

JTA daily news bulletin

Contents copyright: Reproduction only by previous arrangement.

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

Vol. LXI - 66th Year

Monday, March 28, 1983

No. 60

ISRAEL-LEBANON TALKS SEEM TO BE HEADING TOWARD A CONCLUSION, BUT QUESTION OF SUCCESSFUL ACCORD REMAINS

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, March 27 (JTA) — The 12 weeks of talks between Lebanon and Israel appeared to be heading toward a conclusion today but it remained uncertain whether or not they will culminate successfully in an agreement.

Signs of growing frustration and impatience were evident in both Jerusalem and Washington over the weekend as the Israeli, Lebanese and American delegations held their 24th meeting at Netanya Friday and U.S. special envoy Philip Habib continued his diplomatic shuttles between Jerusalem and Beirut.

The Cabinet, at its regular weekly session today, discussed Habib's report of his two days of talks in Beirut with President Amin Gemayel and Lebanese Foreign Minister Elie Salem. Cabinet spokesman Dan Meridor told reporters afterwards that "Much is being achieved... There are problems to be solved, but we hope it won't be long." Government sources said there had been progress on all issues.

Atmosphere Less Optimistic

But the atmosphere was less optimistic after Habib met with Israeli Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir this evening and flew back to Beirut, apparently to convey the latest Israeli position to the Lebanese government.

Israeli sources said Shamir had been "very firm" on Israel's insistence that Maj. Saad Haddad and his Christian militia, armed and financed by Israel, retain control of security in south Lebanon after Israeli forces withdraw.

The Lebanese government refuses to assign such a role to Haddad and its position has been backed by the U.S. Meridor said after today's Cabinet meeting that Haddad's future role was not the major obstacle to an agreement, as some sources had said last week. "It is not a personal problem of Maj. Haddad. It is a very basic security question for Israel," he said.

Differences Between Israel and Lebanon

Israel has reportedly rejected a Lebanese offer to incorporate Haddad's militia into the Lebanese army but send Haddad himself on a diplomatic assignment abroad or allow him "honorable retirement." Haddad has been Israel's principal ally in Lebanon but circles in Beirut regard him as a deserter and renegade who is "too close to Israel."

The Lebanese, for their part, adamantly refuse Israel's demand to maintain surveillance outposts manned by its own troops in south Lebanon for an indefinite period after the bulk of Israel's forces withdraw. Beirut's position on this too is supported by the U.S. on grounds that it would compromise Lebanon's sovereignty.

Israel reportedly was willing to forego the surveillance outposts if Haddad was allowed to remain in command of his militia in the south, whether or not it is incorporated into the Lebanese army. The impasse that has developed revived proposals in the Cabinet today for a unilateral withdrawal of Israeli forces to the Awali River just north of Sidon.

Some hardliners, including Minister of Science Yuval Ne'eman of the ultra-nationalist Tehiya Party, advocated such a move because "no end to the negotiations are in sight."

The official government position is against that course of action. Government spokesmen say there is still a chance that agreement will be reached and an Israeli withdrawal would be conducted in the context of a staged pull-back of all foreign forces. Shamir said in a television interview tonight that both Lebanon and the U.S. have assured Israel that the Syrians and the Palestine Liberation Organization were prepared to withdraw simultaneously with the Israel army.

Frustration And Impatience

But even the official position reflects growing frustration and impatience within policy-making circles here. Government sources said today that the three months of tripartite negotiations was clearly "exhausting itself" and must end soon, one way or another. If the conclusion is unsatisfactory, Israel would have to weigh the situation and consider its "alternatives," the sources said.

This seemed to observers to be an oblique reference to the possibility of a unilateral withdrawal to lines below which Haddad's 2,000 militiamen, aided by the Israel army, are already strongly deployed.

'No Magic Date'

The mood in Washington also reflected impatience. State Department spokesman John Hughes conceded Friday that the Administration was "frustrated" that no agreement had been reached on the withdrawal of foreign forces from Lebanon more than a week after Secretary of State George Shultz held lengthy talks with Shamir on that subject.

Hughes denied that the U.S. has set a deadline for the conclusion of the talks. "In our minds we don't have a magic date," he said, noting that the Lebanese government has talked of April 2 as a target date for an agreement.

