate the rights of the Palestinians." Speaking to a Radio Luxembourg reporter, Arafat said, "We shall insist that the oil embargo be imposed on Egypt for it is inconceivable that Egypt should receive Arab oil while it intends to ship Egyptian oil to Israel." He also warned that Sadat "will pay for his treachery" and recalled that King Farouk's Prime Minister, Nokrashi Pasha, was assassinated after he signed the armistice agreements with Israel in 1949.

Meanwhile, a U.S. delegation headed by President Carter's National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski was in Amman today for meetings with Hussein. The delegation was in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia yesterday where it met with King Khalid. The purpose apparently is to convince the Saudis and Jordanians to take no overt action against the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty if they continue to boycott the peace process itself.

Saudi Foreign Minister Saud Faisal and the U.S. Embassy issued statements after Brzezinski's departure saying the two countries agree to "remain in close contact in connection with the evolving issues in the region." However, Faisal emphasized that "security and stability in the region can only be achieved through meeting the aspirations of Arab, Islamic and Palestinian nations and based on a just and comprehensive peace."

The Embassy statement noted that the U.S. and Saudi Arabia "respect and appreciate the underlying concern for peace which forms the basis for national policies." It described the visit by the American delegation as "friendly" and that the discussions were "serious and far-ranging" and emphasized "the commonality of values and interest between our two nations."

In Amman, Brzezinski met for three hours with Hussein today in what was described by the American official as "useful and constructive" talks. During the meeting, Brzezinski gave Hussein a message from Carter. However, it was not revealed what was in the letter or the content of the talks between the two officials. The U.S. delegation left this afternoon for Cairo.

ANTI-SEMITIC ACTS IN SWITZERLAND

GENEVA, March 18 (JTA) -- Police here and in other cities in Switzerland are investigating a series of anti-Semitic incidents over the last few days. In Zurich, the door of a synagogue was destroyed by a bomb last Thursday causing an estimated 10,000 Francs in damages. The walls of the synagogue were daubed with slogans saying, "We shall kill you," "Heil Adolf," and "We are fighting the lies about the gas chambers."

An anonymous phone caller to the Zurich news-

paper "Blick" said that the Jewish school in that city would be set on fire if the American NBC-TV film "Holocaust" is shown on Swiss television as scheduled beginning April 1. In Lausanne, and Geneva, anti-Semitic slogans have been painted on public walls.

Swiss Jewish community leaders said there is reason for concern but not for alarm. They expressed hope that Swiss TV officials will not be influenced by these acts and will show "Holocaust." There are 6150 Jews in Zurich and 3250 Jews in Geneva and a small Jewish community in Lausanne.

MIDDLE EAST ISSUES AIRED

By Joseph Polakoff

WASHINGTON, March 18 (JTA) -- Israel Defense Minister Ezer Weizman said today that he expects to complete the negotiations with Egyptian Defense Minister Kamal Hassan Ali on the military annexes of the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty by the time he leaves tomorrow to return to Jerusalem. He added that while he may not be "as happy with it as I should be," that element will not block the signing of the treaty in Washington which is expected to take place next week.

Weizman also said he anticipates reaching agreement with Defense Secretary Harold Brown on the U.S. contribution to the cost of Israel's removal of its bases from the Sinai to within Israel's old borders "before he leaves tomorrow." Nobody expects the U.S. to foot the bill for everything, he said. "We shall tighten our belts and do our bit, too." Israel estimates the cost at \$3.2-\$4 billion.

Weizman's appearance on NBC-TV's "Meet the Press" completed a cycle of three nationally televised interview programs on Middle East issues today. He was preceded on ABC-TV's "Issues and Answers" by Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Frank Church (D-Idaho) and Secretary of State Cyrus Vance on CBS-TV's "Face the Nation."

No Secret Commitments

Both Church and Vance said President Carter made no secret commitments to Egypt or Israel on any factor, including establishment of autonomy on the West Bank and Gaza. With Saudi Arabia media attacking the agreement and Jordan also opposing it, Church declared that the U.S. mission "is the most plain spoken": the Carter Administration has yet sent to Saudi Arabia and Jordan.

"And it's high time" to "make it plain to them our special relationship is a two-way street," he added. While those countries do not necessarily have to endorse the agreement, Church said, "it is our right to look to them for discreet help as long as they look to us as their ultimate protector."

