

# JTA daily news bulletin

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## BEGIN SAYS HE REGARDS HIMSELF, AS THE PREMIER, AS FULLY RESPONSIBLE FOR BEIRUT MASSACRE

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Sept. 29 (JTA) -- Premier Menachem Begin said today he regarded himself, as Prime Minister, as fully responsible for any negligence or wrongdoing that might have happened in connection with the Beirut massacre.

Addressing the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Security Committee, Begin said he accepted this responsibility even though he had actually learned of the massacre only after it was over -- on Saturday afternoon, September 18. (Begin first heard of the massacre in a BBC world service broadcast.)

He said that his very fact -- the lateness of his knowledge -- might well be one that the inquiry commission would want to examine. He firmly denied that he, or Defense Minister Ariel Sharon had sought to duck an inquiry. The massacre of the Palestinians at two refugee camps in west Beirut reportedly began the night of Thursday, September 16.

Earlier in the day Begin sent a special emissary to Supreme Court President Yitzhak Kahan with a formal letter informing him of the Cabinet's decision yesterday to set up a judicial inquiry commission to examine "all the facts and factors connected to the atrocity perpetrated by a unit of the Lebanese forces against the civilian population in the Sabra and Shatila camps."

It is Kahan, under the 1968 "Commissions of Inquiry Law," who must now appoint the three members of the commission. (The number--three or five--is determined by the government, along with the terms of reference cited above.) The chairman must be a Supreme Court Justice or a retired Supreme Court Justice.

The expectation in Jerusalem is that Kahan will take the chairmanship on himself. He is likely to announce the commission's composition within a day or two. But the scope of the commission's investigation remained unclear today and Labor Alignment leaders continued to demand the resignation of Begin and Sharon.

## LABOR CALLS OFF KNESSET DEBATE

By Gil Sedan and Hugh Orgel

JERUSALEM, Sept. 29 (JTA) -- An extraordinary session of the Knesset scheduled for today was cancelled last night when the Labor Alignment withdrew its call for urgent debate. The opposition party acted after the government announced yesterday that it will establish a judicial commission to investigate the west Beirut massacre of September 16-17 and Israel's role, if any, in it.

Labor's move to call off the Knesset debate was also apparently in response to the Likud Party's cancellation of a pro-government rally it had planned to stage in Tel Aviv next Saturday night to counter last Saturday night's massive anti-government demonstration there. The Cabinet's unanimous decision to reverse its previous opposition to a full scale probe of events in west Beirut drew commendation from President Yitzhak Navon.

Navon, who was the first high ranking Israeli to call for an investigatory commission, said he was

"very pleased" by the decision even though it should have been made sooner. He expressed hope that this move would reduce tensions in Israel and cause the level of verbal violence to subside.

At the same time, Navon urged President Amin Gemayel of Lebanon to launch an investigation of his own into the massacre of Palestinians by units of his Christian Phalangist party. He said there were alarming signs that the Lebanese were trying to cover up the truth. Navon spoke during a visit to the Druze village of Julis on the occasion of the Moslem feast of Id-Al.

## Sharon Supports Inquiry

Defense Minister Ariel Sharon, the prime target of Israeli protests over the events in west Beirut, expressed full support for the commission of inquiry into both the political and military acts by Israel before and during the episode. Addressing a memorial service for Yom Kippur War dead yesterday, Sharon said "There is nothing more important than the moral value and power of the people of Israel in the land of Israel. An investigation should be carried out in depth and nobody should escape such an investigation, either on the political or military level."

Sharon added: "I personally ... believe in and recognize the conception of ministerial responsibility. To investigate -- yes. But to put this at the very center of our lives -- no." Sharon's reference to ministerial responsibility was seen as an allusion to public demands, after the Yom Kippur War that Defense Minister Moshe Dayan resign.

## Former Colonel Airs Story

Meanwhile, Col. (res.) Eli Geva, who resigned his command of an armored brigade in Lebanon last July when an Israeli occupation of west Beirut appeared imminent, explained his motives in a radio interview over the weekend.

In his first public comments since leaving the army, Geva said the senior military staff had been "very close to a decision" to enter west Beirut at the time although they were aware that it could have been a costly fight in terms of Israeli casualties.

