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**A Nation Is Stunned;
BEGIN ANNOUNCES HE INTENDS TO
RESIGN; EFFORTS UNDER WAY TO
CONVINCE HIM TO REMAIN IN OFFICE**
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Aug. 28 (JTA -- In a move that shocked the Cabinet and stunned the nation Premier Menachem Begin announced today that he intends to resign. He made the announcement at the end of a relatively brief Cabinet session. Likud leaders and spokesmen appeared dumbfounded by this unexpected development.

Begin surprised the ministers at the end of the Cabinet session when he asked to make a "personal statement." He declared: "I came to the Cabinet session this morning to tell you about my intention to resign. This announcement has nothing to do with today's session or with other sessions that took place recently. The reason for my resignation is personal." The other sessions he was referring to were those dealing with the government's new economic austerity budget.

Ministers Are Visibly Moved

The ministers were visibly moved. Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir reportedly was trembling when he told Begin: "We have followed you through thick and thin. Everything you had asked for, we did -- and we shall do." Other ministers spoke about Begin's special place in the State of Israel and among the Jewish people. The ministers enumerated the achievements of the present government, and added: "There is more to do."

The ministers told Begin that he was the only person who could rule the country at this time. But Begin reportedly made no commitments. "I will consider your stand, but I do not promise anything," he reportedly told the ministers. According to one report, Begin told the ministers after the Cabinet session: "I do not feel I function the way a person who holds a job as responsible as mine should function."

Begin did not indicate when he would submit his resignation to the President -- which by law is mandatory to make the resignation legally binding. The Premier agreed to meet with the leaders of all the parties that comprise the Likud coalition tomorrow morning before making any further announcements.

Decision Is Not Seen As Sudden

Begin's associates said today that his decision was not sudden, but was firmed gradually within the past few months. The first substantial indication that "something was going on" was Begin's surprise decision to cancel a visit to Washington to meet with Reagan last month for "personal reasons." It was also recalled that Begin had declared a long time ago that he would resign at the age of 70. His 70th birthday took place several weeks ago.

Since the death of his wife, Aliza, last November, Begin has been in a state of depression and has gradually tapered off involving himself in day-to-day activities. He has spoken out less frequently in public, and when he has done so, he has appeared tired and withdrawn.

The Premier is also known to be depressed over the stalemate in Lebanon and the continuing toll of dead

and wounded Israeli soldiers there. He has also been buffeted by the mounting economic crisis and the growing animosity between the Sephardic and Ashkenazic communities. In addition, he is known to be disheartened by the Reagan Administration's persistent criticism of his government's West Bank settlement policy.

Reagan Again Raps West Bank Settlements

Only yesterday, President Reagan, in his regular Saturday address to the American people, reaffirmed that Israel's West Bank settlement policy posed "an obstacle to peace" in the Middle East. In his address, delivered from his ranch house near Santa Barbara, Calif., Reagan declared that "the future of these settlements can only be dealt with through direct negotiations between the parties to the conflict. The sooner these negotiations begin, the greater the chance for a solution."

Reagan also made it clear that he feels his Middle East peace initiative, which he offered last year and which has been viewed in diplomatic circles here and abroad as having failed, "is definitely alive and available to those parties willing to sit down together and talk peace."

That initiative, rejected by Israel, called for negotiations involving Israel and Jordan and leading to the eventual establishment of an autonomous Palestinian entity in the West Bank in association with Jordan. The initiative, which also criticized the West Bank settlements, was considered moribund since Jordan refused to participate last April.

Consequences Of Resignation

Shortly after the Cabinet meeting today, Cabinet Secretary Dan Meridor issued a statement which said: "At the Cabinet meeting today, after discussion of several issues, the Premier informed the Cabinet of his intention to resign from office. After the announcement of the Premier, all the ministers asked the Prime Minister to retract his announcement, and stay in office."

Legally, the resignation of the Premier -- once it is submitted officially to the President -- is at the same time the resignation of the entire government. From that moment on, the government is considered a care-taker government. Although such a government is by nature transitory, it is politically stronger in that it cannot be toppled by a vote of no confidence, nor can any minister resign. A care-taker government remains in power until it is replaced by another government.

A new government can be formed by one of two ways: the President can ask any Knesset member, including Begin, to try and form a new coalition; or the Knesset can pass a law calling for new elections. Traditionally, the President has asked a representative of the largest party in the Knesset to form the coalition.