Without mentioning the opposition by Sen. William Proxmire (D-Wis.) to what he termed too costly U.S. financial contribution to the Egyptian-Israeli agreement, Church asked "suppose it is \$6 billion, isn't that a good investment?" He noted the U.S. spent \$27 billion because of the last four wars in the Middle East and the oil embargo. He called on the "rich West European nations, specifically West Germany, and Japan, to help in the peace process beginning with the Egyptian-Israeli treaty." "We all have an interest" in the "multilateral peace," he said. Late last week, Senator Richard Stone

(D-Fla.), Ted Stevens (R-Alaska) and Larry Pressler (R-S.D.) asked for European and Japanese contributions to join with the U.S. in underwriting the economic costs of the treaty and to help in the costs of the three-year Israeli withdrawal from Sinai.

Both Vance and Weizman were asked about the threat of violence voiced by Yasser Arafat, chief of the Palestine Liberation Organization. Vance said "we cannot rule out some violence after the signing" and U.S. Embassies have been told to take precautions. When Weizman was asked about Arafat calling the treaty a "time bomb," he replied Arafat "is wrong" and added that Arafat "is an expert on actual time bombs."

Weizman said Israeli troops on the West Bank, once autonomy is in effect, will not be there to control the civilian population but to counter military threats from Syria, Iraq and others. He rejected the view that Israel should leave the Golan Heights as it will do in the Sinai, pointing out that the Syrians are not Egyptians and the areas are not geographically the same.

Issue Of Defense Treaty

Regarding a possible U.S. defense treaty with Israel, Church replied, "Israel has never asked for a pact" and therefore "there is no reason for us to ask them." Weizman said "I don't think it would be a bad idea," but he noted there are "various opinions" in Israel about such a treaty and emphasized "the main thing is to get settled down with Egypt."

Vance was asked whether the U.S. would go to war to protect Saudi Arabia. He replied, "We consider the territorial integrity and security of Saudi Arabia to be of fundamental importance to us." Asked if he was talking about the oil there, Vance replied he was "talking of the stability of the region" which is important "not only to the U.S. but to the peoples of the world."

Vance was asked if the U.S. would have a "direct role" on the future of the Palestinians and "Palestinian state." He replied that the letter in connection with the peace treaty would have the U.S. "participate fully in the negotiations" on the "establishing of a self-governing authority on the West Bank and Gaza."

Church rejected the suggestion that gas stations will be closed Sundays in the U.S. and Americans will have to cancel vacations because U.S. oil will go to Israel on the guarantees in the agreement. "No new oil commitment is entailed," he said, after noting that the 1975 Sinai agreement guaranteed that Israel would have oil. Church pointed out that the Israelis are "adroit" in finding oil supplies and Egypt is to sell Israel oil under the treaty.

Church said that despite the Saudi Arabian opposition to the agreement, he did not think Saudi Arabia would cut off aid to Egypt. "Certainly we will keep our commitment to Israel," he said. While Egypt "may need some limited military help" regarding Libya and its African position, "I will be very much against" such "grandiose talks to make Egypt the policeman of the Middle East. We should learn from our Iranian experience to avoid that."

JERUSALEM (JTA) -- The Histadrut Executive has called a four-hour general strike Monday to protest soaring prices for basic food products and commodities. Described as a "warning strike," it is to last from noon to 4 p.m. local time or half the work day. Delegations of workers from all over the country will assemble outside Histadrut headquarters in Tel Aviv after the strike ends. It will be Israel's first general strike in many years.

NEW YORK CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT ENCOURAGING THE ENROLLMENT OF ORTHODOX JEWS IN THE POLICE FORCE

By Ben Gallob

NEW YORK, March 18 (JTA) — For the first time in the history of the New York City Police Department, top police officials are encouraging enrollment of Orthodox Jews in the force, according to Louis Weiser, the president of the Council of Jewish Organizations in Civil Service. Weiser, who is also a former president of the Shomrim Society, which is comprised of Jewish police, said filing for examinations for a new list of police officers candidates opened March 1 and will continue until May 30.

He said the written examination will be held on a Saturday, June 30, and that a special Sabbath observer test will be held on Sunday, July 1. A similar Sabbath observer test for Jewish candidates was held for the prior list in 1973, Weiser told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, but, as far as he knows, no Orthodox Jews joined the force from that list.