He said he tendered his resignation because he didn't believe his superiors had a "reason for spilling our blood" and hoped his action would forestall a decision to invade the Lebanese capital. But had such an order been given "I wouldn't have dared disobey it," Geva said.

The 32-year-old ex-officer, now a textile executive, said he was not an anti-war activist. But when the Israeli army began its siege of Beirut, "I stopped and thought to myself, what are we doing here? Where have we come. Is it good for the Jews? Do we need it? What is the price?"

Geva, regarded as one of the most outstanding of Israel's younger military commanders, said many of his colleagues shared his doubts but none had spoken out at staff meetings. He said he regretted that "only a minority" of his fellow officers have kept contact with him since he left the army.

## REAGAN DENIES THAT THE U.S. IS TRYING TO 'UNDERMINE OR OVERTHROW' THE BEGIN GOVERNMENT

WASHINGTON, Sept. 29 (JTA) -- President

Reagan strongly denied reports last night that the United States is trying to "undermine" or "overthrow" the government of Premier Menachem Begin because of his Administration's difficulties with the present Israeli government.

"We have never interfered in the internal government of a country, we have no intention of doing so, never had any thought of that kind," Reagan stressed in a nationally televised press conference from the White House. "We expect to be doing business with the government of Israel and with Prime Minister Begin, if that is the decision of the Israeli people."

The President noted that the Israeli people proved in their reaction to the massacre in the Palestinian camps in west Beirut that "There's no change in the spirit of the people of Israel. They are our ally, we feel morally obligated to the preservation of Israel and we're going to continue to be that way."

Reagan had little to say about the massacre itself except that he agreed with his Ambassador to the United Nations, Jeane Kirkpatrick, that the U.S. had to share some responsibility for it. But he said this was in the sense that more should have been done over the years "to bring about the peace that we're trying so hard now to get" in the Middle East.

However, he denied the charge that the multinational force, made up of U.S. marines and French and Italian troops, were withdrawn too early this month. Reagan said they left after accomplishing their task "to oversee and make sure that the PLO left Lebanon." He said no one could have foreseen the assassination of Lebanese President-elect Bashir Gemayel two weeks ago.

#### Rejects Charges About Israel

Reagan also rejected the notion that he believes Israel is trying to "undermine" the peace initiative he proposed September 1. "I don't believe that," he said. He repeated his contention that both sides are "staking out" positions "so as to be in a better position when it comes time to negotiate."

The President said he was "not less optimistic" about the prospects for his peace initiative in the wake of Gemayel's assassination and the massacre in the Palestinian camps. "I'm also not deluding myself that it's going to be easy," Reagan said and one side seeks territory and the other security "and what has to be negotiated out is a kind of exchange of territory for security."

At the same time, Reagan stressed that he meant what he said when he proposed his plan. "This country will never stand by and see any settlement that does not guarantee the security of Israel," he said.

However, the President pointed out that the perception of Israel has changed. "Israel should understand, as we've come to understand, from talking to other Arab states that where, from the beginning, all of us, including Israel, have thought of it as a tiny country fighting for its life, surrounded by larger states and hostile states that wanted to see it destroyed, that their military power has become such that there are Arab states that now voice a fear that they're ... they may be expansionist and they have the military power."

#### Gives No Time Limit For Marines' Stay

Reagan could give no time limit for how long the marines, who began entering west Beirut today, would remain. But he said they, along with

with the French and Italian troops would remain until both Israel and Syria withdraw from Lebanon and the Lebanese government feels it can control its own security.

The multinational force is in Lebanon "to give a kind of support and stability while the Lebanese government seeks to reunite its people ... and bring about a unified Lebanon with a Lebanese army which will then be able to preserve order in its own country," Reagan said:

He said while this is going on he is "optimistic" that the Israeli and Syrian armies will leave Lebanon "as quickly as possible." He said then it will be up to the Lebanese government "to tell us when they feel they're in charge" and "we'll depart."

The President obviously did not expect this to take a long time, since he rejected a suggestion that it would be "another long entanglement such as Vietnam." Under the 1973 War Powers Act, the President would need approval of Congress to keep the marines in Lebanon longer than 60 days.

However, former Israeli Premier Yitzhak Rabin estimated last night that it would take one to two years for the Lebanese army to be built up sufficiently to maintain security over its country. Appearing on ABC-TV's "Nightline" from Tel Aviv, Rabin said that if Syria, the PLO terrorists and the Israeli troops all left simultaneously, then the multinational force could have a chance to help Lebanon restore its sovereignty.

