

# JTA daily news bulletin

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## STATE DEPARTMENT SAYS KHOMEINI IS LYING ABOUT THE U.S. AND ISRAEL

By Joseph Palatoff

WASHINGTON, Nov. 25 (JTA) — The State Department today branded as "lies" the latest charge by the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini that the United States and Israel were trying to seize the main mosques in the Islamic holy cities of Mecca and Medina in Saudi Arabia.

In a statement in Teheran where his followers are holding 49 Americans hostage in the U.S. Embassy, Khomeini said yesterday that "It appears the United States and its corrupt colony, Israel, are attempting to occupy" the Grand Mosque in Mecca and the Prophet's Mosque in Medina, two of the holiest shrines of the Moslem world.

"Our response to these accusations is the same as we have been saying for some time," State Department spokesman Don Hamilton told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency today. "Such comments and statements are lies." Saudi Arabian officials had previously denied the allegations from Teheran, first made by Khomeini last week when Moslem extremists occupied the mosque in Mecca.

In Islamabad, Pakistan, where Khomeini's inflammatory statements incited a mob to burn down the U.S. Embassy last week, killing two Americans, the accusation was repeated that the Americans and "Zionists" were responsible for the seizure of the mosque in Mecca.

The State Department's initial response to Khomeini's charges was made last week by chief spokesman Hoddging Carter who called them "lies." Asked by an Arab reporter if he was specifically absolving Israel, Carter replied with some heat, "absolutely."

## ALMA OILFIELDS RETURNED TO EGYPT

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Nov. 25 (JTA) — The Alma oilfields on the Gulf of Suez, the last of the Sinai oilfields in Israeli hands, were formally returned to Egypt today in brief military ceremonies in the town of A Tour in southern Sinai. The Israeli flag was hauled down and replaced by an Egyptian flag.

The Israelis departed just two years after oil was first discovered at the Alma site. The wells built there provided Israel with two million tons of crude oil annually, a quarter of its total consumption. Their return to Egypt represents the first direct large-scale financial benefit to the Egyptians from their peace treaty with Israel.

Under an agreement recently concluded between the two countries, Israel will continue to receive two million tons of Sinai oil annually from Egypt. Israel will pay \$23.50 per barrel, the price set by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), during the first year. Negotiations are scheduled over the price of oil after that period. The Egyptians are expected to ask for \$32.50 per barrel, a price recently quoted on the Rotterdam spot market.

## 2500-Square-Km Area Also Returned

Israel turned over a 2500-square-kilometer area in southwestern Sinai to the Egyptians today

along with the oilfields. On Jan. 25, 1980, it will relinquish a much larger area including three strategic passes in central Sinai. Egypt will then control two-thirds of the peninsula. The new demarcation line will run from El Arish on the Mediterranean coast to Ras Mohammed on the Red Sea.

The final withdrawal from Sinai in 1981 will be to Israel's original international border with Egypt. At that time Israel will give up the town of Yamit in the north and Ophira in the south along with its military airfields in Sinai.

The documents transferring the Alma oilfields to Egypt were signed at a separate ceremony today by Dr. Elazar Barak, director general of Israel's national oil corporation, and Dr. Mahmoud Ayouti of the Egyptian oil company. The Egyptians intend to make A Tour their district headquarters in southern Sinai. The area is presently inhabited by some 1200 Bedouins.

The last Israeli technicians departed some days ago and the last tanker left Alma with 50,000 barrels of oil for Israel. A large sign on the local canteen wall was an epitaph for 12 years of Israeli presence there. It read, "The story is over." (See related story, P. 4.)

## 'PALESTINE WEEK' AT UN TO FEATURE A DEBATE, FILM AND AN EXHIBITION

By Yitzhak Rabi

UNITED NATIONS, Nov. 25 (JTA) — The 34th session of the General Assembly will open "Palestine Week" tomorrow with a debate on the Palestinian question, the screening of the UN-produced film "Palestinians do Have Rights," and an exhibition at the UN building devoted to the "plight" of the Palestinians — sponsored by the UN but actually designed and organized by the Palestine Liberation Organization.

The Palestine Week will culminate Nov. 29 with the UN-declared "Palestine Day," the date when the General Assembly recommended the partition of Palestine in 1947.

