

# JTA daily news bulletin

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## ADMINISTRATION PULLS BACK FROM PUBLIC CONFRONTATION WITH ISRAEL

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, July 23 (JTA) -- The Reagan Administration pulled back today from a public confrontation with Israel over Israel's continued attacks on terrorist targets in Lebanon, calling such a dispute "counterproductive."

"We feel that they (the Israelis) are as committed to a cessation of hostilities, of violence (across the Israel-Lebanon border) as we are," State Department spokesman Dean Fischer stressed. He said the Administration did not consider Premier Menachem Begin as an "obstacle" to peace.

Fischer said it would be counterproductive to comment on the criticism of Begin yesterday by two top Administration officials, Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger and Deputy Secretary of State William Clark. Both charged that Israeli military actions had undermined U.S. peace efforts in the Middle East.

"Our efforts are focussed on the achievement of a cessation of violence on both sides of the border," Fischer said today. "At this sensitive juncture, we are not going to talk about things that are behind us. Instead, we are concentrating on a reduction of the level of violence," he said.

### Replies To Charge By Begin

Fischer, however, did reply to a charge made today by Begin that there has been no progress in U.S. special envoy Philip Habib's efforts to end the violence across Israel's northern border. He said the fact that Habib, who was in Saudi Arabia today, continues on his "mission unabated, speaks for itself." He said that as long as Habib's mission goes on, "We continue to be hopeful that it will succeed."

At the same time, the State Department seemed to be accepting the Israeli position not to use the term "cease-fire" in connection with Habib's mission. Israeli Ambassador Ephraim Evron, after meeting with Secretary of State Alexander Haig yesterday, used the term "peaceful arrangement." Fischer said this is a "semantical point" and that what both Israel and the U.S. want is a "cessation of hostilities."

He said other parties are trying to use their "influence" with the PLO since the U.S. has no contacts with it. Fischer refused to name the other parties although State Department sources acknowledged that one of them is Saudi Arabia.

### Says U.S.-Israel Relations Remain Close

Fischer stressed that U.S.-Israeli relations remained "close and friendly" and would continue to remain so even though, as he noted, friends do have disagreements. His statements today seemed to be a conscious effort by the Administration to tone down the growing criticism of Israel that has appeared in Washington in the aftermath of Israel's air raid on PLO headquarters in Beirut last Friday which resulted in heavy civilian casualties.

Meanwhile, Israel's usual supporters in Congress have not jumped to its defense. Rep. Stephen

Solarz, (D. N.Y.), in television appearances last night and this morning, was the only member of Congress to publicly defend Israel's raid on Beirut.

He said it was an effort to destroy the "head" as well as the "body" of Palestinian terrorists. Solarz pointed out that most members of Congress continue to support arms for Israel and that there is a majority in the Senate and the House opposed to selling AWACS reconnaissance aircraft and other arms to Saudi Arabia.

Reagan stressed yesterday that there is no review of American policy toward Israel or whether to hold up any other arms shipments to Israel beyond the 10 F-16 jet fighter-bombers which were suspended indefinitely following the Beirut raid.

## CABINET MEETS IN EMERGENCY SESSION TO REVIEW STRAINS IN U.S.-ISRAEL RELATIONS; OFFICIALS STUNNED BY INTENSITY OF U.S. CRITICISM

By David Landau and Hugh Orgel

JERUSALEM, July 23 (JTA) -- The Cabinet convened in closed special session this morning, its second such meeting in two days, to review the serious new strains in U.S.-Israeli relations, the continued fighting along the Israeli-Lebanese border and the renewed efforts by U.S. special envoy Philip Habib to establish what Israel calls a "peaceful arrangement" with Lebanon.

The Israel Air Force went into action again this afternoon, blasting Palestinian artillery positions in the Hasbaya area of southern Lebanon. Terrorist rocket and artillery attacks on towns in northern Israel tapered off last night. Gen. Avigdor Ben-Gal, commander of the northern front, said the relative quiet was the result of the severe damage sustained by the terrorists from Israeli air bombardment rather than diplomatic moves to obtain a cease-fire.

Meanwhile, Israeli officials were stunned and angered by the intensity of the criticism leveled against Israel and Premier Menachem Begin in particular, by top Administration officials in Washington, for Israel's air raids over Lebanon.

