

Where. From Here?

By Bertram H. Gold Am. Jewish Comm.

The failure of American efforts to help negotiate a settlement between Israel and Egypt is disheartening, but it is not the end of the road. Already, both U.S. and Israeli leaders have reaffirmed their determination to continue the search for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

The "shuttle diplomacy" of Secretary of State Henry Kissinger during recent weeks was a test of the willingness of both sides to make needed concessions. In these negotiations, Israel declared herself willing to give up the Mitla and Gidi passes, which are strategically important to her, as well as the Abu Rudeis oil fields, which currently supply about half of her petroleum needs. Israel actually offered Egypt access to the oil fields by both land and sea. In return, she sought nothing more than assurances that Egypt accepted her right to exist and was prepared to take practical steps toward peace. Unfortunately, Egypt was not ready to make this one concession.

Clearly, Israel cannot give without getting something in return. Surrounded by hostile nations as she is, she cannot afford to bargain away her strategic advantages unless her security is guaranteed in some other way.

The U.S. is sure to go on cultivating friendly relations with Arab countries, while also seeking to help create a solid basis for Israel's security. That way lies the best hope for peace in the Middle East -- the peace that American and Israeli people and their leaders are so strenuously seeking. It is to be hoped that the U.S. will prevail on the Arab countries to join the search with comparable intensity.



IRITH WOLLENBERG (LEFT), EXECUTIVE SECRETARY TO DIRECTOR GENERAL OF ISRAELI MINISTRY OF TOURISM, CHATS IN HEBREW AT CIRCUS CIRCUS HOTEL/CASINO/SPA WITH EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, ISRAELI-BORN SHIRLEY IRONS, IN THE MID-STRIP RESORT'S BUFFET INTERNATIONALE. 25-YEAR OLD IRITH, WHO HAS MADE 8 JUMPS AS A PARATROOPER IN THE ISRAELI ARMY, WAS GUEST OF CIRCUS CIRCUS DURING WEEK IN LAS VEGAS AS PART OF FACT-FINDING/STUDY/VACATION TOUR OF U.S.A.

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