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LINOWITZ: AUTONOMY TALKS CAN BE CONCLUDED IN SHORT ORDER BECAUSE THERE ARE NO INSOLUBLE PROBLEMS

By Gil Sedar

JERUSALEM, Dec. 18 (JTA) — U.S. special Ambassador Sol Linowitz ended his final Middle East mission for President Carter here today on an optimistic note. He said the West Bank-Gaza autonomy talks could be concluded successfully "in a fairly short order" because there are no insoluble problems. He also read a joint statement by Premier Menachem Begin and President Anwar Sadat in which they pledged to negotiate "in good faith in order to conclude the negotiations at the earliest possible date."

Linowitz spent two days in Israel during which he had a lengthy discussion with Begin to review the 13 months of autonomy talks between Israel, Egypt and the U.S. He held similar discussions with Sadat in Cairo before coming here. At his farewell press conference today he did not entirely exclude the possibility that he might continue the mission under the Reagan Administration.

Telling reporters that he would meet with Reagan as soon as he returns to the U.S., Linowitz said "I will make it clear to the President-elect that this job must be undertaken by a person who is very close to the President and enjoys his full confidence." He said that part of what he achieved as the American representative in the autonomy talks was due to the fact that the local parties knew he had the confidence of the President.

In their joint statement, Begin and Sadat expressed the "firm conviction that the Camp David process is the only viable path toward comprehensive peace in the Middle East today." Linowitz shared that view and observed, "If there is a determination of both countries to conclude the talks successfully -- as I sense to be the case today -- this can be done in fairly short order."

'Subsidiary Issues' Cleared Away

He said that in recent months, the negotiators cleared away the "subsidiary issues" leaving the toughest questions open, but there are no insoluble problems. He declined to specify what modifications were made in the positions of the negotiating parties but stressed that important progress was made. He said that Israel, for example, changed its stance on several autonomy issues such as water resources, public land, political prisoners and security provisions. He did not elaborate.

Linowitz dismissed the Middle East initiative of the European Economic Community (EEC) countries as "an alternative without an avenue." He will meet with a top EEC diplomat, British Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington, in London before he returns to the U.S.

The joint Begin-Sadat statement ended with expressions of thanks to President Carter "for the part he and his advisors played in helping us to

move forward in our quest for peace in the Middle East." The two leaders also expressed gratitude to President-elect Reagan for his promise that the U.S. would remain committed to the Camp David process.

HADDAD'S MILITIA RAID TERROR BASES

By Gil Sedar

JERUSALEM, Dec. 18 (JTA) — The forces of Maj. Saad Haddad, the head of the Christian militia in south Lebanon, last night launched an unprecedented raid on a number of Palestine Liberation Organization bases in United Nations-controlled areas in south Lebanon.

The militia attacked six villages in the strip controlled by the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) along the Israel-Lebanon border area from the east all the way west to the Mediterranean. Eight terrorists and their collaborators were killed and 12 houses were blown up. The houses were used by the terrorists as staging posts for raids into Israel or in the villages in the border area controlled by Haddad's militia.

At one of the targets, in the village of Barashit, the militia encountered PLO terrorists inside the houses. A militia spokesman said that in the fight which developed eight terrorists were killed. The militia suffered no casualties. Barashit is in the area controlled by the Irish commander of UNIFIL.

Retaliation For Increased PLO Activity

Haddad said the raid was held in retaliation for an increase in PLO activity against the south Lebanese population. Their villages have been shelled, there was increased PLO infiltration, and mines had been planted on local roads. Last week three south Lebanese citizens were killed when their vehicle went over a mine. In addition, the PLO recently began confiscating farm produce sent by the villagers for marketing in Beirut and even kidnapped farmers at roadblocks, Haddad charged. Some of them were held for several days and were released only when Haddad shelled PLO bases.

Israel estimates that there are over 700 PLO terrorists inside the UNIFIL buffer zone in addition to some 6000 terrorists just to the north. Haddad charged that the terrorists were operating under the umbrella of UNIFIL protection. UNIFIL denies this charge and said it had been intercepting PLO activity regularly. Only last Sunday, a spokesman noted, UNIFIL stopped 16 terrorists and disarmed them.

