

JTA daily news bulletin

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

Vol. LIX -- 64th Year JUN 01 1981

Wednesday, May 27, 1981

No. 100

STATE DEPARTMENT INDICATES THAT HABIB'S MISSION IS NOT STALEMATED

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, May 26 (JTA) -- The State Department continued today to maintain its stoney silence on anything concerning U.S. special envoy Philip Habib's efforts to defuse the missile crisis in Lebanon. But Department spokesman Dean Fischer did reject the contention that Habib's mission was "stalelated."

Habib's "mission is in progress and will continue," Fischer said. He refused, however, to confirm or deny that Habib, who has been in Jerusalem since the weekend, will remain there while Saudi Arabia attempts to convince Syria to remove its SAM-6 anti-aircraft missiles from Lebanon.

He also refused to comment on Premier Menachem Begin's offer to go to Beirut for peace talks with President Elias Sarkis of Lebanon or Begin's charge that Soviet advisors were with Syrian troops in Lebanon.

Brezhnev's Proposal Rejected

Meanwhile, the U.S. made it clear that it does not think the missile crisis could be ended by a general peace conference called for by Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev in a speech in Tbilisi last Friday. In his speech, Brezhnev blamed Israel for the present situation in Lebanon.

At a press conference last Friday, Secretary of State Alexander Haig rejected Brezhnev's proposal. "First, I think we are interested in an international conference which would focus on the Soviet presence in Afghanistan," Haig said. He noted that the U.S. has been discussing the situation in Lebanon with the Soviet Union but said "It is too early to say if they make a constructive or a counter-productive contribution to the situation."

Haig said that the U.S. "effort in Lebanon is designed, first and foremost, to quiet the situation down and to play a role which would permit the parties to return to a status quo ante, if you will, a situation that has prevailed in Lebanon from 1976 until very recently." Haig said the U.S. is also aiming in the long term for "a return to normalcy in Lebanon and hopefully, in all ways, from the U.S. point of view, the strengthening of the central government of Lebanon and its ultimate control."

Interestingly, the term "status quo ante" had only been used by Begin up to now in discussing the Lebanese situation. Earlier last week, Fischer used the term return to "normal" and rejected use of the term "status quo ante," saying that it could not be sure to what situation that term referred.

ISRAEL HIT BY POWER BLACKOUT AS POWER STATION WORKERS CUT OUTPUT

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, May 26 (JTA) -- Electric power station employees blacked out large parts of Israel tonight as they cut output by 50 percent. But they backtracked at the last minute from an earlier threat to halt all electricity supplies by nightfall.

Power station workers said they were agreeing to maintain a 50 percent power supply and negotiations with management were proceeding, although the workers complained that management was "playing poker" with them.

But even with only 50 percent cutbacks, large traffic jams built up especially in Tel Aviv as traffic lights failed. Extra police were put on duty and the public was asked to refrain from non-essential driving. Home owners were warned not to use elevators or non-essential electrical equipment. Israelis throughout the country were relying on candles they had stocked up to light their apartments. To spread the burden, the electric power corporation switched the power cuts from area to area, restoring electricity briefly at each point.

(Some of the overseas news wire services were also interrupted, preventing stories from being transmitted. Correspondents for the Jewish Telegraphic Agency telephoned their stories from Israel to New York.)

The power station operators, described by the electric corporation as the highest paid workers in the country, earning four times the national average, are demanding a 25 percent salary increase.

The dispute became serious after the power station operators cut output at the Haifa and Ashdod power stations by 10 percent yesterday. Management responded by immediately dismissing their work committee. All other power station workers, some 400, responded by declaring a 100 percent strike by this evening -- an action which would have completely paralyzed the entire country.

Finance Minister Yoram Aridor said he would not allow the government-owned electric corporation to grant salary increases beyond the minimum laid down by his wage policy.

FRANCE TO HONOR ALL EXISTING ARMS CONTRACTS AND WILL DELIVER ALL UNDERWRITTEN EQUIPMENT

By Edwin Eytan

PARIS, May 26 (JTA) -- French Foreign Minister Claude Cheysson said today that the new Administration of President Francois Mitterrand will honor all existing arms contracts and deliver all underwritten equipment. Cheysson branded as "lies" reports that France might cancel some of its existing arms contracts and said "The Arabs are luckily not fooled by such reports."

