

JTA daily news bulletin

Contents copyright: Republication only by previous arrangement

Published by Jewish Telegraphic Agency / 165 West 46th Street / New York, New York 10036-2574

Vol. LX - 65th Year

Friday, December 10, 1982

No. 233

BEGIN, IN LETTER TO INQUIRY PANEL, AFFIRMS HIS GOVERNMENT HAD NO REASON TO ANTICIPATE A MASSACRE

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Dec. 9 (JTA) -- Premier Menachem Begin continues to maintain that neither he nor his government had any reason to suspect that the Christian Phalangists would commit atrocities against civilians when Israel permitted them to enter the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in west Beirut last September 16 to root out terrorists claimed to be hiding there.

That was the key point made by Begin in a letter to the commission of inquiry into the refugee camps massacre which the commission made public today. The Prime Minister was one of nine senior government and military officials who received formal notification from the panel two weeks ago that they "may be harmed" by its eventual conclusions. All were given 15 days to re-appear before the commission to clarify their earlier testimony and examine witnesses and evidence. Five agreed but requested a one-week extension to prepare their material.

Begin chose to respond by letter to the commission's warning that it might find him lax in the performance of his duties should it conclude that he did not give careful consideration to the possible actions by the Phalangists "and ignored the danger of acts of revenge and bloodshed by these forces against the population in the refugee camps."

A Key Point In Begin's Letter

Begin stressed in his letter, sent to the commission yesterday, that the Phalangists had refrained from acts of vengeance "or other irregular action" against Palestinians in the two days immediately after the assassination of Lebanon's President-elect Bashir Gemayel, the Phalangist leader. According to Begin, their restraint "eased fears" and "confirmed our knowledge" that the Phalangists were "organized, disciplined and centrally controlled military units."

Begin, who testified in person before the three-man panel on November 8, added nothing to his original brief. His letter stressed that he had no cause for concern over the Phalangists' conduct when he and his fellow ministers learned on the evening of Thursday, September 16 that Defense Minister Ariel Sharon had given them permission to enter the camps.

Begin said his own consultations with Sharon and Chief of Staff Gen. Rafael Eitan earlier that day concerned the Israel Defense Force's entry into west Beirut and no mention was made of any role for the Phalangists. He defended the Cabinet decision, made retroactively, to allow the Phalangists into the refugee camps because "according to authoritative information in our possession" about 2,000 armed terrorists were "hiding in the camps."

Begin's letter stated further that the Phalangists had conducted military operations in the course of Israel's "Peace for Galilee" campaign in Lebanon without perpetrating "horrors or slaughter." Therefore, he said, he "did not at all imagine that the Phalangists, a trained and organized military force,

fac[ing] the task of hard fighting in difficult conditions, would want or would be able to perpetrate massacre."

Begin acknowledged that at the crucial Cabinet meeting in the evening of September 16, Deputy Premier David Levy had indeed warned of the possibility of a massacre. But Levy did not propose that the Phalangists be withdrawn from the camps or that the Cabinet even address itself to the issue.

According to Begin, "His words aroused no response on the part of any of the participants at the meetings and this in itself shows that this possibility (a massacre) was not considered likely in the circumstances by anyone present."

Begin also stated that Eitan's warning to the Cabinet that the Phalangists were "sharpening their knives ... there is revenge in their eyes" was made in reference to the overall situation in Lebanon following Gemayel's assassination, not specifically to the refugee camps. According to Begin, Eitan's "words were intended to explain the urgent need for the IDF to take the actions that it took immediately in the wake of Gemayel's assassination," meaning its occupation of west Beirut.

Begin's letter concluded: "In light of the circumstances here described, and in our knowledge that the Phalangists, in coordination with our own forces, had entered certain districts to fight terrorists who were concentrated in them, there were no grounds to assume that acts of atrocity against the civilian population would be perpetrated."

Course Of Action Of Other Officials

Among the others who received warnings from the commission, Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir and Gen. Amos Yaron who was divisional commander in west Beirut at the time, informed the commission that they would submit memoranda but would not appear again in person. Shamir explained that he is leaving this Sunday on an official visit to Uruguay and Argentina and will not return to Israel until December 24. He requested "an appropriate time extension following my return" to prepare his memorandum.

Gen. Amir Dori, commander of the central command, informed the commission that he would appear before it again. Sharon, who is also expected to reappear, was in Honduras and the U.S. this week.

