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GUR SAYS ISRAEL SHOULD AVOID BY ALL MEANS A CONFRONTATION WITH SYRIAN ARMED FORCES IN LEBANON

By Gil Segan

JERUSALEM, Dec. 22 (JTA) — Gen. Mordechai Gur, former Chief of Staff of Israel's armed forces, said yesterday that Israel should avoid by all means a confrontation with Syrian armed forces in Lebanon. Gur, who appeared on a television interview, was referring to the deaths of three Syrian soldiers and the wounding of two others during an Israeli attack on terrorist positions in south Lebanon last Thursday night.

Gur said it was possible to engage in anti-terrorist operations in Lebanon without complicating the situation with Syria. He said he doubted that the Israeli forces which took part in Thursday's operation had intended to make contact with the Syrians. "In the future, we shall simply have to be more careful both in the selection of targets and the measures taken in connection with the operation," Gur said.

Israel expressed regret yesterday over the Syrian casualties and stressed that the Syrian soldiers had been outside the area where the Syrian army — the Arab peacekeeping force in Lebanon — normally operates when they were hit. Deputy Defense Minister Mordechai Zipori said "Israel wants to avoid a conflict with its neighbors. Our encounter is with the terrorists only."

Meanwhile, the Israeli soldier killed in Thursday's action was buried at the military cemetery in Holon yesterday afternoon. He was Nachman Zion, 20, a corporal, who was fatally wounded when his unit stormed a terrorist outpost. Thousands attended the funeral in support of the bereaved family, whose two other sons died ten years ago of kidney disease. Nachman was killed only a month before he was scheduled to leave his active unit and complete his military service as a member of the Nahal para-military unit at Kibbutz Nitzanim.

SWISS PROTESTANT GROUP GETS 5845 SIGNATURES ON PETITION FAVORING JERUSALEM AS A UNITED CAPITAL

GENEVA, Dec. 22 (JTA) — A Swiss Protestant group from Zurich that calls itself "Swiss Israel Shalom" announced here today that it has obtained 5845 signatures on a petition to be presented to the Swiss Government calling for the recognition of Jerusalem as the undivided capital of Israel.

It also calls on the Swiss authorities to be true to their policy of neutrality and close the Palestine Liberation Organization office in Geneva and expel the PLO delegate to the United Nations in Geneva, David Barakat. Most of the signatures were collected following Sunday service in Protestant churches in Switzerland.

One of the initiators of the petition told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that most of the signatures were from non-Jews and that young people were the ones who signed most readily. He added that many others were willing to sign the part relating to the closure of the PLO office but were reluctant to sign the part on Jerusalem.

COURT RULES THAT CONTENTS OF A MAGAZINE BY AUSTRIAN SPORTS GROUP FITS DEFINITION OF FASCIST

VIENNA, Dec. 22 (JTA) — The contents of a magazine published by a leading Austrian sports organization fits the definition of fascist, a Vienna press court decided last week. The ruling ended a two-year libel suit brought by the Oesterreichischer Turnerbund (OETB) against the Communist daily Volksstimme for labeling the magazine, Bundesturnzeitung, a neo-fascist publication. The OETB is one of the three largest sports clubs in the country.

The court stated that the magazine not only propagates nationalistic ideas but can reasonably be called outright fascist. The court defined fascism as the principle of absolute leadership; rejection of parliamentary democracy; militarism; racism; and nationalism.

In several issues, the Bundesturnzeitung published reviews of books that tried to excuse Nazi crimes, make Nazi war criminals appear as martyrs and accused the Allied nations of cruel and unjust acts during World War II. Several articles in the magazine glorified Nazi military leaders and political personalities of the Third Reich, the court said.

STATE DEPARTMENT OFFERS MILD CRITICISM OF PLO ATTACK ON UNIFIL

By Joseph Polakoff

WASHINGTON, Dec. 22 (JTA) — The Palestine Liberation Organization's attack yesterday, with Soviet weapons, on elements of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), was mildly criticized today by the State Department which had taken a harsh line against the Christian forces in south Lebanon last summer for firing on UN troops.