The Minister for External Relations who was speaking on a radio program specified, however, that new contracts will not be signed "with racist or fascist regimes." He refused to explain to what countries these terms would apply.

Cheysson made no reference to Mitterrand's broad hints during his electoral campaign that the supply of enriched uranium to Iraq will be halted. The Minister said "France's signature is sacred and we shall honor all political and commercial obligations. We are not going to change everything overnight. We are reliable partners and shall remain so."

The Minister blamed certain unspecified foreign countries and "some Frenchmen who do not realize how much they serve foreign interests for spreading such lies."

Cheysson said that President Mitterrand will send a number of personal representatives to all Arab countries to inform Arab leaders of France's policy. The President's brother, retired Air Force Gen. Jacques Mitterrand, last weekend conveyed such a message to King Khaled of Saudi Arabia with whom he met in Riyadh.

Cheysson said that the President's brother visited Saudi Arabia in connection with the activities of the aeronautical firm he heads. The company, the state-owned Industries Aérospatiales, announced later today that it has signed a \$135 million contract for an Arab regional telecommunication satellite.

Cheysson's declaration is part of a French attempt to reassure the Arab countries that Mitterrand's election will not basically affect Franco-Israeli ties and that an expected improvement in relations between Paris and Jerusalem will not be undertaken at the Arabs' expense.

Message To Lebanon's Foreign Minister

Cheysson himself delivered this message today to Lebanon's Foreign Minister Fuad Butros. The Lebanese was the first Foreign Minister received at the Quai D'Orsay since the new administration's takeover. French officials told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that Butros was on his way back to Beirut from an Arab League meeting in Tunis and "the meeting just seemed useful at this time."

France has traditionally been one of the main arms suppliers to the Arab world. The Arabs also have between 30 - 50 billion francs (\$6 - \$9 billion) deposited with French banks or invested in French enterprises.

See Franco-Israeli Ties Improving

In spite of Cheysson's declarations and French official reassurances to the Arab states, Israeli circles here believe that Franco-Israeli ties are rapidly improving.

Mitterrand sent a personal message to Israeli Premier Menachem Begin yesterday accepting his invitation to pay an official visit to Israel "as soon as circumstances will permit" and expressed the hope that France and Israel "will renew their dialogue in a spirit of sincerity and trust to discuss the main problems" and especially the establishment of "a just and authentic peace in the Middle East which would take into consideration the legitimate aspirations of all the peoples in the area."

Mitterrand's trip to Israel is not expected to take place before the Israeli elections June 30 or before a new government is installed, possibly not until next fall.

ARGENTINE AUTHORITIES BREAK UP TERRORIST RING TRAINED BY THE PLO

NEW YORK, May 26 (JTA) -- Argentine authorities have broken up a local terrorist network that was trained by the Palestine Liberation Organization to assassinate high Argentine government officials, it was revealed here. According to the Latin Americans Affairs Department of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, two high Argentine military officials announced that the ring had been dissolved before it could carry out its death mission.

Gen. Cristino Nicolaide, commander-in-chief of the Army's Third Division, and Col. Miguel Cabrera, chief of the division's intelligence unit, said the terrorists were trained in Lebanon by the PLO. The terrorists, these officials said, made one attempt last fall to carry out their assassination plans designed to generate a climate of terror

and insecurity in Argentina. On that occasion, according to Rabbi Morton Rosenthal, director of ADL's Latin American Affairs Department, the would-be assassins bombed the home of the Deputy Finance Minister, Dr. Guillermo Walter Klein. He and members of his family escaped death despite the fact that they were trapped in the rubble.

The breakup of the Argentine terrorist ring, Rosenthal said, "is the latest indication of the Palestine Liberation Organization's tentacles spreading through Latin America." Latin American governments, which are being pressured by Arab states to permit the opening of PLO offices, will find "Trojan horses of international terrorism and subversion in their midst," he added.

LAWMEN SEARCHING FOR KKK MEMBERS INVOLVED IN SYNAGOGUE BOMBING TRY

By Kevin Freeman

NEW YORK, May 26 (JTA) -- Jewish community officials in Nashville, Tenn. reported today that law enforcement agencies are continuing in their efforts to find and prosecute members of the Ku Klux Klan involved in an alleged attempt to plant dynamite yesterday at a local temple.

