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REPORT MAREK EDELMAN FREED

NEW YORK, Dec. 27 (JTA) -- The release of Dr. Marek Edelman, one of the last surviving leaders of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, has been confirmed by Polish refugee sources in Paris. He was one of several thousand Solidarity officials arrested when the Polish government imposed martial law two weeks ago.

Rabbi Alexander Schindler, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, who had intervened with the Polish authorities on Edelman's behalf, welcomed the news. "We are, of course, gratified by the release of Dr. Edelman but we remain deeply disturbed by the Polish government's apparent scapegoating of the pitifully small remnant of the Jewish community in an attempt to suppress the Solidarity movement," he said.

Schindler had earlier cabled Polish Prime Minister and Communist Party chief Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski to order Edelman's "immediate release." According to the refugee sources he was freed last Wednesday.

Polish Embassy, Jewish Officials Confer

Meanwhile, in Washington, representatives of B'nai B'rith International and the American Jewish Committee met with Polish officials at the Polish Embassy. At the invitation of the Embassy officials, who had earlier refused to meet with the Jewish spokespersons, Warren Eisenberg and George Spectre, director and associate director, respectively, of the International Council of B'nai B'rith, and George Szabad, vice president, and Hyman Bookbinder, Washington representative of the AJCommittee, called on the Polish government to disavow publicly all anti-Semitic actions.

Embassy press counselor Lucjan Mieczkowski told the Jewish representatives that Polish policy "remains the same as it was last March" when the government headed by then Communist Party secretary Stanislaw Kania repudiated anti-Semitism following an anti-Jewish rally in Warsaw. He said he would forward the B'nai B'rith and AJCommittee statement which asked the government to reaffirm the March declaration.

JEWISH, ISRAELI-LINKED INSTITUTIONS ON PALESTINIAN TERRORIST 'HIT LIST'

VIENNA, Dec. 27 (JTA) -- Palestinian terrorists compiled a "hit list" of 60 targets in Austria, mostly Jewish or linked to Israel, the daily Kurier reported. According to the newspaper, the list was found by police investigating the synagogue bombing here last August and the murder last May of city councilman Heinz Nittel, a friend of Israel.

On the list for terrorist attack were the Jewish community center, the Israel Embassy, the offices of El Al, the Israeli airline, a kosher restaurant, the homes of Israel Embassy staff members, the Israel Tourist Office and the Jewish Welcome Service and the offices of the Austrian resistance fighters organizations.

Kurier said the list had been circulated among various extremist Palestinian groups but gave no source for that information. The paper said that police believe the former Palestine Liberation Organization representative in Vienna, Ghazi Hussein, who was expelled from Austria recently, might have compiled the list with the help of his wife. The list was said to be out of date with respect to some of the targets which have moved to different locations.

REAGAN DENIES U.S. HAS CANCELLED ITS STRATEGIC COOPERATION ACCORD WITH ISRAEL BUT WON'T PREDICT WHEN THE SUSPENSION WILL BE LIFTED

(From Combined JTA Dispatches From Its Bureaus in Washington, Jerusalem and Tel Aviv)

Dec. 27 (JTA) -- President Reagan has denied that the U.S. cancelled its month-old strategic cooperation agreement with Israel when his Administration announced on December 18 that it was suspended, four days after Israel annexed the Golan Heights.

The President, who made his remarks in an interview with the Miami Herald published today, did not predict when the suspension would be lifted. But he appeared to reject Premier Menachem Begin's contention, in a blistering attack last Sunday on U.S. behavior toward Israel, that the agreement is now null and void. Begin had accused the U.S. of "abrogating" the pact.

Speaking to the Herald's Washington Bureau chief before leaving on his Christmas vacation, Reagan took a conciliatory approach toward Begin. He said the Israeli Premier's criticism of the U.S. was "a little harsh" but added, "Friends sometimes have arguments and I guess this is one of them."

Arens: U.S. Tilting Towards Saudis

The interview was published shortly after Israel's Ambassador-designate to the U.S. Moshe Arens, expressed strong criticism of the U.S. Middle East policy in a radio interview in Jerusalem over the weekend and claimed that American "punitive activities" against Israel are unprecedented.