PERES WINS RESOUNDING VICTORY OVER RABIN IN LABOR PARTY ELECTIONS

By David Landau

TEL AVIV, Dec. 18 (JTA) — Shimon Peres won a resounding victory over Yitzhak Rabin at the Labor Party convention here today, confirming him as party leader and its candidate for Prime Minister in next year's elections. The 2123 delegates who cast ballots for Peres gave him a fraction under 70 percent of the 2026 votes cast against about 28 percent for former Premier Rabin, his only challenger.

In his victory speech, Peres urged the party to forget about the contest just ended and unite

and mobilize for the "real challenge—beating Likud. I ask you all to forget 70 percent and 28 percent. We are 100 percent." Peres declared to thunderous applause. He placed great emphasis on unity within Labor ranks, calling for a "massive majority" in support of its leadership.

The greater the majority, the smaller the danger of "factionalism" in the party, he said. "If we are to ask the nation for a clear majority (in the Knesset elections) let us not smash the majority in our own camp." If a new Labor government hopes to be free of dependence on other parties, it must be free of dependence on internal factions within its own party, Peres said.

This was seen as a pointed warning to Rabin supporters to close ranks and not attempt to form a separate "camp" within the Labor Party's institutions. Rabin, in a terse statement to the convention, said he "accepts and respects" the decision of the delegates. He reiterated his pledge "that the party will emerge from this convention whole and united."

But the former Premier was widely criticized by convention delegates for his failure to shake hands with Peres or to mention him — much less congratulate him — in his speech. Peres, in contrast, walked over to Rabin and demonstratively shook his hand before he began his speech.

While Peres' margin of victory exceeded the expectations of his supporters — they would have considered 65 percent a substantial success — political observers said his 70 percent majority did not constitute a landslide but was solid enough to enable him to exclude Rabin from his future leadership team and from his Cabinet should Labor triumph in the next elections. According to the experts, Peres should refuse point blank to negotiate for power positions with the "Rabin camp" as a camp.

Peres Faces His First Test

The first test of his ability and determination to consolidate his victory will begin tonight when the convention commences the complex and arduous procedure of electing the party's new 701-member Central Committee, its key policy-making body between conventions. Peres supporters were insisting that the Rabin group cannot claim representation in precise proportion to the 28.8 percent of the vote garnered by their man.

Peres' lieutenants argued that the Kibbutz Hameuchad movement, as a bloc, and other elements of the "Rabin camp" would be fairly represented in the Central Committee as individuals or as local groups. But the "Rabin camp" as such must now disband, they said.

Peres' victory speech and his keynote speech at the convention meeting last night were acknowledged even by his critics to have been among his best. He reviewed his many years of service to the Labor movement and the government, dwelling especially on his tenure as Defense Minister.

He spoke of Labor's rejuvenation since its massive electoral defeat at the hands of Likud three years ago. He emphasized his plans for encouraging "sophisticated science-based industries" in Israel to provide employment for hundreds of thousands of newcomers and veterans and

and to reduce the nation's foreign debts and its dependency on foreign oil.

Rabin's speech was also well received. It was mainly a programmatic review of national policy and national needs. He dwelt on the merits of the Allon plan, advanced by the late Foreign Minister Yigal Allon as a compromise settlement on the West Bank.

REPRESENTATIVES FROM WORLD SOCIALIST PARTIES, INCLUDING EGYPT, AT LABOR PARTY CONFER

By David Landau

TEL AVIV, Dec. 18 (JTA) — A large number of foreign visitors from "sister Socialist parties" in various parts of the world joined Israel Labor Party leaders on the dais at the party convention. Two of them, Egypt's former Premier Mustapha Khalil and Butros Ghali, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, representing President Anwar Sadat's National Democratic Party, contrived to arrive in Israel late last night to avoid attending the convention opening in Jerusalem. The convention transferred to Tel Aviv this morning and they were present.