They were especially incensed by Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger's charge yesterday that Israel had set back "the whole course of security and peace" in the Middle East by its attack on Iraq's nuclear reactor last month and its bombing of Palestine Liberation Organization headquarters in Beirut last Friday which resulted in heavy civilian casualties.

They contrasted Weinberger's statement with President Reagan's "carefully balanced" remarks yesterday. Reagan, at a chance meeting with several reporters, observed that Israeli civilians have also been under attack from "the other side."

### Weinberger Draws Israeli Wrath

Israeli officials were especially vehement in denying Weinberger's charge, on a television talk show yesterday morning, that Habib had twice been on the verge of a peaceful resolution of the Syrian missile dispute, only to have his efforts undermined by Israeli military actions, first against Iraq and later over Lebanon.

The Israelis said today that as far as they know, Habib made hardly any progress in his mission, begun in May, to persuade the Syrians to remove their SAM-6



anti-aircraft missiles from Lebanon. He certainly never reported to Israel that he was on the brink of reaching a settlement, officials said. On the contrary, he always returned to Israel bearing bad tidings. It was Israel's repeated self-restraint that prevented a military escalation of the crisis, the officials claimed.

#### Also Angered By Clark's Remarks

Anger was also expressed here over the remarks of Deputy Secretary of State William Clark who told reporters in Washington that the Reagan Administration felt "disappointment and some embarrassment" when Begin ordered the air raid on Beirut shortly after State Department Counsellor Robert McFarlane had conferred with the Prime Minister in Jerusalem about Israel's use of American-supplied weapons in offensive actions.

The gravity of the rift with Washington seemed to dawn slowly on Israeli political circles. Until this morning, in fact, there seemed to be little appreciation in Jerusalem of how vehemently critical U.S. opinion was of Israeli actions.

One factor which brought home to Israeli politicians and public how serious the situation has become was the television accounts of the havoc wrought by the Israeli bombing of Beirut last Friday. Those accounts in U.S. network television films broadcast here last night and seen previously all over the U.S., were the first inkling Israeli viewers had of the nature of the Beirut raid.

Another factor that left the Israelis shaken was the statement by Ambassador Ephraim Evron in Washington yesterday, after a meeting with Secretary of State Alexander Haig, that this was "one of the toughest times" in U.S.-Israeli relations.

#### Terms U.S. Comments Unprecedented

Amos Eiran, who was a political counsellor at the Israeli Embassy in Washington during much of the 70s and is now active in the opposition Labor Party, told Israeli radio listeners this morning that the comments made by U.S. officials were "unprecedented."

Other observers compared the atmosphere today with the tense U.S.-Israeli relationship after the Sinai campaign of October, 1956 when the U.S., joined by the Soviet Union, ordered Israel to withdraw its troops from Sinai.

#### Ordered To Minimize Civilian Casualties

In an apparent attempt to mitigate hostile opinion, Air Force Commander Gen. David Ivry said the Air Force was under strict orders to keep civilian casualties at an absolute minimum in its strikes against targets in Lebanon. He said Israeli pilots were dropping the smallest bombs possible for the designated targets and the minimum number of bombs.

"The problem is that the PLO deliberately places its military installation civilian surroundings," Ivry said. "We have not changed our policy of trying not to harm civilians but we have designated new targets which we have not touched before."

Gen. Ben-Gal, who announced the latest air strikes, acknowledged that it was impossible to completely silence artillery and Katyusha rocket launchers by air attacks since they are highly mobile. "To prevent fire against you completely, you have to be present on the gun site," he said, implying that in the last resort, Israeli ground forces would have to occupy the Palestinian positions in south Lebanon as they did in 1978.

#### RESIDENTS OF NORTHERN ISRAELI TOWNS EMERGE FROM THEIR SHELTERS

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, July 23 (JTA) -- Residents of northern Israeli towns and villages emerged from their shelters today, taking advantage of a lull in the shelling and rocketing from across the border to breathe the fresh air after more than a week of continual stays in shelters.

The area was reported quiet today, with no shells up to mid-day. Some rockets were fired during the night, causing no casualties but damaging power lines. Israel Radio, which yesterday transferred its mid-day newsreel to temporary studios in Nahariya, today broadcast from Kiryat Shemona.