Hughes said that while the U.S. is "frustrated it has taken so long," it will "continue to work" on an agreement "hour by hour, day by day..." (the U.S.) wants it done as soon as possible.

Reports from Beirut over the weekend quoted Foreign Minister Salem as saying "we have given everything Lebanon can give" with respect to Israel's security demands, "we cannot give any more on the security arrangements without prejudicing Lebanon's sovereignty." Salem was reported to have said that he still thought an agreement was possible but if none was forthcoming within two weeks, Lebanon would have to reassess its approach to negotiations.

Premier Menachem Begin referred today to the difficulties Israel was having to ensure that the aims of its war in Lebanon were realized. Speaking at a ceremony in the courtyard of the Prime Ministers Office where he awarded "Peace for Galilee Campaign" ribbons to Chief of Staff Rafael Eitan and other senior officers, Begin pledged that Israel would stand firmly by the terms it has presented to Lebanon to ensure that the PLO never returns to that country to launch attacks on Israel.

Begin spoke after the Cabinet meeting. According to reports leaked from the Cabinet chamber, today's

session was stormy, Former Defense Minister Ariel Sharon, now a Minister-Without-Portfolio, was said to have let loose, for the first time, a tirade of criticism against his successor, Defense Minister Moshe Arens.

Sharon charged that Israel's negotiators were surrendering on key issues. "This way we will achieve nothing," he warned. Deputy Premier David Levy and Education Minister Zevulun Hammer reportedly led a spirited defense of Arens. Hammer, a leader of the National Religious Party, said the government is duty-bound to bring an end to the Lebanon episode and the concessions Israel has offered during the talks are fully acceptable to him.

Haddad Accuses The U.S.

Meanwhile, Haddad, appearing on an Israel Radio interview today, accused the U.S. of pressuring the Lebanese government to oust him. "What they (the Beirut government) are asking now is good for America -- it is an American request they are now asking, not a Lebanese request knowing that the main danger existing against Lebanon is the Syrian and PLO presence in the north and in the Bekaa Valley. But nobody is talking about that," he complained.

Haddad said, however, that he was prepared to step down if it could be proven that he is the sole remaining obstacle to an agreement. But he claimed that was a "frivolous and contentious notion."

WEINBERGER: ISRAEL IS NOT A LIABILITY By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, March 27 (JTA) -- Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger strongly denied today that he considers Israel a "strategic liability," maintaining that he considers the Jewish State as well as most Arab countries "strategic assets."

Weinberger's denial came when he was asked on NBC-TV's "Meet the Press" about the belief that he feels Israel is a liability. "The only people who think that are people who don't bother to talk with me," he replied.

"I consider Israel a strategic asset," he stressed. "I consider many other countries in the Mideast strategic assets. I think we need many friends in the Mideast, including Israel, but including also Saudi Arabia and Jordan and Oman and Kuwait and the Gulf states and many others. It is essential that we maintain good and cordial and strong and close relationships with all of these nations. I do not consider Israel or any other of these countries with one or two notable exceptions such as Iran, a strategic liability."

Denies Recommending Arms Embargo On Israel

Weinberger denied that he recommended an arms embargo on Israel after the Israeli army went into Lebanon last June. But he said the U.S. has held up approving the sale of 75 F-16 jets to Israel because "serious questions were raised" about whether Israel has been using U.S. arms, including planes, "only in self-defense," as required by U.S. law and in the arms sales agreements with Israel. He said the planes will not be sent to Israel "pending the outcome of this investigation."

Weinberger also rejected Israel's charges that incidents between the Israeli army and the U.S. marines in Lebanon would not have happened if there had been better liaison between the

two forces. "We do have liaison at all levels where it is required," he said. "We do have basically the same kind of liaison that is possessed by the other members of the multinational force" the British, French and Italian.

He said the marine commander in the field can contact the Israelis at any time and did so only last week. He added that in a recent talk with Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Arens, he was assured there would be no more incidents from the Israeli side. Weinberger said he was "very hopeful" that the incidents have ceased.

But when pressed to discuss the incidents outlined in the letter to him by Gen. Robert Barrow, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, Weinberger said "his letter speaks for itself." He said the letter which charged the Israelis with harassment of the marines, was sent to the State Department which discussed the issue with Israel. He noted that since then the situation has "much improved."

But Weinberger added that "the solutions to all of this" is for an agreement to be reached in which "all of the foreign forces, the Israelis, Syrians, PLO and ultimately the multinational force, all get out of Lebanon."

