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ISRAELI SOLDIER WOUNDED BY ROCKET FRAGMENT NEAR HOTEL WHERE ISRAEL- LEBANON TALKS WERE TO BE HELD

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Jan. 24 (JTA) -- An Israeli soldier was slightly wounded while standing guard at the approaches to the Lebanon Beach Hotel in Khalde shortly before Israeli, Lebanese and American negotiating teams began their weekly round of talks in the hotel this morning.

The soldier was at a roadblock about 400 yards from the hotel when he was struck by stone or metal fragments sent flying by a projectile fired toward the building from an area south of Beirut patrolled by U.S. marines. Israeli sources said the projectile could have been a Katyusha rocket, a mortar or a bazooka shell. According to experts it was a 107 mm. Katyusha rocket.

The incident had no effect on the negotiating session which began on schedule a half hour later. But it could aggravate the recent tension between Israeli forces and the marines who are part of the U.S.-French-Italian multinational force patrolling sections of Beirut and its environs.

Israeli spokesmen say the situation is due to the presence of Palestine Liberation Organization forces in the American patrolled area. Incidents which American sources have described as "dangerous confrontations" occurred when Israeli soldiers on an early morning patrol, fired live ammunition into shrubbery and abandoned buildings along a road over which Israeli convoys were due to pass.

The bullets have come close to marines whose zone is near the road. In some cases marines and Israeli soldiers reportedly had angry, noisy exchanges over these incidents.

The Israelis insist they patrol only those areas assigned them by agreement and complain that marines sometimes enter their zone without prior notification. Israel is expected to use today's incident to demand stricter U.S. control of the area to prevent PLO infiltration.

**ANDROPOV, IN A LETTER TO FRENCH
CP CHIEF, CLAIMS THAT SHCHARANSKY
HAS ENDED HIS HUNGER STRIKE**
Report Not Confirmed By Soviet Jewry Groups
By Edwin Eytan

PARIS, Jan. 24 (JTA) -- Yuri Andropov, First Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party, claims that imprisoned Jewish activist Anatoly Shcharansky has ended his hunger strike and is in "a satisfactory condition."

The Soviet leader also hinted that Shcharansky's 13-year sentence might be reduced were it not for the international pressure campaign on his behalf. Those statements by Andropov were published today in the French Communist Party organ *L'Humanite*, in a letter to Georges Marchais, secretary general of the party. The letter was Andropov's reply to a request by Marchais for information about Shcharansky. The French Communist leader had been contacted earlier by the French Committee for Shcharansky's Liberation.

(Soviet Jewry sources in New York and Washington had no information to confirm that Shcharansky has ended his fast, begun last September. Recent reports from the USSR quoted Soviet officials as saying Shcharansky was being force-fed.)

CP Leader Not Satisfied With Andropov's Reply

Le Monde quoted Marchais today as saying he was "not" satisfied with Andropov's reply. French sources believe he will contact the Kremlin leader again on the matter. Should Shcharansky be freed, credit for achieving this would be of considerable help to Communist candidates in France's municipal elections next March.

Much of Andropov's letter was devoted to re-stating Shcharansky's "guilt" for the crime of "espionage." He allegedly "supplied the American secret service with information concerning the Soviet Union's defense industry," Andropov wrote. The Soviet leader insisted that Shcharansky's "guilt" was "demonstrated and proven in court with irrefutable evidence."

However, he wrote, "Soviet law does not exclude the possibility of shortening his sentence in reply to a request for early release. But according to Soviet law such a decision depends on the prisoner's good behavior. It is obvious that such a possibility is not helped by stormy campaigns or foreign pressures. On the contrary, they prevent his liberation," Andropov's letter said.

It said that "Shcharansky started a hunger strike in order to exert pressure on Soviet justice" but "recently he was in contact with his mother and stopped his hunger strike. He is in satisfactory condition and nothing seems to threaten his life."

According to Soviet Jewry sources, Shcharansky began his hunger strike to protest the denial of mail and visits by members of his family, privileges allowed other prisoners. His 77-year-old mother, Ida Milgrom, recently travelled to Chistopol prison where Shcharansky is incarcerated but was not permitted to see him, the sources have reported.