A report by the Tennessean, Nashville's morning newspaper, said that meanwhile three persons arrested in the incident were members of the Ku Klux Klan. The newspaper said that at least seven other members were being sought in a conspiracy that included plans to bomb a number of pawn shops owned by Jews.

The Tennessean identified the three arrested as Gladys Girenti, about 50 years old, of nearby Madison; Charles Boyers, about 27, of Madison, and Robert Pranz, about 35, of Nashville.

According to Jay Pilzer, executive director of the Jewish Federation of Nashville, three men were arrested by federal authorities yesterday as they drove their pickup truck onto the property of The Temple, a reform synagogue, in an alleged attempt to plant a bomb at the temple.

No History Of Anti-Semitism

Pilzer, in a phone interview with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, said that Nashville, with a Jewish community of about 3700, has not had a history of anti-Semitic incidents. Pilzer added that it was "actually just the opposite," and referred to the Jewish community as being "generally accepted."

Morris Werthan, president of the Jewish Federation of Nashville and Middle Tennessee, in a statement to the JTA today, said: "We find the threat of violence against any citizens of our community, the attempted attack on a Jewish house of worship as contrary to all the traditions of our country. The manufacture and placement of this explosive device posed a threat not only to The Temple, but to the safety of all Nashvillians. The Jewish Federation appreciated the actions of law enforcement officials and are fully behind their continued efforts to find and prosecute any who may be involved in these acts of hatred and violence."

SOCIAL SCIENTISTS, JEWISH LEADERS CONCERNED OVER LACK OF EFFECTIVE MEASURES TO DEAL WITH NEO-NAZISM

By David Kantor

BONN, May 26 (JTA) -- Social scientists and Jewish community leaders have expressed concern over the lack of effective measures by West German authorities to deal with the resurgence of neo-Nazi activities, particularly among the youth. While the authorities are aware of the

phenomenon, they seem to be blind to its political implications, according to speakers at a seminar on the subject organized by the ruling Social Democratic Party (SPD).

One example noted was the failure to register the far rightwing National Democratic Party (NPD) as a neo-Nazi organization. Heinz Galinski, chairman of the West Berlin Jewish community took the legislators to task for failing to correct the present situation whereby only the relatives of death camp victims can sue neo-Nazis who spread propaganda that the Holocaust never occurred. "This cannot be tolerated. We have to see to it that the State prosecution initiates such cases," Galinski said.

Justice Minister Juergen Schmude agreed that existing laws must be tightened to curb neo-Nazi propaganda or new laws introduced. He said the government taken initiatives in that direction. Peter Glotz, Secretary General of the SPD said more attention should be paid to the neo-Nazi phenomenon.

Much of the seminar was devoted to discussions by experts of recent public opinion polls which showed that 13 percent of the West German population holds views characterized by hatred toward foreign groups. Social scientists said that by their nature, those views could be classified as neo-Nazi. But they disagreed as to whether the resurgence of neo-Nazi ideas was caused by economic decline and unemployment or reflected other factors. The pollsters who conducted the survey on behalf of the government said the results did not indicate a definite relationship between unemployment and extreme rightwing opinions.

Meanwhile, another debate is underway on the anti-Semitic or anti-Israel bias among certain leftwing groups in the Federal Republic. It was triggered two months ago when a young German Jew, Henryk Broder, immigrated to Israel. He left a letter to his former leftwing friends protesting their anti-Israel views, which was published in the weekly Die Zeit. In an interview published later in Der Spiegel, Broder attacked the Middle East policies of Chancellor Helmut Schmidt.

Both weeklies were flooded with letters supporting or repudiating Broder's charges against West German society.

WAITING FOR HABIB

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, May 26 (JTA) -- Premier Menachem Begin displayed annoyance over what he claimed was lack of information from U.S. special envoy Philip Habib on the progress of his mission to defuse the Israeli-Syrian missile crisis. Begin told reporters yesterday after a special Cabinet meeting dealing with economic matters that he had been waiting for two days to hear something but so far had heard nothing.

Begin said he understood that Habib was awaiting word from Saudi Arabia before he decided whether to return to Damascus. He said Habib might return to Washington if his mission encountered difficulties. Sources at the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv said yesterday that waiting for developments in Riyadh was part of the political process aimed at solving the missile crisis.