ARABS PROTEST AIRING OF U.S. TV SERIES 'GOLDA' ON FRENCH TV By Edwin Eytan

PARIS, March 27 (JTA) -- The Arab League representative in Paris, Mohammed Yazid, has formally complained to the French Foreign Ministry against the scheduled airing by French television of the American TV series, "Golda," which portrays the life of Israel's late Premier Golda Meir.

Yazid, in a written note, said that broadcasting this program is tantamount to "glorifying Israel and its expansionist aims." He asked Foreign Minister Claude Cheysson to try and prevent the state-controlled TV from going ahead with its program, scheduled to start this week.

Several pro-Arab organizations have also appealed to the "High Authority," a state-appointed body responsible for the television's political neutrality and ethics, to have the series, which stars the late Ingrid Bergman, banned.

One such organization, the Franco-Arab Solidarity Association, said in its letter to the High Authority's President Michelle Cotta; "France, which is favorable to a just solution to the Middle East conflict, should not use television to present a biased view of the problem."

The Association's president, Lucien Bitterlin, also called for a program on the Palestinian question and said it should be followed by a debate between the representatives of all the concerned parties.

CYPRUS IS BECOMING THE NEW CENTER FOR PLO PROPAGANDA By David Kantor

BONN, March 27 (JTA) -- Cyprus is becoming the new center of Palestine Liberation Organization propaganda since the PLO was ousted from Beirut last summer, the daily Die Welt reported today.

According to the paper, the PLO has established, at great expense, a new information and communications center in the Greek part of the island which is partially occupied by Turkey. It has already moved its news agency, Wafa, to Cyprus along with various publications. It is now trying to get the Cypriot government to grant a license to the PLO radio station, "The Voice of Palestine," so that it can resume broadcasts which previously emanated from Beirut.

Die Welt reported that several Arab governments are pressuring the Cypriot authorities to deny the license

because they fear renewed PLO broadcasts would encourage subversive elements within their own borders.

FOREIGN REPORTERS IN ISRAEL PROTEST CENSORS TAPPING TELEX, PHONE LINES

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, March 27 (JTA) -- The Foreign Press Association (FPA) in Israel, whose membership includes over 100 foreign and local correspondents representing newspapers, news agencies and radio and television services around the world, has protested to Premier Menachem Begin and Defense Minister Moshe Arens following published reports that censors tap the telephone and telex lines of foreign journalists.

The FPA letter followed a report last week in Maariv quoting a speech by an unnamed censorship official to Tel Aviv high school students in which the charges of wire tapping were made.

The official also said that former Defense Minister Ariel Sharon had been responsible for leaking state secrets to an Israel Radio correspondent who then refused to submit the material given him to censorship before his broadcast.

The FPA letter asked: "Is this report (of wire tapping) correct, are our communications monitored? If so, under what legal basis? If there is a legal basis for this under Israeli law, is it the intention of the government that this monitoring continue? If yes, then may we register our most serious concern over what we regard as a continuing serious violation of press freedom?"

When foreign correspondents are accredited they must agree to submit to prior military censorship of items dealing with security matters such as Israeli troop movements and nuclear research. All other articles, including those critical of Israel, can be transmitted freely. Telex transmissions are occasionally interrupted and censors have also cut in on correspondents' overseas phone calls. Under Israeli law, bugging is illegal unless a warrant is issued by the Defense Minister.

32 CANADIAN RESIDENTS OF IIO UNDER INVESTIGATION BY WEST GERMANY ARE 'SUSPECTED' NAZI WAR CRIMINALS

By Ben Kayfetz

TORONTO, March 27 (JTA) -- The West German Justice Ministry has confirmed that 32 residents of Canada out of 110 currently under investigation are "suspected" Nazi war criminals.

The list of 110 names was provided to the West German authorities by the Canadian Ambassador in Bonn. According to Dieter Kranz, the prosecuting attorney at the central office of the Justice Ministry for the state of Baden-Wuerttemberg, "Of these they recognized 32 as suspects." Kranz made the disclosure in a telephone interview with the Toronto Star.

He said he received the list from the Canadian envoy early this year and returned it on January 14. Canada's Solicitor General, Robert Kaplan, revealed recently that a large-scale investigation was underway by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police of 110 Canadian residents suspected of war crimes.