Presently it is the Labor Alignment which, since the last elections, has been enlarged by two defectors from the Likud. But given the general disarray of the Alignment and its lack of a clear program on vital issues, it is not clear that the Alignment could actually form an alternative coalition.

This makes the option of new elections a greater possibility. It is assumed that if Begin decides on new elections he could rally sufficient support in the Knesset

set to pass a law calling for new and early elections. Begin's announcement of his intention to resign did not make it clear whether he would remain politically active after he leaves office.

No Clear Sign of Reversing Resignation Decision

Sources close to Begin said today that he would not go back on his decision. Begin left the Premier's office shortly after the Cabinet session and drove off to his residence. He made no statement and would answer no questions.

The assumption that Begin's decision was final was buttressed by Science Minister Yuval Neeman of Tebiya. He told reporters that Begin's move was motivated by "an unexpected personal reason" and therefore he would not reconsider his move. All efforts to persuade him to remain in office would be useless, Neeman said. He did not explain what the "unexpected personal reason" was.

However, Education Minister Zevulun Hammer expressed the hope that Begin would reconsider. He said the National Religious Party, of which Hammer is one of the leaders, would continue its partnership with Likud even if Begin resigns. But he did not rule out a future partnership with the Alignment.

Deputy Foreign Minister Yehuda Ben Meir, also of the NRP, said: "Whatever happens, our party will remain loyal to the partnership with Likud, because this is the mandate which it received from its electors."

Outlook For The Labor Alignment

Labor Party leaders meeting in Tel Aviv said they would watch the situation closely and try to weigh the political options ahead. Because of the number of question marks surrounding Begin's next steps, Labor Party leaders said they would refrain from making any further immediate public statements, until further consultations which were to begin this evening between party leader Shimon Peres, Yitzhak Rabin, Haim Barlev and Victor Shemtov of Mapam, an Alignment partner.

The most likely group for any immediate partnership with the Alignment would be the three-member Tami Knesset faction. It was Tami's threat last week to leave the government because of its discontent with the Finance Ministry's latest economic cutback package that hung heavily over the Cabinet today. In fact, Tami leader Aharon Uzan, who is also Labor and Social Affairs Minister, said he did not attend today's Cabinet session because he anticipated Begin's resignation and he did not want to be blamed for it.

The crisis with Tami might very well have sparked Begin's decision. It is possible -- although there is no clear evidence -- that Begin saw no way out of that crisis. Rather than have a three-member Knesset faction cause his government's fall by reducing its present majority to 61 members in the 120-member parliament, Begin might have decided to create a situation whereby Tami could be outmaneuvered.

Even if Tami resigns from the government and becomes an Alignment partner in a new coalition, and even assuming that Shinui, with its two Knesset members, would join an Alignment-led government, such a government would have only 55 Knesset seats. The Communist Party (Hadash) could promise to be a silent partner of the Alignment, thus giving an Alignment-led government 59 Knesset seats but still two seats short of the necessary minimum of 61 votes in the parliament.

Thus, the political reality today seemed to be that if Begin resigned, this would probably lead to new elections, with a Begin-led caretaker govern-

ment ruling until those elections were held. If no majority is found in the Knesset for early elections, such a caretaker would rule until the next scheduled elections, at the end of 1985.

Demonstration For And Against Resignation

The report on Begin's action instantly prompted pro and anti demonstrations. A gathering in support of the Premier, urging him not to resign, developed this afternoon outside Begin's residence in Jerusalem's Talbiya quarter. Peace Now demonstrators assembled, urging Begin to stick to his planned resignation. Police created a separation zone between the two groups of demonstrators to avoid clashes between them.

According to one report, a movement of "Citizens for Begin" was quickly formed, which organized free transportation to Jerusalem to demonstrate solidarity with the Premier.

Some Of The Heirs Apparent

Political observers speculated that if Begin does quit political life, the internal struggle within Begin's Herut party could intensify. The possible heirs are Foreign Minister Shamir, Deputy Premier David Levy, Defense Minister Moshe Arens and Finance Minister Yoram Aridor. The observers said one public figure -- former Defense Minister Ariel Sharon -- should not be ruled out of consideration.