Yehuda Blum, Israel's Ambassador to the UN, commented on the irony of the situation when he noted that while in the sessions of the General Assembly last year and in 1977 the Arabs and their allies concentrated their attacks on the Egyptian-Israeli peace process in a clear effort to sabotage the peace agreement, the impression this year is that even the Arabs are accepting the peace between Egypt and Israel as a "fait accompli."

## Arabs Trying New Approach

Speaking with Israeli reporters last Friday, Blum also said that the Arabs this year are trying a new approach in the Assembly, namely, refraining from making long, violent anti-Israel speeches — which have become an Arab trademark at the UN — although they continue to press for harsh anti-Israel resolutions.

Accordingly, Blum observed, the debate on the Palestinian question will produce another resolution calling on Israel to cease its occupation of the administered territories and to restore Palestinian rights, including their right to return to their homes and to establish an independent Palestinian state.

The Israeli envoy said he would participate

in the debate on the Palestinian question and that he is scheduled to address the General Assembly Tuesday. He said Israel will argue that the Palestinian Arabs already have their own state, Jordan, and that the Palestinian Arabs are Jordanian citizens.

#### UN Rejects Israel Film

Blum also disclosed that Israel, to counter the UN-produced film on the Palestinians, has obtained its own film, "The PLO," produced by a Swiss company but that the UN turned down Israel's request to screen it at the UN. Blum said Israel was told that the Hammarskjold Auditorium, where films are shown, screens only "cultural films" and not political ones. "We asked for another facility in the UN building to screen the film, and they are checking it, but I doubt our request will be granted," Blum said.

The Middle East issue will be on the agenda of the Assembly for another week, when the Palestinian debate is over, with the start of a Mideast debate Dec. 3 to discuss the Arab-Israel conflict in its entirety.

Observers and diplomats here said they believe that the crisis in Iran and the dramatic news it produces daily will obscure the anti-Israel drive in the current Assembly session. One diplomat noted the PLO leader Yasser Arafat, who was said to plan a visit to the UN to attend the debate on the Palestinians, decided not to attend because, among other reasons, of the situation in Iran.

#### TIMERMAN: 'IMPORTANT TO BE A JEW'

NEW YORK, Nov. 25 (JTA) -- Jacobo Timerman, the Argentinian Jewish editor recently released from house arrest after years of worldwide protest, and who now lives in Israel, declared in a taped interview at United Jewish Appeal headquarters here that "it is very important to be a Jew. After that we can discuss all the other points."

Timerman will receive the UJA David Ben-Gurion Award at the UJA national conference at Lincoln Center Dec. 7. The exclusive interview, conducted by Rabbi Mark Galub, will be broadcast on a syndicated radio program on Dec. 2 over WMCA, and also aired in Palm Beach, Florida, and Tucson, Arizona under the auspices of local Federations and with UJA assistance.

Timerman will get the award for his "struggle against oppression and for the right to live a Jewish life." He said, in the interview, that the decision of Soviet Jews to fight for their right to be Jews "is something that I think we don't realize the importance of." He said the Soviet Jews show "to us" that Jews really "can survive."

He said freedom as a human being and freedom as a Jew "are very different." He said that in Argentina he had been a free man but never a free Jew. "In Israel you are a free Jew," Timerman said, adding that he still did not know "the broad idea of all the richness of being a free Jew."

Declaring that "the best thing for a Jew is to live in Israel," Timerman declared that "if you don't live in Israel you are still a Jew and you are very important for me." He said he had "the ambition that Israel should be the best country in the whole world."

He said he had been arrested because he was editor of the only daily, La Opinion, "that pointed out anti-Semitic incidents in Argentine life."

After three months in clandestine jails, nine months in "a legal jail" and 18 months under house arrest under surveillance by eight policemen living in his apartment, he was finally released because of international pressure, "especially" Jewish pressure.

Timerman said one day he decided he needed something to live for, so he asked a guard which way was east, "so that I might pray to Jerusalem." He said the guard said he could not tell him for security reasons "but I was happy that I had asked." When he was enroute to Israel, he feared his future might be "a mutilated life" because he might not find a job as an editor, a position he was immediately offered by Maariv and which he accepted.

He said when he told the editor he did not know Hebrew, the editor replied it did not matter; that Timerman would write in Spanish "and we will translate," just as with a Soviet Jewish writer, "he writes in Russian and we translate it into Hebrew." Timerman said "I am a journalist writing Spanish in a Hebrew paper and I belong to journalism in Israel. This is the miracle of Israel."