Rif Al-Assad, brother of President Hafez Assad of Syria and his right-hand man, is in the Saudi capital on an unidentified mission. It was seen as a sign that the Syrians are still willing to negotiate a political solution.

GAZIT: ISRAEL SHOULD NOT GO TO WAR FOR THE SAKE OF LEBANESE CHRISTIANS

By Michael Solamon

MONTREAL, May 26 (JTA) -- Shlomo Gazit, a former chief of Israeli intelligence, agrees that Israel has an interest in the survival of the Lebanese Christians but he does not believe it should go to war with Syria for their sake. Gazit, who is president of the Ben Gurion University of the Negev in Beersheba, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency here, "I don't think Israel should risk war for the Lebanese Christians. It is not the problem."

According to Gazit, the problem is that "We have an interest in the survival of Lebanese Christians and in the continuation of Lebanon as an independent country. It is against our political interest to see the Middle East as a monolithic Arab, Moslem Middle East." He stressed the importance of continued aerial surveillance by Israel over Lebanon to monitor the activities of Palestinian terrorists.

"There is no chance whatever to fight terrorist organizations like the Palestine Liberation Organization by defensive, passive measures," he said. Otherwise, Israel might risk a surprise attack such as the one that triggered the Yom Kippur War. "The only source of up-to-date intelligence is air photography and the Lebanese sky is essential for detecting PLO moves," Gazit said.

No Guarantee Of Israeli Victory

In the event that Israel became involved in a war with Syria, its victory is not a foregone conclusion, Gazit said. "I'm not sure that the military victory is clear because we don't know whether there will be a limited conflict between Syria and Israel or with other Arab countries or whether even the Soviet Union might not join," he told the JTA.

Gazit was in Canada to present the Ben Gurion University Negev Award to its first Canadian recipients, Bora Laskin, Chief Justice of Canada and Mrs. Samuel Bronfman, at the annual dinner of the Montreal branch of the Canadian Friends of Ben Gurion University at Shaare Hashomayim Synagogue last Thursday night.

ISRAELI FREIGHTER SINKS IN RED SEA

TEL AVIV, May 26 (JTA) -- The Israeli freighter Shikma capsized and sank in the Red Sea yesterday. But all 31 crew members and the wives of three of them were rescued by the Swedish freighter Arina and are enroute to Port Said, according to the Zim Lines, owner of the Shikma.

The disaster was the second to hit Israel's merchant marine since March 8 when the 19,000-ton bulk carrier Mezada of the Zim Lines foundered in the North Atlantic near Bermuda with the loss of 24 lives.

The Zim Lines said the Shikma was enroute from Eilat to Durban, South Africa with over 300 containers when she developed a list early yesterday morning. Her Master ordered the crew into the lifeboats. The ship sank before salvage tugs summoned by wireless could reach her.

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TEL AVIV (JTA) -- Israel has bought additional quantities of coal for its electric power stations from South Africa, at 1979 prices, according to Ram Ron, director of the newly-established National Coal Importing Company, who returned from negotiations in South Africa last week. Israel is to import coal from a number of countries to ensure constant supplies at the best prices, with about 30 percent from South Africa, 30 percent from the U.S. and between 10 and 20 percent from Australia.

BACKGROUND REPORT NEW FRENCH MINISTERS INCLUDE FRIENDS AND OPPONENTS OF ISRAEL

By Edwin Eytan

PARIS, May 26 (JTA) -- The new French government named last Friday night and headed by Prime Minister Pierre Mauroy includes Ministers known as warm supporters of Israel. But some key posts are held by men who, out of political objectives or personal ideology, advocate policies which Israel considers contrary to its vital interests. One of the five new Ministers of State, a higher-ranking post than those of the other Cabinet members, is the traditional leader of the pro-Arab line.

Michel Jobert, 60, a non-Socialist appointed by Mauroy as Minister of State in charge of foreign trade, served as President Georges Pompidou's Foreign Minister. In 1973, when Arab armies invaded Israel at the outbreak of the Yom Kippur War, Jobert declared in Parliament that "no one can blame people who want to return to their former homes."

Reassuring Arab States

Political circles in France believe that Mauroy, with President Francois Mitterrand's approval, appointed Jobert to the senior post out of internal political considerations -- trying to open the Socialist dominated coalition towards the Centrist parties -- but also as a form of reassurance to the Arab States.

