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AUTONOMY TALKS END ON NOTE OF CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM; THE CHIEF NEGOTIATORS TO MEET AT END OF FEB.

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Feb. 3 (JTA) — Israel, Egypt and the U.S. ended their latest round of autonomy talks on a note of cautious optimism engendered by agreement on procedural matters and an apparent understanding between the parties over how they will approach substantive issues as the negotiations continue.

Ambassador Sol Linowitz, President Carter's special envoy to the Middle East, spoke of "significant progress" after the two days of talks at Herzliya concluded Friday. But neither he nor the other principal participants — Interior Minister Yosef Burg, head of the Israeli negotiating team, and his Egyptian counterpart, Prime Minister Mustapha Khalil — would elaborate. Linowitz flew to Saudi Arabia Friday night and conferred in Riyadh with Crown Prince Fahd and Foreign Minister Saud al-Faisal. He flew to Morocco yesterday for talks with King Hassan.

Working Groups To Meet In Cairo

Before Linowitz left Israel it was decided that he, Burg and Khalil will meet again at the end of this month, probably in Europe, to review the autonomy talks and plan further progress.

Meanwhile, the Israeli and Egyptian working group on the "powers and responsibilities" of the autonomous authority will convene in Cairo next week for further deliberations. Working groups dealing with economic matters and other issues yet to be defined will also meet with increasing frequency.

Acceleration of the autonomy talks, especially on the working group level, was announced in a joint communique and is believed to have been one of the main agreements achieved at Herzliya. Linowitz told a press conference Friday that it was "certainly possible" to conclude the autonomy talks by the May 26 deadline but he "hesitated" to predict that this would be accomplished. He indicated that the mode of the Herzliya talks in which the three principals conferred privately and informally was more effective than elaborate "plenary" meetings and that this format would be followed in the future.

Shift By Egypt Noted

The Israelis seemed buoyed by the results of the Herzliya talks. Israeli sources said Egypt had implicitly recognized the break-down-in-principle of the "powers and responsibilities" issue into three groupings: those that would come under the autonomous authority; those that would be shared; and those that would remain in Israel's hands.

The sources said this represented a shift by Egypt, not overt but implicit in Khalil's position. They said it was significant because when Egypt rejected the Israeli autonomy "model" last month, it had refused to consider even in principle that some "residual" powers would be retained by Israel after autonomy goes into effect.

Agreement in principle on the categorization of powers will enable the negotiators to discuss the issues in detail, the Israeli sources said. They denied a report in the Cairo newspaper Al-Ahram yesterday that agreement was reached on a package of 19 specific powers to be invested with the autonomous authority. The sources said that the talks had not yet advanced to that stage.

Marked Improvement In Personal Relations

The Israelis were also pleased by the marked improvement in their personal relationships with the Egyptians. At a dinner last Thursday night, Khalil offered a toast in which he praised Premier Menachem Begin as "a great leader like Sadat" and said of Burg, "I love him... I love him." This made a powerful impression on both the Israeli and American participants, as the Egyptian Prime Minister obviously spoke with sincerity. Israeli sources observed that it was now inconceivable that the autonomy talks would collapse in total failure.

The joint communique issued after the talks Friday was non-committal as to what transpired. It said: "In order to reach rapid agreement, it is necessary to accelerate the negotiations. It was therefore agreed that the working groups on powers and responsibilities would meet on an accelerated and intensified schedule."

BOMB EXPLOSION IN REHOVOT INJURES SIX

TEL AVIV, Feb. 3 (JTA) — A young mother and her three-year-old daughter were seriously injured and four other people were hurt when a bomb exploded on the main street in the center of Rehovot this morning. According to police, the bomb was placed in a garbage can near the local police station. Dozens of Arabs who were in Rehovot were rounded up for questioning, police said. Some of them were taken to the main Jerusalem police headquarters where they underwent a test to determine if they had handled any explosive devices. Today's bombing incident was the first in Rehovot.