SHARON SAYS ISRAEL IS 'CLOSE TO' A SECURITY ARRANGEMENT WITH LEBANON

NEW YORK, Dec. 9 (JTA) -- Israel's Defense Minister Ariel Sharon said here today that Israel is "close to" a security arrangement with Lebanon and seeks a normalization of relations with that country as the first step toward a full-fledged peace treaty.

He warned that Israel was unalterably opposed to any linkage between progress toward a peace treaty with Lebanon and concessions by Israel on the West Bank and Gaza Strip. He contended that President Reagan's "plan" for the West Bank would "re-institute the Lebanese model" that existed before June, 1982 when Israel launched its "Peace for Galilee" campaign.

Sharon made his remarks in the course of a 90-minute closed meeting with representatives of the Con-

ference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations attended by some 100 persons. The meeting was chaired by Yehuda Hellman, executive vice chairman of the Conference, in the absence of its chairman, Julius Berman, who is in Israel.

The contents of Sharon's speech and his replies to questions were reported to the Jewish Telegraphic Agency by a source who was present at the meeting. According to the source, Sharon intimated that the negotiations for security arrangements with Lebanon were direct. He did not say where or at what level they were being conducted.

Terms Of Security Arrangements

He stressed, however, that security arrangements can come about only through direct negotiations so that the signatories can be held accountable for carrying out the terms. According to the source, Sharon said the security arrangements "we are close to" would contain the following terms:

*No Arab army will again be allowed into Lebanese territory.

*Any other foreign forces such as peace-keeping troops must be from countries which recognize Israel.

*Israel will not permit the military or political presence of any terrorist group on its soil.

*No artillery, rocket-launchers or surface-to-air missiles will be permitted in the 45-50 kilometer zone bordering on Israel.

*Israeli warning stations will be operated in that zone until a formal peace treaty is signed.

Sharon warned that unless President Amin Gemayel of Lebanon signs a peace treaty with Israel he will be the "President of the Presidential Palace but not of the country." He meant, apparently, that Lebanon would degenerate into warring factions as was the situation before the Israeli campaign.

But Sharon insisted that Israel was not putting pressure on Lebanon. "Nothing in our demands go beyond the normal security needs of both countries," he said. "There is nothing to be ashamed of that we want to have a peace treaty with our neighbors, nothing to be ashamed of that we want to negotiate directly in our capital and in their capital."

Cites Commercial Dealings With Lebanon

Sharon disclosed, according to the source, that as of November 15, 1982, Israel formally opened its border with Lebanon with normal customs and passport controls and that thousands of Lebanese have crossed into Israel for business or as tourists. He did not say where the border post is located.

He claimed that commercial normalization has already begun. He said \$20 million worth of goods has already entered Lebanon from Israel, half of it being Israeli exports and the rest Lebanese imports from other countries transhipped via Israeli ports. Sharon said Lebanese importers prefer to use Haifa to their own ports.

Says Reagan's Plan Would Spell Chaos

With respect to Reagan's plan, which called for Palestinian control of the West Bank in association with Jordan, Sharon's view, as conveyed to the JTA, was that it would invite the same chaos that prevailed in Lebanon before June, 1982. According to Sharon, without Israeli forces in control

of internal and external security in the territory, any demilitarized zone associated with Jordan would be open to infiltration by Arab armies and terrorists.

Sharon said that between January 1, 1965 and June 5, 1982, terrorists operating from Lebanon caused over 7,000 casualties: 1,392 dead and 6,239 wounded. He said Israel had good relations with the Lebanese in south Lebanon long before June, 1982.

He said these were not only the Christians who would not exist today were it not for Israel's protection but Moslems, mainly Shi'ites, who also suffered from the Palestine Liberation Organization. He said the Shi'ites often prevented the PLO from operating against Israel from their villages.

Sharon said he could not comment on the commission of inquiry in Israel currently investigating the massacres in the Shatila and Sabra refugee camps in west Beirut last September because the matter is still sub judice. However, he declared, "I believe in Israeli justice."

Cites Massacre Casualty Figures

He said that 479 persons were killed in the Shatila camp of whom 118 were Lebanese, including 98 men, eight women and 12 children; 328 Palestinians, including 313 men, seven women and eight children; seven Syrians; two Algerians; three Pakistanis; and 21 Iranians -- all of them male.