**HABIB RETURNING TO U.S. AFTER
FAILING TO MAKE PROGRESS TOWARD
NEGOTIATED WITHDRAWAL FROM LEBANON**
By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Jan. 24 (JTA) -- American mediator Philip Habib flew back to Washington from Israel today to report to President Reagan on his failure to make progress towards a negotiated withdrawal from Lebanon. In Israel senior officials spoke of "stalemate" and the media spoke of a "crisis" in the talks.

At the weekly Cabinet session yesterday Defense Minister Ariel Sharon said he expected the U.S. publicly to blame Israel for the lack of progress in the talks, and the general atmosphere in government circles here seems to be one of resigned expectation of an open confrontation with the U.S.

Habib is expected back here early next week "and then the pressures will begin," one Israeli source remarked privately. A working session last night between Habib and Premier Menachem Begin, together with Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir and Sharon, produced no substantive shift in the dead-

lock, according to Israeli sources. The main issue of dispute continues to be Israel's demand for three IDF-manned early warning stations in Lebanon after the IDF withdraws from that country. Other disputed issues include the role of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), the role of Maj. Saad Haddad's militia, and the pace of normalization between Israel and Lebanon.

Ministers Perturbed Over Begin-Sharon View

A great deal of attention at yesterday's Cabinet meeting was focussed on the early warning stations, and a group of ministers expressed open doubts as to the wisdom of forcing a confrontation with the U.S. over this matter. This group of ministers, which included Deputy Premier David Levy (Likud-Herut), became particularly perturbed when it emerged from Sharon's briefing that what he and Begin have in mind is not merely electronic surveillance posts, but rather military bases, albeit on a small scale, each manned by a company-size detachment of troops.

Cabinet sources said later that it seemed from Sharon's report -- though there was no absolute clarity on this -- that the three bases would be used not merely to track incursions but also to prevent them physically. The garrisons would engage in patrols and in pursuits if need be.

Minister-Without-Portfolio Mordechai Ben-Porat requested that a (secret) ministerial defense committee meeting be called to discuss this issue in fuller detail. Other ministers who expressed doubts over the proposed IDF stations included Yosef Burg of the National Religious Party, Aharon Uzan of Tami and Yitzhak Modai of the Liberal Party wing of Likud.

But Begin, Shamir and Sharon presented a solid phalanx in support of the Israeli demand for having the IDF staff these bases, and a majority of the ministers apparently supports them.

At the meeting with Habib later in the day, the U.S. envoy reiterated that Lebanon rejected the idea of the IDF manning the warning stations, regarding it as a infringement of its sovereignty. Habib reportedly proposed U.S., UNIFIL, or multinational force-manning -- all of which options Israel rejected.

Basis Clash Of Interests

In private conversations, Israeli sources are wondering aloud whether the U.S. and Israel are in fact caught up in a basic clash of interests in the Lebanon crisis. These sources feel that the U.S. does not see it as an American interest -- given Washington's broad ties throughout the Arab world -- to encourage a political accord between Israel and Lebanon.

Such an accord, these sources reason, would complicate matters for the Americans in Arab opinion, and might also provoke problems within Lebanon itself where some Moslem and Druze are sure to oppose it.

Even more importantly, according to this theory, the U.S. is anxious to demonstrate to the Arabs -- and most especially to Jordan's King Hussein -- that it can exert influence over Israel, and not the other way around. The U.S., after all, regards the impending accession of Hussein to the Mideast peace process, within the framework of the Reagan proposals, as the most vital element in current Mideast diplomacy.

There are allegations being voiced here, and not only from Sharon's circles, that the U.S. is actively discouraging Lebanon from entering into

far-reaching political accords with Israel. These allegations are strenuously denied by U.S. Embassy sources here.

Observers point out that the Israeli suspicions of American ill-will are, in many respects, a mirror-image of the suspicion felt in some quarters in Washington towards Israel. The U.S. suspicion is that the Begin government is deliberately dragging its feet over the Lebanese negotiation-and-withdrawal in order to ward off or avert indefinitely a U.S. effort to apply the Reagan peace proposals for a Palestinian settlement (which Israel has utterly rejected).

At the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee today, Begin admitted that there were "problems" with the Americans over what he termed "conditions for withdrawal." But he pointed to progress at the Kiryat Shmona-Khalde talks on formulating an agreed agenda and particularly on agreement over ending the state of war. The Premier said this issue was agreed in principle -- but Lebanon held that such agreement could come into effect only once the IDF had completely withdrawn from Lebanese soil.