Visitors there report a defiant mood among those residents who have remained, with no panic. Those who have left the new immigrant town, mainly families with children, took only a suitcase with them, planning to return as soon as quiet returns. None are reported to have announced plans to move permanently from the area which has suffered repeated rocket attacks in recent years.

Damage of Galilee kibbutzim has been heavy, with large areas of crops and fruit trees damaged and fields set afire. Many of the kibbutzim in the area also have vacation guest houses and their tourist season has been hard hit.

The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) spokesmen say the international force is holding talks with "both sides" in an effort to return quiet to the region. A Fijian detachment of UNIFIL clashed yesterday with a group of Palestinians trying to smuggle a Katyusha rocket launcher through their lines to set it up to fire into Israel. Shots were exchanged when the terrorists refused to halt. But they were finally stopped and sent back north with their weapons, UNIFIL sources said.

#### BEGIN SAYS AIR FORCE IS THE 'BULWARK' DEFENDING ISRAEL

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, July 23 (JTA) -- Prime Minister Menachem Begin today described the Israel Air Force as the "bulwark" defending the country today. Addressing a passing-out parade of new pilots on annual Air Force Day at an air force base somewhere in Israel, he quoted Winston Churchill's famous saying "Never have so many owed so much to so few."

With his characteristic sense of the past, Begin traced Jewish military history "back 3,000 years to David, our great king and military leader." He said that some people told him the Israel Air Force was the best air force in the world. He said he would not argue with that, but he knew it was the air force with the greatest battle experience in the world.

Air Force Commander Gen. David Ivry said the coming year was a year of great challenges for the Air Force because of the logistics of its move to new bases in the Negev with Israeli's withdrawal from Sinai.

But even with those problems, the Air Force would not let up on its training and development program, Ivry said. He welcomed the new intake of pilots after years of arduous training.

#### PLO KATYUSHA ROCKETS SET FIRE TO NORTHERN GALILEE FORESTS

JERUSALEM, July 23 (JTA) -- Widespread forest fires are currently raging at several points in forests of the Jewish National Fund in northern Galilee as a result of recent heavy Palestine Liberation Organization rocket attacks. Close to 100,000 trees, covering almost 200 acres have been destroyed in recent days, according to the JNF forestry department.



The forest fires have been breaking out along Israel's northern Galilee border as fighting between Israeli forces and PLO terrorist organizations continues in the Lebanon area.

JNF workers in northern Israel, in cooperation with Israeli fire-fighting forces and spotter planes are on duty round the clock in an all-out effort to extinguish the flames. Their progress is being impeded by the rough, mountainous terrain of the region. Most of the forests now being destroyed were planted by residents of the area's settlements 30 years ago.

#### EVRON: NO 'CRISIS' IN U.S.-ISRAEL RELATIONS. JUST 'DIFFERENCE OF OPINION BETWEEN CLOSE FRIENDS'

By Yitzhak Rabi

NEW YORK, July 23 (JTA) -- Israel's Ambassador to the United States, Ephraim Evron, said today that Israel and the United States are not going through a "crisis" in their relationship and all reports to that effect are exaggerated. He characterized the friction between the two countries over Israel's raids in Lebanon as "a difference of opinion between close friends."

Addressing a meeting of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations here, Evron predicted that Israel and the United States will "resume very soon the good relationships," as happened in the past after the two countries went through a period of friction.

He said that "after the dust settles," and the situation with regard to Israel's motives in its recent action in Lebanon would become clearer, there will be "more understanding" on the issue between the two countries. He said that he is "certain" that the close relations between Israel and the U.S. will continue in the future, adding that this attitude was expressed to him yesterday by Secretary of State Alexander Haig and other Administration officials.

#### Sorry About Suspension Of F-16s

Evron, however, said he was "sorry" over the Reagan Administration's decision to suspend the delivery of 10 F-16 fighter planes following Israel's air attack on Beirut last Friday.

"I do not think it (the decision) stabilizes the situation" in the Mideast, "on the contrary," he said, pointing out that Israel is the one country in the region that is threatened with destruction and therefore "we need to defend ourselves."

Evron said that Israel was "forced" to defend its northern border and its citizens following terrorist attacks with rockets and shells from across the Lebanese border.

"None of the rockets and shells were aimed at Israeli military forces but at civilians," Evron charged, adding: "I must express my chagrin and surprise that none of these found place in the American media." He also noted that when Syria bombed the Christian town of Zahle and killed many civilians there "the international community and the media did not pay attention at all."