Sharon said those figures came from the Lebanese Red Cross, the International Red Cross, the Lebanese civilian defense, relief organizations and the relatives of victims.

Sharon arrived in New York yesterday after visiting Honduras where he conferred with government officials. His meeting with the Presidents Conference was held at the headquarters of the World Zionist Organization and Jewish Agency American sections at 515 Park Avenue.

According to JTA's informant he received a "warm welcome" and his statements drew a "positive response."

HABIB: NO SNAG IN TALKSON WITHDRAWAL OF TROOPS FROM LEBANON* By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Dec. 9 (JTA) --Philip Habib, President Reagan's special envoy to the Middle East, denied today that the talks on the withdrawal of foreign troops from Lebanon are stalled. But Habib, speaking to reporters after he and Morris Draper, the special envoy for the Lebanese talks, briefed President Reagan at a White House luncheon meeting, said the two of them would be returning to the Middle East next week to "accelerate" the negotiating process.

While conceding that negotiations of a "formal nature" had not yet begun between Israel and Lebanon, Habib stressed that a considerable amount of "chewing and throwing" was going on and some "form of dialogue" has been established.

"But there are lots of ways to skin a cat," he said. "The negotiating process is alive. It is dealing with the relevant issues. It is consistent with the President's statements and his policies. That is what we are going back to pursue."

Habib and Draper, who had briefed senior Administration officials yesterday on Habib's recent swing through the Middle East, briefed the President on both the progress on the Lebanese talks and the peace initiative Reagan announced September 1.

As they were having lunch, the White House announced it has named a third ambassador to the Middle East talks, Richard Fairbanks, who since earlier this year has been advisor to the Secretary of State on the Middle East with the personal rank of Ambassador.

A White House statement explained that the 41-year-old Fairbanks is being nominated to Ambassador

to allow him "to become fully involved in the Middle East peace initiative." White House deputy spokesman Larry Speakes explained that while Fairbanks had been dealing with the Middle East, the Presidential appointment shows the importance the Administration is placing on the peace process.

Speakes explained that Habib would continue to be responsible for the overall Middle East situation, including the Lebanese negotiations and the Reagan peace initiative; Draper would continue to concentrate on the autonomy talks.

In denying that negotiations are stalled, Habib stressed that no one believed that it would be an "exercise" of a couple of weeks in which an agreement would be reached for a withdrawal of Israeli and Syrian troops and Palestine Liberation Organization forces. He said there has to be a great deal of discussion. "You have to convince people and that is what we are in the process of doing," he said. He added that he believed there has been "considerable success" in trying to narrow the issues.

On other matters, he said no decision would be made on Lebanon's request for an increase of troops in the multinational force until an agreement on the removal of external forces had been reached. He said the attempt to provide Israel's security from southern Lebanon was not a "major hurdle" that cannot be resolved.

Habib, signifying disgust, shrugged off a question from a reporter suggesting that Israel is making southern Lebanon its "Northern Bank." He said, firmly: "I wouldn't accept that characterization."

INDIA WON'T GIVE ISRAELIS VISAS TO ATTEND AIRPORT AUTHORITY CONFAB

TEL AVIV, Dec. 9 (JTA) -- The Indian government has refused to grant visas to a two-member Israeli delegation to attend the conference of the unaffiliated International Civil Airport Authority (ICAA) scheduled to open in New Delhi shortly.

Israel had been invited to the conference which will be attended by delegates from 100 other member states of the ICAA. The Indian authorities agreed to issue visas limiting the Israelis' stay in the country to one month. The ICAA secretariat recently informed Israel, however, that India will not grant the visas under any conditions. India does not have diplomatic relations with Israel.

The Israel Airports Authority reported that it has failed to get the ICAA and the U.S. representatives on that body to press the Indians to grant the visas they had previously promised.

UN CONDEMNS ISRAEL'S AFRICA TIES

UNITED NATIONS, Dec. 9 (JTA) -- The General Assembly overwhelmingly adopted today a resolution condemning Israel for its alleged cooperation with South Africa, especially in the military and nuclear areas. The vote was 113-18 with 10 abstentions.

The resolution, adopted as part of a series of resolutions dealing with apartheid, demanded that Israel sever all ties with South Africa, in particular, its "nuclear and military" cooperation. It also urged all member-states to pressure Israel to cut its relationships with South Africa.

