JTA daily news bulletin

Contents copyright. Republication only by previous arrangement.

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

Vol. LIX - 64th Year | Tuesday, May 5, 1981 | No. 85

HEBREW UNION COLLEGE LIBRARY CINCINNATI

MAY 07 1981

REAGAN, IN MESSAGE TO BEGIN, CALLS ON ISRAEL TO REFRAIN FROM OVERT MEASURES AGAINST SYRIA'S DEPLOYMENT OF SAM MISSILES

By Gil Sedan and Hugh Orgel

JERUSALEM, May 4 (JTA) -- Israel was expected to reply affirmatively to an urgent message from President Reagan to Premier Menachem Begin today, calling on Israel to refrain from any overt measures against Syria's deployment of SAM-6 anti-aircraft missiles in Lebanon while the U.S. attempts, by diplomatic means, to defuse the situation. Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir, meeting with Ambassadors from the European Economic Community (EEC) countries today, make it clear that Israel was still relying on political options.

Other political sources repeated the official position that Israel would try to avoid a military confrontation with Syria but would not acquiesce to the deployment of the missiles on Lebanon's central mountain range. Begin said today that Syria had placed additional missiles on the Syrian-Lebanese border over the weekend but did not say on which side. He said there were three SAM-6 batteries now inside Lebanon.

Reagan's message was delivered personally by U.S. Ambassador Samuel Lewis. Begin interrupted a meeting with the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Security Committee to receive him and then read the message to the committee. He appeared pleased with its contents, indicating that the U.S. accepted in principle Israel's demands that the missiles be withdrawn from Lebanon.

No Progress On The Diplomatic Front

Lewis told reporters after his meeting with Begin that there has been no progress so far on the diplomatic front but he did not think the situation was "desperate". He said the U.S. would continue to do its utmost to resolve the matter, including contacts with the Soviet Union which is presumed to have influence in Damascus. Lewis said he had no information to confirm reports that the Syrians have placed more missiles in Lebanon.

The missiles were deployed after Israeli fighter planes shot down two Syrian helicopters over central Lebanon last week as a warning to Syria to halt its attacks on Christian forces. Syria insists that they will not be withdrawn. According to reports from Beirut today, Syria has asked the U.S. to put pressure on Israel to end its attacks on Lebanon. Diplomatic sources in Beirut said that Syria will not change its position despite hectic efforts by the U.S. Embassy in Damascus.

Feeling That Time Is Running Out

Reagan's message arrived when the feeling here was that "time is running out" for diplomatic means to be effective. But opinion is divided on what other measures to take. Begin stressed that the Reagan Administration is the most friendly toward Israel in recent years, implying that Israel should comply with the American request to exercise restraint. But committee chairman Moshe Ahrens seemed less optimistic when he emerged from the meeting.

"It is very difficult to predict how the Syrians behave," Arens said, noting that President Hafez Assad is beset with internal difficulties. He would not say how long he thought Israel should wait for diplomatic efforts to succeed before it took matters into its own hands. But Labor MK Yossi Sarid said he saw prospects that the missiles would be removed without resort to military means.

BEGIN DENOUNCES SCHMIDT OF WEST GERMANY AND GISCARD OF FRANCE

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, May 4 (JTA) -- Premier Menachem Begin delivered an election campaign blast here last night but his main target was not the Labor Alignment opposition but Chancellor Helmut Schmidt of West Germany and President Valery Giscard d' Estaing of France. He denounced them both as greedy hypocrites, presumably because of their Middle East policies generally and their willingness to sell sophisticated weapons systems to Israel's Arab foes.

Addressing the central committee of his Herut Party, Begin's "impressive display of oratorical fireworks" -- as one local newspaper put it -- constituted what observers said was probably the strongest attack ever by an Israeli government leader on the leaders of two of the principal Western European powers. He charged that they were interested only in selling weapons to the Arabs at the highest possible price and buying oil from them at the lowest possible cost.

Schmidt came in for the most scathing invectives. He was accused by Begin of willfully seeking to forget German crimes against the Jewish people. "There is no remnant of heart, morality or memory," Begin charged with reference to Schmidt's recent remark that Germany has a "moral commitment" to the "Palestinians who escaped or fled from the West Bank."

According to Begin, "From a moral point of view, Schmidt's statements certainly rank as the most callous ever heard. It means that the Holocaust had conveniently managed to slip his mind and he did not make mention of a million and a half small children murdered, or entire families wiped out."

