

IDF SAYS SYRIAN FORTIFICATION WORK IN THE BEKAA VALLEY POSES NO DANGER FOR THE TIME BEING
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, May 13 (JTA) -- The Israel Defense Force disclosed Tuesday that it has been keeping a sharp eye on Syrian fortification work in the Bekaa Valley in eastern Lebanon but that for the time being it poses no danger.

The United Nations Disengagement Observers Force (UNDOF) on the Golan Heights announced that it carried out a routine inspection of military emplacements on both sides of the Israeli-Syrian line Tuesday.

An UNDOF spokesman told reporters there was no tension in the area and nothing irregular on either side. He stressed that the inspection was routine and its timing had nothing to do with recent reports of growing tension between Israel and Syria on the Heights and in Lebanon.

An IDF spokesman said that in recent months the Syrians laid foundations for new fortifications in the southern part of the Bekaa Valley in the vicinity of Lake Karoun where Israeli forces had faced the Syrian army before the IDF was withdrawn from Lebanon last year.

No Significant Change In Deployment

According to the spokesman, there has been no significant change in the deployment of Syrian forces in the Bekaa Valley. Military sources pointed out however that while the concrete infrastructure built by the Syrians can be described as defensive, the tank positions could be manned rapidly and converted to an offensive posture.

Israeli officials and army officers have been concerned for some time with the Syrian fortifications, gun and tank emplacements and command areas. Details of those developments were not released in the hope that the matter could be resolved by diplomatic means with the help of the U.S., IDF sources said.

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Richard Murphy was sent to Damascus to try to persuade Syrian President Hafez Assad to dismantle the new infrastructure, but he refused, the sources said.

PERES: SYRIA HAS REBUFFED ISRAEL'S EFFORTS TO ENGAGE IN DIALOGUE

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, May 13 (JTA) -- Premier Shimon Peres disclosed Tuesday that Israel made efforts to engage in dialogue with Syria on either limited or comprehensive issues but was rebuffed by Damascus on both levels.

His remarks were contained in extracts from a radio interview that will be broadcast in full Wednesday on the occasion of Israel's Independence Day. He said: "We made an effort -- not directly -- to arrive at dialogue with the Syrians at one of two levels: At the local, limited level, meaning the Golan Heights and Lebanon, and at

the higher level of, perhaps, comprehensive negotiations. "But, he said, "regarding comprehensive negotiations, we immediately received a negative response. On negotiations to be limited regarding place and scope, there was initially something of a hearing, but afterwards we also received a negative response from the Syrians."

His remarks were the first revelation that Israel had approached Syria with an offer of talks. In extracts from the same interview released last Friday, the Premier affirmed that Israel has no intention of attacking Syria and it does not believe the Syrians will attack Israel, though a constant alert is maintained on the northern borders.

Israel's Relations With Jordan

Peres also clarified the status of Israel's relations with Jordan. "In the first place, the understandings with Jordan are known and open to everyone. We told the Jordanians, first, that we are ready to conduct negotiations with a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation. That is an understanding. Of the five names they proposed (of possible Palestinian delegates) we agreed to two," Peres said.

"Second, the Jordanians insisted on an international forum. We agreed. Third, they insisted that it be based on (UN Security Council resolutions) 242 and 338. We agreed. These are far from negligible understandings. I can say, fourth, that in practice both they and we agree that the Americans will be the implementors in the attempt to generate dialogue," Peres said.

"The final thing -- and I don't say this is an understanding between us, but this is an understanding of Jordan -- is that Jordan is the first Arab state that tried seriously to integrate (Palestine Liberation Organization chief Yasir) Arafat into negotiations, and reached a conclusion, which became public, that this gentleman is not a partner for negotiations."

Peres was referring to King Hussein's announcement last February that he had ended his year-long efforts with Arafat because the PLO leadership is unreliable.

Issue Of Autonomy In The Gaza Strip

Responding to questions about his reported proposal to introduce Palestinian autonomy on the local level in the Gaza Strip, Peres said, "I'm not proposing anything. I think proposals should come from the Arab side. Every proposal that originates with us will immediately arouse overall Arab opposition."