#### Basis For Israel's Actions

The Israeli envoy explained that Israel had to attack the terrorists in Lebanon at this time because of "a change of tactic" on their part in recent months. "They began a systematic, massive military build up," he said, with arms they received from Libya, Syria and other sources. In fact, Evron claimed, the terrorists succeeded

in building the "infra-structure of well supplied regular forces."

Under those circumstances, Evron said, Israel had to attack terrorist strongholds in Lebanon. "We are determined to put an end" to the PLO's attacks on Israeli civilians, he said, adding that Israel will continue with its defensive attacks until raids and bombardments of Israeli territory is stopped.

The Ambassador said that in the course of the Israeli attacks, civilians were killed but the responsibility is with the terrorists who shelter themselves among civilians. "Those who make the war their objective," Evron said, "should bear in mind the consequences."

#### Claims Media Created Division

Howard Squadron, chairman of the Conference of Presidents, rejected at the beginning of the meeting reports in the American media of a "division" in the American Jewish community over Premier Menachem Begin's policy in Lebanon. He said that "the efforts to find division in the Jewish community" and between Israel and the United States is "characteristic" of the way the media handles these issues.

Squadron said the Jewish community in the United States will continue to support Israel. This attitude was also expressed by Rabbi Alexander Schindler, President of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, who said that American Jews will continue "to stand by Israel."

#### Statement By The Presidents Conference

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Conference of Presidents called on President Reagan to immediately resume F-16s planes deliveries to Israel. In a statement unanimously adopted, the Conference called the suspension "a one-sided punishment of Israel" whose result is "to endanger Israel's security and compromise America's own interest in the Mideast."

The statement, sent to the White House in a form of a telegram signed by Squadron, said that "while all Jews are deeply concerned by the loss of civilian lives on both sides of the Lebanese border ... the primary responsibility for civilian deaths in Beirut must be borne by the terrorist PLO which has deliberately exposed Lebanese civilians to the loss of life by locating its headquarters and military installations within civilian areas."

The message to the White House quoted Reagan's own statement given to the American Assembly for Zionism and Israel last May calling Israel "a major strategic asset whose military strength stands as a deterrent to Soviet aggression. When our country enhances Israel's security, we advance our own strategic interests," the President said then.

#### FRENCH POLICE DETAIN SUSPECT IN RUE COPERNIC SYNAGOGUE BOMBING

PARIS, July 23 (JTA) -- French police have detained a suspect in the bombing last October of the Rue Copernic synagogue in which four people were killed. Police detained a Spanish national, Ernesto Mila Rodriguez, 24, in a south Paris hotel late last night and said he was questioned throughout the day.

Police declined to link Rodriguez with the Paris synagogue bombing and said the warrant was issued for general questioning by the French state security court. The court may hold suspects indefinitely without charging them. Rodriguez has been named in both the Spanish and French press as one of the men who left the bomb outside the synagogue. Police have said in the past they wished to question him but did not consider him a prime suspect.



**BEHIND THE HEADLINES****CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY ON VERGE OF COMPLETING TASK OF PRESERVING THE FAMOUS CAIRO GENIZA COLLECTION**

By Maurice Samuelson

CAMBRIDGE, England, July 23 (JTA) -- Cambridge University is about to complete the huge task of preserving for posterity the world's greatest treasure house of Medieval Hebrew manuscripts -- the famous Cairo Geniza collection.

The last of the 140,000 fragments and documents, some up to 1,000 years old, are being unravelled, cleaned and sealed in a specially developed plastic casing by experts at Cambridge University library.

Dr. Stefan Reif, the scholar in charge of the priceless collection, says the conservation work begun about 80 years ago when the material came to Cambridge, will be completed in the autumn of 1981.

The parallel task of cataloging the fragments may not be finished until the end of the century, and Reif fears that it will be delayed or even suspended by lack of funds. Nevertheless, the completion of the conservation work will be an important milestone in an archeological epic in some ways as remarkable as the finding of the Dead Sea scrolls.

**Recovered By Noted Scholar**

This accumulation of Hebrew manuscript material and Judaica was recovered from the thousand year old Ben Ezra Synagogue of old Cairo in 1896-7 by the noted scholar Dr. Solomon Schechter who later founded the Conservative movement in American Judaism.