Asked about that possibility in a radio interview today, Sharon said, "The Herut movement always had free competition and elections." If Begin sticks to his resignation, Sharon said, he hoped Begin would "lead Likud in the election campaign." He said Likud would win a major victory if an election took place.

BEGIN'S INTENDED RESIGNATION IS HIGHLIGHTED IN WEST EUROPE By Edwin Eytan

PARIS, Aug. 28 (JTA) -- West European radio and television stations highlighted today Premier Menachem Begin's intention to resign often interrupting news programs and even feature films. The West European governments followed diplomatic practice and refrained from any official comments but the press commentators said Begin's departure might spell a "fresh start" for the Mideast and help solve the Lebanese crisis.

West European Prime Ministers and Presidents were informed of Begin's decision often while they were far from their offices, vacationing, on week-end rests or campaigning.

The one West European leader who will be most affected will be West Germany's Chancellor Helmut Kohl who was to go to Israel this week for a long expected and often postponed official visit. West German officials believe the visit will nevertheless take place as scheduled.

Tripartite Talks Break Off

In Paris, the tripartite talks on Israel's redeployment after the Shouf Mountains broke up rapidly after the announcement of Begin's decision. American diplomats said the talks between envoy Robert McFarlane, Druze leader Walid Jumblatt and President Amin Gemayel's National Security Adviser Waddi Haddad were to end today in any case.

Jumblatt told McFarlane yesterday that his forces would not give up their arms and allow Lebanese army units in the Shouf area after the Israeli forces leave, nor would the Druze withdraw from their positions.

Shortly after the announcement from Jerusalem that Begin intended to resign, the various delegations' cars drove up to the building where the tripartite talks were being held and the various representatives drove away. McFarlane left for London for talks with British officials and possibly with Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

McFarlane was in Paris as part of a European tour for talks with officials of Italy, France and Britain, which have supplied troops, along with the United States, to the 4,800 member multinational peace-keeping force in Lebanon. He visited Italy last week.

American diplomats here and in Washington refused to immediately comment on Begin's intended resignation, saying they needed time to study the development. But the Druze delegation here said they hoped his departure "would speed up the search for a solution to the Lebanese crisis."

Few Friends Among West European Leaders

Begin did not have close personal relations with most of the West European leaders, many of whom had never met with him and others who privately, like France's President Francois Mitterrand, or publicly like Austria's former Chancellor Bruno Kreisky or West Germany's Helmut Schmidt, regretted his policies and blamed part of Israel's international isolation on Begin's personality.

Paradoxically, Western diplomats attending the United Nations-sponsored conference on Palestine which opens tomorrow in Geneva, said that some Palestinian and hardline Arab diplomats "regret Begin's resignation. He was their favorite whipping boy and his departure will force them to change tactics during the forthcoming meeting."

U.S. SAYS BEGIN'S MOVE IS AN INTERNAL MATTER OF ISRAELI GOVT.

WASHINGTON, Aug. 28 (JTA) -- The White House spokesman said today that Premier Begin's announced intention to resign was considered "an internal matter" of Israel's government which appeared to be unrelated to President Reagan's reiteration yesterday of the Administration's oft-stated view that Jewish settlements on the West Bank are an obstacle to peace.

Larry Speakes said the Begin announcement "is an internal matter with the Israeli government," that the Reagan Administration saw no link with the President's reiteration of his view that the settlements hindered peace and that the White House would have no other comment.

Speakes said the Reagan Administration was not given any advance knowledge on the Premier's statement to the Cabinet and that the White House learned about it through a telephone call from Ambassador Meir Rosenne of Israel. The statement by Speakes was issued in Santa Barbara where Reagan is vacationing.

DELAY IN IDF REDEPLOYMENT ANGERS MILITARY CIRCLES

TEL AVIV, Aug. 28 (JTA) -- Military circles have expressed displeasure with the reported political decision to delay for a few days the planned withdrawal of the Israel Defense Force from the Shouf mountains and its redeployment to the Awali River. The delay was reportedly agreed to under heavy pressure from American and Lebanese authorities.

The military circles were quoted in the press as saying that the delay, ostensibly to give the Lebanese army time to prepare to take over from the IDF in the area where the Druze and Christian Phalangists

are warring, will expose the rear IDF units to the crossfire between the Druze and Christians trying to improve their own positions as the Israelis leave. It was reported last week that the IDF was to begin its pullback from the Shouf area today and be completed by the eve of Rosh Hashanah on September 7.