Other visitors included Francois Mitterand, the French Socialist leader who represented the Socialist International. The foreign guests included a high-ranking minister from Rumania, another from Sierra Leone and an exile Chilean Socialist leader. There were delegates representing all Western European Socialist parties. Mario Suarez of Portugal was unable to attend at the last minute because he was slightly injured in an automobile accident.

President Yitzhak Navon attended the convention opening, as he does the convention openings of all of Israel's political parties. Although his office is non-political and he is barred from making statements favoring any particular faction, he told the Laborites, "I wish that you emerge whole in body and spirit from this convention."

Mapam Secretary General Victor Shemtov exhorted Labor to "unite, conciliate, join hands here and now." His plea was echoed by Histadrut Secretary General Yeruham Meshel who warned that the nation "will not forgive us" if Labor misses its chance to change the government.

FINAL SETTLEMENT REACHED WITH ISRAEL ON U.S. CLAIMS RESULTING FROM ISRAEL'S ACTION IN 1967 AGAINST THE USS LIBERTY

By Joseph Polakoff

WASHINGTON, Dec. 18 (JTA) — A final settlement of U.S. claims resulting from action by Israel's armed forces 13 years ago during the Six-Day War against the American naval vessel, USS Liberty, has been made with U.S. government acceptance of Israel's proposal to pay \$6 million for damage to the ship.

Making this announcement today, the State Department said Israel will pay three annual installments of \$2 million each, beginning next January 15 "as final settlement of the U.S. claims for compensation for damage to the USS Liberty."

The State Department said "The government of Israel paid in full in 1968 the U.S. claim for \$3,323,000 on behalf of the families of the crewmen who were killed in the incident." In addition, "in 1969, the government of Israel paid in full the U.S. claim for \$3,452,275 for injuries sustained by members of the Liberty's crew."

The ship was damaged by Israeli fighter aircraft on June 8, 1967 while off the Sinai coast and the Egyptian town of El-Arish which was being shelled

in the course of the Six-Day War. American casualties were 34 dead and 75 wounded. The Liberty's naval role was that of a communications monitor, sometimes known as a "spy ship."

Since reports have cropped up from time to time in the media here and abroad, often sensationalized, that Israel deliberately attacked the Liberty, questions were raised today when State Department spokesman John Trittner announced the final settlement. "The incident was thoroughly investigated in 1967 by the U.S. Navy," Trittner said. "The government of Israel immediately accepted responsibility" and attributed the actions to "error and confusion." Trittner added that the State Department "has no information it was a deliberate attack."

He noted that a Navy "court of inquiry" concluded that it has insufficient information to make a judgement about the reasons for the Israeli action. The transcript of the court of inquiry has been made available to the public for some time.

The Israeli Government's View

The Israel government has consistently pointed out since the incident took place that in the fighting in Sinai, Israeli forces took the Liberty to be a hostile warship since it had no clear identification signs and wore gray paint and since neutral shipping had been warned to stay out of that eastern Mediterranean area. Upon realizing that the Liberty was American, Israeli forces helped in the rescue efforts and the government of Israel immediately apologized to the U.S. and expressed condolences to the families of the casualties.

A spokesperson at the Israel Embassy here told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency today that "The Israeli official commission of inquiry reached a conclusion that erroneous identification of the Liberty as an enemy warship was not due to Israeli negligence but because of the absence of clear markings on the Liberty as an American ship."

Observers here noted that the Liberty, a converted World War II freighter of the "Victory" type, had a distinctive silhouette. A number of "Victory" type freighters were purchased by Egypt after the war and employed in its merchant marine.

Report To Congress Due

Trittner said that a claims settlement "does not normally require the approval of Congress" but that "the Department will make a report shortly" to Congress. "In addition, we have already contacted appropriate Congressional committees to inform them about this settlement," he said.

Trittner disclosed that the U.S. Navy's claim for damage to the Liberty was between \$7.5 million. The ship was retired from service however and the repairs were never made. Consequently, the U.S. accepted the lower figure proposed by Israel.

Final negotiations over the ship damage claims were made some weeks ago when Israeli Ambassador Ephraim Evron took up the matter with Vice President Walter Mondale, the JTA was informed. After exchanges held at the State Department and after Israel's proposal was

brought to President Carter's attention, they were accepted in formal documentation by the State Department.

