

GOLDA MEIR

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taken place against the backdrop of Black September threats and that the pilot was partly to blame for failing to heed Israel's signals to land. She added that "everything is at the disposition" of an international body to investigate the tragedy, but decried being "condemned and then investigated".

Responding to questions on Israel's borders, she said: "Egypt must understand Israeli control of Sharm el-Sheikh is to protect Israeli shipping" through the Straits of Tiran to the Far East and East Africa. She described the Straits as "a lifeline for us". She also reiterated Israel's need to control the Golan Heights, and said the Suez Canal could be open for Egypt to use at present. Withdrawal from the Suez area would not be "a final line", she said, since that "should be negotiated through a peace treaty." Reporting on her recent visit with Pope Paul at the Vatican, Mrs. Meir said the "Pope was very, very gracious -- very kind." The Pope's final sentence, she said was, "this dialogue must continue. I look forward to its continuation in the spirit in which we had spoken."

Earlier, meeting with members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Mrs. Meir is reported to have told them she was "very grateful" for aid received thus far, but that Israel needed more. Rep. Thomas E. Morgan (D. Pa.) told reporters that Mrs. Meir did not raise the matter of U. S. aid at her meeting with 28 members of the 39-member House committee which lasted over an hour Feb. 28. According to one source here, the main purpose of her visit is to seek a \$565 million U. S. aid package for the coming fiscal year, including \$300 million worth of military credits for the purchase of the latest model fighter-bombers and helicopter gun ships. Morgan also said Mrs. Meir "seemed optimistic" over chances of negotiations between Israel and Egypt "because the shooting on the (Suez) Canal has ceased for 18 months."

The State Department said that Mrs. Meir's 3-hour meeting with Acting Secretary of State Kenneth Bush "constituted another in a useful, positive discussion with distinguished visitors from the Middle East." On her arrival here, Mrs. Meir had said she at no time considered postponing her trip because of the Sinai tragedy, and was convinced it would not "interfere" with the process of seeking an agreement in the Middle East. For the rest of her 10-day stay she will be meeting with Jewish leaders and addressing various conventions.

WASHINGTON (WNS)--The State Department and the Israeli and Jordanian Embassies emphatically denied reports of direct or indirect communications between Premier Golda Meir and King Hussein.

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MIAMI BEACH (WNS) -- Premier Golda Meir told an audience of more than 3000 Jewish leaders at the Israel Bond Organization Inaugural Dinner that her meetings in Washington with President Nixon and other top U. S. officials were "wonderful and inspiring".

Referring to her talk with Nixon, she said he "never assumes a position of superiority in talks with the Prime Minister of a small country," and that he knows "there's always something we want him

to do." The Premier, however, divulged nothing of substance of her talks.

Mrs. Meir concluded her round of talks in Washington with a two-hour breakfast meeting March 2 with nine Senators, four of them members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

None of the Senators would reveal the details of their discussions. She later attended a black-tie dinner at the White House.

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