Accuses Entire German Nation

Begin accused the entire German nation of applauding when Jews were murdered as long as Germany was victorious. "But now we hear of a commitment to those who strove to complete what the Germans started in Europe," Begin said, a reference apparently to the Palestinians. "Schmidt must have concluded some very lucrative business deals in Saudi Arabia which affected his memory," Begin said.

(Schmidt, on his visit to Saudi Arabia this week, reportedly backed away from a multi-billion dollar arms deal with the Saudis that he had favored, on ground that West Germany could not at this time rescind its 1971 decision not to sell arms to countries in "danger zones" such as the Middle East.)

Turning on Giscard, who faces a run-off election for the Presidency against French Socialist leader Francois Mitterrand on May 10, Begin observed that Jews had been persecuted for their "love of lucre." He added:

"If you want to see unbridled greed and ovarice, go see Giscard d'Estaing of France and Helmut Schmidt of Germany. The French have conveniently forgotten all the lofty ideals of their revolution and the Germans want to forget their unforgivable crimes. All they care about is how to sell arms at high prices and to buy cheap oil. That is the full extent of their ethos and morality."

(In Bonn today, a government spokesman called Begin's attack on Schmidt "insulting" and said a formal protest probably would be made to the Israeli Ambassador tomorrow. The spokesman said that Begin was electioneering, "but even an election does not pardon inapt and insulting statements." There was no immediate reaction from France.)

Begin To Serve Full Term If Reelected

Begin also announced to the Herut stalwarts that he was prepared to serve as Prime Minister beyond his 70th birthday if Likud wins the June 30 Knesset elections. He thereby neutralized an important Labor Party campaign point which was that Likud voters would be voting for a temporary leader inasmuch as Begin had pledged previously that he would retire at age 70, two years hence.

Political observers said that by promising to serve out a full second term, Begin was scotching rumors that in his appeal to his old Irgun lieutenant, Yaacov Aridor, to return to political life, he was designating a successor.

EBAN CALLS ON EEC TO ABANDON ITS MIDEAST INITIATIVE

AMSTERDAM, May 4 (JTA) -- Israel's former Foreign Minister Abba Eban said here that the European Economic Community's (EEC) Middle East peace initiative has already failed and that the EEC should abandon it and cooperate instead with the U.S., Israel and Egypt to pursue the success achieved so far by the Camp David accords.

Addressing a meeting of the Socialist International over the weekend, Eban said the EEC had made a "grave mistake" by not consulting Israel on its approach and by its de facto recognition of the Palestine Liberation Organization. The EEC has shown insufficient appreciation of the Camp David achievements, he said.

Eban, who is expected to be named Foreign Minister if the Labor Party wins the June 30 Knesset elections, stressed that a solution of the Palestinian problem is possible only through negotiations between Israel, the Palestinians and Jordan.

The Netherlands Foreign Ministry announced, meanwhile, that the resumption of the Euro-Arab dialogue on a ministerial level between the EEC and the Arab states will not take place before the summer recess. It said the delay was caused by "technical reasons."

The Arab countries have announced that they would not be able to complete preparations in time. When the dialogue is resumed, Dutch Foreign Minister Christoph van der Klaauw will have been replaced in the rotating chairmanship of the EEC Council of Ministers by Britain's Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington.

KOCH SAYS PROPOSED ARMS PACKAGE FOR SAUDIS IS A BETRAYAL OF ISRAEL

By Kevin Freeman

NEW YORK, May 4 (JTA) -- Mayor Edward Koch said today that the Reagan Administration's proposed sale of a multimillion dollar arms package to Saudi Arabia, including Air Warning and Control Systems (AWACS), would be a "betrayal of a promise" to Israel and a "gross error on the part of the United States." Koch declared, "The sales should not be deferred but ended."

Koch, addressing a luncheon sponsored by the American-Israel Chamber of Commerce and Industry at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel, said it is in America's best interests and a national security matter for a strong Israel. He said that the proposed arms sale "is destructive of Israel" and there is "no question" it would reduce Israel's ability to defend itself.

The mayor added that the initial agreement of the sale of F-15s to the Saudis in 1978 stipulated that "we would never allow their planes to be offensively outfitted." The arms package now being proposed by the Reagan Administration is "a betrayal of Israel," he said.