According to Arens, a Herut hardliner who is chairman of the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Security Committee, the U.S. is moving away from the Camp David accords and closer to the Saudi Arabian position as stated in Crown Prince Fahd's eight-point plan first enunciated last August and flatly rejected by Israel.

"The way I perceive American actions and American policy is that the U.S., in effect, decided to adopt the Saudi Arabian position on Middle East issues," Arens said. "When they do that I think they do not really realize the Saudis do not have any positions of their own. They are the positions of the Palestine Liberation Organization or (Col. Muammar) Qaddafi (of Libya) or Syria because the Saudis feel they have to give in to the threat of the most extreme people in the Arab camp. That is the reason they bankroll the PLO and other extremist elements."

He claimed that "The Americans have mistakenly come to the view that Saudi Arabia is a moderate country and a stable country which can make a con-

tribution to the peace process. There is nothing further from the truth. What is most serious is that the U.S. seems to have decided to put pressure on Israel to accept the Saudi position and this probably involves moving away from the Camp David accords."

Defends Begin's Attack

Arens defended Begin's angry attack on the U.S. which he delivered on December 20 after Washington suspended the strategic cooperation agreement. He said someone other than Begin might have used a "different tone." But he contended that Begin's bitter recriminations against the U.S. were justified because "such discriminatory and punitive action is usually reserved for states already at war or on the verge of hostilities." According to Arens, he could recall nothing like them since the freezing of Japanese assets in the U.S. shortly before Pearl Harbor.

Arens said Washington's measures would be counterproductive and would only stiffen Israel's resolve not to budge on an issue vital to its security.

Sharp Words From Sharon

Israeli Defense Minister Ariel Sharon also had sharp words for the U.S. in a weekend interview published in Yediot Achronot. He said that by suspending the strategic cooperation agreement, which he signed with Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger November 30, "The United States had decided to try to force Israel to return to the 1967 borders after April, 1982" when its withdrawal from Sinai becomes final.

He said Israel had moved to extend its law to the Golan Heights in order to make it clear that it will never return to the 1967 borders. The American response, he said, was a breach of the strategic cooperation understanding. There was nothing in the agreement which allowed for its postponement or cancellation, which makes America's unilateral action all the more serious, Sharon said. But according to Sharon, the agreement remains in effect and there were signs that Israel's firm stand would lead to its implementation.

The State Department declined to comment on Sharon's remarks. Officials in Washington said privately that the strategic cooperation agreement was not cancelled but only that talks aimed at its implementation had been postponed. They said there has been no change in U.S. policy toward the territories occupied by Israel, including the Golan Heights. That policy is that the future status of those territories must be determined by negotiations.

Meanwhile, Sen. Charles Percy (R. Ill.), chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, arrived in Israel today for a three-day visit as part of a Middle East tour. He declined to talk to reporters at Ben Gurion Airport, but Israeli officials said he would meet with Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir tomorrow and with Begin and Sharon on Tuesday. Percy is also scheduled to confer with Labor Party leader Shimon Peres and former Defense Minister Ezer Weizman. His next stop on the tour will be Jordan.

EGYPT'S FOREIGN MINISTER PLEDGES TO PURSUE PEACE WITH ISRAEL AND HITS SYRIA'S INTRANSIGENCE By Lisa Palmieri-Billig

ROME, Dec. 27 (JTA)-- Foreign Minister Kamal Hassan Ali of Egypt has pledged that his country will pursue its peace process with Israel even if it takes years and will not become involved in war regardless of what other Arab states did.

In an interview published in the daily La Repubblica, the Egyptian diplomat criticized Syria for refusing

to discuss anything with Israel, indicated that Egypt supported only the "positive elements" in the Saudi Arabian peace plan and expressed confidence that the present dispute between Israel and the U.S. over Israel's annexation of the Golan Heights does not jeopardize the Camp David accords.

Israel's action on the Golan and any resulting armed conflict between Israel and Syria certainly would not involve Egypt, Hassan Ali declared. "The Arab common defense treaty no longer concerns us since the Arab countries chose to form another Arab League which has excluded us," he said. "We will certainly not become involved in a war."

