

BITTER REACTIONS IN ISRAEL OVER LEBANON'S FORMAL ABROGATION OF THE MAY 17 AGREEMENT

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, March 5 (JTA) -- Although hardly unexpected, Lebanon's formal abrogation today of its May 17, 1983 withdrawal and security agreement with Israel drew bitter reactions here. An official statement issued by the Prime Ministers Office blamed Syria for "forcing Lebanon to surrender to a diktat which means a death sentence for Lebanon's independence."

The Reagan Administration, which played a major role in negotiating the agreement, also reacted strongly to the announcement in Beirut of the abrogation of the accord. (See separate story from Washington.)

The decision to cancel the accord was announced after an extraordinary session of the Lebanese Cabinet by Cabinet secretary Shafiq Mneimneh. "The Cabinet at its meeting under President Amin Gemayel today decided to cancel this unratified agreement and to consider it null and void," the statement said. It followed by several days Gemayel's return from Damascus where he had conferred at length with President Hafez Assad of Syria.

Abandonment of the pact, the second to be signed between Israel and a neighboring Arab state, was Syria's main condition for good relations with the Gemayel regime and a cease-fire between the Lebanese army and the Syrian-backed Moslem and Druze factions battling against it.

Mneimneh hinted, however, that Lebanon was prepared to renegotiate terms for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from south Lebanon. He spoke of guarantees that Beirut would prevent the infiltration of terrorists into the region close to Israel's northern border. This was greeted by skepticism in Israel.

Mulling Options For Redeployment of IDF

The statement from the Prime Ministers Office said that inasmuch as Lebanon has proven "unable to fulfill its international commitments and prevent south Lebanon from becoming once again a base of terrorism, Israel will, by itself, know how to find the suitable ways of protecting its security."

The statement added that Israel would "continue to feel friendship toward the Lebanese people." Government officials said today that in light of the Lebanese decision, the Israeli Cabinet would now feel free to consider the options for a redeployment of the Israel Defense Force in Lebanon to more southerly lines.

The Cabinet had avoided a decision on that issue until now so as not to weaken Gemayel's resolve as long as there was even a faint hope that he might resist Syrian pressure. But that hope seemed to have been abandoned when Gemayel went to Damascus last week, a journey which one Knesset member described as a "trip to Canossa."

Israel has stated repeatedly in recent days that if the May 17 pact was abrogated, Israel would no longer be bound by its commitments under that agreement. While the official reaction here was obviously prepared before the event, signals here were mixed regarding Lebanon's professed desire to renegotiate security arrangements.

Mixed Reactions On Renegotiating Process

Premier Yitzhak Shamir's press spokesman, Avi Pazner, was quoted by the Army Radio today as rejecting the idea on grounds that anything agreed to by the Lebanese government would be worthless. But other government sources, including Cabinet ministers, were said to believe that sooner or later a renegotiating process would begin. Some key policymakers do not rule out renegotiation but doubt that anything of substance would emerge from it.

They point out that the Lebanese army is in disarray, incapable of exerting any significant authority in south Lebanon and therefore could hardly guarantee the security of Israel's northern border.

Peres: Implement Accord Unilaterally

Meanwhile, Shimon Peres, leader of the opposition Labor Party, urged today that Israel implement the moribund May 17 pact "unilaterally, and at once."

Peres listed the terms of the accord that Israel could implement. These include aerial overflights of Lebanon and naval patrols of the Lebanese coast; the deployment of electronic monitoring devices to function after the IDF leaves Lebanon; creation of local defense units and an expansion of the militia of the late Col. Saad Haddad. All of this could be done "in a short time," Peres said.

He called for a pullback of the IDF behind the international boundary once these objectives have been accomplished, coupled with a clear warning that if the Palestine Liberation Organization re-entered south Lebanon, the IDF would return to drive them out.

"The IDF in not a garrison army," Peres said. "Its defensive doctrine should be based on mobility; security in south Lebanon should be maintained by remote control, not a physical presence in the area."

Meanwhile, the Swiss Foreign Ministry confirmed today that the second round of Lebanese reconciliation talks will begin in Lausanne on March 12. Talks last year in Geneva aimed at reconciling the warring Lebanese factions ended in failure.