Kranz told the Star that there are no immediate plans to ask for extradition. He did not identify the 32 suspects or reveal details of their alleged crimes. Until now, West Germany has requested the extradition of only one Canadian resident, Helmut Rauca, whose case is now before the Ontario Court of Appeals.

The Netherlands requested the extradition of another Canadian, Jacob Luitjens, in 1981 but the Canadian authorities declined on grounds that the alleged offense, "aiding and abetting the enemy in time of war" was not an extraditable offense under the treaty between Canada and Holland. Luitjens, who is on the faculty of the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, denied he was ever a Nazi collaborator. A Dutch court sentenced him in absentia to life imprisonment in 1948.

Meanwhile, Svend Robinson, a New Democratic Party member of Canada's Parliament, has urged Kaplan to seek legislation that would allow Canada to prosecute suspected Nazi war criminals living in the country. Present laws allow only extradition procedures.

NEW TRAVEL TAX FOR ISRAELIS PASSES FIRST READING IN THE KNESSET

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, March 27 (JTA) -- A new tax bill that will require Israelis to pay a \$50 levy when they travel abroad, passed its first reading in the Knesset last week by a vote of 44-34. The travel tax, originally instituted by a Labor-led government, was rescinded by the Likud when it first took office in 1977. It is being restored now under heavy pressure from the Tami and Agudat Israel parties, two of Likud's coalition partners.

The new tax is expected to yield more than 3 billion Shekels a year, according to Israeli economists. Tami expects part of this revenue to be used to increase welfare subsidies for large families. The Aguda Israel wants larger government subsidies for its yeshiva students to come out of the new tax, as promised by Likud.

The travel tax is an unpopular measure, considering the large numbers of Israelis who vacation abroad each year. It is opposed by the Labor Alignment. Labor Party chairman Shimon Peres conceded that it was a mistake to impose the tax when Labor was in power. Government spokesmen note that the 15 percent value-added tax (VAT) is not applied to travel tickets. Oppositions MKs reply that the \$50 levy on a \$300 ticket to a near-by Mediterranean resort amounts to more than 15 percent.

RESERVISTS IN THE IDF WILL HAVE TO SERVE EXTRA DAYS IN THE ARMY

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, March 27 (JTA) -- Reserve soldiers in the IDF will have to serve 45 days army service if they are members of regular units and 60 days if they belong to specialized units, Chief of Staff-elect Gen. Moshe Levi told military correspondents here. Under normal circumstances reservists serve 30 days a year.

Levi said the army would remain in Lebanon "as long as required, as demanded by the government." He said the situation had been re-examined by army headquarters in December "according to data which may alter the situation." Israel Radio's military correspondent said Levi was hinting at the presence of Soviet-made SAM-5 missiles inside Syria.

Levi said that Defense Minister Moshe Arens had decided in favor of an army reorganization involving the establishment of an overall land forces command -- a controversial proposal put forward six years ago by Gen. Yisrael Tal and not implemented till now because of opposition by most currently-serving senior officers and several former Chiefs of Staff.

CORRECTION: A headline in the March 15 Bulletin on the World Conference on Soviet Jewry should have stated: Kirkpatrick Rejects View That the Declining Number Of Jews Allowed To Leave the USSR is Due Solely to Neshira. The word solely was inadvertently omitted.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES POPULARITY OF BEGIN'S POLICIES IS DECLINING AMONG THE SEPHARDIM By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, March 27 (JTA) -- Although Premier Menachem Begin still enjoys great personal popularity in Israel, the popularity of his government's policies is declining, especially among the poor Sephardic communities which have been the backbone of Likud's support.

This was the analysis of two Israeli political scientists in a discussion arranged by the American Enterprise Institute here last week. The two professors spoke on the condition that their comments were not for attribution.

This new development has come about because the Sephardi poor are linking spending for the war in Lebanon and investment in West Bank settlements with the decline in social spending, one of the political scientists explained. He noted that Israel is now suffering problems in the health, welfare and educational systems, as well as in the overall economy. This has effected the very poor people who have been the chief supporters of the Begin government, he added.

Sephardim Active In Peace Now

The professor noted that only last September, when some 400,000 people protested the government's then refusal to appoint a commission of inquiry into the massacres at the Palestinian refugee camps in Beirut, almost all of the demonstrators were Ashkenazim. But now, he said, Sephardim have emerged among the Peace Now protestors on the West Bank and in Jerusalem.