The Geniza was the synagogue's depository for worn-out copies of sacred Jewish writings. Schechter, then reader in Talmudic literature at Cambridge, was sent to Cairo by his friend and patron Dr. Charles Taylor, master of St. John's College, Cambridge.

In Cairo, Schechter secured the approval of the synagogue authorities to empty the Geniza, and the fragments which he brought back from what is now called the Taylor Schechter Geniza collection.

Over the following 80 years, the Geniza collection has ushered in a new era of Jewish learning. According to Reif "There is hardly an area of Hebrew and Jewish studies that has not been revolutionized by findings that originated in the Geniza. Taken together its fragments make up a literature of the sacred, the heretical and the mundane which reaches back to Biblical times and extends forward to the 19th Century."

**Many Hebrew Books Recovered**

Among the many lost Hebrew books recovered from the hoard is the original version of "The Wisdom of Ben Sira," a work dating from the Second Century BCE. Jewish doubt about its sacredness had led to its exclusion from the Hebrew Bible and eventually the loss of its Hebrew text but the Geniza ensured that it was not lost forever by preserving a 10th Century copy.

No less exciting are the samples of the original handwriting of outstanding figures like Moses Maimonides and Yehuda Halevi and the many detailed accounts of social, economic and religious life among Near East Jews in the 11th and 13th Centuries.

While these discoveries are a tribute to the generations of scholars who have studied the Geniza, the present pace of work on its restora-

tion goes back only eight years to when Reif, then only 30, was put in charge of it. Of the 140,000 fragments, 100,000 had still not been treated to ensure their preservation. Of these 68,000 had not even been opened when he arrived.

Faced with the huge task, Reif was on the verge of resigning, but he persevered. A gifted lecturer he turned to the Jewish community in Britain for funds to help him build a team of conservationists and scholars. These donations, together with money from other countries, supplement the budget provided by the university. Costs in 1981 are expected to reach 70,000 Pounds.

Today, though the shadow of the economic recession hangs over the Geniza collection, its physical preservation is now ensured against the ravages of the damp English climate, but the task of opening its secrets to students of Jewish history is far from finished.

**AVRAHAM FATAL DEAD**

JERUSALEM, July 23 (JTA) -- Rabbi Avraham Fatal, a leading Sephardic Torah scholar and mystic died here this week and was buried in Har Hamenuhor cemetery. Fatal was the father-in-law of the Sephardi Chief Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, who, together with his Ashkenazic colleague, Shlomo Goren, led the funeral cortege through the city's streets. In his eulogy, Yosef recalled Fatal's "profound love for the Torah and for all those who study it." Yosef traced Fatal's career from his service as a young rabbi in Aleppo, Syria, some 60 years ago.

**DVORA MAATEL LEVIN DEAD AT 90**

JERUSALEM, July 22 (JTA) -- Rabbanit Dvora Maatel Levin, widow of the late leader of Agudat Yisrael, Yitzhak Meir Levin, died here yesterday at the age of 90. She was the sister of the Hasidic Rabbi of Gur (Gerrer Rebbe) and her funeral was attended by thousands of Gerrer Hasidim. Her late husband was leader of the Aguda in pre-war Poland and later in Israel and he served as a minister in Premier David Ben Gurion's first government.

She was a noted personality in her own right. Acquaintances said of her that she inherited a goodly portion of the wisdom and good sense of her father, Rabbi Avraham Mordechai Alter, the Rabbi of Gur and most prominent leader of pre-war European Orthodox Jewry.

**FLIGHT OF SOVIET JEWISH WOMAN**

TEL AVIV, July 23 (JTA) -- Igor Tufeld, a new immigrant from the Soviet Union now doing his military service here, says the Soviet authorities are endangering his mother's life by continually delaying an operation for a benign brain tumor. Vladimir and Izolda Tufeld have been refused exit permits since 1977, despite a petition by 35 U.S. Senators.

Vladimir, now in a Moscow hospital after suffering a heart attack, has been refused permission to leave on the grounds that he once worked in a Moscow electronics factory. The factory manager has testified he was not engaged on security work.

Their son said doctors in Moscow continually postponed scheduled operations on the grounds they were "suddenly called to conferences abroad." A number of neurosurgeons around the world have offered to operate on Mrs. Tufeld, but her applications for permission to leave the Soviet Union temporarily, returning after the operation, have also been refused.