He said the United States would need to help train the Lebanese Army. Rabin said if this happens, then in one or two years the Lebanese army would be able to function on its own. But he warned that any shortcuts might only lead to disastrous effects in the Mideast.

#### Other Issues Discussed

At one point at his press conference Reagan said he did not know why the U.S. opposed a United Nations resolution for an international inquiry into the massacre in Beirut except to say he believed it contained such things as sanctions and a threat to expel Israel which the U.S. has always opposed. The State Department said last week the U.S. opposed an international inquiry while the Lebanese and Israeli governments were conducting their own investigation.

On another matter, Reagan said the U.S. had held up a sale of F-16 jets to Israel because it did not think the "climate" was right in view of the situation in Lebanon. But he said all other military supplies to Israel in the "pipeline" were going ahead, including spare parts and ammunition. He said the only exception was the decision to suspend the delivery of "cluster shells" because of the "controversy" over their use in Lebanon. (By David Friedman)

#### U.S. MARINES ARRIVE AT BEIRUT AIRPORT AS IDF WITHDRAWS

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Sept. 29 (JTA) -- The last Israeli soldiers withdrew from Beirut international airport at noon today and the first U.S. marines to be stationed there arrived by helicopter minutes later.

The swift change-over indicated that Israel had suddenly, at the last minute, backed away from its earlier insistence that at least some Israeli troops remain at the airport, that its personnel man the control towers and that Israeli planes have free use of the runway. Only yesterday, Chief of Staff Gen. Rafael Eitan said Israeli forces would have to remain at Beirut airport as long as Israeli troops were stationed in central and eastern Lebanon.

Eitan was said to have made that point strongly at a meeting yesterday morning with U.S. special Ambas-

sador Morris Draper. The meeting reportedly ended in a deadlock. A later meeting was held in Tel Aviv between Defense Minister Ariel Sharon and U.S. Ambassador Samuel Lewis on the same subject. The American envoy prevailed and the Israelis agreed reluctantly to pull out of both west and east Beirut.

The only Israelis remaining in the Beirut area will be a small party at Baabde village, site of the President's official residence. It will consist of a Foreign Ministry representative, a military spokesman and an office for the Israel Broadcasting Authority's radio and television correspondents.

#### STATE DEPT. SAYS ISRAELI, SYRIAN TROOPS WITHDRAWAL IS NOT A BASIS FOR U.S. MARINES TO LEAVE LEBANON

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Sept. 29 (JTA) -- The State Department asserted today that the withdrawal of Syrian and Israeli forces from Lebanon is not a condition that must be met before U.S. marines will leave Lebanon.

The Department's deputy spokesman, Alan Romberg, explained that "during the limited period of time" the multinational force will be in Lebanon. "The U.S. expects that the Israelis and Syrians will follow through on their announced intentions and withdraw from Lebanon. The very presence of the multinational force will encourage early agreement on these withdrawals."

Romberg said that President Reagan, in his press conference last night, did not make the withdrawal a condition when he said he expected Syria and Israel to leave Lebanon during the period the multinational force was helping the Lebanese government regain its ability to preserve its own security.

The President said the marines would leave once the Lebanese government feels it is "in charge." However, Romberg left open the possibility that the Lebanese might not feel in charge until foreign forces have left their territory.

He added that the President's urging of a withdrawal of foreign forces from Lebanon "as quickly as possible" included the "withdrawal of the PLO forces." The PLO was not mentioned in the questioning last night or in the President's response, Romberg conceded. But he noted that its withdrawal from Lebanon has been part of the U.S. position since the beginning of the present situation last June.

#### Arens' Charge Confirmed

Romberg also confirmed today a charge made by Israel's Ambassador to the U.S., Moshe Arens yesterday that some PLO forces have returned to Lebanon through the "back door." He said the U.S. has not been able to "verify" the exact number but "we are convinced that some PLO fighters and leaders evacuated from Beirut have reinfiltreated into Lebanon." Romberg said none of them were in Beirut.

Arens claimed that thousands of PLO fighters are still in northern Lebanon and in the Bekaa valley.