With respect to autonomy, he said: "In this case, the initiative has to come from the Arab side. The Arabs know that this (Israeli) government, like earlier governments, is ready to discuss self-rule in the territories. This is an option which we constantly raise. We will not impose it, we will not implement it by force. But if the Palestinians awake from their slumber -- or more correctly, their nightmare -- and are ready to discuss this regarding Gaza and Judea-Samaria (West Bank), we shall willingly discuss it."

3 INJURED BY KATYUSHA ROCKETS

TEL AVIV, May 13 (JTA) -- A man and two children were slightly injured by Katyusha rockets fired into Upper Galilee early Tuesday afternoon. The 107 mm. rockets appeared to have been fired from outside the south Lebanon security zone. The attack did not affect Memorial Day observances for Israel's war dead or the Independence Day festivities which began Tuesday night.

MEMORIAL DAY IN ISRAEL

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, May 13 (JTA) -- Naomi Amely, whose husband was killed in action in the Sinai campaign of 1956, received a blazing torch from President Chaim Herzog at the Western Wall Monday night, officially opening Memorial Day, a day of solemn remembrance of the nearly 10,000 men and women who have fallen in battle since the State of Israel was founded in 1948.

Herzog, addressing the crowd gathered at the site, said the entire nation shared in the feelings of grievous loss of young lives. "We reach our hand to the bereaved families. We should deserve the price we paid for our freedom and independence," he said.

Memorial Day was ushered in Monday night with the wail of sirens all over Israel. Sirens sounded again at 11 a.m. Tuesday calling a halt to all activity for a minute of silence in memory of the country's war dead. At 7 p.m. Tuesday, Memorial Day was brought to an official close with the sound of sirens and a new torch-lighting ceremony on Mt. Herzl, where 3,550 war dead are buried, marking the start of Independence Day to be celebrated Wednesday, the 38th anniversary of Israel's independence.

Memorial Day ceremonies were held at the Mt. Herzl military cemetery and at military cemeteries and memorial sites all over the country. Speaking on Mt. Herzl, Premier Shimon Peres said: "The fallen gave our people the taste of revival, they gave this country the taste of a homeland, they gave us full independence. "Addressing the bereaved families, he said that Israel is trying to "strengthen the peace in the south, decrease the tension in the north and propose peace in the east." He expressed hope that Israel will never lack the wisdom "to be just and to seek peace."

Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir spoke at the Mt. of Olives cemetery at the mass grave for Israeli soldiers killed in battle there in the War of Independence in 1948. He said the Arab countries must recognize that Jews will live in Israel forever.

TWO MORE MEMBERS OF THE JEWISH UNDERGROUND RELEASED

JERUSALEM, May 13 (JTA) -- Two more members of the Jewish terrorist underground were released from prison Tuesday on the eve of Independence Day. Of the 27 men originally convicted and sentenced for a series of violent crimes against Arabs in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, only seven remain in jail.

Gilead Peli, 32, and Yeshua Ben-Shoshan, 36, left Tel Mond prison one year short of serving the two-thirds of their sentences required for early release for good behavior. President Chaim Herzog substituted a two-year suspended sentence

for the remaining one year in prison. Peli was sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment for conspiracy to commit a crime and participation in a terrorist organization. The Supreme Court, on appeal, reduced his sentence to 4 1/2 years. Ben-Shoshan was originally sentenced to 4 1/2 years.

They told reporters they regretted their acts and called on Herzog to pardon the seven others still in jail. Three of them are serving life sentences for an attack on the Islamic College in Hebron in which they murdered three Arab students.

\$1 MILLION FUND SOUGHT TO ALLEVIATE SHORTAGE OF TRAINED CANTORS AND TO COMBAT JEWISH ILLITERACY IN WORSHIP

KIAMESHA LAKE, N.Y., May 13 (JTA) -- A \$1 million fund to alleviate the shortage of trained cantors and to combat Jewish illiteracy in congregational worship was proposed as the Cantors Assembly opened its 39th annual meeting here Tuesday.