#### DOING BUSINESS WITH ISRAEL

MIAMI, Nov. 25 (JTA) -- The Florida-Israel Chamber of Commerce responded this year to more than 40 inquiries from Israel for help in finding distributors, machinery and equipment for Israeli factories and counseling in business and technology. Arthur S. Rosichan, Chamber president, reported at the Chamber's annual dinner meeting here.

He also told the 500 business and professional guests that the Chamber responded as well to requests from Florida business and professional people for information on sources of investment in Israel, as well as information on Israel inventions and products. He announced that after Jan. 1, the Chamber will become the America-Israel Chamber of Commerce, Florida Region.

Zvi Brush, Minister of Information of Israel, who substituted for Israel Ambassador Ephraim Evron who was ill, stressed the advantages of investing in Israel, including its proximity to the European Common Market, which he said made it advantageous for American firms to establish plants in Israel for sales in the Common Market.

Brush said he was very optimistic about the peace accord between Israel and Egypt and that formal diplomatic relations between Israel and Egypt would be established soon.

#### SOVIET DELEGATION WARNS AGAINST INTERFERING IN USSR INTERNAL AFFAIRS

DENVER, Colo., Nov. 25 (JTA) -- Members of a visiting delegation of Soviet officials responded to questions about broken promises in regard to exit visas for Jewish would-be emigrants and about officially-inspired anti-Semitic publications in the USSR by denials and warnings about interference in Soviet internal affairs, a co-chairwoman of the Committee of Concern for Soviet Jewry reported.

The co-chairwomen, Mrs. Lillian Hoffman and Mrs. Rhoda Friedman, were invited by Rep. Timothy E. Wirth (D. Colo.) to a breakfast meeting with the five members of the Soviet Union's Supreme Soviet.

During a question and answer period following a talk by Sergey Medunov, head of the delegation, and First Secretary of the Krasnodar Region Party committee, Mrs. Hoffman raised the issue of Soviet Jewish emigration. She said she referred to a recent meeting between Robert Hawke, the Australian labor leader, and Soviet officials when, she said,

promises were made to release the Prisoners of Conscience and to grant visas to long-term refusniks — over five years.

She said Medunov replied that there has been discussion in some Soviet circles on the matter, that Soviet officials detain persons who have state secrets just as any other country would do, and that there was no truth that the prisoners were jailed for taking part in the emigration movement — as Mrs. Hoffman had suggested to him.

She said Medunov also had replied that the prisoners had been guilty of criminal activities, that trials were held according to state law, that refusals were not forever and that cases would be reviewed and that prisoners eventually would get out. Medunov also replied that some persons made "the mistake" of coupling human rights with state rights and that "we do not want interference in our internal affairs," a statement Mrs. Hoffman said he made very emphatically.

In the evening, State Senator Dennis Gallagher, interfaith chairman for the Committee of Concern, and his wife were hosts for a dinner for two of the Soviet officials, to which Mrs. Hoffman and Mrs. Friedman were invited as Committee of Concern leaders. The two Russians were Boris Stukalin, chairman of the State Committee on Publishing Houses, Polygraphy and Book Trade, and Aleksey Obukov, of the American Section of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. An excellent speaker in English, Obukov served as Stukalin's translator.

#### Concern About Anti-Semitic Literature

Mrs. Friedman expressed deep concern over the "obvious increase" in the publication of anti-Semitic literature emanating from the Soviet Union, specifically citing several well-known anti-Jewish propagandists and their writings. She asked for an explanation of the vast distribution of such material, which she said was obviously officially endorsed despite the Soviet Union's alleged ban on publication of "hate" material.

Stukalin responded that those writers were anti-Zionist, not anti-Semitic. Asked to define Zionism, he said it was racist, nationalistic and represented Jews who think they are superior to others. Several references were made at the dinner to Prisoners of Conscience as being criminals and reiteration by the Soviet officials that Americans should not interfere in Soviet internal affairs. The Soviet visitors said the USSR did not interfere in American affairs.

Mrs. Hoffman said that while the standard Soviet party line on such issues "obviously was not changed," the dinner guests felt it was extremely important to have confronted the Soviet delegates on these vital issues of concern.

