

JEWISH NEWS BRIEFS

WASHINGTON (WNS) -- President Carter stressed May 29 that the United States would not make its own proposals on autonomy for Arab residents of the West Bank and Gaza Strip unless it was necessary to "break a deadlock" between Israel and Egypt or to suggest a compromise between their positions. Answering questions at a news conference, he said it would be "counter productive" for the U.S. to "pre-empt" the negotiations on autonomy now going on between Israel and Egypt. The President also stressed that the U.S. has "never espoused an independent Palestinian state" and believed that it would be a "destabilizing factor."

UNITED NATIONS (WNS) -- The Security Council began meeting on a complaint from Lebanon that Israel is escalating its attacks on that country. The Council is reportedly trying to draft a resolution which will satisfy all members. Israeli Ambassador Yehuda Blum told the Council that his country recently received information "based on reliable sources" that the Palestine Liberation Organization has decided to step up violence in south Lebanon. This information "is undoubtedly the cause of the heightened tension in the area," he said. Blum stressed that Israel supports the territorial integrity of Lebanon and "believes that the time has come to move toward a negotiated peace between Israel and Lebanon." He said the terrorists groups, under the leadership of the PLO, are responsible for the chaos in Lebanon. "There are some 2000 armed PLO terrorists south of the Litani River" who are a threat to Israel, the villages in South Lebanon and the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL)," he said. Lebanese Ambassador Ghassan Tuani called on the Security Council to put an end to Israeli "violations of Lebanese sovereignty."

JERUSALEM (WNS) -- Twenty-three Arab high school and college students have been arrested by security forces for alleged terrorist connections or sympathies. Three Arab students at Tel Aviv University and four high school students were ordered held on suspicion of membership in a hostile organization, and of planning to establish such a group. Another 14 students were being held as suspected members of the National Progressive Organization; a left-wing group that rejects the legitimacy of Israel and supports the Palestine Liberation Organization. Two other students were arrested as suspected members of terrorist organizations.

UNITED NATIONS (WNS) -- The Security Council voted May 30 to extend the life of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) on the Golan Heights for another six months. The vote on the 1,025-member force was 14-0 with China, as usual, not participating.

JERUSALEM (WNS) -- Israel released 16 Arabs who have been jailed on suspicion of terrorism May 28. Seven of them crossed into Egyptian territory at El Arish while the others remained on the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The release came less than 24 hours after Premier Menachem Begin announced, during his meeting with Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, that he would release a number of Palestinian prisoners.

TEL AVIV (WNS) -- Three Israeli landing crafts sailed through the Suez Canal May 29 enroute from Eilat to Ashdod. The vessels painted a sparkling white and flying flags from stem to stern, were the first units of the Israel Navy ever to use the waterway. They received a warm reception from the Egyptians.

JERUSALEM (WNS) -- Attorney General Yitzhak Zamir confirmed May 29 he plans to prosecute MK Samuel Flatto-Sharon on charges he bought his election in the 1977 Knesset campaign. Two of Flatto's aides, Jacques Ben-Odis and Yaacob Halfon, will also be charged. The election of the former French millionaire, wanted in France for tax evasion and fraud, came as a surprise in 1977.

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WASHINGTON (WNS) -- The State Department confirmed May 29 that Soviet-made SAM anti-aircraft missiles are in place in Lebanon near the Syrian border. A Department spokesman said they were Syrian installations.

TEL AVIV (WNS) -- The Israel Navy has informed an Israeli fishing fleet of 20 trawlers it can no longer operate within 100 kilometers of El Arish including the fishing grounds of the Bardawil Lagoon, which Egypt has claimed as its territorial waters.

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TEL AVIV (WNS) -- Premier Menachem Begin told reporters May 28 that he was unable to persuade Egyptian President Anwar Sadat to allow the settlers of Neot Sinai to continue cultivating their vegetable fields which are in the area returned to Egypt May 25. "President Sadat said this would be difficult and we must accept this announcement, to my regret," Begin said. The settlers, who had earlier refused to leave the fields, did so when they were told that the Premier would make the request to Sadat.

NEW YORK (WNS) -- The American Jewish Congress hailed May 30 as "a major victory for religious freedom and church-state separation a decision by the U.S. Supreme Court holding unconstitutional a New Jersey law providing special income tax deductions for parents who send their children to parochial schools. Leo Pfeffer, special counsel of the AJCongress, said the ruling demonstrated "the U.S. Supreme Court shows no indication of retreating from its strong position that religious schools may not be financed - directly or indirectly -- by tax-raised funds."

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