Asked by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency for comment, the Department's chief spokesman, John Trattner, replied, "We don't like interference, much less firing, on UNIFIL." James Holger, political advisor to UNIFIL Commander Lt. Gen. Emanuel Enskine, said the PLO fired 46 rounds, including 26 Soviet-made Katyusha rocket shells, at Norwegian and Ghanaian UNIFIL battalions in south Lebanon. He said there were no casualties and that the UNIFIL command had protested to PLO headquarters in Beirut.

Last summer, after Maj. Saad Haddad's Christian forces, which are supported by Israel, fired on UNIFIL troops, the State Department branded Haddad's militia as "brigands" and used some of the bitterest language publicly heard at the State Department since the Viet Nam war.

When the JTA asked Trattner today if he would use the same language about the PLO, he refused, saying that the State Department would be "taking sides" if it did.

Asked about the Syrian attack on two Lebanese villages in the area controlled by Haddad's forces and the Syrian battering of the Christian-dominated town of Zahli, Trattner said "We have a humanitarian concern for civilians in the area." Asked if he would condemn Syria, Trattner replied that the State Department "opposes violence in Lebanon

from any source." He said, "I won't make a specific condemnation to satisfy this side or the other."

CABINET DECIDES NOT TO SUPPORT KNESSET BILL CALLING FOR THE ANNEXATION OF GOLAN HEIGHTS

By Gil Sedan and Hugh Orgel

JERUSALEM, Dec. 22 (JTA) — The Cabinet has decided not to support a Knesset bill calling for annexation of the Golan Heights. A majority of the ministers voted to ask the Knesset to kill the measure when it is formally submitted by its author, Geyla Cohen of the ultra-nationalist Tehiya faction, on Wednesday. Cabinet Secretary Arye Naor told reporters after the Cabinet meeting that the government felt that the proposed bill would not change the security situation but would cause Israel political embarrassment. The U.S. and other friendly countries have been urging the government not to back the bill. U.S. special Ambassador Solomon Linowitz publicly cautioned against it when he was in Jerusalem last week.

Last Friday, the U.S. State Department declared, with reference to the Golan bill, "Our view has been and remains that the annexation of the Golan Heights or in fact any of the territories occupied by Israel in the 1967 war would be contrary to United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 on which the Camp David accords and all Middle East peace negotiations since 1967 have been based." The statement added that "a move to annex would be profoundly disruptive to our joint efforts with others in the area to achieve a comprehensive Middle East peace."

Cabinet sources reported that several ministers had stressed that annexation of the Golan now would rule out the possibility of peace negotiations with Syria at a later date. Some said it would bolster support for President Hafez Assad of Syria in the Arab world which is beginning to cool toward him because of his close ties with the Soviet Union.

Naor repeated Israel's position that the Golan Heights must remain in its hands for security reasons and that its future status should be decided in eventual peace talks with Syria. Meanwhile, he said, Israeli settlements on the Golan Heights should be increased and existing settlements strengthened.

Main Support For The Bill

The main support for Cohen's bill comes from the Golan settlers and the various kibbutz movements that represent them. The opposition Labor Party came under considerable pressure from its kibbutz movements at its national convention last week to back annexation. The party's stand to date has been equivocal. Victor Shemtov, chairman of Mapam, Labor's alignment partner, warned party chairman Shimon Peres yesterday that if Labor votes for the Golan bill, an alignment crisis would be inevitable.

Before the Cabinet decision, Likud had not formulated a position. Representatives of the religious settlements on the Golan were scheduled to meet today with the National Religious Party's Knesset faction to urge them to support the bill.

Cabinet sources said the Likud coalition would probably seek a discussion with Labor for a joint position on the Golan bill. Cohen, who

also authored the controversial Jerusalem Law, passed by the Knesset last July is expected to press her Golan bill.

SURPRISE DELAY IN THE ABU-HATZEIRA PROCEEDINGS

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Dec. 22 (JTA) — Attorney General Yitzhak Zamir dropped a bombshell in the Knesset's House Committee today, delaying for at least two weeks its decision over whether to remove the immunity of Religious Affairs Minister Aharon Abu-Hatzeira who has been indicted on three counts of bribe-taking.