Begin maintained that Habib supported Israel's desire for normalization of its relations with Lebanon. The Premier also disclosed that the U.S. envoy was fairly confident he could obtain Syrian withdrawal simultaneously with that of the IDF. But Habib was less certain about the PLO. (Israel's position is that the PLO fighters must leave Lebanon before IDF and Syrian withdrawal.)

Labor Party leader Shimon Peres challenged the Premier over the warning stations, implying that in his view they were not necessary.

Another leading Laborite, former Chief of Staff Mordechai Gur, baldly warned Begin not to be "dragged by Sharon into another war with Syria" as he had been "dragged" into the conflict with Lebanon by Sharon during the summer. Begin flatly denied this assertion.

OFFICIALS DENY KNOWLEDGE OF REPORT THAT ISRAEL'S RELATIONS WITH ETHIOPIA HAVE IMPROVED

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Jan. 24 (JTA) -- Government officials denied any knowledge today of a report in a British publication that Israel's relations with Ethiopia have improved of late to the point where Israeli advisors have replaced Soviet and East German experts working with the head of the Marxist regime, Menghistu Haile Mariam, in Addis Ababa.

The report appeared in "Foreign Report," a subsidiary of the London Economist and was featured in Haaretz today. It said that Israel's defense links with Ethiopia, which were close during the reign of the late Emperor Haile Salassie, have been restored.

Danny Weinreich, a spokesman for the Defense Ministry, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency today that he "knew nothing" of the report. The Foreign Ministry also disclaimed knowledge.

Elements In The Report

According to the report, the thaw in relations with Ethiopia began last November after the Ethiopian army failed in an assault on rebels in Eritrea. There has been a general improvement of ties with Israel and a possibility that aviation links will be restored between Tel Aviv and Addis Ababa, the report said. It spoke of Israelis replacing East Germans as military intelligence advisors and of Israelis now filling roles in the central government and in Menghistu's personal bodyguard.

Although the government seems to be dismissing these reports, some observers here found them credible in view of the fact that Israelis have been

permitted to visit Ethiopia recently after being barred from that country for years. Another indication of substance is the sudden, marked change in public statements here on the condition of the Falashas, Ethiopian Jews.

A team of Israeli social workers who visited the Gondar region where somewhat less than half the Falasha live, reported at a press conference here last Thursday that their situation was no worse than that of the rest of the rural population and that they are not subjected to official harassment and maltreatment. On the other hand, a Knesset member also recently returned from Ethiopia described the plight of the Falashas as "very bad." (See separate story P. 4.)

During the Haile Salassie regime, Israel maintained close ties with Ethiopia, including military links which were rarely publicized. Israel regarded Ethiopia, along with Turkey and Iran under the Shah as key links in a "peripheral" alliance of mutual interests on the fringes of the Middle East. The three countries are non-Arab and, until the fall of the Shah and Salassie, were pro-Western in their orientation.

Sources here said that even after the Ethiopian Emperor was deposed, Israel continued to have secret military links with that country. But these lapsed in the late 1970's and a period of total estrangement set in.

U.S. DENIES IT IS CONSIDERING CUTTING OFF AID TO ISRAEL

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Jan. 24 (JTA) -- The Reagan Administration rejected today reports that it was considering cutting off aid to Israel in an effort to achieve a "speedier withdrawal" of Israeli forces from Lebanon.

"The U.S. remains extremely concerned over the slow pace of the negotiations aimed at achieving the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Lebanon," State Department spokesman John Hughes said. But he stressed that Secretary of State George Shultz has "on a number of occasions made it clear" that he opposes using threats of withholding aid as a means of pressuring Israel.

Hughes refused to comment directly on a report by the syndicated columnists Rowland Evans and Robert Novak in The Washington Post today in which they said that the National Security Council and the State and Defense departments have drafted a document, ready for the President's signature, to cut off military aid as a means of forcing an Israeli withdrawal.

White House deputy press secretary Larry Speakes declined immediate comment on the Evans and Novak report, saying he would neither confirm nor deny it. He said he might have a comment later in the day, after checking with the State Department. At another point in his press briefing, Speakes remarked, "I would not read anything into that," apparently referring to the Evans and Novak column.

