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U.S. MULLING ITS PARTICIPATION AT THE RESUMED AUTONOMY TALKS

By Helen Silver

WASHINGTON, Aug. 27 (JTA) -- The United States has not yet made a decision on whether it will be represented at the resumption of the Egyptian-Israeli autonomy talks, but is "considering all options," according to State Department spokesman Dean Fischer, and "would not rule out the possibility" that Secretary of State Alexander Haig will represent the United States.

Fischer was asked at the State Department briefing today whether it would not be unusual for the United States not to be represented at the first meetings of the Foreign Ministers scheduled to take place in Cairo Sept. 23-24. Haig will be at United Nations General Assembly meetings in New York at that time. Egyptian Foreign Minister Kamal Hassan Ali is also scheduled to be at the General Assembly session at the same time.

Fischer replied: "We don't regard it as particularly unusual, because of the fact that they (Israel and Egypt) are signatories to the Camp David treaty as we are ourselves. The two countries do have full diplomatic relations, they meet bilaterally at various levels on a variety of subjects, just as we meet bilaterally with each of them. We regard these meetings as being as much a part of our full partnership relationship as the trilateral negotiating sessions themselves."

Fischer was asked whether a replacement for former special Mideast Ambassador Sol Linowitz was being considered and he replied "that decision has not been made." He was asked about reports that the autonomy negotiations would be held in New York and he said, "We have no confirmation and no comment on them. It is very possible that Secretary Haig will meet with them (the participants) if they come to New York."

EGYPT AGREES THAT ISRAEL WILL REMOVE ALL ITS EQUIPMENT WHEN IT EVACUATES SINAI NEXT YEAR

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Aug. 27 (JTA) -- Egypt has agreed that Israel will remove all equipment from airfields it is to evacuate in the Sinai by next April but leave the infrastructure intact, according to Defense Minister Ariel Sharon who returned from Cairo this evening.

Sharon stayed on in Egypt for an additional day, after Premier Menachem Begin and his party had left yesterday, for additional talks on the Israel's withdrawal from Sinai. He said he and Egyptian ministers and officials had worked out general policy lines on extending of normal relations between the two countries.

Committees are to be named and meet alternately in Israel and Egypt to discuss details concerning border problems, including civil aviation, police and customs cooperation, and communications. Sharon's aides said the Egyptians had indicated that they might be interested in buying fixtures in the Yamit sector villages to be handed back to Egypt, but did not insist on them being left, saying they "already had plans for the area."

CRIF JOINS IN PROTESTS AGAINST CHEYSSON'S MEETING WITH ARAFAT

By Edwin Eytan

PARIS, Aug. 27 (JTA) -- The Representative Council of Major Jewish Organizations in France (CRIF) joined today in the chorus of protests against Foreign Minister Claude Cheysson's scheduled meeting with Palestine Liberation Organization chief Yasser Arafat. The CRIF said in a statement that any move toward recognizing the PLO "can only reinforce its intransigence and jeopardize the search for a peaceful solution" to the Middle East conflict.

Another organization, the France-Israel Alliance, had earlier written Premier Pierre Mauroy calling for Cheysson's resignation and rapping what its president, Gen. Jean Lecomte, saw as a continuation by the new Socialist Administration of the previous government's "cynical" pro-Arab slant.

Reports from Beirut appearing in the French press today indicate that the Palestinians are just as unhappy with the new French Administration's policy in the Middle East. The PLO is described as deeply regretting Cheysson's refusal to call on Arafat at his headquarters in Beirut and President Francois Mitterrand's pro-Israeli declaration. The Palestinians are also described as "perturbed" by French insistence on the positive aspects of the Camp David process which is anathema to most Arab states.

French sources, meanwhile, continue to remain vague on the date or the site of the forthcoming Cheysson-Arafat meeting. The sources continue to stress that the Minister "will welcome all the opportunities to confer with the PLO leaders, if the conditions for such a meeting are right." The French want Arafat to call on Cheysson at the French Embassy or at the French Ambassador's residence in Beirut. The meeting might take place on "neutral" ground in Damascus in order to placate both sides, officials here say.

MYSTERY SURROUNDS TUNNEL UNCOVERED NEAR WESTERN WALL LEADING IN THE DIRECTION OF SECOND TEMPLE SITE

By Hugh Orgel

JERUSALEM, Aug. 27 (JTA) -- Mystery surrounds an ancient tunnel uncovered near the Western Wall in the Old City, leading in the direction to the presumed site of the Second Temple. It has sharpened further the dispute between the two Chief Rabbis on the one hand and the National Religious Party Ministers, archaeologists and the academic community on the other.