U.S. WARNS IT WILL NOT PARTICIPATE IN TALKS ON LEBANON THAT DO NOT INCLUDE ISRAEL'S SECURITY CONCERN

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, March 5 (JTA) -- The Reagan Administration warned today that it would not take part in any discussions on Lebanon that did not include Israel's "legitimate" concern for the security of its northern border.

"We would not participate in any discussion or negotiations that did not take that priority into affect," State Department spokesman John Hughes said. He indicated that warning was aimed at Syria whose "influence in Lebanon seems to be on the

upcourse" as a result of the announcement today by the government of Lebanon that it is abrogating its May 17 agreement with Israel.

Hughes said the U.S. welcomed the statement by the Lebanese Cabinet that it would consider means of safeguarding Israel's northern border. "How that will be done remains to be seen," he added. But he stressed that "I don't think any fair minded person would dispute" that Israel has had and continues to have "legitimate concerns" about terrorist attacks from Lebanon across its northern border.

Hughes' remark came after he read a statement expressing "regret" over Lebanon's abrogation of the agreement and indicating that the U.S. now believes that the next step in the negotiations is up to Syria and its supporters in Lebanon who forced the government of President Amin Gemayel to break the agreement.

State Department Statement

Noting that the U.S. played a "facilitating role" in negotiating the agreement and witnessed its signature, the statement said the May 17 agreement "still represents the only agreed formula for insuring both Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon and Israel's legitimate security interests in a manner consistent with Lebanese sovereignty. Lebanon needs peaceful relations with all its neighbors.

"Those who were responsible for the rejection of the agreement must now bear the responsibility to find an alternative negotiated formula for bringing about Israeli withdrawal," the statement added. Hughes indicated that the U.S. will wait and see what happens before taking any new initiative.

The statement, however, stressed, "The U.S. does not intend to abandon the people or the legitimate government of Lebanon." Hughes said, "We will continue to be engaged" in diplomatic efforts and stressed that the U.S. ships will remain off-shore. He noted that Lebanon will continue to receive economic and military aid as well as military training consistent with its ability "on the ground" to receive it.

"Our long-term goals remain the restoration of a sovereign, independent, unified Lebanon; the removal of all foreign forces and the security of Israel's northern border," the State Department statement said. "We oppose the partition of Lebanon which could only lead to greater instability. The Middle East is a region of vital importance to the United States and our allies. The United States will continue to be deeply concerned and involved in efforts to resolve the Arab-Israeli problem and other critical issues in the Middle East."

The statement made clear that the U.S. intends to continue to protect American lives and property in Lebanon.

Shultz Does Not Consider His Effort A Failure

Hughes rejected the suggestion that Secretary of State George Shultz considers his efforts in Lebanon a failure. "He thinks it is not a failure to have been presented with a challenge in a country that has been tearing itself apart for many years to have given considerable American effort and lives to bring about peace in that country and perhaps not to have brought that about in the same way that many others have not brought it about," Hughes said.

He added that the effort was a "worthy thing to have done even though the desired results have not been achieved" and said he believes that the British, French and Italians, who made up the multinational force along with the marines, feel the same way.

ISRAELI JETS BOMB TERRORIST TARGETS IN SOUTH LEBANON By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, March 5 (JTA) -- Israel Air Force jets bombed targets in the Aley area near the Beirut-Damascus highway in two separate raids today. A military communique said a three-story building that served as a base for terrorist attacks was hit in a raid this morning. The planes returned at noon to blast other targets in the area. All returned safely to their bases, a military spokesman said.

Beirut radio reported that I2 Kfir fighter-bombers took part in the morning raid, four dropping bombs and the rest flying cover. The Druze radio station in the nearby Shouf mountains said the building hit in the morning raid was demolished but there were no casualties because it was unoccupied.

The latest air strikes followed the wounding of 15 Israeli soldiers in separate incidents in south Lebanon yesterday. Eleven soldiers were hurt, one seriously, when three explosions ripped the Sidon port area. Four other soldiers were wounded when their vehicle struck a land mine near Baloul village in the eastern sector of the front.

Sidon Port Closed Down Indefinitely

The Sidon port was closed down indefinitely despite protests from local residents. An Israel Defense Force spokesman said it would remain closed while troops carried out an inch-by-inch search for clues to the perpetrators of yesterday's attack.