#### SHAMIR ACCUSES FRANCE OF BEING MORE NEGATIVE TOWARD ISRAEL THAN ANY OTHER WEST EUROPEAN NATION

By Yitzhak Rabi

NEW YORK, Sept. 29 (JTA) -- Israeli Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir met with Foreign

Minister Claude Cheysson of France for one hour today. Their encounter, at the United Nations Plaza Hotel, was described later as "open and cordial."

But according to a spokesman for Shamir, the Israeli Foreign Minister accused France of being more negative toward Israel than any other European nation, demanded that it change its policies toward Israel and warned that pursuit of a one-sided-Middle East policy would, in the final analysis, only harm French interests. According to the spokesman, Cheysson did not reply directly to the charges.

Cheysson was the first foreign diplomat with whom Shamir met at the start of his three-week visit to New York to attend the current session of the UN General Assembly. Shamir will address the General Assembly tomorrow morning.

His spokesman said the Israeli Foreign Minister spoke openly about Israel's displeasure with recent French Middle Eastern policy, especially, as regards the Lebanese crisis. Shamir told Cheysson, the spokesman said, that any actions taken by France in pursuit of its Middle East policy without consultation with Israel or understanding of Israel's positions were doomed to failure. He said France's negative attitude was displayed when it was the only Western European country to vote in the Security Council for sanctions against Israel during the Lebanese war.

While the French diplomat did not respond directly to these and other charges, he said that France would not support radical anti-Israel moves at the UN, such as any attempt to suspend Israel from the world organization, Shamir's spokesman said.

#### Elements In Shamir-Cheysson Dialogue

According to the spokesman, the massacre in west Beirut two weeks ago was not the main subject of the Shamir-Cheysson dialogue. He said Shamir explained Israel's position and told Cheysson that in Israel's view, the situation in Lebanon is now progressing and Beirut is no longer the international terrorist center it was.

Cheysson was reported to have said that France wants all foreign forces to leave Lebanon and to find a solution to the Palestinian problem. He also expressed his country's positive attitude toward President Reagan's Middle East plan announced on September 1. Shamir said Israel will leave Lebanon, but first there must be security arrangements in the 40-kilometer zone of Lebanon north of the Israeli border.

Cheysson replied that this was a legitimate concern of Israel and suggested that one way Israel's security could be assured would be to have a multinational force stationed in the zone. Shamir rejected that idea, saying Israel was not interested in a multinational force and preferred to have an arrangement with the Lebanese army. The two Foreign Ministers also discussed conditions for a stable Lebanon under the government of President Amin Gemayel.

According to his spokesman, Shamir questioned Cheysson about a Franco-Egyptian plan announced during the Lebanese war for mutual recognition between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization. Cheysson said France would not press that plan for the time being but would not rule out the possibility of doing so in the future. Shamir expressed a desire for improved bilateral relations with France despite the disagreements between Jerusalem and Paris.

Before leaving for New York yesterday, Shamir told reporters at Ben Gurion Airport that the main purpose of his trip was to mobilize all friends of Israel "against the ugly campaign of lies directed against the state and the people of Israel in relation with the horrible crime in the Palestinian camps in Beirut."

## U.S. POLICIES TOWARD ISRAEL UNDER FIRE BY HUSSEIN AND ARAFAT

By Kevin Freeman

NEW YORK, Sept. 29 (JTA) -- The policies of the United States toward Israel were strongly criticized by King Hussein of Jordan and Palestine Liberation Organization chief Yasir Arafat in separate interviews.

Hussein, in an interview published this week in the international edition of Newsweek magazine (but not in the domestic edition), accused the Israeli government of responsibility for the massacre of Palestinian civilians at the Shatila and Sabra refugee camps in west Beirut. He charged that it was an Israeli plan to encourage a "negative reaction" to President Reagan's peace initiative outlined on September 1.

"The Israelis have a long history of this type of thing," Hussein said. "Maybe we all needed this kind of shock to realize what is happening and what has happened for a long period of time." Hussein said "Israel created these atrocities with American arms and American aid. I think that the United States should reassess its attitude toward a monster that it has helped to create."

Arafat, meanwhile, in an interview Sunday on the CBS-TV "60 Minutes" program, charged the U.S. with complicity in the massacre of the Palestinians at the refugee camps. "What has been done in Beirut and in Lebanon was not an Israeli aggression," the PLO leader said. "This is an American conspiracy against the Palestinians."

