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FRANCE READY TO REPLACE IRAQ'S NUCLEAR REACTOR AND SELL ARMS TO MIDEAST COUNTRIES, BUT NOT ISRAEL

PARIS, July 6 (JTA) -- France is ready to replace the Iraqi nuclear reactor destroyed by Israel last month, Foreign Minister Claude Cheysson told the Beirut daily "Al Nahar". Cheysson said that if Iraq makes the request, France will replace the reactor "on the terms we apply to other countries."

Earlier, he said that France will "multiply checks and controls to ensure that civilian reactors are not used for military purposes."

Cheysson also said France will sell arms to Middle East countries but not to Israel. He added that arms will not be sold to countries with totalitarian regimes or which are at war. "As far as the Middle East is concerned, only the second restriction is applicable," he said. "As a consequence (of the restriction) we shall not deliver arms to Israel."

Cheysson named Saudi Arabia, Iraq, the Persian Gulf States, Egypt and North Africa as countries to which France is prepared to sell weapons. Last week he told the weekly Le Nouvel Observateur that arms exports are "vital for our industry" and that 300,000 people are directly employed by it. He said that the export of weapons is essential to French industry and to the country's defense.

Reaffirms Recognition of PLO

Cheysson reiterated France's recognition of the Palestine Liberation Organization as "one of the representatives of the Palestinian people," saying that the Palestinians do not have, under current conditions, the possibility to democratically choose their representatives. He said the PLO might emerge as the sole Palestinian representative "when conditions become adapted to their free, democratic choice."

French officials refused to comment on Cheysson's declaration. Only State Minister for Foreign Trade, Michel Jobert, confirmed Paris' readiness to replace the Iraqi reactor "on certain conditions and if Iraq makes the demand."

When asked whether the training of a nuclear generation in Baghdad might not by itself endanger ultimate peace, Jobert said "there is no stopping progress. All over the world, an increasing number of countries and scientists are about to enter the nuclear age." Jobert did not comment on Cheysson's declaration barring Israel from the French arms market.

AGUDA ISRAEL WORKING OUT DETAILS OF AN AGREEMENT WITH LIKUD

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, July 6 (JTA) -- The ultra-Orthodox Aguda Israel, said to be firmly determined to continue its partnership with Premier Menachem Begin is expected to decide tomorrow to establish "negotiating teams" to work out the details of an agreement with Likud. The Aguda is expected to demand stricter Sabbath observance

laws and assurances that the new Knesset will amend the Law of Return to define a Jew as a person born of a Jewish mother or converted by an Orthodox rabbi "according to halacha."

The Aguda, however, will carefully avoid any commitment as to the longevity of its agreement and may insist on the right to dissent on certain issues, political observers said. Its move toward a coalition with Likud was reported today following a meeting between the Premier and the top man on the Aguda's Knesset list, Avraham Shapiro, a wealthy carpet merchant.

Shapiro was reliably reported to have favored a pact with the Labor Alignment when it appeared that Labor might have won one or more Knesset seats than Likud. But the final vote count gave Likud a one seat edge, making it impossible for Labor to form a majority coalition.

The larger body of opinion within the Aguda clearly favors the alliance with Likud although, as Shapiro explained, their preference was not for the party itself but for Begin personally because of his Orthodox practices. Begin "mentions the name of God at every opportunity," Shapiro said.

Political observers expect the Aguda, with only four Knesset seats, to retain the chairmanship of the Knesset's powerful Finance Committee. It will not sit in the Cabinet, however, since this is forbidden by Aguda's "Council of Sages" which determines every action of the party according to religious tenets.

Sharon May Be Defense Minister

It appeared increasingly likely, meanwhile, that Agriculture Minister Ariel Sharon, the Cabinet's most outspoken hawk, will be named Defense Minister when Begin forms his new government. Sharon was Begin's choice for the post after Ezer Weizman resigned last year but he ran into stiff opposition from other ministers, notably the two Deputy Premiers, Yigael Yadin and Simcha Ehrlich.

Yadin, whose Democratic Movement is now defunct, has departed from politics. Ehrlich remains a leader of Likud's Liberal Party faction but with hawks dominating the next government it is unlikely that he will be able to muster opposition to Sharon as he did in the past.