The news was first made known this morning when Israel Radio reported that Rabbi Yehuda Meir Getz, the rabbi of the Western Wall, had discovered the tunnel a month ago while he was investigating a seepage of water near the ancient wall. He cleared away debris and found the tunnel which is more than five yards wide and 10 yards high.

He claimed that it was one of the entrances to the Temple, possible one used by the Cohanim (priests). He informed Ashkenazic Chief Rabbi Shlomo Goren, who gave him permission to use Ministry of Religious Affairs workers to clear away the mud and silt. Goren imposed complete secrecy on the operation but later reportedly informed then Religious Affairs Minister Aharon Abu Hatzeira of the finding and the clearing work.

When the report was broadcast, Interior and Religious Affairs Minister Yosef Burg expressed surprise and annoyance that workers from his Ministry were employed by Getz without his knowledge that the tunnel even existed. Education and Cultural Affairs Minister Zevulun Hammer also expressed amazement and anger that the Department of Archaeology and Antiquities, which is under his jurisdiction, had not been informed and had not issued the license required before such work can be carried out. Goren is feuding with both NRP Ministers about his injunction banning work at the City of David dig. Neither Burg nor Hammer have accepted the injunction as the final word on the matter.

Archaeologists, who have not been allowed near the tunnel site, say they have known for some time that such a tunnel existed. It was first charted by a British explorer in the last century and even named on maps after him.

Doubt Tunnel Was Temple Entrance

Most archaeologists say it is doubtful that the tunnel was a Temple entrance. They are united in saying that it is unlikely any remnants of the Second Temple would ever be found because records of that period and subsequent reports show that the entire Temple area was razed to the ground and ploughed under by the Romans.

Goren appeared to agree with some of the archaeologists when he said today that the tunnel was "probably not an entrance but a water conduit or a reservoir" which he said would fill up again with water during the winter rain season. But Goren, who visited the site today, went to the mikvah (ritual bath) before entering the tunnel to recite Psalms.

The Chief Rabbi has barred reporters and archaeologists from the site, saying only Getz can allow visitors since he is the "baal habayit" (owner) there. This has been disputed by Hammer who asserted that any ancient site automatically comes under the jurisdiction of the Antiquities Department, and not the rabbinate.

Mayor Teddy Kollek of Jerusalem has expressed fears of negative reactions by Arabs and Moslems when they learn that the work on the tunnel is proceeding under the Temple Mount and near the foundations of the Dome of the Rock mosque. Some reports note that this fear was the basis for the absolute secrecy imposed by Goren. But some observers say the news has now been leaked to the press to take pressure off the dispute on the City of David dig.

A REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK:

BEGIN'S VISIT TO EGYPT

By Gil Sedan

ALEXANDRIA, Aug. 27 (JTA)-- The bellboy who showed me to my hotel room hardly knew what I was doing here. Talks? What talks? Was Premier Menachem Begin of Israel here in Alexandria?

The bellboy was not an exception. Israel's peace with Egypt was hardly the talk of the town as Begin and President Anwar Sadat met here for two days. Few Egyptians seemed excited about the goings on, or the peace process. In fact, the reaction on the part of the Israeli public is not much better. Only two weeks ago former Defense Minister Ezer Weizman said on Israeli television that the government has succeeded in destroying the joy of peace among Israelis. There is no longer that joy of peace in Egypt, either.

When Begin's motorcade raced through the empty streets of Alexandria there was nothing reminiscent of the large crowds which greeted him cheerfully two years earlier in the same city. The million-and-a-half Egyptians in town this week were much more concerned about swimming and bathing in the Mediterranean than about the visiting Israeli leader.

I wondered whether this was because of the lack of progress in the autonomy talks or merely because of the inconvenience the visit caused, as the main streets were closed to traffic and the usual traffic jams became even worse. Both, it seems were true. As a Jerusalemite I recalled the problems caused by similar state visits in that city, including the general havoc in the routine of daily activities. But when Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and President Nixon created commotion and tumult during their visits to Jerusalem in the 1970s, we accepted it with love. We knew that it was history in the making.