Koch also focused on the Saudi commitment to the destruction of Israel. He strongly chastised those who applauded Saudi Oil Minister Sheikh Ahmed Zaki Yamani when he told a meeting of the Foreign Policy Association in New York last month that Israel was Saudi Arabia's main enemy. "Some people will sell their own mothers for oil," Koch declared.

The mayor praised Israel for its stand in defending the Christian population of Lebanon and criticized Christians in America for remaining silent about the Lebanese situation in which the Christians there are being slaughtered by the Syrian armed forces and the Palestine Liberation Organization. He said Lebanese Christians are usually referred to as rightwing Phalangists and that this term in the U.S. "has been a problem in the cause of the Christian population in Lebanon," Koch said.

JOSEPH HAGER DEAD AT 80

NEW YORK, May 4 (JTA) -- Rabbi Joseph Hager, who for over 50 years was the spiritual leader of the Wall Street Synagogue and the founder of several yeshiva day schools, died last Saturday at Beth Israel Hospital after a long illness. He was 80 years old. Hager was a seventh generation descendant from a Hasidic rabbinical family in Austro-Hungary. His father, the Radawitzer Rebbe, Grand Rabbi Israel Hager, was the first Hasidic rabbi to settle permanently in the United States, in 1913.

Joseph Hager received his ordination from Yeshiva University in 1923. He helped found the Wall Street Synagogue in 1929 and was its first rabbi. The synagogue was the first in the city's financial district. Hager was the founder of the Hebrew Institute of Long Island in Far Rockaway and the Yeshiva Day School in Spring Valley, N.Y. He also was the founder and past chairman of the Home of Sages of Israel in Manhattan and was the head of Kolel Radowitz in Safed, Israel, where scholars of Jewish mysticism gathered for study and research. Hager was the publisher and editor of the Synagogue Light magazine.

UAHC RAPS U.S. AID TO EL SALVADOR

NEW YORK, May 4 (JTA) -- The Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC), through its Commission on Social Action, has called on the Reagan Administration to end all U.S. military aid to El Salvador and to promote instead a "political solution through international mediation of the conflict."

In a resolution adopted by the commission and released this week, the UAHC deplored the acts of violence in El Salvador that "violate any standard of human decency."

This violence, the resolution said, was "the tragic result of applying a military solution to an economic, social and political crisis. A major source of responsibility for violence and terrorism

rests with those forces receiving U.S. military aid." Noting that "indiscriminate mass murder continues," the Reform Jewish group declared:

"In our concern for the human rights and human dignity of the Salvadorean people, the UAHC urges the U.S. government to: Encourage a political solution through international mediation of the conflict; Initiate a thorough and complete investigation into the recent murders of American citizens and demand prosecution of those responsible; Provide generous support to efforts of the United Nations and private charitable organizations to provide food and medicine to the refugees; Give special attention to Salvadorean refugees in the United States who request the right of extended voluntary departure; Use increased economic aid in ways which develop channels for the feeding of the people of El Salvador and for the effective restructuring of the Salvadorean economy."

U.S. SEES SITUATION IN LEBANON AS 'FRAUGHT WITH PERIL' AND IS TRYING TO DEFUSE THE CRISIS

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, May 4 (JTA) -- The Reagan Administration, concerned about the situation in Lebanon which it sees as "fraught with peril", is trying to defuse the crisis, a State Department spokesman said today. But the spokesman, David Passage, said the Administration has set no "deadline" for action even though it views conditions in Lebanon with "urgency."

Passage refused to comment on specific U.S. requests, such as removal of the SAM-6 anti-aircraft missiles Syria placed in Lebanon last week. "The principal American objective is to defuse the level of tension in the area," he said. To obtain that objective, Passage said the U.S. would continue diplomatic and political efforts. But he would not be specific.

Neither the State Department nor the White House would confirm that President Reagan sent a letter to Israeli Premier Menachem Begin asking Israel to be patient while diplomatic measure are undertaken.

Won't Give Score Card On U.S. Efforts

Passage emphasized that the U.S. is working with all parties involved in the conflict, except the Palestine Liberation Organization. But he said other parties, some Arab states, were presumably in contact with the PLO, urging it to help reduce the tension, too. The spokesman said he would not want to give a "score card" on U.S. efforts to ease the latest crisis in Lebanon.

"Thus far, the situation has not deteriorated into out-and-out conflict," Passage said, and "it's our objective to prevent the situation from deteriorating into out-and-out conflict." He said the U.S. was "satisfied" that the Soviet Union understands the "importance" with which the U.S. regards the situation in Lebanon. But he would not say what the Soviet response has been.