The committee, which was expected to act today, was thrown into confusion by a letter from Zamir charging that the police "used trickery" in building its case against the minister. The Attorney General, who had been pressing hard for a waiver of immunity in order to bring Abu-Hatzeira to trial and seemed at the point of getting it, said he did not know beforehand of the alleged "trickery" and did not explain its exact nature.

In his letter, read by committee chairman Moshe Meiron, Zamir said the police resorted to a trick to persuade former B'nei Brak Mayor Yisrael Gottlieb, to turn state's evidence against Abu-Hatzeira. Gottlieb is the prosecution's chief witness. He was reportedly convinced to testify by a police emissary who was a personal friend and used Gottlieb's trust in him to overcome his reluctance to testify. A recording of the police emissary's conversation with Gottlieb will be turned over to the committee at the end of this week or sometime next week.

Zamir admitted that it was only after a new round of discussions with the police that he found out that he had not been kept fully informed of the investigation that led to the indictment and that a secret recording of the police conversations with Gottlieb existed. Zamir's letter reached the committee while it was in the midst of a discussion of what clause in the law should be used to lift Abu-Hatzeira's immunity as a Knesset member.

GISCARD MEETS NEW CHIEF RABBI

PARIS, Dec. 22 (JTA) — President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing received today France's new Chief Rabbi, Rene Sirat, to congratulate him upon his appointment and to assure him of the French government's desire to fully cooperate with the Jewish community. The outgoing Chief Rabbi, Jacob Kaplan, accompanied Sirat to take official leave from the President.

After the meeting French sources said Giscard assured Sirat that he and his government will do all in their power to stamp out anti-Semitism in all its forms and will do their best to help and encourage Jewish culture and education in France. Sirat is due to meet Giscard again next week when he will present the Jewish community's New Year's seasonal greetings to the President.

JERUSALEM, (JTA) — The Israeli and American embassies in Cairo denied Sunday that any official request had been made by the U.S. to Egypt for use of the two military airfields in Sinai that Israel will evacuate when it completes its departure from the peninsula in 1982. The denials were issued after Egypt's Deputy Premier, Fouad Moheiddin, declared in Parliament Sunday that Israel and the U.S. had "insisted" on the use of the airfields by U.S. forces. He said this was categorically rejected by the Egyptian government.

SPECIAL INTERVIEW REFORM WITHOUT FANFARE

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Dec. 22 (JTA) — Finance Minister Yigal Hurwitz was wrestling with his colleagues in the Cabinet over the size of next year's budget while reporters gathered outside to hear what it would all mean for the pocketbook and shopping bag of the ordinary man and woman. Akiva Levinsky, quiet-spoken and businesslike at his office in the Jewish Agency building, half a mile away could scarcely fail to make the comparison.

The ministers, he noted, naturally enough, were concerned about the future of their specific ministries while Hurwitz was trying to make them look at the picture as a whole. In his two years at the treasury of the Jewish Agency, Levinsky encounters virtually the same challenge, week in and week out. The figures involved, of course, are smaller. Still, an annual budget of more than \$500 million is a massive responsibility by any yardstick.

But making his assessment, midway between world Zionist congresses, Levinsky is not pessimistic. "The members of the Executive (who head the Agency's departments) are slowly agreeing to become part of an overall approach, to see the overall problems as well as their own particular department's concerns."

Reforms Have Been Sweeping

Levinsky's reforms — still in the process of evolution — have been sweeping indeed. It is in character with the man that they have been undertaken without fanfare — without the publicity and public recognition, in Israel and in the Jewish diaspora, that they perhaps should have.

Levinsky is keenly aware of the Jewish Agency's "image" problems, and spends a good deal of time thinking about them. "But in the final analysis," he says, image is shaped by what is actually done. No amount of "packaging" can sell a commodity that is faulty, and similarly no amount of negative preconceptions can prevent the Jewish Agency's public image improving if the work of the departments and of the Agency as a whole is genuinely meritorious.

Apropos of "image," Levinsky points to a conundrum which, he says, continues to baffle him. While the Jewish Agency as such suffers, especially in the Israeli media, from an undeniable "image problem," the individual departments that together comprise the Agency each separately have a good and often very good "image." "Take the settlement department, for example," he says, "or youth aliya."