"We will turn over every fishing net, examine every board and building in the area until we are satisfied," he reportedly told residents who pointed out that most imports into south Lebanon, including food, comes through Sidon. Two ships attempting to enter Sidon port today were turned away.

JEWISH LEADERS ASK REAGAN, SHULTZ TO URGE KOHL NOT TO SELL ARMS TO SAUDIS

NEW YORK, March 5 (JTA) -- The Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations today called on President Reagan and Secretary of State George Shultz "to bring their influence to bear" against the proposed sale of military hardware to Saudi Arabia by West Germany.

"A generation after Hitler, German arms again imperil Jewish lives," the Conference said in a statement. "To the Jewish people, Germany carries a special responsibility, a legacy of the Nazi era. Selling military hardware to Saudi Arabia, which participated actively in all of the Arab wars against Israel would make a mockery of Germany's obligations." The statement added: "Jews must never again be the targets of German weapons."

The call came as Chancellor Helmut Kohl of West Germany was to meet with President Reagan and Shultz at the White House today. Kohl stated yesterday on NBC-TV's "Meet the Press" that his government has not decided whether to sell arms to Saudi Arabia, but ruled out selling the Saudis the Leopard II tanks. He stressed that although Germany has a "special historical responsibility" to Israel, it also has a "tradition" of friendly ties with Arab states.

The Presidents Conference, in its statement, disputed the view that Saudi Arabia is a "moderate" Arab state. "Each year it gives tens of millions of dollars to the PLO," the statement said. "It paid for Syria's huge build-up of Soviet arms. It is the world center of anti-Semitic propaganda. Its king threatens holy war against the Jewish State."

CANADIAN CONSERVATIVE LEADER ON THE CARPET FOR STATEMENT ABOUT ISRAEL

By Michael Solomon

MONTREAL, March 5 (JTA) — Brian Mulroney, leader of the opposition Conservative Party, says he reaffirmed Canada's support for Israel at a meeting with seven Arab diplomats last month but declined to comment further on what transpired at the meeting which was described by an aide as "private."

One of the Arab diplomats present told the media that Mulroney had drawn a distinction between friendship toward Israel and regarding it as Canada's ally.

In an apparent effort to mend fences with Canada's Jewish community before next summer's elections, Mulroney's press secretary, Bill Fox, said last Thursday that "Mr. Mulroney wishes to state that at the meeting (with the Arabs) in the presence of leading members of his caucus, he reaffirmed Canada's support and friendship for the State of Israel as a matter of irreversible policy."

Mulroney met on February 9 with diplomats from Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco and Somalia. They reportedly expressed concern over remarks he had made earlier in Toronto in which he referred to Israel as an ally. According to one of the diplomats, Mulroney offered apologies.

"We were made to understand that the use of the word ally was to be interpreted as nothing more than a statement made by the chief of the Conservative Party for domestic political purposes," the diplomat said. "Concern about the security of the State of Israel is one thing but saying Israel is our ally is another," an unidentified Arab source told reporters later.

Arabs Issue A Warning

The diplomats had reportedly warned Mulroney of severe economic consequences for Canada if a future Conservative government considered Israel to be an ally. Fox, speaking for Mulroney, did not deny this. He expressed surprise that the February 9 meeting was mentioned in the press, adding that Mulroney "does not intend to comment on private meetings at any time, least of all those involving representatives of foreign governments."

Canada has an extensive financial stake in the Middle East which includes 5,000 Canadians working in Saudi Arabia, contracts in Algeria and a Canadian-led development program in Iraq worth several billion dollars.

P.M.'s OFFICE DENIES CHARGE THAT IT IS COLLUDING WITH THE U.S. TO SLOW DOWN SETTLEMENT ACTIVITY
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, March 5 (JTA) — The Prime Minister's Office flatly denied today former Defense Minister Ariel Sharon's charge that the government was colluding with the United States to slow down settlement activity on the West Bank.

Sharon, a Minister-Without-Portfolio, alleged that there was a "silent agreement" between Israel and the U.S. to stop the settlements. "There is no need to exert pressure on Israel. Israel is giving up without pressure," he contended in a speech to the Council of Jewish Settlements in Judea and Samaria yesterday.

