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HABIB CALLS NEGOTIATIONS FOR SYRIAN WITHDRAWAL AT 'IMPASSE'; BUT HE REMAINS OPTIMISTIC

SAN FRANCISCO, June 5 (JTA) -- Special U.S. envoy Philip Habib indicated here last night that the simultaneous withdrawal of all foreign forces from Lebanon has reached what he hoped was "momentarily an impasse" on the part of Syrians, who have refused to accept the Israel-Lebanon agreement.

Addressing the opening session of the three day annual national governing council of the American Jewish Congress, Habib said, "What it means is that it is going to take a little more talking, a little more negotiating, a little use of the influence of others."

Habib, who returned from the Mideast last Thursday, said he will not continue to participate personally in this stage of the negotiating process to get the Syrians to withdraw from Lebanon simultaneously with Israeli troops, because the Syrians have made it clear that he was not welcome in Damascus, where he has been declared persona non grata for alleged pro-Israel bias. (See story on Page 3.)

Habib, however, remained optimistic that there is the possibility for the withdrawal of foreign forces from Lebanon within a foreseeable timetable. "In this business, you learn that many things are a question of timing, and it looks as if the precise moment has not yet arrived at which you can say you've got it wrapped up," he said.

Sees Incentives On Syrians

The U.S. envoy said Syria, despite its current objection to the Israel-Lebanon accord, has its own incentives for cooperating with the Lebanon government, which include that the vast majority of the other Arab nations support Lebanon's right to conclude its agreement with Israel, that Israel will not withdraw its forces from Lebanon unless Syrian and Palestinian Liberation Organization troops leave as well, and that Syria does not wish to be responsible for a continued Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon.

In response to a question, Habib said the current internal struggle between PLO chief Yasir Arafat's "more moderate" followers and the more radical factions of the PLO is going to have a profound influence in the future of peace and stability in the Middle East.

A "total radicalization" and a return to militancy and terrorism by the PLO, which might be expected to occur if the more radical wing takes over, will hurt the peace process, according to Habib. He added that the PLO leadership is not going to be the same as it used to be, thus introducing a degree of uncertainty. "It isn't going to simplify the task, it is going to complicate it," Habib said.

According to reports from Beirut today, heavy fighting broke out this weekend between rival factions within Arafat's mainline Al Fatah group of the PLO. The fighting among the PLO is part of a continuing battle between units in Leb-

anon's Bekaa valley situated behind Syrian lines who are opposed to Arafat's leadership. Reports said as many as 7 people were killed and 18 wounded in an exchange which included artillery, rockets and heavy machinegun fire.

Syrians Violating Agreement

Habib also noted in his address that the Syrians are bringing PLO troops into Lebanon in a "deliberate infiltration" contrary to the previous agreement arranged last summer for the evacuation of PLO forces from Beirut which said they would not return.

Should the Syrians change their current position against the withdrawal agreement, Habib said, then the PLO forces would also leave. He said in his opening remarks that attempts have been made to involve the Soviet Union in the troop withdrawal negotiations, but that their interest is for a continued Syrian presence in Lebanon and that the Israel-Lebanon agreement is not implemented.

"The Soviet Union is playing its usual negative role," Habib said. He added that the United States' immediate aim is to convince Syria that coming to the negotiating table is in its own interests. "We believe that Syria will make its own decisions."

"I do not think in the case of the Lebanese situation, the Soviet Union is calling the shots," he added. However, the Soviets are agreeing with the Syrian position for its own objectives, he noted.

In response to another question, Habib said that Saudi Arabia has been very helpful in the efforts to persuade Syria to accept the withdrawal agreement. "It is no secret they are an actor in the drama of what is going on," he said. He explained that the Saudis, although they will not admit it publicly, have the same policy as the Israelis and Americans -- they favor a sovereign and independent Lebanon in which there are no external forces, Habib said.

ISRAELIS URGED BY U.S. TO STAY IN LEBANON UNTIL SYRIANS WITHDRAW

By Gil Sedan and Hugh Orgel

JERUSALEM, June 5 (JTA) -- The Israeli government was put in an ambiguous position over the weekend as the United States urged it to hold to its present lines in Lebanon until the Syrians agree to withdraw, while pressure intensified at home to pull back from the dangerous Shouf maintains regardless of what the Syrians do.