Noting the critical shortage of trained cantors -- only one student will be graduated this year from the Cantors Institute -- Cantor Samuel Rosenbaum, executive vice president of the world's largest body of cantors, urged the group to commit funds to underwrite scholarships that would help train 150 to 200 qualified cantors in the next decade.

Rosenbaum told the 300 delegates that 60 Conservative synagogues were currently seeking full-time cantors, adding: "If our generation of chazzanim (cantors) is to have meaning and significance beyond the moment, we must not allow what we have created and nurtured to wither." He called on the Cantors Assembly to "make a leap of faith" and provide the funding that would permit the training of a new generation of cantors.

At the same time the Conservative leader challenged Judaism's other cantorial, rabbinical and congregational bodies to "unite in a common effort to implement this fund." He stated:

"Our studies of the Holocaust reveal that, under those trying conditions, chazzanim led prayers, conducted choirs, presented concerts and used their skills to uplift the Jewish spirit. Both openly and clandestinely they served in the ghettos of Lodz and Warsaw, in the labor battalions, in the concentration camps, risking their lives daily to comfort their fellow-Jews and to pray with them. Dare we who live in the world's most affluent Jewish community be any less committed?"

High Holy Day Tapes

A portion of the fund, said Cantor Saul Hammerman, president of the Cantors Assembly, would be utilized to combat "Jewish illiteracy" by producing video tapes of high holiday services to help synagogue-goers familiarize themselves with the Rosh Hashanah and Yon Kippur liturgy. He suggested that these video cassettes be sent on loan to members of congregations "so that they may more readily understand and follow high holiday synagogue ritual."

Decrying the "spiritual complacency" of contemporary American life, Hammerman declared: "We lead prayers for a generation of illiterate Jews -- not ignorant or stupid, mind you, but simply untutored in the glories of our heritage. Thus, new approaches must be devised to bring

our people to the level of appreciation that they -- and we -- need for Jewish survival in the synagogue. "The invention of the videocassette recorder now makes it possible to introduce Jewish families to High Holy Day services and orient them to the music and the form of worship. I think we'll find that making use of the TV tape as a tool of Jewish literacy will evoke a heightened degree of participation in the services and make the synagogue and its rituals more attractive to our congregants."

SHCHARANSKY EXPRESSES GRATITUDE TO CONGRESS FOR HELPING HIM WIN HIS FREEDOM FROM THE SOVIET UNION

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, May 13 (JTA) -- Natan (Anatoly) Shcharansky expressed his "gratitude" to the United States Congress Tuesday for helping him win his freedom from the Soviet Union. In return, Congressional leaders pledged to continue the struggle until all Soviet Jews who want to emigrate are allowed to leave the USSR.

"I am released, but 400,000 Soviet Jews are still kept as prisoners of the Soviet Union," Shcharansky said as he was welcomed to Washington in a ceremony in the Rotunda of the Capitol.

"The success in winning the recent release of Anatoly Shcharansky is proof that we need to do much more, not proof that we have done enough," House Speaker Thomas O'Neill Jr. (D. Mass.) declared.

Pledge Efforts To Continue The Struggle

O'Neill said that in a private meeting with Shcharansky, before the ceremony, the leaders of the House and Senate "pledged to continue our efforts to win the freedom of 400,000 Soviet Jews who desire to leave the Soviet Union."

As Shcharansky entered the Rotunda under the Capitol dome he was given a standing ovation by the hundreds of Senators, Representatives, officials of national and local Jewish organizations, and others who attended the ceremony.

During his stay in Washington, he is scheduled to receive the Congressional Gold Medal for his wife, Avital, and for himself. Both the Senate and House approved resolutions awarding the medals, introduced by Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D. NJ) and Rep. Benjamin Gilman (R. NY).

Avital Shcharansky, who is two months pregnant, remained in Israel for her husband's first visit to the United States. But Rep. Sidney Yates (D. Ill.) noted at the ceremony that she was known to every member of Congress for her constant appeals on behalf of her husband and other Soviet Jews.