Political sources here branded Sharon's accusation "a blatant lie." The Prime Minister's Office issued a statement saying that Jewish settlements "throughout Eretz Israel" continue and would continue ac-

cording to government policy. Many settlers are dismayed, however, by reports that funding for settlement activities would have to be reduced within the framework of Finance Minister Yigal Cohen-Orag's austerity budget introduced last month.

Protest Freeze Of Settlement Funds

The budget for fiscal 1985 represents a desperate attempt to slash government expenditures across the board in order to deal with Israel's worsening economic situation.

But militant settlers of the Etzion bloc south of Jerusalem protested against a freeze of settlement funds today by establishing a symbolic "new settlement" called Eiruvim near the Jerusalem-Hebron highway. It consists of three tents, two water tanks and an electric generator. A new settlement had been projected for the site but work was abandoned for lack of funds.

The settlers, most of them yeshiva graduates, rushed to the site "before the Arabs take over." They began to fence off the area "to prevent penetration by Arabs into State-owned lands," according to Shilo Gal, chairman of the Etzion Regional Council. Gal said the security authorities approved the move.

In his speech yesterday, Sharon urged Jews to settle in the heart of every Arab populated area on the West Bank. "No one place should be left without Jews," he said.

JEWISH GROUP CLAIMS RESPONSIBILITY FOR AMBUSHING BUS CARRYING ARABS

JERUSALEM, March 5 (JTA) — A Jewish group calling itself "Terror Against Terror" claimed responsibility today for ambushing a bus carrying Arab laborers from the West Bank to their jobs in Israel early yesterday morning. Six of the 18 passengers were wounded, one seriously.

An anonymous telephone caller who said he represented "TNT," the Hebrew acronym for the group, told The Jerusalem Post that the ambush was just the beginning of a campaign of vengeance against terrorists who attack Jews.

Masked gunmen opened fire on the bus as it traveled a narrow mountain road on the outskirts of Mazraat A-Sharkiya, near the West Bank town of Ramallah. Israel Radio reported that security forces were using tracker dogs to hunt down the assailants. No arrests have been made.

The TNT group has taken responsibility for a series of grenade attacks on Moslem and Arab Christian religious and other institutions in the Jerusalem area and the West Bank in recent months. There have been at least a dozen such incidents. The latest was a hand grenade explosion yesterday outside the Arab hospital in the Old City of Jerusalem. There were no injuries.

NEW YORK (JTA) — Ninety Jews left the Soviet Union with Israeli visas in February, the National Conference on Soviet Jewry reported. This continues the trend of less than 100 individuals departing per month, established during the last quarter of 1983.

BONN (JTA) — The West German daily, Die Welt, reported Monday that Spain has offered to sell Saudi Arabia a new combat tank which is going to be built with the help of West Germany. According to military experts here, the tank is the same one that Egypt hopes to assemble with the help of Krauss Maffei, the Bavarian producer of the Leopard II tanks.

JACKSON'S MISSION IMPOSSIBLE

BOSTON, March 5 (JTA) — The Rev. Jesse Jackson, who hoped to turn around the tide of suspicion and anger in the Jewish community following his reference to Jews as "Hymies" and New York City as "Hymietown," appeared to have failed in his mission yesterday.

In fact, according to some observers who attended a meeting in Framingham, organized by the Bay State Lodge of B'nai B'rith, many of the 800 people present left in an angry mood because Jackson refused to disavow his past contacts with PLO leader Yasser Arafat and refused to dissociate himself from a warning to Jews by a Black Muslim leader, Louis Farrakhan, that if they harm "this brother," this will be the last one you do harm."

Jackson sought to convince his audience to move beyond "the hornet's nest of division and hatred" that has inflamed Jewish-Black relations "to a new dialogue." He said, "I stand before you perhaps bloody, but unbowed. I remain the candidate determined to heal the wounds."

He urged that Jews and Blacks "move away from a war of quotations" and establish person-to-person dialogue. "Contact must not be minimized. We must not relate to each other through the cameras and writers. We must give one another a chance," the Democratic Party presidential hopeful declared.

Opposition To Jackson

But there were some in the audience at the Walsh Middle School and outside who felt otherwise. Jackson, on his arrival at the school, was greeted by some 25 protesters carrying placards saying "Anti-Semites we will fight, whether they are Black or white," "Jackson and Arafat in '84," "King had a dream, Jesse has a scheme," and "Hymies against Jackson."