The Cabinet discussed the matter this morning against the background of last night's giant Peace Now rally in Tel Aviv's municipal square where throngs demanded that Israel "Get out of the mud in Lebanon." The Americans, on the other hand, warned Israel that a unilateral withdrawal would only jeopardize efforts to get the Syrian army and the Palestine Liberation Organization terrorists to agree to leave Lebanon.

The U.S. position, apparently backed by its West European allies and by the Lebanese government, was outlined in reports sent from Washington by Deputy Foreign Minister Yehuda Ben-Meir who has been meeting with Administration officials. The U.S. and the Lebanese have reportedly painted a dark picture of future developments if the Israeli army pulls back now

now to shorter lines in Lebanon. Such a move, they contend, would shatter the delicate structure of President Amin Gemayel's government in Beirut and would lead to the occupation of areas evacuated by Israel by Syrian and PLO forces.

Defense Minister Moshe Arens, who met with ranking French government officials while he was in Paris to attend the air show last week, told the Cabinet that the French believe the Syrians will leave Lebanon in the long run. This was presented as an argument in favor of the view that Israel should be patient and give diplomacy another chance to achieve the desired pull-out of all foreign forces from Lebanon.

Britain now seems to share the American view. The government received a message from Foreign Secretary Francis Pym over the weekend, asking Israel to show restraint and leave Lebanon only after a full settlement is reached.

The problem is that in its present deployment, the Israeli army is vulnerable to ambush and hit-and-run attacks by PLO terrorists acting as surrogates for Syria. Casualties are mounting slowly but steadily. Eight Israeli soldiers were killed and 71 were wounded last month alone.

This has given impetus to the political opposition. A Labor Party resolution demanding that Israel pull out of the Shouf mountains immediately and out of all of Lebanon within the next few months was rejected out of hand by Premier Menachem Begin last Friday. Partial or total withdrawal is also the rallying cry of Peace Now and similar anti-war movements and grass roots groups composed of parents of soldiers serving in Lebanon. Even some members of Begin's Likud-led coalition favor the concentration of Israeli forces in the 28-mile security zone north of the border which was, in fact, the originally stated objective of the "Peace for Galilee" operation launched exactly one year ago today.

150,000 At Peace Now Rally

The Peace Now rally in Tel Aviv attracted some 150,000 persons according to its organizers. The rally culminated a week-long war protest march that began at Rosh Hanikra on the Lebanese border. It was joined by the Yesh Gevul (There's a Limit) movement of reserve soldiers who refuse to serve in Lebanon and the Committee to End the War in Lebanon which is affiliated with Israel's Hadash Communist Party. Peace Now disassociated itself from the latter because it wants nothing to do with political movements of any stripe. Peace Now also reprimanded the reservists on grounds that no matter how distasteful the war in Lebanon, army discipline must be maintained.

But some banners waved at the rally had a clearly political message. They read, "Superfluous war, superfluous government," and "Return Israel to its Natural Size," a slogan with implications for the West Bank and Gaza Strip as well as Lebanon. All speakers at the rally denounced the "unnecessary war initiated by the government" in Lebanon and called on the Begin coalition to resign.

The rally, heavily guarded by regular and border police, passed off without incident. Observers noted that unlike such previous demonstrations there were no hecklers in the crowd last night and no anti-Peace Now or pro-government banners on display.

Despite the rally which seemed to reflect widespread sentiment in Israel, the government is expected to heed Washington's advice and take no unilateral steps in Lebanon, at least for the time being.

Nevertheless, some coalition members are restive. Likud MK Meir Shitreet urged the government to reject American "dictation." He said Israel should set a deadline for Syrian and PLO withdrawal from Lebanon. If it is not met, Israel should itself withdraw "to a convenient line," he said.

Geula Cohen, of the ultra-nationalist Tehiya party, also proposed independent steps to deploy the Israeli army along "new lines" with the intention to remain in Lebanon indefinitely. Eitan Gilboa, a Hebrew University expert on American affairs, pointed out that Washington's message was a "request," not "dictation." He said the American position should be taken as a signal to the Arab world that unless the Syrians and PLO withdraw from Lebanon, that country would revert to total anarchy.