REAGAN SENDS TO CONGRESS THE NUCLEAR AGREEMENT WITH EGYPT

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, July 6 (JTA) -- President Reagan sent to Congress today the nuclear agreement with Egypt which, he said, will "further the non-proliferation and other foreign policy interests of the United States."

The agreement signed at the State Department on June 29, could provide Egypt with up to two nuclear reactors for energy production purposes. Congress has 60 days in which to accept or reject the accord.

"The proposed bilateral agreement reflects the desire of the governments of the U.S. and Egypt to establish a framework for peaceful nuclear cooperation in a manner which will recognize our shared non-proliferation objectives, the economic and energy development needs of Egypt and the friendly and harmonious relations between the U.S. and Egypt," Reagan said

in his message accompanying the nuclear cooperation agreement. The President noted that Egypt ratified the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty last February. "This is an important step toward controlling the dangers of the spread of nuclear weapons," Reagan said, "and is a reaffirmation of Egypt's long standing commitment to the objectives of this (non-proliferation) treaty and its commitment to peace and stability in the Middle East and Africa."

No Comment On PLO Contacts

Meanwhile, White House Deputy Press Secretary Larry Speakes had no comment today on a report in the Los Angeles Times yesterday that the U.S. has been maintaining secret contacts with the Palestine Liberation Organization since the Nixon Administration and up to the present. He also had no comment on reports of joint Soviet-Syrian naval maneuvers off the Syrian coast.

That issue was raised by a minister at Israel's Cabinet meeting yesterday but was promptly quashed by Premier Menachem Begin. Cabinet Secretary Arye Naor explained later that "This is not a matter for the government of Israel." Uri Porat, Begin's press spokesman, was quoted by Israel Radio yesterday as saying that Israel expects the U.S. to "react" to such Soviet moves wherever they are made, but especially in the Middle East.

At the State Department, spokesman Dean Fischer also refrained from commenting directly on the Los Angeles Times report. He merely repeated that the U.S. will not hold talks with the PLO until it recognizes Israel's right to exist and accepts United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

BRITAIN CALLS FOR 'NEW CHAPTER' IN RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL ONCE A NEW ISRAELI GOVERNMENT IS FORMED

By Maurice Samuelson

LONDON, July 6 (JTA) -- Britain has called for a "new chapter" in relations with Israel once the new Israeli government is formed. Douglas Hurd, Foreign Office Minister of State, said he hoped relations would improve regardless of who becomes the new Israeli Premier. However, in an interview with Jewish press representatives several days ago he added his hope that the new Israeli government would be "more reasonable in tone" than previously.

"We will try to understand the preoccupations and anxieties of Israel and hope they will accept that we in Britain and the European Economic Community (EEC) are working in good faith for a lasting peace in the Middle East," he told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

Referring to the closeness of the Israeli election result, Hurd also expressed the hope that the next government could pursue "a clear line of policy, and I expect that will happen." Speaking on the day after Britain assumed the six-month presidency of the EEC Hurd added that the 10-member countries would pursue the EEC peace initiative "without respite."

Besides awaiting the outcome of the Israeli elections, it would await the evolution of the Reagan Administration's Middle East policy, and make the EEC's policy "complementary" to that of the U.S. U.S. policy was "not yet fully defined" and Britain sought to keep "closely alongside the U.S.," he added.

Asked whether Britain had a scenario for the six months during which Lord Carrington will preside over the EEC Council of Ministers, Hurd said there

was nothing "magic" about the six months and Britain was not aiming to put its own label on EEC diplomacy in that period.

Issue Of The PLO

On the contentious issue of whether Carrington would meet Palestine Liberation Organization Chairman Yasir Arafat, Hurd said emphatically that no meeting was planned. However, it remained a possibility within the framework of the Euro-Arab dialogue later in the year.

Looking forward to what Hurd termed "close and frank relations" with Israel, he suggested that relations could have been better over the past year had Israel reacted differently to the EEC's Venice initiative, calling for mutual recognition by Israel and the Palestinians.

"It should have been possible without yielding anything of substance for Israel to have welcomed the Venice declaration, and at the same time underlining the principle of Israel's right to exist," he said. However, Israeli reaction had affected the tone of public exchange with Britain. "I hope we can now start a new chapter with the Israel government which is more reasonable in tone," Hurd said.