BRITAIN SAYS PLO WILL HAVE TO BE INVOLVED IN MIDEAST PEACE PROCESS

By Maurice Samuelson

LONDON, Feb. 3 (JTA) — Britain is now giving its full support to the claim of the Palestine Liberation Organization to take part in a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. This emerged in a speech by Douglas Hurd, the Foreign Office Minister in charge of Middle East questions. He told a luncheon of the Middle East Association last week that while Britain did not regard the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, "no one should doubt that the PLO will have to be involved in the peace process."

Britain is doing so with the blessing of powerful forces in the ruling Conservative Party, led by former Prime Minister Edward Heath. In a lengthy foreign affairs debate in Parliament last week, Heath insisted that the key to the Middle East was the settlement of the Palestinian problem and he bemoaned the fact that "Europe has done absolutely nothing about it."

Heath, while expressing "full support" for the Israeli-Egyptian peace agreement, said he

regretted that the Middle East negotiations had been removed from the Geneva sphere, because there the Soviet Union was represented. Eventually it would be necessary to return to Geneva and obtain the commitment of the Soviet Union, he said.

Hurd's statement came little more than a month after he and Sir Ian Gilmour, the Deputy Foreign Minister, had met Farouk Kaddoumi, the PLO's foreign affairs spokesman, at a reception in the Syrian Embassy in London. That meeting led to protests from Jewish organizations which Hurd brushed aside, saying the meeting had been "the story of a cocktail party."

In fact, it is symptomatic of the increasingly pro-Arab course which Britain is steering as it tries to woo the whole Moslem world in the aftermath of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan.

Old Plan In New Garb

More precise advice to the British government came from Denis Walters, another Conservative MP, long known for his pro-Arab sympathies. He is also a close colleague of Gilmour, and his suggestions are unlikely to fall upon deaf ears.

Describing American partisanship for Israel as "wrong" and "dangerous," Walters said that "something must quickly replace the Camp David initiative quickly when it peters out on 26 May."

He added that possible European initiatives should include reviving the plan for a period of international control of the West Bank and Gaza, put forward in 1979. The final transfer of power to a "fully independent Palestinian government" could be associated with Jordan and the ending of the period of international trusteeship would be conditional on the new government acceding to the peace settlement entered into by Israel and other Arab States.

Walters even suggested resuscitating the 30-year-old Palestine Conciliation Commission consisting of the U.S., France and Turkey.

It remains to be seen how far Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher will allow her government to go along the present pro-PLO course. On the international level, she will be most reluctant to irritate or embarrass President Carter. She is also a tough opponent of terrorism and is sensitive to the views of Jewish voters in her North Finchley, London, constituency.

However, she has delegated a large degree of say over foreign policy to Lord Carrington, the Foreign Secretary, who is in the forefront of the Foreign Office's pro-Moslem campaign. In the foreign affairs debate in the Commons, Mrs.

Thatcher herself, while playing on the need for rapprochement between the West and Islam, made no reference to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

HEBRON UNDER TIGHT SECURITY

FOLLOWING MURDER OF YESHIVA STUDENT

By David Landau and Yitzhak Shargil

Jerusalem, Feb. 3 (JTA) — Hebron remained under tight curfew today in the aftermath of the murder of a yeshiva student there last Thursday. The victim was identified as Yehoshua Sloma, 23, originally from Denmark. He died of two gunshot wounds in the head and was buried in Jerusalem this afternoon. His identity had been withheld pending notification of his parents who live in England. They were persuaded by the military

authorities not to inter him in the ancient Jewish cemetery in Hebron for fear of further aggravating the tension there.

Mayor Fahed Kawassema of Hebron, a prominent West Bank leader, expressed "sorrow" over the killing. He suggested that personal motives may have been involved. Police investigating the murder report no progress so far.

Scattered incidents of violence erupted over the weekend between local Arabs and residents of Kiryat Arba, the Gush Emunim stronghold adjacent to Hebron where Sloma lived. Most of the clashes in and around Hebron involved stone-throwing, which Arabs and Jews accused each other of starting. Rubber tires were burned in the streets and the Abraham Avinu Synagogue in Hebron was stoned.

Three buses and a taxi carrying local workers back from their jobs in Israel Friday night were hijacked by armed men who robbed the passengers. One of the buses was abbed into a ditch. The hijackers fled before security forces arrived.