In Alexandria, the Israeli journalists who accompanied Begin also had the feeling that the making of history had slowed down somewhat, and perhaps this was the reason for the lack of enthusiasm by all the parties concerned -- the bellboy, the general public and also Begin and Sadat. Begin would not have minded if time had stopped altogether.

The Agony Of Withdrawing From Sinai

It is now eight months before the last Israeli soldier will leave Sinai, when Israel is due to return the area to Egypt under the peace plan. Begin is well aware of the threats of the Yamit settlers and their supporters to do everything in their power to prevent Israel's withdrawal. He is aware, too, and remembers the bitter charges by the Labor Alignment opposition that peace could have been achieved without giving up the settlements so easily. Sadat, on the other hand, has made it quite clear in the past and again this week, that the settlements must return to Egyptian sovereignty.

Begin probably would not mind something happening that would spare him the moment when the Israeli flag is to be removed from Yamit and the Egyptian flag flies there in its stead. But Begin's politics are guided by legal formalities and the written word. The written word makes it quite clear that by April 25 there will no longer be any Israeli presence in Sinai -- and he intends to adhere to that commitment, despite strong opposition.

Reality And The Written Word

Begin's sensitivity about the written word was quite apparent at the press conference he and Sadat held here yesterday at the end of their two-day summit. He again spent time quoting Palestine Liberation Organization resolutions and statements to show why Israel would never talk to the PLO. He kept referring journalists to the Camp David accords which spoke of Palestinian participation in the Jordanian and Egyptian delegations to the autonomy talks -- not of a separate Palestinian delegation.

Sadat did not comment. After all, why should he? All he cares about presently is that the withdrawal will take place in time, and he is ready to ignore and swallow a great deal until that time arrives, including Israel's bombing of Iraq's nuclear reactor which came two days after his summit meeting in Sharm el Sheikh last June, and the bombing of terrorist headquarters in Beirut last month with its heavy toll in civilian lives.

Sadat confirmed at the press conference that these two incidents were raised in his talks with Begin, but "I prefer not to comment." Asked whether he could promise Israel that he would continue the peace process after Israel's final withdrawal from Sinai, Sadat did not use the phrase that has become traditional for him, "no more war."

He let Begin announce, instead, that he was confident Egypt would not go back on its peace commitment. Yes, Sadat conceded, there are some difficulties in implementing the process of normalizing relations between Egypt and Israel "but I have already instructed my Foreign Minister to see to it that they are overcome." It had a familiar ring.

Sadat began the press conference with an announcement that the autonomy talks, "the full autonomy talks," as both he and Begin stressed, would resume next month. He ended it by declaring that, yes, he was an optimist by nature and that it was still possible to conclude the talks by the end of the year, as he had declared before. If not, well, things don't always happen on schedule just as long as the Israelis leave Sinai on schedule.

The journalists at the press conference came away with the feeling that they already heard this before. Begin and Sadat appeared to feel the same way.

No Excitement About Peace

After leaving the press conference I drove to Cairo, a three-hour drive along a boring flat road through the Egyptian delta with its shabby and dirty towns with millions of people. Poverty and misery are visible everywhere, and one is not surprised that Egyptians are no longer excited about peace. The Egyptians had hoped that peace would bring a radical change in their way of life.

While there are changes, they are hardly radical. The social and economic problems are too complex to surmount in such a short period of time since Sadat's historic visit to Jerusalem in 1977. What are some of the changes? Egyptians are investing a great deal of effort and money in developing such things as traffic lights and the telephone system, both of which operated much smoother this time than they did shortly after Sadat's visit to Jerusalem.

Yet, peace is a reality. It was amazing to me to be able to introduce myself anywhere (perhaps almost anywhere) in Egypt as an Israeli and feel safe -- and often even welcome. But this is not the kind of peace we Israelis dreamed about. We thought that peace with Egypt would be the beginning of a new era, that the gates would be open to us in the entire Arab Mideast. But this seems as far away as ever. Perhaps we are not modest enough, perhaps we should be happy with what has already been achieved -- and hope for the better.

REPORT ANTI-SEMITISM IS NOT A 'MAJOR PROBLEM' IN ARGENTINA AND JEWS ARE FEELING MORE SECURE THERE

By Yitzhak Rabi

NEW YORK, Aug. 27 (JTA) -- Anti-Semitism is not a "major problem" in Argentina today and that country's 300,000 Jews are feeling more secure now than in recent years, according to Gerard Daniel, president of the World Union for Progressive Judaism (WUPJ) who has just returned from a two-week visit to Argentina, Brazil and Chile.