Although Britain had had contacts with the PLO, these had been on official and not ministerial levels and the exchanges had always been on the basis that the PLO would recognize Israel's right to exist. This had also been the basis of British discussions with "moderate Arab governments."

Although not immediately evident from Hurd's remarks, there are also reports here that Carrington, in the wake of the Israeli elections, now gives himself little chance of making a major contribution to the Middle East peace process during his presidency of the Council of Ministers.

Another reason for his hesitation is that under President Francois Mitterrand, France has become markedly more favorable to the furtherance of the Camp David peace process and less interested in the Venice declaration than under the previous French Administration.

COURT TO RULE ON TERRORISTS' CLAIM THAT THEY HAVE POW STATUS

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, July 6 (JTA) -- A Nablus military court will rule tomorrow on the claims by four suspects in the May, 1980 ambush slaying of six yeshiva students in Hebron that they are prisoners of war and therefore cannot be tried for the crime. Similar claims of POW status under the Geneva Convention have been rejected in the past when raised by alleged terrorists facing trial.

One of the four accused is serving a life sentence for the murder of a Jewish couple last year. All of them, West Bank Arabs in their 20s and 30s, are charged with firing on their victims from ambush near the old Hadassah building in Hebron. In addition to the six dead, 16 other Jews were wounded. All were returning from Friday evening services at the time.

The prosecution charges that the leader of the group, Adnan Jaber, 33, had been trained in the Soviet Union in sabotage and espionage tactics. The others, Yasir Zayadat, 31, Muhammed Shubaki, 36, and Taisir Taha, 21, are members of El Fatah who received military training in Syria. According to the charges, they were sent on their mission by Abu Jihad, deputy to Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasir Arafat. They were captured last September while attempting to escape into Jordan.

If convicted, the defendants could face the death penalty under a recent amendment to the penal code. Defense lawyers distributed pamphlets in the court-

room quoting the accused as saying they did not fear death. "Any Palestinian should be proud of their brave action in the war against Zionism," the pamphlet said.

HABIB TO RETURN TO MIDEAST BUT NO OFFICIAL DATE IS GIVEN

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, July 6 (JTA) -- Special U.S. envoy Philip Habib met for 70 minutes with President Reagan at lunch today and left the White House without giving any indication of when he might return to the Middle East.

Habib, who ducked the press by leaving by a side door, was expected to return to the region this week. It would be his third trip there on his mission, which began in May, to ease the tensions created by Syria's placement of SAM-6 anti-aircraft missiles in Lebanon and Israel's threat to destroy them. According to a White House spokesman, Reagan renewed his appreciation for Habib's efforts in the Mideast.

Habib was recalled to Washington late last month, presumably because the Administration did not want him to be in the region during Israel's elections, held June 30. His meeting with Reagan today followed the adjournment of a special Arab League committee meeting convened in Beirut to further peacemaking efforts in Lebanon. The committee has scheduled another round of meetings to begin there on July 25.

According to reports from Beirut, the tension in that country was eased somewhat last week when Christian Phalangist militiamen left the besieged city of Zahle and were replaced by Lebanese army regulars. But Syrian forces still control the roads to Zahle and their missiles have not been removed from the Beka valley.

According to one report, the Arab League committee will attempt to extract a statement from the Phalangists renouncing all ties with Israel as a precondition to any peaceful settlement of Lebanon's six year-old civil war. Israel has been supplying weapons to both the Phalangists and the Christian militia headed by Maj. Saad Haddad in south Lebanon.

BEGIN IN BID TO FIND PARTNERS FOR A VIABLE COALITION GOVERNMENT

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, July 6 (JTA) -- Premier Menachem Begin continued his efforts today to line up partners for a workable coalition government. The final vote count in the June 30 Knesset elections gave his Likud party a fragile one-seat edge over the Labor Alignment - 48 to 47- and Begin needs a minimum of 13 more Knesset mandates to achieve a 61 seat majority.

He spent two hours today in conference with former Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan whose Telem faction won two seats. Dayan told reporters afterwards that he and Begin had discussed "principles" and would hold more meetings. He did not elaborate.