Labor Party Position Denounced

Meanwhile, a senior source at the Prime Ministers Office denounced the Labor Party resolution for total withdrawal as "a war of attrition against the government." Begin reportedly believes that withdrawal at this stage would ham Israel's security and political position and would lead inevitably to a new war in Lebanon. His personal view is that the U.S. should be given time to exhaust all diplomatic efforts to convince the Syrians to withdraw and that when Israel eventually withdraws its own forces, the evacuated territory should be policed by the multi-national force presently deployed in Beirut and by the Lebanese army.

But Labor Party Secretary General Haim Barlev said today that he saw no reason for Labor to reverse its position for unilateral withdrawal. "It may be justified to delay the decision for a few days, but if we set no deadline we may find ourselves in the same situation a year from now," he said.

Labor, and some coalition members as well, believe that Israel must act in its own best interests, not for the interests of the U.S. As former Chief of Staff Mordechai Gur, a Labor MK summoned it up, "It is our sons who are fighting in Lebanon."

TAX ON WITHDRAWAL DROPPED

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, June 5 (JTA) -- The controversial proposal on imposing an 0.3 percent tax on all bank withdrawals was virtually killed today as its promoter, Finance Minister Yoram Aridor, withdrew the proposal.

Aridor said the tax, originally designed to finance the continued presence of the Israeli army in Lebanon, was "good and convenient," but "because of public sensitivity to the tax," he was not going to pursue its legislation.

The tax, which should have raised at least 10 billion Shekels a year, was attacked by both the opposition and coalition, with Liberal ministers threatening to vote against it, as well as Tami Knesseters. For this reason the tax was not brought before the Cabinet today.

Theoretically, the Cabinet can still approve the proposal, which was officially made by the Ministerial Economic Committee. However, with Aridor's announcement, the tax proposal was virtually dead.

AMSTERDAM (JTA) -- Amsterdam's historic Sephardic synagogue, a landmark over 250 years old, has been reopened for services on the Sabbath and Jewish holidays.

The congregation had decided earlier to close the synagogue because it could not afford the cost of security arrangements insisted on by the police. The money has since been made available. The building will not be opened for tourists however until a suitable guide is found.

HABIB, OTHER MIDEAST ENVOYS, TO MEET IN WASHINGTON TO PLAN EFFORT TO MOVE SYRIA

By Helen Silver

WASHINGTON, June 5 (JTA) -- Special U.S. envoy Philip Habib and U.S. Ambassadors to the Middle East will meet at the State Department this week to discuss ways of convincing Syria to agree to withdraw its troops from Lebanon.

The meeting was disclosed by Nicholas Veliotis, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs while testifying last week before the House Foreign Affairs Committee's subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East. Habib returned from the Mideast last week after an unsuccessful mission in which the Syrians refused to receive him in Damascus. Also meeting in Washington with State Department officials this week will be Lebanese Foreign Minister Elie Salem.

The agreement between Israel and Lebanon for Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon is "a major step toward peace and national reintegration for Lebanon, and, we hope, toward a wider process of reconciliation in the region," Veliotis told the subcommittee. "It is therefore vital that Syria and the PLO also agree to withdraw their forces soon, so that Israel will withdraw and Lebanon will finally have a chance to bind its wounds and run its own affairs."

Veliotis expressed disappointment that Syria has thus far opposed the agreement and not agreed to withdraw the 50,000 troops it now has in Lebanon. "Syria has stated publicly on several occasions in the past that it was willing to withdraw its forces when the government of Lebanon indicated they were no longer needed. The Arab League summit at Fez last fall also addressed the matter of Syrian withdrawal in light of Israel withdrawal. We hope that Syria on reflection, will meet this commitment."

Warns Of Confrontation

Veliotis warned, "the danger of confrontation and renewed hostilities in this dangerous and volatile situation, by miscalculation or otherwise, must not be underestimated. No one's interest would be served by new tragedy."

The U.S. expects the multinational force to continue its role in Lebanon "in the near term" Veliotis stated. Lebanon's request for expansion of the MNF "is still on the table," he said, "but all the troop contributors have agreed that no decision on the issue can be made until Israeli, Syrian and PLO withdrawals are underway. The Lebanon-Israel agreement, which deals with the situation in southern Lebanon, makes no reference to the MNF."

Veliotis added that the "agreement does, however, envisage a continued role for UNIFIL (the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon), the United Nations peacekeeping force, when the agreement is implemented. It foresees that the presence of UNIFIL will assist the government of Lebanon in reassuring Palestinian civilians located in the Sidon and Tyre areas in southern Lebanon of their safety. We believe this reassurance could be an inducement for the departure of PLO forces who remain in the northern and eastern parts of the country."