ANTI-SEMITISM IN ARGENTINA

NEW YORK, Dec. 18 (JTA) — "Isolated acts" of anti-Semitism do not reflect the feelings of the government or people of Argentina and are "contrary to the country's national tradition," Interior Minister General Albano Harguindeguy told leading Jewish community representatives in Buenos Aires last week.

The meeting between the minister and top officials of the DAIA, the umbrella agency of the Argentine Jewish community headed by Dr. Mario Gorenstein, is part of a permanent, on-going dialogue Jewish leadership conducts with government officials on matters of Jewish concern, according to Jacob Kovadloff, Director of the American Jewish Committee's Latin American Department. Kovadloff has just returned from a swing through South American Jewish communities on behalf of the AJC Committee.

Some weeks ago, Gen. Jorge Videla, in an interview with an Israeli newspaper, tended to minimize anti-Semitic incidents brought to his attention, Kovadloff said. "Our meetings have not given us full satisfaction," Gorenstein declared before the DAIA just a few days ago in discussing the rise in anti-Semitism in Argentina over the past several months.

Observers in Argentina are hopeful for significant improvement both in official Argentine reaction to anti-Semitism and on human rights issues, Kovadloff said, when Gen. Roberto Viola takes over as the nation's president next March 20. The DAIA leadership had the opportunity to meet with Viola some time ago, Kovadloff reported.

In their encounters with Viola and Harguindeguy, DAIA leaders complained sharply about the airing of a virulently anti-Jewish program on the "Videoshow" television series and the desecration of a Jewish cemetery as illustrations of the recent spurt in anti-Semitic activity that had to be combatted.

It is encouraging to note, Kovadloff said, that leading Argentine newspapers such as "Clarín," "La Prensa" and "La Nación," major Catholic groups and the Argentine Bar Association have shown spontaneous solidarity and support for Jewish communal denunciations of anti-Semitism. The community is disappointed, however, Kovadloff reported, that Argentine trade unions and leading political figures have failed to express such support.

The call of Jewish communal leadership for active prosecution and punishment of anti-Semitic acts followed an upsurge of anti-Semitic publications in Argentina. Last July, too, there were bomb attacks on several Jewish schools, fortunately without casualties.

One of the most vicious anti-Semitic publications is the neo-Nazi magazine "Papeles," issued by the Aryan Nationalist Integral Party. This was supposed to be banned by the government following an earlier meeting between DAIA leadership and the Minister of Interior but the ban never was announced and Papeles continues to appear.

While Argentinian Jewish leaders can and do speak out forcefully in the name of the community on issues directly affecting Jews, Kovadloff declared, they feel they can intervene only as individuals when it comes to political and other matters that divide the entire country. Misunderstanding of this position, he said, is probably at the root of charges of inaction sometimes leveled against Argentine Jewish community leaders from abroad.

LATEST PAPAL ENCYCLICAL CRITICIZED

NEW YORK, Dec. 18 (JTA) — The American Jewish Congress has voiced "surprise and disappointment" at a statement in Pope John Paul II's recent Encyclical that it says "misrepresents" the Biblical injunction of "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth."

Henry Siegman, executive director of the AJCongress, took objection to a passage in the Pope's "Divis in Misericordia," issued Dec. 2, which calls the Old Testament injunction a "distortion of justice." In a letter to Msgr. Jorge Mejia of the Vatican's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, Siegman expressed hope that "the necessary steps will be taken to clarify and correct this passage."

The passage stated: "Not in vain did Christ challenge his listeners, faithful to the doctrine of the Old Testament, for their attitude which was manifested in the words: 'an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' This was the form of distortion of justice at that time; and today's forms continue to be modeled on it."

Inconsistency Noted

This passage, Siegman said, "is entirely inconsistent with the other passages in the Encyclical dealing with the Old Testament. It is also inconsistent with both the letter and spirit of the Vatican 'Guidelines for the Implementation of Nostra Aetate' of 1975, which represented so important an advance in Catholic-Jewish relations."