Egypt Not Concerned With Golan Annexation

He said that while Egypt condemned Israel's annexation of the Golan Heights, it did not concern Egypt in the same way that the annexation of Jerusalem did when Israel made it official by adopting the Jerusalem law last year. According to Hassan Ali, Jerusalem is part of the West Bank, and Egypt and Israel are in the process of negotiating autonomy for the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

Contrasting the positions of Egypt and Syria, the Foreign Minister noted that "Syria refuses to discuss the Golan or any other problem with Israel. We have chosen peace and negotiations. This is our present position and will remain such also in the future. . . Only discussion can clarify differences and seek out an area of common agreement. It is a difficult task and we may need months, years. But we have no choice."

With respect to the Saudi plan, Hassan Ali said it could be a follow-up but not a substitute for the Camp David accords. "I am not speaking of the plan in its entirety but of the positive elements contained therein, in particular, point seven which recognizes the right of all states in the region to live in peace," he explained.

He added: "Later, one could discuss with Israel the (problem of) recognition of a Palestinian state, but one cannot arrive at an agreement with an enemy without accepting discussion with him." He noted that at the initiative of the late President Anwar Sadat "We recognized Israel and following this, everything went well."

Hassan Ali expressed confidence that Israel would carry out all of its obligations under the peace treaty with Egypt. He said Israeli Defense Minister Ariel Sharon had just confirmed that the last occupied portions of Sinai would be returned to Egypt next April 25.

DUTCH OFFICIAL SAYS EEC NATIONS MIGHT NOT BE PART OF SINAI FORCE By Henriette Boas

AMSTERDAM, Dec. 27 (JTA) -- Foreign Minister Max van der Stoep has cast doubt on the participation of Britain, France, Italy and Holland in the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) which is to patrol Sinai after Israel completes its withdrawal next April.

In an interview published in Het Parool, van der Stoep said the four countries are still holding consultations on Israel's demand that they subscribe to a joint U.S.-Israel statement affirming that the Camp David accords are the sole basis for the MFO.

The Dutch diplomat made it clear that Holland, for one, would not renounce the 1980 Venice declaration on the Middle East by the European Economic Community (EEC) ministers to which Israel objected because it called for association of the Palestine Liberation Organization in the peace process.

He said Holland does not demand that Israel subscribe to the Venice declaration but is not prepared to abandon it "as the price for our participation" in the MFO. Whether or not Holland joins the international peacekeeping force will depend ultimately on Israel, van der Stoep said.

LATIN AMERICAN FRIEND OF ISRAEL UNHAPPY WITH GOLAN HEIGHTS MOVE

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Dec. 27 (JTA) -- A Latin American friend of Israel said here that he was not very happy with Israel's annexation of the Golan Heights. Dr. Rafael Caldera of Venezuela, President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union who is visiting Israel as a guest of the Knesset, expressed his views at a press conference last Thursday. The Union represents about 100 parliamentary bodies of Western and Eastern bloc nations.

Referring to his conversation with Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir, Caldera said: "I considered myself obliged to express my feeling that that step (annexation) was not the best and that it did not assist advancement of the peace process." With respect to the future of Jerusalem, he said: "I understand the feeling of the people of Israel toward Jerusalem, but it is a very difficult question."

Noting that the Palestine Liberation Organization had attended the sessions of the Inter-Parliamentary Union as observers, Caldera explained that the invitation was extended before his election to head that body. Although the PLO enjoys official status in some Latin American countries, this is not the case in Venezuela, he said.

CABINET REFRAINS FROM ACTING ON SETTLERS IN NORTHERN SINAI

By Gil Sedan and Hugh Orgel

JERUSALEM, Dec. 27 (JTA) -- The Cabinet refrained from taking decisive action today to reduce the threat of a violent confrontation with settlers in northern Sinai which must be returned to Egypt next April.

The settlers, re-enforced daily by hundreds of militants from other occupied territories and various parts of Israel, have threatened "war" against anyone who tries to remove them from their homes. They were reported today to be digging trenches around Yamit, the principal town in the region.

The Cabinet, in a vaguely worded resolution, authorized Defense Minister Ariel Sharon to "preserve law and order" in the town. It called on the settlers to renew their negotiations with the government for compensation to relocate.

Squatters Pouring Into Northern Sinai

A ministerial negotiating committee was named last week, consisting of Deputy Premier and Agriculture Minister Simcha Ehrlich, Finance Minister Yoram Aridor and Housing and Construction Minister David Levy. But negotiations have not been resumed and squatters continued to pour into northern Sinai, occupying homes abandoned by settlers who have accepted compensation and gone elsewhere.