"Jews in Argentina are not going around scared," Daniel told a press conference held at the Essex House here today. He said that in Argentina and the two other countries he visited he met with Jewish leaders, government officials and various members of the Jewish community. He said that the Jewish leaders in Argentina con-

tended that the situation in that country is "continuously improving for the Jews." The Jewish leadership in Argentina, Daniel said is "greatly encouraged" by progress made in the field of human rights over the last two years.

Daniel said, however, that "anti-Semitism is a latent problem in Argentina." He said that the Jewish leadership "is still somewhat concerned over the ability and the willingness of the Argentinian authorities to carry out their avowed policy of renouncing anti-Semitism."

He also said that members of the Jewish community are concerned over the future of Argentina's economy. "They believe that a further deterioration of the country's already weak economy might lead to a revival of anti-Semitism."

Timerman's Reports Questioned

Asked about charges made by Jacobo Timerman, the Argentinian Jewish journalist who was imprisoned, tortured and held in jail for several years without any charges brought against him, that anti-Semitism is widespread in Argentina, Daniel replied:

"The Jewish leadership in Argentina on various levels is very clearly questioning the reliability of Timerman's report. They are also disturbed by the timing and the sensation that Timerman's book caused in the United States and said that it has not been helpful for the Jewish community in Argentina at a time when there is a great improvement for the Jews there." He was referring to the book, "Prisoner Without A Name, Cell Without A Number."

As for the Jewish communities in Chile and Brazil, Daniel said that they "enjoy a comfortable degree of security, and Jews are not leaving those countries."

Daniel also reported the formation of a South American Federation of Jewish Liberal Congregations, to be affiliated with the WUPJ. He said that four congregations in Argentina, Brazil and Chile are committed to the new organization, which plans to conduct a rabbinical training program and youth exchange and educational exchange program with the Reform movement in the United States.

NORTH AMERICAN ALIYA UP IN JULY

NEW YORK, Aug. 27 (JTA) -- The number of North Americans emigrating to Israel increased by 13 percent in the month of July, as compared with a year ago, according to figures released today by the Israel Aliya Center for North America.

The center's director, Dr. Aharon Kfir, reported that some 335 new immigrants from North America came to Israel during July as compared with 292 in the same month last year. The totals for July included 64 families and 108 individuals, with approximately 85 percent of them under age 45.

Kfir pointed out that the figures represented only those North Americans who emigrated with the help of Israel Aliya Centers in the United States and Canada. "They do not include those who made aliya without our assistance or those tourists who changed their visa status while in Israel." The center is sponsored by the World Zionist Organization.

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BONN (JTA) -- A former SS official, Joachim Nehring, 78, who had been charged with participating in the murder of Jews on two occasions in Galicia during World War II, was declared innocent Wednesday after several witnesses appearing at his trial failed to identify him or provide a detailed account of the events in which he was allegedly involved.

FORD MOTOR CO. SAYS THREATS OF CONTINUED ARAB BOYCOTT WILL NOT SWAY IT DOING BUSINESS IN ISRAEL

DETROIT, Aug. 27 (JTA) -- Ford Motor Company's rejection of boycott threats by the Arab League remains the auto manufacturer's firm policy and Israeli distributors of the Ford cars continue in operation. The adherence to this policy of resisting the Arab pressures was restated to The Jewish News by spokesmen for Ford, in view of the repetition of reports that the boycott threats were to be resumed.

Speculation that the Arab League boycott, which was imposed on the Ford company in 1966 because the auto maker licensed one of its dealers to assemble knocked-down vehicles in Israel, again threatens the firm appeared in an article in the Detroit News by Patrick Fitzgerald, who wrote:

"An Arab boycott that has frozen Ford Motor Co. out of one of the world's fastest growing auto markets has become an issue of concern in the Toyota-Ford joint venture negotiations. A Toyota spokesman said the company is concerned that a deal with Ford might complicate the Japanese firm's relations with nations of the Arab League, especially Saudi Arabia, Toyota's second largest export nation this year."

The Near East report published an item last month which stated, "Saudi Arabia has warned Japan's largest car manufacturer, the Toyota Motor Co., to expect retaliatory action from Arab nations if it forms a business tie with the Ford Motor Co., and undertakes a joint venture to produce motor vehicles."