Even the two education departments (Torah education and education in the galah), which are often criticized in the press — "Have you ever heard any criticism of the hundreds of teachers they send out each year to Jewish schools around the world? Why, Jewish education would literally crumble away in many countries without those teachers..."

On the day of our interview there had been a particularly damaging story on the front page of a leading Israeli paper regarding an education department head who had stayed abroad longer than the three weeks Agency chairman Leon Dulzini has stipulated as the maximum duration of trips by department heads. In addition, the paper wrote, he had taken his wife with him at the Agency's expense.

Issue of 'Image'

"There has to be a goodly measure of common sense in such things," Levinsky says. On the one hand, the work of such departments is done primarily abroad and obviously, therefore, their top executives must do a lot of travelling. The three-week rule, moreover, is intended as a guideline — "not as an iron-clad law." At the same time, Agency personnel, and especially the leadership, must plainly take greater account of the sensitivities involved (not to mention the budgetary constraints), Levinsky observes.

He says the root-cause of the Jewish Agency's "image problem" — and of much of the inefficiency and laxity that still bedevils some departments — is the political party system on which the Agency is based.

"If you ask me," he says, "an executive of five members is enough." But it is the will of the public — in Israel and in the diaspora — that wants (as expressed in the elections to the Zionist congresses) a proliferation of parties. Each of these parties and movements demands a slice of the power and influence. Thus, in practice, a wholesale reduction of the Executive portfolios is "impossible."

"It is unfair," Levinsky adds, for politicians who themselves press for this sort of "carve-up of the spoils" during and after every election campaign, to then publicly criticize the Agency for, among other things, "politicization" and proliferation of parties.

Healthy Achievements Cited

Despite the limitations imposed by this political reality, Levinsky's achievements in his two years at the treasury have been impressive. Last year alone, Agency manpower costs were reduced by 15 percent and the actual number of Agency employees was cut by 11.5 percent. (Not all manpower posts were filled in the past.)

He introduced a system of "three-year plans" as part of his overall planning-oriented approach. (Levinsky is a scion of the Labor movement and long-time member of Kibbutz Maayan Zvi, came to the Agency from a top slot in the Bank Hapoalim commercial empire.)

The original "three-year plan" will be updated this year according to changing conditions. Another novelty: "evaluation teams," comprising Agency officials and outside experts, are commissioned to review and supervise major Agency projects.

Budget calculations — perhaps traditionally the key function of the treasurer — have also undergone a thorough overhaul. "We look at everything from the starting point of budget-zero," Levinsky says proudly. This means that nothing is untouchable or sacrosanct, everything is put under a critical microscope by the finance department's team of expert economists — many of them top-flight men groomed over the years by Levinsky's predecessor, Leon Dulzini.

Levinsky also insists on "full disclosure" of all background data to the Board of Governors and its relevant committees.

Concept of Full Partnership

He insists that for him the concept of "full partnership" that underlays the "reconstitution" of the Jewish Agency is meaningful and imperative, not mere rhetoric. "I want the Board to be genuine partners in decision making — in deciding on the concepts and principles governing the work of the Agency — and hence shaping its budget," Levinsky asserts.

Obviously, he says, the overseas members and especially the United Jewish Appeal and United Israel Appeal members, are a key factor in drawing up the income side of the budget. They have their

fingers on the pulses of cash-flow, income assessments, likely influences on fund raising in the year ahead.

But Levinsky involves them equally in the expenditure side. "People who came to Israel for a short time cannot obviously go into the precise figures — they accept what we prepare for them. But they can and indeed must and do share in policy decisions — for instance — how long a new settlement should be under the Agency's 'wing' or how long an individual immigrant should be aided by the Agency which brought him here before the government takes over fully."

Another vital area of budget making in which all the Board of Governors and Executive members must share the responsibility is in setting a ceiling on the Agency's borrowings. "This immediately and directly affects the order of priorities in the Agency's work on the ground," Levinsky explains.

Another Noteworthy Advance

Another noteworthy advance in the Agency in which Levinsky has had important input: the decision to publish the Agency comptroller's annual report. This year, part was published (for the first time) and part held back (some of it sensitive material dealing with communities in distress or delicate fund raising work). In the future, Levinsky pledges, "the trend will be towards fuller and fuller publication."