Man Acquitted Of Murder

In another development, a Jerusalem district court acquitted Ilan Tor, a Kiryat Arba resident, of charges of murder and attempted murder in the fatal shooting of a 17-year-old Arab schoolgirl during a riot on the Hebron-Jerusalem road last March. Tor, 30, and the father of five children, was accused of firing the fatal shot. But the court found that there was no conclusive proof that the girl was killed by bullets fired from his revolver. Other guns were fired during the melee.

Meanwhile the final evacuation of Elon Moreh was delayed by the refusal of the last four families and 10 single men to leave the Gush Emunim settlement declared illegal by the Supreme Court. Officials expressed hope that they would leave peacefully by tomorrow. Most of the Elon Moreh families moved to their new settlement at Djebil Kebir last week.

BYRD CAUTIONS ISRAEL NOT TO OPPOSE U.S. ARMS PACKAGE FOR EGYPT

By Joseph Polakoff

WASHINGTON, Feb. 3 (JTA) — Sen. Robert Byrd (D. W. Va.), the Senate majority leader, declared in a press interview that it would be "unwise" for Israel to oppose a proposed multi-billion dollar arms program for Egypt which includes F-16 jet fighters and other sophisticated U.S. military equipment.

In comments to a reporter here last Thursday, which were confirmed by Byrd's press secretary, the Senator said the Israelis should focus their energies on settling the autonomy issue. "As long as there is this West Bank autonomy program, our ability to cooperate with Arab countries in meeting the common danger of Soviet expansionism is hampered," he said. Byrd was a leader on obtaining Senate approval of the controversial arms package last year which provided weaponry for Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Israel.

Israeli sources here say they are not opposed to Egypt acquiring U.S. arms but question Egypt's need for F-16 fighters and wonder how Egypt would use them. The point is being made that Israel's concern is not what President Anwar Sadat would do with the F-16s and Phoenix missiles but that a more radical Egyptian government might use them against Israel.

Meanwhile, in his weekly news conference

at the Capitol yesterday, Byrd agreed with a reporter that Israel bore "a major responsibility" for the "slow pace" of the autonomy talks but added quickly that "all sides have a major responsibility. There is enough blame to go around."

The Senator, asked if Israel was primarily responsible for the slow pace, said "I don't think there is any doubt." When he was asked further if Israel is dragging its feet in the autonomy talks, Byrd, this time replied, "I was pleased to see in today's press that some progress has been made. It is vitally important for the security of Israel. In that connection, he said, "The sooner the parties can move to a rank autonomy, the better for the security of Israel. Asked if it is "primarily" Israel's fault, he replied: "I'm not going to lay it primarily at anyone's door."

WEIZMAN'S SUPPORT OF CARTER'S RE-ELECTION STIRS CONTROVERSY

JERUSALEM, Feb. 3 (JTA) — President Yitzhak Navon, in a rare political comment, has criticized Defense Minister Ezer Weizman for his repeated public endorsements of the re-election of President Carter. He told Jewish leaders from the United States and Canada, who are here for the 1980 Israel Bonds Prime Ministers conference, that Weizman's deprecatory remarks on Israel television last week about Democratic challenger Sen. Edward Kennedy (D. Mass.) had been a "grievous mistake."

Israel's Presidents do not usually take part in political controversies. Navon's comments came Friday when one of the Bonds delegates shouted, "We will replace Carter." Navon replied that "unlike our Minister of Defense I do not meddle in American politics. I'm sorry, but it was a grievous mistake...."

Weizman, who was criticized both in Israel and the United States after he expressed the hope during his recent visit to the U.S. that Carter would be re-elected, stirred up the controversy again last week when he said that Kennedy had not done anything for Israel and would not be elected President.

Mann Deplores Weizman's Intrusion

(In New York, Theodore Mann, chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, issued a statement declaring he deplored "Weizman having "once again intruded himself into the American political process." Mann said that Weizman "correctly praises President Carter for his unforgettable role in the achievement of peace between Israel and Egypt but the criticism Mr. Weizman has expressed of Senator Kennedy is entirely unfounded and unwarranted. Senator Kennedy's long and distinguished record as a staunch supporter of Israel's cause is unimpeachable."