Passage noted, however, that the Soviet Ambassador to Washington, Anatoly Dobrynin, had discussed Lebanon at two meetings at the State Department last week. The U.S. reportedly seeks to have Moscow persuade the Syrians to remove the missiles from Lebanon.

TRIPARTITE TALKS ON SINAI FORCE

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, May 4 (JTA) -- The United States, Egypt and Israel began three days of talks at the State Department today aimed at establishing a multi-national peacekeeping force for Sinai which now appears certain to include U.S. troops. But State Department spokesman David Passage refused to go into details.

The Reagan Administration conceded over the weekend that it would be unable to get the United Nations Security Council to approve such a force, required by the terms of the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty. The Soviet Union could be expected to veto the attempt because of its opposition to the Camp David agreements.

"We have concluded that it would not be possible to get a UN force," Passage said, "and we will now proceed with our plans for an alternative multi-national force." The Egyptian-Israeli peace agreement requires the U.S. to put together a force if a UN contingent cannot be established by the time Israel completes its withdrawal from Sinai in April, 1982.

Will Consult With Other Countries

Passage said the U.S. will begin consultations with other countries but he refused to indicate which countries are being contacted. It has been widely reported that the U.S. will now have to put up half of the 2500 troops. The others might come from such countries as Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Nepal, Peru and Fiji.

So far there has been little public reaction from Congress about the possible use of American troops to patrol Sinai. Passage said that consultations have started with Congress on the creation of the multi-national force.

The heads of the three delegations meeting at the State Department are Col. Thomas Tienka of the U.S., Maj. Gen. Avraham Tamir of Israel, and Admiral Mohsen Hamdi of Egypt.

LABOR APPROVES KNESSET LIST

JERUSALEM, May 4 (JTA) -- The Labor Party's Central Committee approved a list of 63 candidates for the June 30 Knesset elections today and the biggest surprise was the placement of a hawk, MK Shoshana Arbeli Almoslino, in the No. 2 spot after party chairman Shimon Peres. Mrs. Almoslino, a veteran of past Knessets, is considered to be a representative of Israel's Sephardic community which voted heavily for Likud in the last elections.

Former Foreign Minister Abba Eban drew the No. 3 spot, followed by former Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and former Minister of Commerce and Industry Haim Barlev. The Rabin camp won 11 places among the first 60 and expressed satisfaction.

Several new faces appeared among the first 10 on the list, thereby assured of election. They include Rafi Edri, director general of the Histadrut construction company, Shikun Ovdim; Naava Arad, secretary of Naamat, Histadrut's women's organization; and former Chief of Staff Mordechai Gur. But Labor found no place for an Arab candidate.

The list submitted by Peres with the admonition to approve it "despite the anger of all those who were not included," was adopted by the Central Committee after two weeks of wrangling during which the party leadership came under pressure from the various factions comprising the Labor Alignment. Of the 63 candidates, 50 are believed to have a good chance of election. Mapam, the Labor Party's Alignment partner, approved a list of eight candidates yesterday. They were placed near the top of the list in spots reserved for Mapam, Labor has 34 members of the present Knesset of whom nine will not be in the next Knesset.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES
THE JEWS OF SALT LAKE CITY
By Gila Berkowitz

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah, May 4 (JTA) -- In the heart of this city is a large but humble building with Stars of David in the windows. It looks so much like an old-time Brooklyn shul that one would expect its pews to resonate with the sounds of the Kaddish and be permanently scented with pickled herring and egg kichel.

But it would be wrong to assume that the building is a synagogue. It is, in fact, the Assembly Hall of the Mormon Church headquarters. Utah is strewn with false clues to where and what its Jewish community is.

Part of the confusion lies in the traditional identification of the Mormons with the "Children of Israel." Symbols such as the Star of David and terms such as "Zion," are emphatically Mormon in Salt Lake City, so the real synagogue, Congregation Kol Ami, is carefully ornamented with Menorahs, and historical documents written by Jewish leaders often refer to the Jews as part of the "Gentile" (non-Mormon) community.

Authentic Jewish Imprint

Yet the Jews have had an authentic imprint as well. For while the community has never been large (there are about 2300 Jews in Salt Lake City and less than 10 families in nearby Provo) it has a long and rich history in the region.