ISRAELI SOLDIER WOUNDED, SEVEN TERRORISTS KILLED

TEL AVIV, Aug. 28 (JTA) -- An Israeli soldier was slightly wounded today near Aley on the Beirut-Damascus main highway when an explosive charge went off on the side of the road as he passed by. He was hit in the hand and treated on the spot and returned to duty shortly afterwards.

In other incidents, seven terrorists were killed and three were wounded by Israeli forces today and last Thursday. Five of those killed and the three wounded clashed with an IDF unit in the Shouf mountains on Thursday. The army spokesman said that the three wounded and two of those killed had recently escaped from the Ansar detention camp and were being sought. The other three dead terrorists were Druze. There were no Israeli casualties.

SPECIAL SERVICES HELD ON THE EVE OF THE MARCH ON WASHINGTON By Helen Silver

WASHINGTON, Aug. 28 (JTA) -- Separate Sabbath services on Friday night, the eve of the mammoth march here commemorating the 20th anniversary of the 1963 March on Washington, at which Dr. Martin Luther King presented his historic "I have a dream" speech, symbolized differences with the Jewish community over support of yesterday's march.

One special Sabbath service was held at Temple Sinai, sponsored by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC), which unhesitatingly endorsed and took part in the march, despite initial widespread opposition from other Jewish organizations. About 600 worshippers attended that service.

The other service was sponsored by the New Jewish Agenda, an anti-establishment group, which was held at American University and attended by about 500 marchers.

In contrast to the 1963 march, when many Jews marched under Jewish banners, the only visibly Jewish organization represented among the marchers was the New Jewish Agenda, whose several hundred marchers were joined by members of the UAHC, the umbrella agency for American Reform synagogues.

Hundreds of other Jews were presumed to have joined the estimated 250,000 marchers but they did so as individuals. The New Jewish Agenda marchers carried a red Star of David, with the greeting "Shalom," and a 24-foot banner proclaiming in gold letters, "Justice, Justice shalt thou pursue."

More than 60 speakers were listed to address the mammoth assembly, each limited to five minutes. There were no Jewish spokesmen among them.

Block Opposition To Anti-Semitism

Coretta Scott King, widow of the assassinated Black civil rights leader, told the worshippers at the Temple Sinai service that "Jews have supported Black Americans in their quest for equality because it is morally right. It is for this same reason that responsible Black Americans will continue to vigorously oppose anti-Semitism in America."

Rabbi Alexander Schindler, UAHC president, who gave the benediction at the close of the march yesterday, told the Temple Sinai service: "I am proud that the movement of Reform Judaism will take its place among the hundreds of thousands of Americans of every race, religion and walk of life who will be march-

ing together for justice, peace and freedom." He declared: "Our presence will be consonant with the highest moral and ethical values of the Jewish tradition. It will be in keeping with our devotion to the security and dignity of Israel and its people" and "it will demonstrate our commitment to the goals of Martin Luther King, Jr. and his dream of reconciliation, of healing, and of struggling together until the last battle is won."

Dr. Benjamin Hooks, executive director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, told the worshippers that "we appreciate the support of Jews who were in the very forefront of the battle" for civil rights for Blacks.

Referring to recent differences between Jews and Blacks, Hooks said "we must submerge our differences and remember the things that join us together and strengthen us, not the things that keep us apart."

Representatives of the American Jewish Congress, B'nai B'rith and the Greater Washington Jewish Council, which had also endorsed the march, some after march organizers agreed to eliminate from the march agenda references Jewish groups considered to be anti-Israel, participated in the service.

Martin Luther King III spoke at the New Jewish Agenda service. He was joined by Susannah Heschel, daughter of the late theologian, Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, in blessing the Sabbath candles.

Moe Rosenstein, the New Jewish Agenda coordinator for the march, said that the joint participation by Dr. King's son and Ms. Heschel in the service "will be our way of beginning the process of reconciliation" between Jews and Blacks. He added that "the alliance between Blacks and Jews in the past has been a powerful force for promoting justice and now is the time to work through our differences so we can join together to realize Dr. King's dream."

After initial hesitation, the American Jewish Committee also endorsed the march. Like other Jewish groups, the Committee sent suggestions to chapters to hold events at the local level to commemorate the 1963 march. Howard Friedan, Committee president, sent a telegram to Mrs. King, pledging the Committee's support and "renewed determination" to help achieve the goals of Dr. King.