"That her husband is here today in freedom is as much her victory as it is his," Yates said. He also noted that Shcharansky is the first private citizen to be honored in a ceremony in the Rotunda. To mark the occasion, Shcharansky, who has been appearing in shirt sleeves, wore a suit and tie.

'Will Not Rest Until The Key Is Turned'

The need to continue the struggle for Soviet Jewry was stressed by all the speakers at the ceremony. Senate Majority Leader Robert Dole (R. Kan.) stressed that Congress was marking the day both out "of gratitude to Natan Shcharansky's rescue and determination that we will not rest until the key is turned that will unlock countless

cells in that unhappy land where dissent is held to be a criminal offense, and true faith is feared as the enemy of political orthodoxy."

Sen. Robert Kasten (R. Wis.) stressed that "the plight of Soviet Jewry will not be downplayed in the interest of diplomacy. Peace and human rights cannot be separated."

Shcharansky noted that he first met members of Congress in 1975, and that their statements as printed in the Congressional Digest were used against him at his trial. Jokingly calling the Congressmen his "accomplices," he said, "I was grateful to know after my release that my accomplices did not abandon me and that our 'criminal' activities continued and continue up to this day."

Shcharansky stressed the need to keep and strengthen the Jackson/Vanik Amendment which provides that the Soviet Union will get U.S. Most Favored Nation trade benefits only if there is large scale emigration.

Warns Against Soviet PR Gimmicks

He warned against being taken in by Soviet "public relations" gimmicks where only a few are released, and urged that U.S. trade benefits be given only when all Soviet Jews are allowed to emigrate. "Real understanding between the East and West can be based only on mutual trust," he said.

Shcharansky was scheduled to meet later on Tuesday with President Reagan, Vice President George Bush and Secretary of State George Shultz. He is also scheduled to testify on Wednesday before the Commission on security and Cooperation in Europe which monitors the Helsinki agreements and to address the National Press Club on Thursday.

JTA INTERN WINS SMOLAR AWARD

NEW YORK, May 13 (JTA) -- Marlene Goldman, a 19-year-old intern with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, was named the 1985 winner of the JDC/Smolar Award for Student Journalism.

Goldman, a journalism major at New York University's College of Arts and Sciences, was selected from 35 applicants for a series of articles on the United Nations End of the Decade Women's Conference in Nairobi last summer. The articles appeared in the JTA Daily News Bulletin and were reprinted in a number of American Jewish newspapers across the country.

Honorary president of the JDC, Donald Robinson, will present the award, which carries a cash prize of \$1,000 at the JDC Semi-Annual meeting in the Grand Hyatt Hotel here May 21.

The Award, which is named for the late Boris Smolar, a major figure in American Jewish journalism for more than 60 years, was designed "to encourage better understanding within the world Jewish community while giving support to young people entering the field of journalism," said Nathan Freedman, director of public information of the JDC.

Goldman, who is currently a sophomore at NYU, was born in Huntington, Long Island and attended Commack High School North where she served as Arts Editor for her school newspaper, Varohi. In her freshman year at NYU, she was awarded a B'nai B'rith Hillel/JACY Fellowship to intern at the Jewish Student Press Service.

Goldman, who began her JTA internship last June, is also a member of the University Scholars at NYU and works at the WNYU radio station.

'DEMOCRACY IN ISRAEL' IS THEME OF ISRAEL'S 38TH INDEPENDENCE DAY

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, May 13 (JTA) -- Israel will celebrate the 38th anniversary of its independence on Wednesday and the theme this year will be "democracy in Israel." The Knesset will open its doors to the general public for the first time.

It will display Israel's Declaration of Independence and visitors will hear a recording of the historic Declaration of Independence by Israel's first Prime Minister, David Ben Gurion, delivered to the nation on May 14, 1948.

By tradition, Independence Day, a festive occasion, is preceded by Memorial Day, a day of solemn mourning for the country's war dead. It will conclude Tuesday night with a torch-lighting ceremony which also heralds the beginning of Independence Day.

In keeping with the theme of democracy, many institutions and companies, military and civilian, will hold "open house" to the public featuring special exhibitions. Excursions are planned to early Jewish settlements, the Jewish National Fund, the Nature Reserves Authority and the Society for the Protection of Nature are organizing the tours.