Arafat added that he would be willing to conduct a dialogue for a Palestinian homeland with "All the democratic Jews who are living in Israel and outside Israel." He said he would open a dialogue with the Reagan Administration provided it dropped its conditions for such a dialogue which include PLO recognition of Israel's right to exist and acceptance of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

### Gemayel Expresses His Views

At the same time, Lebanese President Amin Gemayel said the first step toward the restoration of Lebanese sovereignty and independence is the withdrawal of Israeli military forces from predominantly Moslem west Beirut.

"We have to recover our sovereignty in our capital, and from the capital, we could begin discussions for the withdrawal" of all foreign forces from Lebanon, Gemayel said Sunday in an interview on the ABC-TV "This Week With David Brinkley" program.

"Lebanon needs to recover its sovereignty and independence," he said. "You can't reach this goal without obtaining the withdrawal of the Palestinians, the Syrians and the Israelis from Lebanon."

The interview was Gemayel's first with a U.S. television network since being sworn into office last week to succeed Elias Sarkis to a six-year term. Gemayel, a member of the Christian Phalangist Party, was elected after his younger brother Bashir was killed along with 25 other Phalangist Party members in an explosion in the party headquarters in east Beirut just days before Bashir was to be sworn into office as the new President of Lebanon.

The Lebanese President, in the televised interview from Beirut, said it was still too early to discuss a peace treaty with Israel because such an agreement would first have to be discussed among Lebanese government officials and then approved by the Lebanese Parliament. "But what I

can assure you is that I am for real peace," Gemayel said. "We need to reach a real peace, not an artificial peace."

In a related development, President Reagan was urged to cut off military and economic aid to Israel by leading officials of the United Presbyterian Church as a demonstration of the Administration's concern over Israeli government policies in Lebanon.

In a letter to Reagan sent by James Costen, moderator of the Church's General Assembly, and its stated clerk, William Thompson, the officials urged the President "to take the necessary actions to halt military and economic aid to Israel until such a time as the government of Israel is prepared to withdraw not just from west Beirut but from all of Lebanon and to start meaningful negotiations for a diplomatic solution to the problems of the area."

### LATEST OPINION POLL SHOWS SLIGHT DROP IN POPULARITY FOR BEGIN, SHARON SINCE THE BEIRUT MASSACRE

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, September 29 (JTA) -- Premier Menachem Begin and Defense Minister Ariel Sharon have sustained relatively small declines in popularity since the west Beirut massacre despite intense criticism leveled against them in Israel, the latest public opinion poll shows.

The poll, conducted for the monthly magazine Monitor by the Dahaf Research Institute, found Begin's popularity rating down from 82 percent to 72 percent since the beginning of September. Unfavorable opinion rose in that period from 15 to 27 percent. Sharon dropped in the polls from 78 to 64 percent favorable. His unfavorable rating increased from 17 to 35 percent.

The poll indicated that if elections were held now, Likud would win 55 Knesset seats, six fewer than it now holds, and the Labor Alignment would gain five seats for a total of 43. Likud would still be the majority party and would be able to govern with the six seats of the National Religious Party making up its loss.

### YOSEF YEKUTIELI DEAD AT 85

TEL AVIV, Sept. 29 (JTA) -- Yosef Yekutieli, one of the founders of the Maccabi sports organization and initiator of the Maccabiah games, died Saturday at the age of 85 and was buried Sunday. He won the Israel Prize for his work in physical education in 1979, and was a distinguished citizen of Tel Aviv.

Yekutieli was born in Russia in 1897 and came to Palestine at the age of nine. After graduating from the Jerusalem Teachers Seminary, he fought with the Turkish army during World War I. He was one of the founders of the Palestine Football Association in 1928 and the Palestine Sports Federation in 1931.

### HIAS SEEKING JEWS WHO LIVED IN THE VICINITY OF MINSK

NEW YORK, Sept. 29 (JTA) -- HIAS, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, is seeking to locate Jews who lived in or around the towns of Rudensk, Kaidanov (Koidanovo), and Dukara, Byelorussia (all in the vicinity of Minsk), during the period 1941-1944, it was announced here. Such persons are sought as possible witnesses in an ongoing Department of Justice war crimes prosecution. They are asked to call or write Joseph Edelman at HIAS about this matter. The address is 200 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y., 10003; the telephone is (212) 674-6800.