The protesters were members of Jews Against Jackson and the Jewish Defense League from Boston and New York City who had come to protest both Jackson's appearance and B'nai B'rith's sponsorship of the meeting. Shifra Hoffman, an activist and a spokesperson for Jews Against Jackson, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that her organization, with chapters in about 20 states, will continue to demonstrate against the candidate wherever he appears.

Hoffman said that in addition to exposing Jackson "for what he is, an anti-Semite," her group's aim in picketing his meetings "is to show that not all Jews are Judenrat," a reference to the Jewish councils in Nazi-occupied Europe, some of which collaborated with the Nazis. "We intend to expose Jews who invite Jackson to address Jewish audiences."

Hoffman said that Jews Against Jackson is calling on Jews to drop their support of Jackson just as they dropped their support of the American Civil Liberties Union when the organization provided legal support for the neo-Nazis to march in Skokie, Ill. in 1978.

Fern Rosenblatt, head of the JDL, said that Jackson has a right to speak anywhere, but that he should not be invited by Jews to address a Jewish audience because he is dedicated to the destruction of Israel.

Inside the school, one man was removed from the audience after he shouted during Jackson's speech, "You're an anti-Semite, You're a Jew-hater." Organizers of the event condemned such activity.

Under questioning by the three-member panel, Jackson promised not to use derogatory terms again

and said he did not consider Arafat a hero. He said he had embraced the PLO leader during a trip to the Middle East in 1979 because this is the customary form of greeting among Arab men.

During the 90-minute session he repeated his view that Israel's best security lies not in warfare "but in reaching an accommodation with the Palestinian people based upon mutual recognition of each other's rights to exist as a sovereign nation."

The reception he received yesterday was far cooler than the response last week at Temple Adath Yeshurun in Manchester, N.H. where he apologized for his "Hymie" and "Hymietown" remarks. Until then, Jackson insisted that he had no recollection of having made the remarks in a private conversation in a cafeteria at the Washington National Airport during a discussion of foreign affairs.

Later in the day yesterday, Jackson addressed several hundred Arab-Americans in Worcester, where he was warmly received. He expanded on his theme of a "trialogue," saying Blacks, Jews and Arabs should talk together.

NAVON TO ADDRESS A SEPHARDIC CONFERENCE IN BUENOS AIRES

BUENOS AIRES, March 5 (JTA) — Former Israeli President Yitzhak Navon is scheduled to help celebrate the contribution of Sephardic Jews to Jewish national rebirth at the Fifth Biennial Assembly of the Latin American Sephardic Federation (FESELA).

The assembly will be held in conjunction with the First Conference of Presidents and Representatives of Sephardic Communities of Latin America. Both gatherings, beginning March 13, in this city, will stress the cultural achievements of Sephardic Jews in Latin America.

Simultaneous with the celebrations will be a photographic exhibit titled "Discovering Jewish Colonial America." This is believed to be the first show dealing with the subject of Jews and Marranos in Latin America in colonial times.

The project, which has been in the works for several years, was developed by the Center for the Investigation and Dissemination of Sephardic Culture, under the aegis of Prof. Mario Cohen, chief of the Center's history department. The exhibit will open March 13 at the headquarters of the Argentine Jewish Society.

8 SUSPECTS ARRAIGNED IN GROSS MURDER

NABLUS, West Bank, March 5 (JTA) — Eight suspects in the murder of yeshiva student Aharon Gross in Hebron last July 7 were arraigned in a heavily guarded courtroom here today. Five pleaded not guilty but the alleged leader of the group, Ibrahim Sirbil, admitted to the crime, saying he acted in "self-defense" against Jewish settlers whom he accused of terrorism.

Gross was stabbed to death in the Hebron market square and lay dying of his wounds in the gutter while his companions chased the alleged killers who escaped in a car. The youth was at first misidentified as an Arab and was taken to a Moslem hospital before his body was turned over to Israeli authorities.

The eight suspects are charged with organizing a "jihad" (holy war) against Jews on the West Bank to be conducted by murder and sabotage aimed at forcing Jews to evacuate the territory and the imposition of the Moslem religion on Israel by force of arms. Outside the courtroom, Jewish youths from Hebron and Kiryat Arba demonstrated, demanding the death penalty for Gross' murderers.