Last Thursday, 108 families moved into Yamit in a convoy of 60 vehicles. The army and police made no attempt to stop them and they received encouragement from Ashkenazic Chief Rabbi Shlomo Goren who visited the town to celebrate Chanukah.

The Cabinet was split over how to deal with this situation. A number of ministers have demanded

an immediate crackdown. Communications Minister Mordechai Zipori and others declared there was no justification to treat law breakers in Yamit different from law breakers anywhere else. Zipori accused Sharon of responsibility for the deteriorating situation.

Government Intends To Implement Peace Treaty

Cabinet Secretary Arye Naor said the government intends to carry out its obligations under the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty to the letter and will complete the evacuation of Sinai next April "with or without the agreement of the good people of the movement to halt the withdrawal."

Ehrlich, who is in charge of the Sinai withdrawal, said that if a compensation agreement could be worked out, all residents would be removed by next March 31. He added, however, that nothing could be done to prevent new residents from moving in and that the squatters were not violating the law by occupying vacated houses.

He was promptly criticized by opposition members of the Knesset for inviting the Gush Emunim and other ultra-nationalists to defy the government, making it more difficult to remove them when the time comes.

Many Yamit residents are willing to move but are holding out for a better offer of compensation from the government for the businesses, homes and farms they will have to abandon. The ideologically motivated settlers, their numbers enlarged by the squatters, declare they will not leave Sinai under any circumstances. They are, in fact, repairing greenhouses and farms as if there was no question of evacuating in a few month's time.

These people, members of the rightwing Tehiya faction, the "Movement to Halt the Withdrawal" and the Gush Emunim, are trying to collect one million signatures on a petition demanding that the government renege on the Sinai withdrawal clause of its peace treaty with Egypt.

DENY REPORT THAT BEGIN IS CONSIDERING CALL FOR EARLY ELECTIONS

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Dec. 27 (JTA) -- Widespread reports in the Israeli media that Premier Menachem Begin was considering calling for new elections, possibly as early as next February, to increase the Likud's Knesset strength, have been denied by a spokesman for the Prime Minister's Office.

According to the reports, Begin has asked the Justice Ministry if there was a legal basis for early elections and was told that a special law dissolving the present Knesset could be adopted. But political experts doubt that he could muster the 61 votes in parliament necessary to pass it.

According to the media reports, Begin reasons that his popularity is at an all time peak and new elections would substantially increase Likud's slim majority over the opposition Labor Alignment which is presently seriously divided. He would regard the outcome of the elections as a referendum on Israel's occupation of the Golan Heights and any other measures he might take.

Some officials said Begin leaked his inquiry to the Justice Ministry to put his coalition partners on notice that they had better support his policies. The Premier reportedly was annoyed with the Agudat Israel party for not voting on the Golan annexation bill and for objecting vociferously to delays in the payment of special subventions for their yeshivas and other religious institutions.

HUNDREDS OF JEWS IN FAR EAST SEEK TO JOIN THE ZIONIST MOVEMENT

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Dec. 27 (JTA) -- Hundreds of Jews in the Far East have expressed their wish to join the Zionist movement and to be represented in the next World Zionist Congress in 1982, it was reported here by Miriam Meyouhas of the World Zionist Organization department of organization, who returned from a tour of the area. She said that various Zionist groups are signing up members.

Reporting on various Jewish communities in the Far East, Meyouhas said the Jewish community in Thailand comprises 80 families, some 300 persons, all residing in Bangkok. Ten of the families were born in the country and hold Thai citizenship. The other families are either aliens who have lived there for many years or temporary residents who reside in the country for brief periods of time. The community operates a large communal center in downtown Bangkok. It includes a synagogue, classrooms, a library and an apartment for guests from overseas.

Some 300 Jews live in the Philippines, most of them of East European origin, Meyouhas said. The community operates a synagogue and a Sunday school with 30 students. A new synagogue is scheduled to be built soon. There are some 600 Jews in Japan, most of whom live in Tokyo. The new communal center includes a synagogue, an auditorium, a swimming pool and a kosher restaurant. The community employs a young and active Conservative rabbi.