(Mann said Weizman was incorrect when he said that Kennedy had not bothered to say "a good word" throughout the Camp David negotiations and that only now does he have anything favorable to say about Israel. Mann cited, as one example, a statement by Kennedy on Sept. 18, 1978 that "The Camp David agreements represent a major milestone in the 30-year quest for peace in the Middle East. President Carter, Prime Minister (Menachem) Begin and President (Anwar) Sadat deserve the congratulations of all the people's of the world for the good will, hard work and willingness to compromise which has produced

this monumental achievement."

(Noting that Weizman may be correct or incorrect in his prediction that Carter will be re-elected, Mann stressed that by making public his prediction, Mr. Weizman has at the same time denigrated those other aspirants for America's highest office—Republicans as well as Democrats—who by their support of Israel's cause have continued the tradition of American bipartisan effort in Israel's behalf so essential to the security of the Jewish State.)

Evron Critical Of Mann

(In Washington, Israeli Ambassador Ephraim Evron has questioned the appropriateness of the disapproval of Weizman expressed by the Presidents Conference, the Jewish Telegraphic Agency was informed by an Israeli source today. In a conversation with Mann, Evron reportedly said the Presidents Conference was not justified in criticizing Weizman in the way it did. The source said Evron did not enter into a discussion with Mann regarding the Presidential election campaign here but merely spoke of the Presidents Conference's criticism of Weizman.)

HANNA ROVINA DEAD AT 90

TEL AVIV, Feb. 3 (JTA) — Hanna Rovina, the first lady of the Hebrew theater, died last night at the age of 90. Funeral services will be held here tomorrow.

Rovina was one of the founders of the Habimah Theater in Moscow in 1917 and then came to Tel Aviv with the Habimah in 1928. She continued to be one of its leading actors until suffering a stroke last year. Her most memorable role was that of Leah in "The Dybbuk," which she created in 1923 and continued to play until 1963.

Born in Minsk in October, 1889, she started out to be a kindergarten teacher. She was supervisor of an institute for refugee children in Samtovo before moving to Moscow in 1916 to study acting with Stanislavsky. Rovina received many honors and decorations during her long career in Israel.

SHAMIR'S APPOINTMENT AS FM POSTPONED

JERUSALEM, Feb. 3, (JTA) — The scheduled appointment of Knesset Speaker Yitzhak Shamir as Foreign Minister today has been postponed until the "status of the Liberals in the government is improved," Premier Menachem Begin promised a delegation of the Liberal Party several days ago. The Liberals demanded that more government portfolios be given to their representatives, and Begin agreed in principle. Details have to be worked out.

Ever since the resignation of Simcha Ehrlich as Finance Minister the Liberals no longer hold an influential portfolio in the Cabinet. Originally they wanted one of their representatives appointed Foreign Minister after Moshe Dayan resigned four months ago, but they were unable to come up with a suitable candidate.

The Liberals presently hold four portfolios: Deputy Premier (Ehrlich), Industry (Gideon Patt), Energy (Yitzhak Modai), and Minister-Without-Portfolio (Moshe Nissim). Herut holds the portfolios of Premiership, Defense (Ezer Weizman), Construction and Housing (David Levy) and Transportation (Haim Landau). Shamir is also a member of Herut.

SPECIAL TO THE JTA STRATEGY DEVELOPED TO PROTECT RIGHTS OF OBSERVANT STUDENTS

By Ben Gallob

NEW YORK, Feb. 3 (JTA) — The threat of a drastic cut in the number of alternative dates on which Saturday Sabbath observers can take state-wide college entrance examinations led the National Jewish Commission on Law and Public Affairs (COLPA) to develop a two-pronged strategy to protect the rights of such observant students. Howard Zuckerman, COLPA president, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

One effort has been to negotiate with two major testing agencies, the College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB), which administers the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), and with the Law Schools Admissions Council (LSAC) which administers the Law Schools Admission Test (LSAT).

Both agencies have warned that, in response to requirements in the new New York State Truth in Testing, they will have to make severe cuts in the number of Sunday and Monday alternate test days. Zuckerman said the negotiations has resulted in one additional test date, as an interim action, to the deeply reduced numbers of alternate Test dates the two agencies said they would have to institute.