He said the current examinations, to develop a new four-year list, may be the last opportunity for Jewish young people to enter the police force in any substantial numbers. Apart from the fact that the police department wants to broaden minority representation, Weiser said there is a possibility that "selective certification" — the appointment of a candidate out of his or her examination rank for preferential hiring — may be extended to cover applicants with fluency in languages other than Spanish, as at present.

Weiser said preferential hiring on that basis had been held legal by the courts if the police department demonstrates to the city's personnel department the need for personnel with such special qualifications. He said the process may be broadened for the new list to include candidates fluent in Russian, Hebrew, Yiddish and other languages.

He said that if that preferential hiring procedure was broadened to include such additional languages, the applicant would be asked to indicate fluency in one of the languages and be given a test, if he or she passed the examination, to confirm the claimed fluency.

Meetings Have Been Held

Weiser said Police Commissioner Robert McGuire has shown strong interest in the program to attract more Jews, including Orthodox Jews, to the force. He said meetings had been held with members of the Orthodox community on recruitment of Orthodox Jews and the police department officials had promised full cooperation. One of the problems is that a federal grant of \$250,000 for recruitment of minority members for the examination will not be available in full for that purpose. Weiser said the City Board of Estimate had disallowed use of \$150,000 of the grant for public media to reach minorities.

He also reported that top police officials were examining the problems anticipated in observant Jews joining the force, including provisions for absence for Jewish holidays and for the Jewish Sabbath, not only in police duties but at the Police Academy.

Weiser said that currently, only 750 Jewish men and women are in the force, compared with some 2400 Black and Hispanic police. He noted that the city's problems of budget austerity raised questions about employment opportunities for those passing the examinations and meeting

other requirements for appointment. He said there were currently about 11,000 police officers eligible for retirement and that the normal attrition rate is estimated at 1200 to 1400 yearly.

Weiser said it was estimated that between 5000 and 6000 successful candidates would be appointed from the new list, though he added it was not possible to estimate now how many of the jobs left open by attrition might be left unfilled for budgetary reasons. He said the Shomrim Society was getting the cooperation of the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York and the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith in its efforts to recruit Jews for the examination. He added that the ADL would sponsor one of the examination classes, in cooperation with the Shomrim Society on April 22-23 at the ADL offices here.

Several years ago, the police department sponsored a campaign to recruit more Jews but that campaign was not aimed specifically to include Orthodox Jews. Weiser said there was even a possibility that Hasidic Jews might be approached to take the examination. He said there was no information immediately available as to the number of Jews who had filed to take the examination since filing began March 1.

AMERICANS URGED TO AID SOVIET JEWS BY SENDING MATZOS TO USSR EMBASSY

NEWARK, N. J., March 18 (JTA) — A group of New Jersey teenagers is appealing to the American public to help Soviet Jews by sending matzos to the Soviet Union's Embassy in Washington in advance of the Passover holiday beginning April 11.

Susan Jeanette Kuperstein, a 17-year-old Springfield, N. J. high school senior and spokesperson for the New Jersey Region of United Synagogue Youth (USY), said USY members believe that if the Soviet Embassy is swamped with matzos, Soviet authorities will allow the unleavened bread to be shipped to the USSR "for its more than three million harshly restricted Jews, many of whom desperately want to leave that country for freedom." As it is, she said, "only a small matzo production is allowed in the Communist nation."

Ms. Kuperstein pointed that President Carter has said the Soviet Union appears to be allowing an increasing number of Jews to leave the country and that the United States is close to granting the Soviet Union Most Favored Nation status. "If the Soviets are sincere about permitting Jews to leave the USSR, and are really serious in seeking Most Favored Nation status, they will prove their good intentions by accepting the matzos sent to the Embassy and work out an arrangement to ship it to their country," she said. "This is a test of Soviet sincerity." The executive board of the New Jersey USY decided on the campaign, according to Mark Mulgoy of Summit, N. J., regional executive social actions vice president. Other USY regions throughout the country, with a membership comprising youngsters from 14 to 18 years old who attend Conservative synagogues, are expected to take part in the campaign, Mulgoy said. There are 65 USY chapters in New Jersey.

BERNARDO VERBITSKY DEAD AT 71

Buenos Aires, March 18 (JTA) — Bernardo Verbitsky, one of Argentina's foremost fiction writers, died here Friday at the age of 71 after a long illness. A few months ago he received the Argentine Concorde Prize for his novel, "Sister Shadow/Sister Loneliness." Verbitsky, who was born in Buenos Aires, became famous with the publication of his novel, "Slums Are Also America" (1957).