Large Communities In Hong Kong, India

The Jewish community in Hong Kong numbers 1,200 persons of various origins. The community operates a large communal center and publishes a Jewish newspaper. There are some 500 Jews in Singapore, mostly East Europeans. They maintain an active communal center and recently renovated two synagogues.

There are 6,000 Jews in India, 4,000 of whom live in Bombay. There are some 40 active synagogues, as well as a Jewish club which houses a kosher restaurant and the offices of the Jewish Agency. The Zionist Society of India, which was inactive in recent years, is resuming its activities and elections are scheduled for various posts in the Society to prepare work for the next Zionist Congress. Meyouhas said that two groups of Indian Jews are expected in Israel shortly to participate in leadership seminars.

She expressed confidence that many of the Jews in these countries will immigrate to Israel once Zionist activities begin to expand and permeate into the communities.

30,000 PEOPLE FLOCK TO BETHLEHEM FOR CHRISTMAS FESTIVITIES

JERUSALEM, Dec. 27 (JTA) -- Some 30,000 people participated in Christmas festivities in Bethlehem. A select audience of some 1,000 people attended the midnight mass at the St. Catherine Church last Thursday while outside in Manger Square a giant television screen provided several thousand other pilgrims with a view of the church service. Israel TV broadcast the ceremony live to about 30 countries.

Bethlehem Mayor Elias Freij rejected pressure by Arab extremists to cancel the traditional Christmas eve reception and limit the festivities to protest against Israeli measures on the West Bank. Local residents said security measures

were unprecedented. Israeli troops patrolled the town's back streets and watched crowds from rooftops overlooking the square. Persons entering the square were searched and police sealed off the entire area.

MARK GAYN DEAD AT 72

TORONTO, Dec. 27 (JTA) -- Mark Gayn, a journalist and author who was considered an outstanding authority on the Far East and the Soviet Union, has died here at the age of 72 after a lengthy battle with cancer. For the past two decades he was a member of the editorial board of the Toronto Star.

Born into an assimilated Russian Jewish family in Manchuria, Gayn was raised in China, resided in the Soviet Union during the early post-revolutionary years and graduated from Pomona College in California. Despite his assimilated background, he expressed a heightened interest in Israel in recent years and followed its development with close concern and sympathy. At his funeral, David Ariel, Israel's Consul General in Toronto, underlined Gayn's close relationship with Israel.

Regarded as one of the leading authorities on foreign affairs, Gayn wrote for Amerasia, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Newsweek, Chicago Sun, The Nation, and for the last 30 years for the Toronto Star. He was in China during the last years of the Kuomintang government, in Japan during the early years following World War II, and travelled widely in Mongolia, the USSR, Eastern Europe, Korea and Vietnam. His book, "Japan Diary," appeared in 1952 and sold widely. He had recently completed a sequel, "New Japan Diary."

THIRD JEWISH SCHOOL IN AMSTERDAM

AMSTERDAM, Dec. 27 (JTA) -- The Education Ministry has approved the establishment of a kindergarten and elementary school by the Liberal Jewish community which will be the third Jewish school in the Amsterdam area. The Ministry subsidizes all schools, secular and denominational, provided they have a minimum number of pupils.

That provision was waived for the new school, to be known as the Leo Baeck School, at least for its first few years. It was established by parents who do not want to send their children to either the ultra-Orthodox "cheder" or the Rosh Pina school, both of which accept only those youngsters whose mothers are Jewish by halachic standards or who have been converted by an Orthodox rabbi.

Many of the children of the Liberal congregation do not fulfill that requirement. It is expected that one of the three schools may be forced to close down eventually because of the relatively small number of Jewish children in the Amsterdam area.

RULING ON GOLAN DRUZE

JERUSALEM, Dec. 27 (JTA) -- The Interior Ministry said last Thursday that Druze on the annexed Golan Heights will not be forced to carry Israeli identity cards, at least for the time being. "Things will be done gradually and reasonably," Haim Kubersky, director general of the Ministry, told Israel Radio.

Israel's pressure on the 14,000 Golan Druze, most of whom regard themselves as Syrian citizens, to accept Israeli ID cards, raised tensions in the territory. The Druze, a non-Arab Moslem sect, held a four-day general strike and imposed religious sanctions on the minority in their community that accepted Israeli ID cards. Kubersky said that for the present ID cards issued by the Military Government would be valid for Druze.