"Yet such is Reagan's inclination against confrontation that not even his closest advisors can be sure he will actually invoke the embargo," the columnists said. But Evans and Novak added that the Administration fears that if King Hussein of Jordan does not join the autonomy talks by the Administration's mid-March deadline because the Israelis are still in Lebanon, this could mean the "collapse" of President Reagan's Middle East peace initiative. "That is why the President is ready to buck the political furies and sign the arms embargo drafted for him," Evans and Novak concluded.

"It sounds like someone is trying to scare the Israelis," an observer here commented.

Hughes stressed that the Administration's policy is the one that has been enunciated by Shultz. He referred reporters to statements by Shultz in which he specifically ruled out the use of foreign aid as a weapon to compel Israel to follow U.S. wishes.

A Department source noted that at any one time there may be as many as 20 options being proposed. But he denied the Administration is even considering cutting off or withholding aid to Israel.

Habib To Brief Officials

Meanwhile, Hughes said U.S. special Ambassador Philip Habib who is on his way back to Washington from Lebanon, would be briefing Administration officials on the talks being held between Lebanon, Israel and the U.S. But Hughes denied that Habib was recalled to Washington because of the slow pace of the negotiations.

He noted that the envoy was due to return to participate in the meeting between President Reagan and President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt at the White House this Thursday.

Issue Of Early Warning Stations

Hughes also stressed that the U.S. had "never volunteered" the suggestion or was "pressing" for the use of American personnel in the early warning stations to be set up in south Lebanon to prevent terrorist attacks on Israel.

He refused to say what the U.S. position would be if it were asked to participate in manning the stations. Lebanon wants the stations manned by a multinational force or by Americans alone Israel is demanding that it man the stations exclusively.

Hughes said he would not discuss details of the negotiations now going on. But he indicated that the U.S. is opposed to the Israeli position when he noted that the U.S. has always been clear that it wants "all PLO, all Syrian and all Israeli forces" out of Lebanon.

TWO TERRORISTS NABBED

TEL AVIV, Jan. 24 (JTA) -- Security forces have arrested two men, one 18 years old and the other 28, from the Gaza Strip who carried out a grenade attack on a bus in Tel Aviv on January 8 in which 12 persons were injured. An army spokesman said the two men admitted their action and said they had been trained in Egypt. They said they were members of the El Fatah wing of the PLO.

The 18-year old terrorist was from the refugee camp at Deir El-Ballach near Gaza and the other was from Marazi village also in the Gaza Strip. The army spokesman said one had confessed also to a grenade attack in the Gaza Strip last November which killed one Arab and wounded another.

Israel has in the past accused Egypt of failing to prevent Palestinian terrorists from infiltrating into the Gaza Strip from Egypt, and thence into Israel.

UNITED NATIONS (JTA) -- Israel charged Monday that Syria's new Soviet missiles, delivered to it in recent weeks, pose a serious threat to Israel's security. In a letter to the UN Security Council, Yehuda Blum, Israel's Ambassador, said that the newly introduced long-range Soviet missiles are capable of penetrating deep into Israel's airspace and other neighboring countries. "Israel, for its part, cannot be expected to ignore the serious threat to its security inherent in these recent Syrian activities," Blum declared.

21 U.S. JEWISH COMMUNITY LEADERS RETURN FROM MEXICO REASSURED ABOUT THE SITUATION OF JEWS THERE

NEW YORK, Jan. 24 (JTA) -- A fact finding mission of 21 American Jewish community leaders has just returned from Mexico reassured about the situation of Mexican Jewry.

The mission spent five days in Mexico investigating two concerns of the Jewish community there -- a barrage of anti-Zionist and anti-Semitic propaganda during and after the war in Lebanon and the possibility that Jews would be scapegoated for the country's severe economic crisis.

Led by Alvin Steinberg of Washington, D.C., chairman of the Community Service Division of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, and Philip Aronoff of Houston, Texas, chairman of the Young Leadership Committee of ADL's Southwest regional office, the group met with Mexican government officials, the ambassadors of the United States and of Israel and leaders of the Comité Central Israelite, the umbrella organization of the Mexican Jewish community.

According to Steinberg and Aronoff, anxieties about Mexican Jews possibly being singled out for blame for the nation's economic woes have been allayed as a result of assurances by government representatives that Jews would not be discriminated against or scapegoated for what is a national problem.

The cochairmen added that the Jewish community seemed to be held in high esteem for its significant contributions to Mexico's industry, commerce and culture. They said that the members of their delegation were impressed by the dynamic, vibrant Jewish life clearly evident in the synagogues, sports centers, schools and other communal institutions they visited.