MILENDER ELECTED TO JTA BOARD; SEAL NAMED JTA BUSINESS MANAGER

NEW YORK, Dec. 9 (JTA) -- Sumner Milender, Boston Jewish communal leader, was elec-

ted to the Jewish Telegraphic Agency Board of Directors, it was announced by Martin Fox, president of the JTA.

Milender is a vice president of the Bureau of Jewish Education of Boston, a trustee of the Boston Jewish Community Council, member of the Board of Overseers of Brandeis University, and a Board member of the Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Greater Boston. He also is a member of the Large City Budgeting Conference, on the Executive Board of the National Jewish Resources Center, and a member of the Executive Board of the Jewish Chaplaincy Council of the JWB.

In addition, Fox announced the appointment of Mark Seal as business manager of JTA, replacing Jan Neuman who resigned recently to go into private business. Seal, a native Canadian, was educated at McGill University, Montreal, and studied economics at the Ruppin Institute in Israel and Baruch College, New York. Prior to coming to JTA, Seal was controller of Kibbutz Gezer from 1974 to 1978, was a campus outreach professional with the Jewish Association for College Youth from 1978-1980 and then business manager of the Jewish Frontier, an American Labor Zionist journal.

AMERICAN RED CROSS TO CONTINUE EFFORTS TO HELP ISRAEL'S MAGEN DAVID ADOM GET RECOGNITION

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Dec. 9 (JTA) -- The American Red Cross (ARC) has pledged to continue efforts to help Israel's Magen David Adom receive official international recognition, according to Rabbi Rubin Dabin, chairman of Operation Recognition which has been campaigning for this.

The pledge was made at a luncheon here this week at which George Eley, who is retiring after 12 years as president of the ARC, received the International Humanitarian Award of the American Red Magen David for Israel (ARMDI). The award was presented by ARMDI chairman Joseph Handleman.

Dabin said Richard Schubert, who is the incoming president of the ARC, said he will continue Eley's efforts to get the Magen David Adom recognized by the International Committee of the Red Cross and the League of Red Cross Societies. The Geneva-based groups do not recognize the Magen David emblem while they do recognize the Red Crescent of the Moslem countries.

The ARC recognizes the "bigotry" of the two international groups against Israel and the "blackmail" that is being used by the 21 Arab members of the two international groups, Dabin said. He said the ARC was the first national Red Cross body to unilaterally recognize Magen David Adom and their action has been followed by 21 other national Red Cross bodies. But Dabin stressed this is not the same as recognition by the two international groups.

CHANUKAH MENORAH IN WASHINGTON

WASHINGTON, Dec. 9 (JTA) -- The 30-foot tall national Chanukah menorah is standing in Lafayette Park across from the White House for the fourth consecutive year. Rabbi Abraham Shemtov, director of the American Friends of Lubavitch which sponsors the menorah, said he has been told that before the menorah went up, many Jews had complained that there were no symbols of Chanukah at prominent sites in Washington, only the national Christmas tree which faces the other side of the White House. He said he was told that the menorah gives Jewish children "a source of pride," particularly after the recent rash of swastika daubings on area synagogues.

SWISS WILL NOT ACCEPT TRIFA

DETROIT, Dec. 9 (JTA) -- The government of Switzerland has informed the U.S. Justice Department that it will not accept Archbishop Valerian Trifa of Grass Lake, Mich., for residency in Switzerland, according to a report in The Jewish News by Alan Hitsky, news editor.

Trifa, who heads the Rumanian Orthodox Episcopate in America, voluntarily accepted deportation in October rather than continue his fight against U.S. charges that he lied about his ties to the fascist Rumanian Iron Guard when he entered the U.S. in the early 1950's and when he applied for American citizenship.

Under the agreement reached in Federal District Court in Detroit, Trifa asked to live in Switzerland. Allan Ryan, Jr., director of the Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations, told The Jewish News that the U.S. "is now making the inquiries and arrangements to see if Trifa can go to other countries," Hitsky reported.

"Switzerland was his first choice," Ryan said. "Under the law we were obligated to wait for that decision." According to Hitsky, Ryan was reluctant to discuss the countries that would be approached or the length of time it would take.

"It will take some time," Ryan said. "The decision will have to be made in the capitals of these countries, not at their U.S. embassies. It will take some time, but I am hopeful it will not be an inordinate amount of time."

Trifa has been accused of being the leader of the student movement of the Iron Guard and inciting a pogrom in Bucharest in January, 1941.