PALESTINIAN MEETINGS IN PARIS DROPPED

UNITED NATIONS, N.Y., June 5 (JTA)-- A plan to hold a conference on Palestinian rights, scheduled for August in Paris, was abandoned here

Thursday night, reportedly under French pressure. The French government had made it clear that it was afraid such a conclave might touch off anti-Semitic incidents, as well as attract terrorists to Paris from all over the Middle East.

Massamba Sarre of Senegal, chairman of the 23-nation committee planning the conclave, told reporters that "Paris is out." He met with newsmen after a three-hour session of his committee. Other committee members reportedly expressed doubts the conference would ever be held.

Sarre said the committee would consider alternative sites, including Geneva and Vienna, each the home of a substantial UN operation.

A spokesperson for the Israel Mission to the UN said the mission had no comment on the development.

The Swiss were understood to have informed UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar that they could not guarantee the safety of the expected 1,000 delegates. While the Austrian government has not formally objected, Austrian diplomats at the UN have been telling fellow-diplomats that Vienna does not have a suitable meeting place.

The conference had been scheduled for August 16-27. It appeared that, even if another site was found, the conference would not be held before 1984. A General Assembly resolution, adopted last fall, fixed the date and location.

Early in March, a number of French Jewish leaders met with French Foreign Minister Claude Cheysson in Paris and reminded him that the conference was scheduled to take place just one year after an anti-Semitic terrorist bombed a famous kosher restaurant in Paris' old Jewish quarter. The Jewish leaders told Cheysson that would bring to Paris pickets from all parts of Europe to demonstrate against the conference.

YIDDISH THEATER FETE IN MONTREAL

By Michael Solomon

MONTREAL, June 5 (JTA) -- The 100th anniversary of the Yiddish Theater in North America and the 25th anniversary of the Yiddish theater in Canada were jointly celebrated by a Gala performance May 29 of "Wandering Starf," a dramatization of Shalom Aleichem's novel of the turn of the century fledgling Yiddish drama.

Dora Wasseman, director of the Montreal Yiddish Theater since it began 25 years ago, sought to create such a theater since she emigrated from the Soviet Union 30 years ago. Until the establishment of the Montreal Yiddish Theater, all Yiddish performances had come from the United States.

Wasseman noted with satisfaction the unanimous support she said her theater is getting from Canadian and international audiences. "After a successful start in Montreal, we shall play the "Wandering Starf" in Toronto, Buffalo, Albany and possibly New York," she said.

"We are invited by the Consul General of Israel, Yitzhak Meir, to perform in Israel for the second time after our initial success (there) in 1979," she added. "We are going to produce some Canadian plays by Canadian authors in the future seasons."

BONN -- A film critical of the Bonn government for not fully removing the verdicts of the notorious Peoples Courts of the Nazi era from official records has been banned from distribution by the West German Foreign Ministry, the Frankfurter Rundschau reported. The film, "Die Weisse Rose" (The White Rose) which tells the story of a wartime anti-Nazi group, was to be distributed worldwide by the Goethe Institutes which are largely supported by government funds.

ISRAELI MEDIA ASSESSES WAR IN LEBANON ON 1ST ANNIVERSARY; PRINCIPALS MAINTAIN THEIR VIEWS

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, June 5 (JTA) -- The Israeli media took stock of the war in Lebanon today, exactly one year after it started. Most newspapers carried special supplements dealing with the war. A four hour broadcast by the State-owned radio featured comments by government and opposition personalities, none of whom deviated from their by now familiar views. But commentators were generally critical of the political aspects of the war.

Much attention was focussed on former Defense Minister Ariel Sharon, now a Minister-Without-Portfolio. He said he had no regrets over his conduct of the war and if he had to do it over, he would still recommend the "Peace for Galilee" operation and its implementation.

He denied allegations that he had conducted the war without consultations with his ministerial colleagues and had presented them with fait accomplis after the event. Sharon conceded that he had made two mistakes. One, he said, was believing that the country would be united without anyone "exploiting the situation for political gain" as he claimed the opposition Labor Alignment had done.

His other mistake, Sharon said, was to think the government had "the strength to stand firm and not run away from its responsibilities."