Wave of Anti-Israel Propaganda

According to Rabbi Morton Rosenthal, director of ADL's Latin American Affairs Department, and a member of the delegation, "the Jewish community remains troubled by the persistent wave of anti-Israel propaganda emanating from Mexico's well-staffed, well-financed office of the Palestine Liberation Organization, particularly since the war in Lebanon."

Noting that much of this PLO propaganda is "anti-Semitic as well as inflammatory," Rosenthal said that anti-Semitic graffiti has appeared throughout Mexico City and there have been several public demonstrations denouncing Jews, Zionism and Israel.

In discussing how Americans could be helpful, Mexican Jewish leaders told the delegation that increased tourism would bolster the economy and improve international understanding.

Among those with whom the mission met were Enrique Savignac, Minister of Tourism in President Miguel de la Madrid's Cabinet; Ravi Vieyra, editor of the leading Mexican daily, "Excelsior"; John Gavin, U.S. Ambassador to Mexico; and Israel Gur-Arie, Israel's Ambassador.

MK PRESENTS SOMBER PICTURE OF FALASHAS

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Jan. 24 (JTA) -- The condition of the Jews in Ethiopia (Falashas) is "very hard" according to Knesset member Dror Zeigerman (Likud-Liberals) who returned Saturday night from a 10-day visit to Ethiopia together with a group from the World Union of Jewish Students (WUJS).

Zeigerman went into Ethiopia on an Israeli passport. He said the economic situation of the Falashas was bad. There were conditions of famine in Ethiopia and the Falashas were affected by it, Zeigerman said. Moreover, he added, their condition was worse than that of other groups because they "suffer from anti-Semitism" they are not permitted to learn Hebrew, their synagogues are closed... world Jewry should fight for their right to leave." Zeigerman said the Falashas wanted to leave. "This was their message to us," he said.

His report -- he will deliver a full account to the World Zionist Executive this week -- differed sharply from that of a group of four Israelis who recently visited Ethiopia and told reporters here last week, at a press conference sponsored by the World Jewish Congress-Israel Bureau, that the Falashas were no worse off than other sections of the Ethiopian population. That group, whose visit to Ethiopia was arranged by the WJC, asserted specifically that there was no famine, that synagogues had been reopened and that there was no institutionalized anti-Semitism. (See January 21 Bulletin.)

Both visits came in response to a Reuter news agency report last month which in effect conveyed an invitation from Ethiopian authorities to Israelis to view the Falasha situation at first hand.

SOLON SAYS U.S. IS UNDERMINING CHANCES FOR MIDDLE EAST PEACE

NEW YORK, Jan. 24 (JTA) -- Sen. Carl Levin (D. Mich.), a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said that the Administration, guided by President Reagan's Middle East peace initiative, is not acting as a mediator in that region to get the parties to come to the peace table but is undermining the chances of peace in the Mideast.

The solon, addressing the national executive committee of the Zionist Organization of America, asserted that the Administration continues to "coddle" the Saudi Arabians and is also "offering a big fat carrot" to King Hussein of Jordan in the way of airplanes and missiles as an enticement to get the Jordanians to the peace table. "These excesses will make peace impossible," Levin declared, adding that he was afraid "the stick, instead of the carrot," is being levelled against the Israelis.

The Senator also charged that the State Department has never disclosed publicly that armed PLO members remained in west Beirut after all of them were supposed to have been evacuated under a plan worked out by U.S. special envoy Philip Habib last fall and before the Israelis entered that part of the city to help oversee their evacuation. He said he would continue to prod the State Department to disclose the fact that U.S. intelligence officials did tell the Department that armed PLO fighters had remained in west Beirut.

Ivan Novick, ZOA president, who was recently elected to the presidium of the World Zionist Organization, told the meeting that the Administration should grasp the reality that the real obstacle to peace in the Mideast is "Arab intransigence, Arab hostility, Arab inability and failure to be flexible, and Arab refusal to accept and recognize Israel."

Warning that the issue of West Bank settlements is being used to divide the American Jewish community, Novick declared that "Jewish settlement within the territories is valid based on its rights to security and self-defense, its historical connection to the heartland of Eretz Yisrael and the fact that, in accordance with International law, Israel holds better, if not the best title to the lands in question. Others may disagree, but we exercise the right to hold to our point of view."