Begin's major effort is concentrated on the National Religious Party and the Aguda Israel which, together, will control 10 seats in the new Knesset. Begin met over the weekend with NRP leader Yosef Burg to discuss coalition possibilities. NRP Knesset-member Rabbi Haim Druckmann said today that Begin promised that Burg, who is Interior Minister in the outgoing government, would not be replaced by Dayan as the minister in

charge of autonomy negotiations with Egypt and the U.S. Druckmann said he protested to Begin when he learned that Dayan wanted the autonomy role as the price for joining a Likud-led coalition. He said Begin told him the matter was not discussed with Dayan, that he was satisfied with the way Burg has conducted negotiations and had no intention of replacing him.

FRENCH RACIST HISTORIAN CONVICTED

PARIS, July 5 (JTA) -- Robert Faurisson, a French historian who wrote a book last year in which he claimed that reports about the Holocaust are "grossly exaggerated" and that genocide was not a policy fundamental to Nazism, has been convicted by a French court of inciting hatred and racial discrimination.

The 52-year-old history professor, who has been suspended from his post at Lyons University, was given a 90-day suspended sentence and fined \$900 by the Correctional Court of Paris. He was also ordered to pay a total of \$3,500 to three French Jewish organizations that had filed suit against him for spreading "racist theories."

FLATTO-SHARON WINS POSTPONEMENT OF HIS NINE-MONTH JAIL SENTENCE

JERUSALEM, July 6 (JTA) -- Samuel Flatto-Sharon, defeated last week in his bid for re-election to the Knesset, has won a postponement of the nine-month jail sentence imposed by a Jerusalem magistrate following his conviction on charges of bribery and other irregularities in his 1977 election campaign.

A Jerusalem district court agreed today to delay Flatto's prison term until the Supreme Court rules on his appeal against the lower court's verdict. The Supreme Court is not expected to review the case for several months because of its backlog of work.

The District Attorney did not oppose the delay. The court denied a prosecution request for an injunction to prevent Flatto from leaving the country. The former MK, a multi-millionaire, was ordered to post bail of 500,000 Shekels.

RETIRED HIGH COURT JUSTICE DEFENDS CONDUCT OF MILITARY GOVERNMENT IN OCCUPIED AREAS

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, July 6 (JTA) -- Retired Supreme Court Justice Haim Cohen strongly defended the conduct of the Military Government in the occupied territories. He observed that while the military sometimes exaggerates security needs over other values, its overall record of administration has been exemplary.

Cohen, who earned the reputation of being one of the most liberal jurists on Israel's highest court, made his remarks at a press conference to mark publication of the booklet "The Rule of Law in the Areas Administered by Israel," a research study by the Jerusalem branch of the International Committee of Jurists (ICJ).

The study was undertaken in reply to a highly critical report by West Bank lawyers Raja Shehadeh and Honathan Kuttub published last year under the imprint of the ICJ with a forward by the organization's secretary general, Niall MacDermont.

The booklet does not deal with the political aspects of Israel's occupation. Examining the Military Government from a legal viewpoint it stated that all of its acts in the spheres of human rights, ownership of land, and Israel's right to establish settlements are strictly legal.

The introduction to the study, written by Cohen, stated that by appealing to the Supreme Court, residents of the territories are able to make use of one of the most significant expressions of the rule of law in the areas.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES THE JEWS OF MEXICO

By Jesse Zel Lurie

MEXICO CITY, July 6 (JTA) -- There are three groups of Jews in Mexico: 43,000 Ashkenazim and Sephardim in separate kehillot, and about 150 native Mexicans, who are not recognized as Jews by the first two. All three groups try to avoid publicity and don't like to talk to foreign journalists, particularly Jewish reporters from their big neighbor to the North.

We are four reporters representing two Jewish weeklies in New York and Philadelphia, a monthly magazine and the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. We had been invited to Mexico by the government Tourist Council and Aeromexico to help celebrate what they called Jewish Heritage Week. This proved to be a publicity gimmick to increase Jewish tourism from the United States which did not sit well with the Jewish communal leaders.

"Why pinpoint us?" asked a Sephardi banker. "Why not a French Heritage Week?" (There is a substantial French community in Mexico City with a French Lycee to which some Jewish parents send their children.)

"Why not?" we asked. "Perhaps we in the United States can learn something from you. We are told that almost three-fourths of your children attend Jewish day schools, that they graduate fluent in Hebrew, that most or many of them spend at least a year after graduation in Israel, and that the small group in this room has just raised \$2 million for a new building on the Hebrew University campus on Mt. Scopus."