Labor Says War Could Have Been Avoided

Labor Party chairman Shimon Peres maintained that the problem of terrorist attacks on Israeli towns and settlements in Galilee could have been handled differently. He pointed out that it was Israel's bombing of Palestine Liberation Organization bases in west Beirut following the attempted assassination of Ambassador Shlomo Argov in London that led to renewed shelling of Galilee by the PLO.

Former Premier Yitzhak Rabin, another Labor Party leader, said Israel had never fought a war that yielded so little. But former Chief of Staff Gen. Rafael Eitan claimed Israel had achieved all of its objectives and more.

Elihu Ben-Elissar, chairman of the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Security Committee, said the war showed the world that Israel meant what it said. He noted that the world press is no longer as interested as it once was in interviewing PLO chief Yasir Arafat.

Arens Optimistic

Defense Minister Moshe Arens sounded an optimistic note. "Those of us who live in the Middle East know that this region has more problems than solutions," he said. "Nevertheless, I think we have turned over a new leaf in the Middle East and I think that there is a good chance the situation is going to start to improve."

Sources close to Premier Menachem Begin told the Jerusalem Post today that "the orgy of published and broadcast evaluations of the Lebanon war this weekend is harmful to vital Israeli interests and can only make resolution of this conflict all the more difficult." The sources said the widespread criticism of the government and the Labor Party's resolution calling for Israel's unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon only encourage the Syrians to sit tight and wait for Israel to pull out without Damascus having to take any steps to remove its own and PLO forces from Lebanon.

The newspaper Maariv reported Thursday that Begin reprimanded Sharon last August for ordering the large scale mobilization of Israeli reserves without consulting or informing him.

The article, headlined "Maariv Report -- The War Which Has Not Ended," said Begin learned of the call-up by telephone from Interior Minister Yosef Burg. Burg obtained the information from his son, Avraham, a supporter of the Peace Now movement and a reserve soldier who had completed his duty in Lebanon and was suddenly called up for a second time.

According to Maariv, Begin summoned Sharon to his office the next morning to demand an explanation. He criticized the then Defense Minister for acting without the knowledge of the Cabinet or the Prime Minister. Sharon is said to have apologized but explained that since the Cabinet had discussed in principle the entry of the Israeli army into west Beirut, he considered it "natural and self-understood" that there would have to be a mobilization of the reserves.

Eitan Opposed Beirut Entry

Maariv reported further that in July, 1982, the Cabinet voted by a majority of one to order Israeli troops into west Beirut but Begin did not order the move at the time because of the narrow majority. It also reported that Eitan, then Chief of Staff, opposed Israel's entry into west Beirut. Eitan was quoted by Maariv as telling the northern area commander, Gen. Amir Drori, that a certain division would not be mobilized "because I swear to you we will not capture west Beirut. I will never take that step."

Israeli forces occupied West Beirut in September, immediately following the assassination of Lebanon's President-elect Bashir Gemayel. By then, PLO and Syrian forces had been evacuated from the city under a safe conduct guarantee.

According to another Maariv report, an Israeli sniper in west Beirut had PLO chief Yasir Arafat in his gun sights at a distance of 140 meters, but instead of killing him, he took Arafat's picture.

The close-up photograph was shown to U.S. special envoy Philip Habib at the start of the PLO evacuation by Gen. Drori. When Habib expressed surprise that Arafat wasn't shot, Drori said that Israel kept to its word not to harm the PLO during the evacuation, Maariv reported.

RELATIVELY QUIET 6-DAY WAR ANNIVERSARY

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, June 5 (JTA) -- The 16th anniversary of the Six-Day War found the West Bank relatively quiet today. The scattered incidents which occurred were minor compared to outbreaks on the same occasion in previous years.

The most serious disorders were in Nablus, where Najah University was shut down yesterday following a violent demonstration in which five security men were slightly injured. It will remain closed until the end of the school year. Seven students were injured in a clash at Bir Zeit University near Ramallah between pro and anti-Yasir Arafat groups. Arafat meanwhile is facing a major mutiny within PLO ranks.

The commercial strike in Nablus was only partially effective. Most merchants refused to close their shops. Several local schools cut classes short. One Israeli vehicle was stoned. Its windshield was smashed but no injuries were reported. A curfew was imposed on several refugee camps and in the Nablus casbah as a measure to prevent possible disorders.