SOLON SAYS ANDROPOV IS 'HARD NOSED' ABOUT ISSUES OF HUMAN RIGHTS

By Helen Silver

WASHINGTON, Aug. 28 (JTA) -- Sen. Dennis DeConcini (D. Ariz.) said that Soviet leader Yuri Andropov took a "very hard nosed" position toward human rights during a meeting with nine U.S. Senators on August 18 in Moscow.

DeConcini, who participated in the meeting, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency in an interview here: "We presented a joint statement prepared by all nine of us and within that statement there was a discussion of human rights. Four particular cases were mentioned -- Andrei Sakharov, Anatoly Shcharansky, Uri Orlov and Raoul Wallenberg. We also brought to (Andropov's) attention the reduction in the number of exit visas for Soviet Jews."

Continuing, DeConcini said: "In his response to our statement, Andropov said somewhat facetiously that 'it was a lucky day for him because we had picked such bad examples'. Then Andropov compared differences between what human rights means in the Soviet Union and our country. He said that the USSR should not try to make the U.S. think like it does on human rights, and that the U.S. in turn should not try to make the Soviet Union come to our standards. If (Andropov told the Senators) this continues, it will never lead to better relations between the two countries."

DeConcini said that Andropov went over each of the four cases with the Senators. He told them that Sakharov was "sick" and that he had written an article in a foreign magazine which called on the U.S. to declare war on the Soviet Union.

The Arizona Senator and the Soviet leader referred to Shcharansky as a "spy" and affirmed that "there will be no discussion of him until his prison time is finished." He also described Orlov as a spy, DeConcini said. As to Wallenberg, Andropov insisted, according to DeConcini, that the former Swedish diplomat who rescued thousands of Jews during the Holocaust, is not in the Soviet Union.

The issue of Jewish immigration was also discussed in the meeting and Andropov, the Senator said, tried to show with statistics from 1945 to 1983 that the USSR's record on Jewish emigration was positive. Andropov claimed that 270,000 Jews have left the Soviet Union since 1945. The Soviet leader contended that about 92 percent of the applications for exit visas were approved, DeConcini said.

The Senator reported that he met with a number of refuseniks in Moscow who expressed their gratitude for the support they get from American Congressmen.

The other members of the delegation are still in the Soviet Union. They are: Senators Dale Bumpers (D. Ark.) Claiborne Pell (D. R.I.) Russell Long (D. La.), Patrick Leahy (D. Vt.), Howard Metzenbaum (D. Ohio), Donald Riegle (D. Mich.), Paul Sarbanes (D. Md.), and James Sasser (D. Tenn.)

HERZOG'S ROSH HASHANAH MESSAGE

JERUSALEM, Aug. 28 (JTA) -- President Chaim Herzog issued the following Rosh Hashanah message

In the course of the past year Israel has signed a second formal agreement with an Arab country -- namely, Lebanon. However, many problems continue to beset Israel -- political military economic and social. We look forward to the coming year in the hope that, as in the past, so in the future, the common efforts of our people in the State of Israel, coupled with the efforts of the Jewish people, will enable us to overcome many of these problems.

Now, as never before, it is incumbent upon the Jewish people to close ranks and stand together. The ominous rise of anti-Semitism in different parts of the world, coupled with an increase in acts of violence and terror against Jewish persons and institutions, must sound an alarm in many Jewish communities.

The greatest danger facing our people, however, is not from our enemies, but from within our ranks. The Jewish people is being decimated by assimilation, which in many communities reaches catastrophic dimensions. There are only two effective measures to overcome this danger. The first is by strengthening and enlarging the Jewish educational system in every community. The second is by increased involvement on the part of the Jewish youth throughout the world in life in Israel, by studying here, visiting and spending vacations -- all of which we hope will culminate in aliyah.

I send special greetings to the members of our Jewish family who live under oppression and suffer from discrimination, who languish in prison and in exile, and who crave to join us in freedom. They are always in our thoughts.

I send my greetings on behalf of the people of Israel to the Jewish communities of the world from the eternal city of Jerusalem, confident in the knowledge that by common effort, the Jewish people throughout the world, will continue to prosper ... and that Jewish communal and personal involvement with Israel will continue to grow and develop.