The government, which is facing a run on the Franc and a massive flight of capital out of the country, wants to prevent the Arab countries from withdrawing their funds in France which would have further weakened the currency.

Even in Pompidou's days, Jobert was considered as the most pro-Arab and anti-Israeli member of a generally hostile administration. French press reports say that he has already contacted Arab embassies in Paris and Arab leaders abroad to reassure them about the new regime's intentions in the Middle East.

The new government consists of 30 Ministers and 12 Deputies. Five of its members hold the rank of Ministers of State which would normally make them members of an inner Cabinet and give them additional weight.

An Old Friend Of Israel

The one considered as senior, both because of his influence with the Socialist Party and his close personal relations with Mitterrand, is Marseilles Mayor Gaston Defferre. An old party stalwart, who had been close to the late Socialist Premier Guy Mollet, Defferre at 71 is the wise old man of the government.

An old friend of Israel, he is known to be close to many of Israel's leaders. He has been appointed in charge of the Ministry of Interior and will also be in charge of decentralization of the new administration.

Among the other three, Ministers of State, one Nicole Questiaux, in charge of welfare, is not known to take any interest in foreign affairs or the Middle East. The remaining two are Michel Rocard, who recently met with Yasir Arafat in Beirut and reviewed a Palestine Liberation Organization guard of honor; and the leader of the party's leftwing, Jean-Pierre Chevenement, who is known as a warm supporter of Palestinian state aspirations.

The new Minister for Foreign Affairs, Claude Cheysson, is a 61-year-old former career diplomat who has served since 1973 as a European Economic Community commissioner of the Community's Ministers, in charge of relations with developing countries, North Africa, the Middle East and Israel.

Cheysson is known to favor reinforced ties with the Third World and especially Africa and Asia. He advocated a plan providing for Arab petro-dollar investments in under-developed countries with Western guarantees. He is also a strong believer in the Euro-Arab dialogue as well as in the north-south dialogue.

Cheysson has visited Israel several times and knows the area's problems well. It is generally believed that he is strictly tepid in his support for the Camp David agreements and is a firm believer in the search for a global peace with Palestinian participation.

The new Defense Minister, Charles Hernu, also knows Israel well. He is mayor of Villeurbanne which is twinned with Israel's Bat Yam and has often headed municipal or Socialist delegations to Israel. He is an enthusiastic admirer of the Israeli defense forces and plans to adopt some of their methods in the French army. Hernu is considered with Defferre as Israel's best friend in the new government.

Only One Jew Appointed Minister

Contrary to earlier expectations, only one Jew was appointed Minister: Jack Lang in charge of culture. Lang is a proud Jew, as the French say, who openly and sometimes energetically asserts his Jewishness. Politically, he is close to the Party's leftwing and believes that Israel, for its own good, should negotiate with the Palestinians and under certain conditions accept the creation of an independent Palestinian state.

A former Jew, Laurent Fabius, converted by his parents in childhood, has been appointed junior Finance Minister in charge of the budget. Fabius had generally tried to steer clear of any involvement in Jewish or pro-Israeli activities in the past.

Among the appointments to the President's staff are Jacques Attali, 34, a Jewish economist active in community affairs, and Pierre Dreyfus, 74, an industrialist who headed the state-owned Renault auto industry. Both will serve as Presidential advisors, presumably on economic matters.

Marxist Philosopher Appointed

Mitterrand also appointed as his advisors on foreign affairs Hubert Verdine, a career official known as a top level expert on Arab affairs, and Regis Debray, 41, a Marxist philosopher who is a close sympathizer of the Palestinians. Debray, who, it is believed, will serve as Mitterrand's "consultant on ideology," is a friend of Premier Fidel Castro of Cuba and was arrested in 1967 by Bolivian authorities while working there in an anti-government movement together with the late guerrilla leader Che Guevara.

In all, the new Ministers and advisors are a mixed lot, including some of Israel's best friends, such as Defferre, and some of its most dangerous opponents, like Jobert. It is assumed, however, that Mitterrand himself will make the basic decisions which could affect major Israeli interests.

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NEW YORK (JTA) -- Mayor Edward Koch and Benjamin Abileah, the Acting Consul General of Israel, will join with other local Jewish leaders May 29 to mark the 14th anniversary of the reunification of Jerusalem.