The first Jews passed through embryonic Salt Lake City on their way to the gold rush. Some settled there in 1854. In 1866 Mormon leader Brigham Young donated land for the Jewish cemetery. He was cordially disposed to the Jews, who had been helpful to his Mormon pioneers in earlier years.

The community grew steadily, building successively larger and more elaborate synagogues. Its character is clearly evident by the fact that an architect was brought from Germany to build a synagogue that was a small-scale replica of the Berlin Temple.

When the main temple turned Reform, an Orthodox synagogue was founded. With an influx of Eastern European Jews in the early decades of this century, a second Orthodox congregation was founded. However, Orthodox Judaism eventually disappeared in Salt Lake City.

Reform and Conservative movements joined together in 1972 to create the city's only synagogue, Kol Ami. The merger is working admirably in a community where all concerned Jews are chiefly interested in education -- Kol Ami's Hebrew school dominates it.

A Colorful Social History

Salt Lake's Jewish community has a colorful history imbued with pioneer spirit. The copper mines of this mountainous region attracted hardy individualists of the 19th Century. Mines eventually gave way to ski resorts and in these, also, Jews took a zestful part.

Utah was the site of some proto-kibbutz communes. But, the harsh extremes of climate and the poor practical preparation of the early farmers meant that the experiment was doomed to early failure. Some of the remaining settlers, however, started poultry farms and were successful in the venture. Several innovations in poultry farming are the result of this modest but more successful effort.

Throughout this century Jewish citizens and settlers have tended to be businessmen looking for a quiet and decent place to raise their families. Downtown Salt Lake City is dotted with clothiers, jewellers, and other familiar businesses that bear Jewish names. The newest wave of newcomers, typically enough, are physicians, lawyers, and academics.

The standard of living -- and economic opportunities -- are somewhat lower in Utah than back east or further west. But the happier settlers point out that the low crime rate, wholesome orientation (the state is dry), and attractive scenery of the area continue to attract and keep community members. Despite the fact that Mormons are energetic proselytizers, Jewish leaders claim that relations between the two groups are excellent. They also say that overt anti-Semitism is virtually non-existent.

Despite its low-key character, the Jewish community of Salt Lake City is friendly and open. Jewish visitors, whether on business or on skis, are assured a welcome.

KGB PREVENTS MOSCOW JEWS FROM HOLDING HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MEETING

NEW YORK, May 4 (JTA) -- The official noose around unofficial gatherings of Moscow Jews grew tighter as KGB agents yesterday prohibited a mass memorial meeting to victims of the Holocaust in the Ovrazhki woods near Moscow, it was reported today by the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry and the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews.

Under the rubric of closing the woods to the public for "sanitary cleaning," KGB agents prevented the memorial meeting from being held by prohibiting anyone who could not prove having a summer home in the area from leaving the Ovrazhki train station. In Moscow, at least 11 familes were held under house arrest to thwart their participation in the gathering which annually takes the form of family outings.

According to the SSJ and the UCSJ, the apartment of one of the families, Dr. Vladimir Brodsky's was ringed by plainclothesmen and uniformed officers and five police cars. Earlier, several activists were warned by the KGB that the gathering would violate a regulation allegedly passed on April 16 banning unauthorized meetings of seven or more persons in the greenbelt surrounding the capital, and that those who showed up would be jailed for 15-30 days. Last October, almost 1,500 Jews, the largest group ever, celebrated Succoth under the watchful eyes of dozens of police agents.

In an earlier move to halt unofficial gatherings, Soviet authorities shut down a weekly biophysics seminar led by Prof. Alexander Lerner which had been operating for the past six years. Authorities have also sought to intimidate participants in unofficial Hebrew and religious classes and in the children's kindergarten and have arrested Dr. Viktor Brailovsky, a Jewish cultural and emigration leader. Brailovsky, who was arrested last November, continues to be held in Butyrka Prison. To date, no formal charges have been made against him.

Lerner's seminar, which continued when other scientific, Hebrew and religious study circles were being shut down by the authorities in recent months, was itself stopped on April 28 when police barred refusenik scholars from gathering at Lerner's apartment. Lerner has been denied an exit visa to rejoin his daughter in Israel for the past decade.

* * *

TEL AVIV (JTA) -- Aharon Yariv, head of Tel Aviv University's Center for Strategic Studies, says that the best way to advance towards a solution of the Palestinian problem is for Israel to recognize their right to self-determination.