Background of Ashkenazim, Sephardim

We are meeting in the magnificent home of Dr. David Brucilovsky, a prominent internist and head of the Mexican Friends of the Hebrew University. A new group of young couples in their thirties had just been organized by the Friends and the two generations were meeting together for the first time; one of the younger men, a doctor wearing the brown tunic of the Mayo Clinic where he had interned, answered my question.

"First of all, we are a very small community, 43,000 in a population of 70 million, not even a tenth of one percent. We are a very young community. The Ashkenasim came here only one generation ago and the Sephardim are here a little longer."

(They came with little more than shirts on their backs. The Ashkenazim were escaping from Hitler's Europe and the Sephardim were fleeing from the Ottoman Turkish rulers of the Levant. They began as peddlers making the rounds of primitive villages with clothing and Christian figurines. They went into manufacturing, trade and stores. The second and third generations opened supermarkets, auto agencies and property developments.)

(Some of them amassed great personal wealth and their children became academics -- some 5 percent of the faculty at the University of Mexico are Jews -- or achieved rapid promotion in the civil service -- the head of the North American desk in the Foreign Office who accompanied President Lopez Portillo to Washington last month is 36-year-old Andres Rozental -- or entered the professions like the young doctor who was talking to us.)

"We haven't really put down roots yet ..." the doctor continued. "But what are you afraid of?" I broke in. "Anti-Semitism of course. We see

what is happening in Argentina. We are Mexican citizens. We love our country. It has been good to us. But we are still foreigners ..." A young lady interrupted. "I am the fourth generation born here and I am still considered a foreigner. My daughter is the fifth generation and her daughter will be the sixth generation and she will still be called a foreigner."

The Jews Of Venta Prieta

There is another group of Jews in Mexico who will never be called foreigners but most of the Jews in Mexico City refuse to recognize them as Jews. Their center is Venta Prieta, a village about 65 miles north of Mexico City.

Commonly called the Indian Jews they resent both the name and most of the articles written about them. Visiting journalists, photographers and historians depicted them as exotic primitives and derided their mythology of being descended from secret Jews who hid in the mountains during the 18th Century to escape the Inquisition.

They are no more Indian than the rest of the Mexican population. Almost all Mexicans are a mixture of Europeans and Indian genes. To call a Mexican an Indian is considered an insult. It is a pejorative name meaning lazy, unwashed and drunk.

I visited Venta Prieta together with Rabbi Samuel Lerer, a Conservative rabbi and a member of the Rabbinical Assembly. He is the only American rabbi in Mexico City and the only one that will provide rabbinical services such as marriages, bar mitzvas and circumcisions to Venta Prieta.

Since I accompanied Lerer, I was received cordially and allowed to photograph their "shahrit" service, which included the naming of four little girls by the rabbi. The president of the community, Saul Gonzales, answered all my questions until I asked about the history of the community. Our conversation was conducted in Spanish and Hebrew. The Interpreter was one of the dozen young men and women in this tiny community of less than 150 souls who have studied and worked in Israel. When I asked about the group's origins, the interpreter told me in Hebrew:

"When I come to your synagogue I don't ask you about your Jewish ancestry. Zeh mafria lanu. Your question disturbs us."

Growing Closer To Israel

I apologized and continued to talk to the young man about Israel. My superficial impression was that the young people of Venta Prieta are beginning to doubt the old folks tales of their Jewish ancestry, which is completely undocumented. But every group needs a mythology to account for its distinctiveness. For the young people their association with and love of Israel may have replaced the mythology.

Thus they are growing closer to the Jews of Mexico City who also find Israel a bastion. And as the young people of the village finish school and enter professions the class difference is being bridged. The process takes time. At the moment the Mexican Jews of Venta Prieta have nothing in common with the "foreign" Jews in the capital except an overwhelming desire to pray to the one God with tallit, tfillin and Torah, and a love of Israel to which a large proportion of the Venta Prieta youth have gone to study, to work and to serve in the Israel army.

* * *

JERUSALEM (JTA) -- Knesset Speaker Yitzhak Berman said Monday that he has officially notified Premier Menachem Begin that he does not intend to serve in that largely ceremonial office in the new Knesset. It is not yet known who Likud might name to replace Berman as Speaker.