Response To Boycott Threats

Philip Slomovitz, editor and publisher of The Jewish News, writing about this development in this week's issue of his newspaper, said that in response to these assertions, K. D. Holloway, president of Ford Mid-East and Africa, Inc. defined the Ford policy in a statement to The Jewish News. The statement, in part, said:

"Ford Motor Co. has no wish to become involved on either side of the Arab-Israeli dispute. This is an issue properly the responsibility of governments, not private companies. Our interest is to serve the vehicle needs of all of the countries of the Middle East, without regard to politics, or conflicts between or among those countries. Presently, in Israel, we are selling commercial vehicles in kit form, via an Israeli-owned distributor/ assembler."

"Without changing existing methods of conducting business, Ford would like to find ways to participate fully in the expanding markets of this region. Present U.S. laws and regulations, however, prohibit meaningful contact on the boycott with Arab officials. Merely to reply to the Boycott Office's standard questionnaire, for example, would subject Ford Motor Co. to criminal penalties. These include possible fines up to \$50,000, prison terms up to five years and the suspension of all export licensing privileges for export from the U.S. to any country in the world."

"So what is the Ford position vis-a-vis the boycott? In a nutshell, we have been blacklisted for 15 years, are frozen out of a rapidly growing vehicle market and would like to find ways to serve both Israel and the various Arab nations with quality Ford cars, trucks and tractors. Existing laws in the U.S. prohibit even the first steps in this direction."

Slomovitz reported that in a supplementary statement to The Jewish News, Robert Hefty, director of international and diversified products in the public relations department of Ford Motor Co., said, "Ford sales to the Israeli distributor/assembler continue as before, subject to normal business conditions. A very small volume of Ford vehicles -- fewer than 2,000 units annually -- is sold to Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia. This is a combined figure for all three markets. All other Arab countries presently boycott Ford vehicles, with the result that these markets remain closed to us."

The Ford Motor Co.'s car sales assumed extensive proportions in Egypt prior to the Camp David agreements, thus emphasizing that the Arab League boycott did not have unanimous support in Arab ranks.

ADL CONDEMNS INJECTION OF ANTI-SEMITISM INTO THE NEW YORK MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

NEW YORK, Aug. 27 (JTA) -- Natalie Gordon, chair of the New York Regional Board of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, today sharply condemned the injection of anti-Semitism into the New York municipal elections.

Ms. Gordon cited a news bulletin dated Aug. 7 distributed by James Lawson, a writer and president of the Harlem Council for Economic Development, in which he assailed alleged "Jewish domination" of New York City government. Quoting such Lawson statements as "... Jewish Mayor Edward Koch ... Jews dominate this Board of Estimate ... blatant strangle hold (sic) of unfair Jewish domination of this city ... if this city fails, Jews will be rightly blamed" Ms. Gordon called them a "new low in political invective."

The Lawson bulletin also attacked Manhattan Borough President Andrew Stein, Comptroller Harrison Goldin, Queens Borough President Donald Manes and Brooklyn Borough President Howard Golden. Ms. Gordon, called the Lawson remarks "scurrilous" and said they "have the potential for inflaming intergroup tensions."

"It is regrettable" she continued, "that any individual or group should choose to engage in anti-Semitic statements in connection with this fall's New York elections. ADL is appalled by the Lawson statements and feels there is absolutely no place in the legitimate political process for this kind of prejudice-peddling."

The Lawson bulletin appealed to the community to vote for David Dinkins, Ismael Betencourt, John Esposto and Frank Barbaro. Ms. Gordon said that the candidates, contacted by ADL, disassociated themselves from Lawson, assured the ADL that they repudiate this kind of bigotry and that they do not welcome support that smacks of anti-Semitism.

BRITISH SOLDIERS IN GERMANY ARRESTED AS NEO-NAZI ACTIVISTS

BONN, Aug. 27 (JTA) -- Police in Hannover arrested some 40 neo-Nazis and sympathizers during an unauthorized rally by the Nazis in that city. Among those arrested were six British soldiers stationed in the "Rhein army" in West Germany and one French civilian who participated in the rally. It was the first time the British soldiers serving in Germany since the end of World War II were arrested as neo-Nazi activists.

Police said the soldiers and French civilian were arrested to protect them from angry anti-Nazi demonstrators who clashed with them. The neo-Nazis were in Hannover for a meeting of an organization called the "People's Socialist Movement of Germany." The participants at the meeting ranged in ages from 17 to 52 and carried with them large quantities of neo-Nazi propaganda material.