Visitors to Mt. Hermon will be treated to a concert sponsored by the nature protection society. It will be performed by the Youth Philharmonic Orchestra and musicians from the Israel Philharmonic and Israel Chamber Orchestra. Many sports events are also on the agenda.

PERES' INDEPENDENCE DAY MESSAGE

JERUSALEM, May 13 (JTA) -- Premier Shimon Peres issued the following Independence Day message:

The journey of our people to spiritual and political rebirth in its own land has not all been paved with joy. This is the longest and most revolutionary journey undertaken by any people, any time in the history of mankind. This is a journey which has not yet been completed. While we may perhaps already pronounce the benediction on deliverance, the time is not yet ripe to congratulate ourselves on a task completed.

The journey is not yet over; neither have all the controversies been resolved -- firstly, between us here in Israel, and our brethren throughout the world. At the same time, we will continue to maintain the unity of the people -- despite its pluralistic character -- and will continue to strive to assemble all Jews, from all corners of the world, here in Israel.

It is only in our historic homeland that we have attained national freedom, self-fulfillment and true, unqualified pride and self-respect for every Jew: both as a human being and as a Jew.

We believe that the construct which has been created here in Israel in the last hundred years is not the sum total of declarations or of chance -- but, rather, the result of vision, hard work and stubborn principles. Those who remain true to the path of pragmatic Zionism know that this is the most humane course of action the world has ever known.... The national unity government has succeeded in halting the inflationary spiral which had threatened to sweep the national economy into the abyss. We are now on the threshold of a new economic momentum, which will comprise the encouragement of exports,

the replacement of imports and a structural reorganization of the economy.

On the political level, we have broadened the gateway between Israel and Egypt and despite attempts to intimidate and terrorize us-- both countries remain resolved to deepen the ties between us as a prelude to a comprehensive peace in the region. The Hashemite King has, also, come a long way to meet us on the road to the negotiating table while the PLO continues to prove that it is an obstacle to peace -- as we have postulated.

The present government of Israel can also pride itself on the fact that in its time internal tensions in the country have been greatly reduced: between Ashkenazim and Sephardim, between the different political parties, between religious and secular elements, between Jews and Arabs. Israel's image in the world has also improved. Leaders and governments are attentive to our views. They appreciate our firm stand against terrorism; they understand that our continuing struggle here in Israel is based not only on power but, also, on justice.

HERZOG'S INDEPENDENCE DAY MESSAGE

JERUSALEM, MAY 13 (JTA) -- President Chaim Herzog, in his message marking Israel's 38th Independence Day, said:

The year just past has indeed been marked by struggle, in Israel and throughout the Jewish world. Anti-Semitism has made itself felt in many a country. The Jews of the Soviet Union, of Syria and Ethiopia, still find themselves behind barred doors. Jews in the free nations face the overwhelming threat of assimilation and engage in a complex and ardent effort to strengthen and expand Jewish education.

Over Israel, as over the whole of the civilized world, hangs the threat of terrorism. It is one of the positive achievements of the year that the international community is beginning to think in terms of a unified and un intimidated effort to stem terrorism. In this, Israel has demonstrated leadership in confronting the problem.

I call on the Jewish people to affirm their resolve to combat our enemies by coming to Israel this year in a demonstration of unity and commitment.

In Israel we will rededicate ourselves to the struggle against intolerance and for the strengthening of our democracy. Together with our Government's successful efforts to rehabilitate the country's economy and its constant search for peace in the region, we must rededicate ourselves to the principles of equality and tolerance for all faiths and peoples enunciated in Israel's Declaration of Independence.

Towards the end of the year a happy note was struck by the liberation of Anatoly Shcharansky from his long inhuman imprisonment. The hope that he may be followed by many other Prisoners of Zion, together with the hope for peace and harmony in Israel, for fruitful Jewish education in the world, for closer links between Jews everywhere and Israel, and aliya to it-- with these hopes and with faith in the Rock of Israel, we face the 39th year of the State of Israel.