#### BEGIN FOREGOES WEST BANK PROCLAMATION

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Nov. 25 (JTA) — Premier Menachem Begin declined to present to the Cabinet today the draft of an expected government proclamation on the status of Jewish settlements on the West Bank intended to assure the Gush Emunim that future settlements will not be subject to challenge in the courts. Begin was known to be working over the weekend on such a statement but apparently decided not to introduce it for the time being because of mounting public protests and strong opposition within his Cabinet to any

further appeasement at the Gush Emunim.

Deputy Premier Simcha Ehrlich, leader of Likud's Liberal Party wing, angrily denounced the Gush Emunim "and those in the government who support it" in a speech in Tel Aviv. "It (the Gush Emunim) tries to create facts in contravention of Cabinet decisions. They consider themselves a state within a state and I am deeply sorry that some ministers negotiate with them on those terms," Ehrlich said.

He noted that the Gush "are now part of a political grouping whose aim is to fight the government and we should remember that." Ehrlich was referring to the new ultra-nationalist Tehiya faction headed by Tel Aviv University Prof. Yuval Neeman, which has attracted militants who defected from Herut.

Ehrlich spoke out against behind-the-scenes efforts to draft a new government proclamation aimed at contravening the Supreme Court's order that the Gush Emunim settlement of Elon Moreh be dismantled because it was established illegally on seized Arab lands. "We have already announced that we will claim sovereignty (over the West Bank) at the end of the five years (autonomy transition period). But if the Cabinet decides now that Judaea and Samaria are not occupied territory (as demanded by the Gush) that would endanger the peace process and violate the Camp David agreements," Ehrlich said.

The former Finance Minister said he opposed new settlements on the West Bank at this time because of the cost factor. This has been the rallying cry of the Black Panthers and residents of poverty neighborhoods who have taken to the streets to denounce the government for spending millions on settlements while slums fester and wage-earners are confronted with soaring prices under the government's new austerity economic program.

#### Some 5000 People Hold Rally

About 5000 members of the Peace Now movement which opposes new settlements on political ground held a rally in downtown Jerusalem last night. They were joined by Black Panthers, Issa Badia Marciano, who stressed the economic rather than the political aspects. The demonstrators were blocked by police when they attempted to march to Begin's residence. But a small group of Peace Now members maintained an all-night vigil outside the Premier's home. They demonstrated this morning outside Begin's office while the Cabinet was in session.

The government has announced that it will abide by the Supreme Court's ruling to remove Elon Moreh. But the Cabinet decided a week ago to carry out the evacuation in two stages. Some 30 acres of land were returned to their Arab owners last Wednesday. But the settlement remained intact. According to the Cabinet's decision it will be removed within six weeks by which time the government will have prepared an alternative site at Jebel Kebir about six miles away.

This was supposed to be the government's "last word" on the matter. But Begin's consultations over the weekend with various ministers and with Attorney General Yitzhak Zamir indicated that it was still trying to find a legal way to preserve Elon Moreh where it is. Begin reportedly told his ministers today that he had been persuaded that a government proclamation would not be useful at this time. It was not clear whether the statement was shelved or will be presented at a later time.

## BEHIND THE HEADLINES

SANTA KATERINA IS NOW FULLY EGYPTIAN  
By Yitzhak Shargil

SANTA KATERINA, Egyptian Sinai, Nov. 25 (JTA) -- One week ago, the sign at the small airfield near the Santa Katerina Monastery said, in bold Hebrew and English letters, "Mt. Sinai Airport." Today, the sign, in Arabic and English, reads "Santa Katerina Airport." The Hebrew lettering on this and on all other signs designating places, roads and buildings has been blotted out with black paint.

It is a small thing but it brings home bluntly the obliteration of 12 years of Israeli presence in this region at the foot of Mt. Sinai that was officially returned to Egyptian administration last Tuesday, two months ahead of the timetable set by the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty. Even the plaque on the airport terminal building stating that it was built by the Israeli Army Corps of Engineers has been covered -- in this case by a large portrait of President Anwar Sadat who formally took possession of the area last Tuesday, the second anniversary of his visit to Jerusalem.

Certain unremovable evidence of Israeli enterprise remains: There are the paved roads, the tourist motels and shops, an Israeli field school specializing in ecology and various water wells dug by Israelis in this arid region. And Israeli tourists who are flocking here with passports and identity cards are given a warm welcome by the new owners.