The Guidelines, Siegman noted, urge that Catholics not set "the Old Testament and the Jewish tradition founded upon it... against the New Testament in such a way that the former seems to constitute a religion of only justice, fear and legalism, with no appeal to the love of God and neighbor."

But, he continued, "this is precisely what this passage seems to do. More important, this passage misrepresents the Judaism of the time of Jesus, which in fact understood and interpreted the Biblical 'eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth' to require monetary compensation for injury inflicted on one's fellow man. Indeed, there is no evidence that it was ever interpreted in Judaism to require or to permit inflicting physical injury."

OVERLAND TRANSPORT OF GOODS BETWEEN ISRAEL, EGYPT GETTING OFF TO A VERY SLOW START

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Dec. 18 (JTA) — The overland transport of goods between Israel and Egypt, hailed as a great step forward in the process of normalization of relations between the two countries, is getting off to a very slow start.

Under arrangements completed recently, the Neot Sinai transit point was due to have started operation on Monday with goods transhipped from Israeli to Egyptian trucks in a back-to-back operation at the border crossing point. While Israel was ready to allow Egyptian trucks and cars to circulate in Israel, like vehicles from other parts of the world shipped here by sea or air ferries, Egyptian law does not allow for movement of non-Egyptian vehicles inside Egypt.

However, the first planned shipment, of 20 tons of Israel-made paper, due to have made the crossing Monday was postponed until today. It has now again been put off by the Egyptians, probably until next Monday. A load of Israel-grown bananas due to have been shipped today was also postponed until Monday.

While road shipments are still being held up, freight movement by air is beginning to work well. It consists mainly of hatching eggs and chicks flown by both El Al and the Egyptian Nefertiti Airline.

KAHANE, RELEASED FROM JAIL, BARRED FROM ENTERING TECHNION

HAIFA, Dec. 18 (JTA) — Rabbi Meir Kahane, founder and former leader of the Jewish Defense League in the U.S. and now head of the ultra-nationalist "Kach" (Thus) movement, was last night barred from entering the Technion here.

But Kahane, who was this week released from jail after serving seven months for inciting violence on the West Bank and trespassing on the Hebrew University campus in Jerusalem, made an inflammatory speech to television cameras and security and student union representatives outside the Technion campus gate on Mount Carmel.

He hailed the expulsion of West Bank Arab mayors, Fahd Kawasme of Hebron and Mohammed Milhim of Halhoul, and physical attacks on others, saying he still felt that all Arabs should be removed, both from Israel and from the West Bank. Kahane and his followers some time ago launched a campaign to raise funds to pay Arabs to leave their homes.

He appealed last night to students to elect him to the Knesset so that he could speak out freely without danger of arrest for incitement to violence. Kahane was released from jail by Premier Menachem Begin, acting as Defense Minister.

SHOSTAK PRAISES AUTOPSY LAW

NEW YORK, Dec. 18 (JTA) — Eliezer Shostak, Israel's Minister of Health, told the American Friends of Kiryat Sanz Laniado Hospital this week that the new anatomy and pathology bill which calls for strict adherence to halacha in performing autopsies which was recently passed by the Knesset was a "good law" and would not hinder the development of medicine in Israel. He assured the 500 people attending the American Friends' annual dinner that there will be "no damage" to medical research by allowing the family of the deceased the final say regarding autopsy.

Shostak, who was the guest of honor of the American Friends which presented him with an award citing him as a "humanitarian, statesman and protector of the sanctity of life," asserted that the standard of health care in Israel is high mainly because of "the devotion of its medical personnel."

The minister, who came to the U.S. especially to attend the community-wide dinner highlighting the achievements of Kiryat Sanz Laniado Hospital in Netanya which opened in 1976, praised the dedication and work of Rabbi S. L. Halberstam of Sanz, the founder of the hospital, because the rabbi established a hospital where medical practice and halacha work in harmony. Shostak also cited Halberstam's plan to increase research in the study of childless couples. "We need people," the minister said, and Israel is in need of an increased birth rate which he termed "Internal gliya."