The other effort is a bill, drafted with COLPA assistance and introduced in both the New York State Assembly and the Senate, which would mandate an alternate date for Sabbath observers for all higher education standardized tests, including the SAT and the LSAT, which are given only on Saturdays. The Admission Testing Law, which became effective last August and which is popularly known as the Truth in Testing Law, requires that within 30 days following the grading of such standardized tests, questions used in the test must be made public.

The testing agencies said the law would force them to reduce drastically the number of alternate dates for Sabbath observers because the agencies are barred by the new law from re-use of previously used test questions.

Prior Testing Dates

Prior to adoption of the Truth in Testing Law, the CEEB gave each year seven Saturday tests and seven alternate dates. The LSAC gave five tests throughout the year with five alternate Sunday or Monday dates. In 1979, for example, the CEEB held SAT tests in January, March, May, June, September, November and December, each followed by an alternate date for Sabbath observers. The LSAC held LSAT exams in February, April, June, October and December with five alternate dates.

The CEEB responded to the new law by announcing it would omit the regular January test and reduce the number of alternate dates to two in May and June. The LSAC declared it would continue its five Saturday tests each year but would reduce alternate dates from five to one in December.

Zuckerman said COLPA acted in behalf of Yeshiva University; Yeshiva High School Principals Council of Greater New York; Agudath Israel of America; Young Israel; the Rabbinical Council of America; Torah Umesorah; the National Council of Yeshiva Principals; the National Association

of Hebrew Day School PTAs; and the Educators Council of New York.

Three representatives of the Principals Council — Rabbi David Weinbach, Dr. Joseph Preil, and Ruth Ritterband — and Zuckerman and Dennis Rapps, COLPA executive director, met on Jan. 21 in the CEEB office with Al Simms, CEEB vice-president. With the January SAT examination dropped, negotiations centered on the first 1980 test, on March 22. Zuckerman said Simms agreed to an alternate SAT test date on March 23, a Sunday.

Efforts With State Legislators

Zuckerman also reported that the LSAC agreed to provide an alternate date on the night of Saturday, Feb. 2, which he said COLPA had accepted as an interim offer.

The other COLPA effort was to arrange with Assemblyman Sheldon Silver, Manhattan Democrat and with State Senators Kenneth La Valle, Suffolk Republican, and Donald Halperin, Brooklyn Democrat, to introduce in the Legislature the COLPA-drafted bill which would require that whenever a higher education standardized test is given in the state on a Saturday, the testing agency would provide an alternate date for Sabbath observers.

Rapps said the bill covers all standardized tests, including not only the SAT and LSAT but also the Graduate Record Examination and the medical school admissions tests. Both the CEEB and the LSAC have been meeting with legislators in an effort to amend the Truth in Testing Law to reduce the number of tests to be made public and a lesser number of questions in the remaining tests to be made public.

Zuckerman said COLPA had assurances that the COLPA bill would be approved and signed into law but that the outlook was for adoption of the COLPA bill as a separate measure or its inclusion as part of a package of amendments to the Truth in Testing Law. The amendments, he said, would incorporate agreements expected to be reached on a reduction of the number of tests and questions to be published.

Assured Of Early Adoption

Zuckerman explained that while COLPA had assurance of early adoption of its bill, COLPA had sought the additional alternate tests dates in February and March because of possible delays arising from negotiations with state legislators on reduction of the number of tests and questions in examinations which must be made public.

Another reason, he said, was that there are cutoff dates for registration for the SAT and LSAT, and COLPA wanted to assure enough time for registration. He said that legislative action was expected on the COLPA measure, either as a separate measure or as part of an amendments package.

Rapps also commented on a recent federal ruling in Albany, barring application of the Truth in Testing Law to medical school entrance examinations until a ruling was made on the constitutionality of the law. Rapps said the ruling had been widely but erroneously reported as declaring that law to be unconstitutional.

JERUSALEM (JTA) — A group of 15 Knesseters is currently preparing a bill which would call for imposing Israeli law on the Golan Heights.