Levinsky is reluctant to discuss his own aspirations if and when the Labor Party returns to power in Israel (and thus, at the Zionist congress the year after, to primacy at the Jewish Agency). But, referring to press speculation that some Labor "outsider" might be "parachuted" into the chairman's seat, Levinsky permits himself to observe that the high positions in the Agency deserve to be filled by people who have grown into them and have had experience in Israel-Diaspora affairs.

JEWISH AGENCY REPORTS THAT BETWEEN 300,000 AND 500,000 ISRAELIS NOW LIVING IN THE U.S. By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Dec. 22 (JTA) — Between 300,000 and 500,000 Israelis are now living in the U.S., according to an internal report prepared by the Jewish Agency. Agency officials declined to comment on the report, details of which were disclosed by Israeli newspapers yesterday.

Sources in the Prime Minister's office said they thought the figures were exaggerated. They noted that the Central Bureau of Statistics spokesman pointed out that their monthly and annual figures are estimates and merely show the excess of citizens leaving the country over those returning. Few departing Israelis admit they are "yordim" (emigrants). Many Israelis return after a year or more of study or visit abroad.

The report was prepared for presentation to Premier Menachem Begin by Agency Director General Shmuel Lohis after a tour of the U.S. He was accompanied part of the time by Deputy Premier Simcha Ehrlich who broke off his trip to rush home to support the government in a crucial non-confidence vote.

Of the total estimated in the report, some 220,000 Israelis are living in the New York area

and another 120,000 in Los Angeles. The yordim include about 100,000 children, about 35,000 of them living in New York.

A Sizeable Element in U.S. Society

If the Jewish Agency figures are correct, Israelis now represent a sizeable and significant element as a national group within America's pluralistic society.

The report suggested that Ehrlich should coordinate an inter-governmental committee to ensure continued contacts between Israel and the emigrants in the hope that many of them can be persuaded to return home. Special attention should be paid to the education of the children. Special "Israel schools" should not be established, the report said but emphasis should be put on adding more Israeli, Hebrew and Zionist content to existing Jewish schools and Sunday schools.

The report recommended that yordim who agreed to return should be extended special facilities in both imports and loans, bringing them closer to the special arrangements granted to new immigrants.

LIBERATORS OF NAZI CAMPS TO MEET IN U.S. NEXT FALL By Joseph Polakoff

WASHINGTON, Dec. 22 (JTA) — The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council, the federal organization that will establish a memorial to the victims of Nazism, has announced it will sponsor the first "International Conference of Liberators of Concentration Camps" that will take place in Washington next autumn. The specific dates have not been set for the gathering to which delegations from ten countries are expected to attend.

Elie Wiesel, chairman of the Council and himself a survivor of Auschwitz and Buchenwald, said the conference will honor the Allied Forces who liberated Nazi concentration camps and that every effort will be made to locate medical corps personnel, military correspondents and photographers, and every commanding officer of each army that had participated in the liberation as well as the chief of staff, the battalion commander, and the officer of the detachment that first entered each camp.

Australia, Canada, Czechoslovakia, France, New Zealand, Poland, the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia have been invited by the Council to send a formal delegation made up of individuals who participated in camp liberations. Initial contact with these countries was made through the Department of State. The U.S. Army Center of Military History, commanded by Brigadier General James Collins Jr., will provide liaison between the Department of Defense and the Council. The U.S., the host country, is the home of more than 5,000 survivors of these camps.

Miles Leman, chairman of the Council's Committee on International Relations and a resistance fighter during the Nazi occupation of Europe, has met with representatives of American veterans organizations to seek their help in locating American liberators, the Council said. The Council's offices are at 425 Thirteenth Street, N.W., Washington, D. C., 20004.

TEL AVIV, (JTA) — Israel Labor Party chairman Shimon Peres says he will be ready to announce his "shadow cabinet" within a month if elections to the Knesset are advanced to earlier next year than the statutory November date. No complete shadow cabinet can be drawn up in Israel in advance of elections due to the coalition form of government.