Of course, they must bring dollars. The Israeli Pound is no longer legal currency. The Egyptians have opened a small bank at the airport where visitors can exchange pounds for dollars or Egyptian currency. It is needed to pay the \$3 landing fee. A glass of mango juice costs \$1, or its Egyptian equivalent. The biggest customers at the bank are local Bedouins who somehow have accumulated sackfuls of Israeli currency.

## Israeli Tourists Arrive Regularly

Planes and busloads of tourists from Israel arrive here every day and pick up Egyptian entry visas at the airport or the bus station. It is a simple process. Any holder of an Israeli passport or identity card need bring only an extra photo which is pasted on the Egyptian form and stamped with the official seal.

But this special treatment will end on January 25, 1980, the day the area was originally scheduled to be handed back to Egypt. After that, Israelis will have to apply in advance for Egyptian visas, just like tourists from any other country.

Meanwhile, in the remote southwestern region of Sinai, the last Israeli technicians have left. A tour and the offshore Alma oilfields. That region was formally returned to Egypt today. The departing Israelis took with them the \$15 million floating oil rig which had been drilling in the Gulf of Suez. It was dismantled and taken to Elat where it will remain unless the Egyptians agree to buy it. They are expected to eventually, in which case the rig will be refloated and towed back to the Gulf.

PALESTINIAN FOUND GUILTY OF TRYING  
TO SMUGGLE EQUIPMENT TO THE MIDEAST

NEW YORK, Nov. 25 (JTA) -- A 45-year-old wealthy Long Island engineer who said he was born in Ramallah, Paul Ajlouny, and who describes

himself as an adviser to the Palestine Liberation Organization, was found guilty last Friday night by a federal jury of trying to smuggle stolen communications equipment to the Middle East in the spring of 1978. Ajlouny lives in Hempstead.

Federal prosecutors said the attempt, stopped on a Brooklyn pier, was part of a scheme to set up an independent telecommunications network for the PLO. Ajlouny faces up to 10 years in prison.

But the jury in Brooklyn's District Court failed to reach a verdict on 136 other counts and a mistrial was declared on those counts. The counts claimed that Ajlouny had placed 1136 telephone calls through illegal use of a "blue box," a device by which long distance calls can be made without knowledge of the telephone company. The office of Edward Korman, U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, charged many of those calls had been made to PLO headquarters in Beirut.

The equipment, much of it owned by New York Telephone Company, had been sent by Ajlouny from various places to the Brooklyn pier where it was found by customs inspectors in April, 1978. Judge Mark Constantino allowed Ajlouny to remain free pending sentence but ordered him to hand over his passport to the prosecutor. John Wing, his attorney, said he would appeal.

## MILITARY TRIBUNAL TO HEAR SHAKA CASE

JERUSALEM, Nov. 25 (JTA) -- A three-man military tribunal will tomorrow hear the case of Nabbus Mayor Bassam Shaka, and is expected to hand down its ruling Tuesday. Shaka has been ordered expelled from the West Bank for alleged pro-terrorist activities.

If the order is upheld, the mayor will have three days in which to appeal to the Supreme Court. The court last week declined to review an appeal by Shaka on the grounds that the due process requires him to go to the military tribunal first. There were news reports today that other West Bank mayors were quietly proposing a "deal" with the authorities whereby the expulsion order would be revoked, and in return Shaka would resign his mayoralty.

## VIDELA MEETS WITH SYRIAN OFFICIAL

BUENOS AIRES, Nov. 25 (JTA) -- The Syrian Embassy here reported in a press release that Mohsen Bilal, chairman of the Exterior Relations Committee of the Syrian Parliament, now touring Latin American countries, paid a courtesy call on President Jorge Rafael Videla, accompanied by Ambassador Abdul Akil. The Embassy release said Bilal was assured by Videla of Argentina's sympathies and that Bilal thanked Videla for Argentina's recognition "of the rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination." Thirty-seven foreign diplomats, including Israel's representative, were guests of Videla at a luncheon in his residence. Representatives of democratic, Communist and Arab countries attended the luncheon.

BUENOS AIRES (JTA) -- Yehoram Gaon, the Israeli singer and actor, has arrived here for a tour. He was introduced in a program of the official Argentine television station at a special luncheon offered by the Argentine actress, Marta Legrand. But Gaon said he could not eat the food on the menu because it was not kosher. Instead of eating, he sang some of his songs, remarking they are all ways "kosher."