The slogans they carry say "More money for solution of social, domestic and communal problems; less money for settlements, less money for the military," the professor said. He predicted that Israel was at the beginnings of "new groupings" in its political system.

Opposition To Retaining the Territories

At the same time, the two political scientists stressed that the "trend" in Israel has been "against" the government's policy of "holding on to the territories," the West Bank and Gaza, and moving toward the Labor Party's position of "repartitioning" them.

On the other hand, the professors said, the majority of Israelis would oppose any repartition of Jerusalem with perhaps only five percent supporting such a move. They added they believed that if a "sophisticated" way could be worked out to give the Arab sections control of their own daily administration most Israelis would support it.

The two professors predicted "a moment of truth" for the Begin government should King Hussein of Jordan decide to join the peace talks. They said that Begin would insist that the Camp David accord be adhered to and that only autonomy be discussed in the first stage of the negotiations.

U.S. Rapped For 'Lack Of Clarity'

The United States was criticized for a "lack of clarity" in its policy toward the Mideast by the two professors. One of the professors said that "contradictory" policies have been offered by Washington.

As an example, he noted that at one time the U.S. linked the autonomy negotiations to the withdrawal of foreign forces from Lebanon and then the two issues were "decoupled." He said it still was not clear whether the U.S. wants the negotiations, if Hussein joins the talks, to begin slowly or to start

with the discussion of the "end results." He said this means that Israeli groups who want to push a position around a particular U.S. "line" cannot do so since it might change the next day.

The other professor said some Israelis would like to see the U.S. exert "very delicate and sensitive" pressure on Israel but not in a way to "create the impression" it is trying to "compel" Israel. He explained this could be done by showing the "implications" and "alternatives" of acting or not acting in a particular way.

Issue Of Lebanon

In discussing Lebanon, one of the professors said that up to now, Israel had started preemptive wars only when it had no choice, but in Lebanon it established a new policy of acting when Israel was strong and conditions favorable. He said the war became political, especially from the start of the siege of Beirut.

He said this policy was due to the personality of former Defense Minister Ariel Sharon but said it also had the support of Begin, Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir and Chief of Staff Gen. Rafael Eitan. But, he added, there has now been a "partial retreat" from what he called these "new tendencies."

But he said the Lebanese war showed that there was no longer a "consensus" in Israel on all military actions. He said this lack of consensus is one of the reasons Defense Minister Moshe Arens has been pressing for a speedier withdrawal from Lebanon.

But the professors indicated that one of the prices for Israel's withdrawal will be the continued presence of Maj. Saad Haddad's Christian militia in south Lebanon. They said that Haddad will be the "alternative to the Israeli presence" since Israel does believe it can yet rely on the Lebanese army for security in south Lebanon.

AGUDATH ISRAEL ASSAILS DEFEAT OF AMENDMENT TO THE LAW OF RETURN

NEW YORK, March 27 (JTA) -- The Agudath Israel of America blamed "the shortsighted and un-Jewish perspective to Judaism" of the Liberal Party faction of the Likud for the defeat in Israel's Knesset of an amendment to the Law of Return which would have recognized as converts to Judaism only persons converted according to halacha.

The controversial "Who is a Jew" amendment was defeated last week by a vote of 58-50. Six Likud Liberals voted with the opposition Labor Alignment to reject the measure which was strongly supported by Premier Menachem Begin and the religious parties in his coalition. Six others did not vote or absented themselves from the Knesset chamber during the balloting. Five Liberals supported the amendment as did one Labor MK. The amendment was introduced by the Agudat Israel.

In its statement, the Agudath Israel of America noted that the action of the Liberal Party was particularly regrettable in light of the recent decision by the Reform Central Conference of American Rabbis which resolved at its national convention that the child of a non-Jewish mother married to a Jew is to be considered Jewish.

The Agudath Israel statement added: "The failure of Israel's Parliament to finally amend the Law of Return to conform with halacha, coming so soon after the Reform rabbis' action, will not only create chaos in Israel, but eventually can lead to intermarriage in our Holy Land." Agudath Israel, which fought to amend the Law of Return, declared that it will not give up the battle to keep Israel spiritually intact.

The Jewish Telegraphic Agency wishes its readers a happy Passover.