JEWISH OFFICIAL SAYS JEWS IN LATIN AMERICA ARE VULNERABLE

NEW YORK, Dec. 9 (JTA) -- Jacobo Kovadloff, director of South American Affairs for the American Jewish Committee, today described Latin America as "a society in ferment, facing unprecedented challenges of social justice, freedom and violence, along with ongoing terrorism and repression."

Jews are especially vulnerable in unsettled conditions such as exist in Latin America at present, Kovadloff pointed out. Often, he said, they are victims of endemic anti-Semitism and neo-racism.

Discussing "Current Political Trends in Latin America" at the Forest Hills Jewish Center Institute for Continuing Education, Kovadloff stated that the gap between classes, the friction between developed and undeveloped countries, and the ongoing clashes between guerrillas and armies were among the major problems facing Latin America.

"The conflict between liberalism and conservatism in Latin America is not simple or clear-cut," Kovadloff said. "It involves aspects of social democracies, Christian democracies, Socialism and Marxism, as well as the rightwing movements of neo-Nazism and indigenous fascists; populism, demagogism and militarism."

The Spanish heritage, embodying absolutism, monarchical societies and civilian/military regimes, is still strong, Kovadloff stated, adding that "Pan-Americanism remains the un-attained dream."

Kovadloff formerly directed the AJ Committee South American Office in Buenos Aires, his native city, from which he was forced to flee in June, 1977, as a result of anti-Semitic threats to the lives of himself and his family.

AFL-CIO LEADER PLEDGES CONTINUING U.S. LABOR SUPPORT OF ISRAEL

NEW YORK, Dec. 9 (JTA) -- Lane Kirkland, president of the AFL-CIO, pledged that American labor "will neither swerve from our support of Israel, nor yield ground to those, in or out of the Administration, who would push our democratic ally into unilateral concessions to those who deny her right to exist."

Kirkland, speaking last night at the Jewish Labor Committee's National Trade Union Council Human Rights Award dinner here honoring Douglas Fraser, president of the United Automobile Workers Union, added: "To those who would punish Israel by withholding economic or military assistance we say: save that talk for General (Wojciech) Jaruzelski (military leader of Poland) and his Soviet masters. Such threats will behoove an Administration that has just lifted sanctions on the Siberian pipeline, refuses to halt the flow of credit to the Eastern bloc, and is begging the Soviet Union to buy more grain from us."

Kirkland praised Fraser for "being a long-time friend of Israel" deserving the honor being bestowed on him.

UAW Chief Cites Israel's Democracy

In his own remarks, Fraser, reviewing the war in Lebanon and its aftermath, said: "Like the U.S., Israel is a country in which the citizens by no means take what their government says at face value. Despite living in the shadow of a virtual siege throughout its young existence, Israel has never attempted to stifle political dissent or curb the free expression of its people and press."

He noted that "Following the Phalangist massacre at the (west Beirut refugee) camps, the UAW condemned the perpetrators, but also pointed to the Begin government's share of responsibility for the events in Beirut. I realize that our comments have made a number of people unhappy, but as we've all seen since then, the U.S. criticism of the massacre paled in significance compared to the firestorm of debate and soul-searching in Israel itself. This points, I think, to the vital link between the U.S. and Israel, the real and lasting basis of our relationship."

Fraser said that when the people of Israel hear a news broadcast or read a newspaper, "they apply their own judgement and bring to bear their own experience in evaluating the truth or falsity of what they hear and read."

He urged that Americans should judge Israel by its democratic values and experiences and not on the basis of false propaganda stories spread by its enemies. Like Kirkland, he reiterated his long-standing friendship with Israel and pledged that he, and his million-member union of auto and agricultural implement workers, "would continue its link with Israel's cause."

CURFEW IMPOSED ON LEBANESE TOWN

TEL AVIV, Dec. 9 (JTA) -- Israeli forces today imposed a curfew on the Lebanese town of Aley, on the main Beirut Damascus highway, following heavy clashes between local Druze and Christian Phalangists. Two Druze residents were killed by Phalangist fire in the area yesterday.

Today's exchanges were said to have been especially heavy in the village of Souk El-Arab, some three kilometers southwest of Aley. Israeli army vehicles toured the area, appealing through public address loudspeakers to both sides to cease their fire. According to reports from Beirut, heavy fighting was also taking place in and around Tripoli where casualties included both Lebanese Christians and Moslems as well as several Syrian soldiers.