

## REAGAN WANTS TO SOLVE "DETERIORATING POSITION OF WEST"

WASHINGTON (WNS) -- The Reagan Administration has made it clear that resumption of the West Bank - Gaza Strip autonomy talks will take a back seat to its first "priority" in the Middle East, the "deteriorating position of the West" in the region. This was revealed by State Department spokesman William Dyess in response to questions on reports that senior Department officials see no value in having the talks between Israel, the United States and Egypt resume now.

"We remain fully committed for a comprehensive peace in the Middle East," Dyess said. "We are ready to participate for further discussions in the context of the Camp David framework at a time mutually agreeable to Egypt and Israel. We remain hopeful that participation in these discussions can be broadened at an appropriate time with the agreement of our partners. We are convinced, however, that the highest priority of the United States in that region should be to arrest the deteriorating position of the West vis a vis the Soviet Union. Achievement of that goal will itself provide a beneficial context for the future of the peace process." Dyess added that he was "not necessarily" suggesting a delay in the autonomy talks while the U.S. strengthened its security in the Mideast since "you can proceed on both tracks."

The U.S. position was at odds with that of the government of Premier Menachem Begin which has been calling for a resumption of the autonomy talks. Egyptian President Sadat, meanwhile, wants to delay the talks until after the June 30 Israeli elections. Begin, answering questions at a Foreign Press Association luncheon in Jerusalem, urged the U.S. to take the "initiative" in resuming the talks. "The Mideast and its periphery is an area of supreme strategic importance," the Premier stressed. "It should be the interests of the free world... not to be taken by surprise. But if somebody wants to wait, if anybody thinks they've got time to solve the Israel-Arab conflict, what can Israel do?"

Meanwhile, Secretary of State Alexander Haig announced that he will go to the Middle East at

a "reasonably early" date. His announcement came at the conclusion of a half hour meeting at the White House between President Reagan and Israeli Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir. "I am clearly anxious to go" to the area to "continue the momentum on the peace process and conclude the kinds of consultations which started here" with Shamir's visit. Shamir told reporters that in his talks with the President he presented "the most essential and most vital problems" for Israel and its relation with the U.S. and predicted that "the results will be very fruitful."

Haig was questioned about the possibility of Jordan joining the peace talks. "This involves a consultative process with the parties concerned and is not a made-in-America solution. This is a matter for the parties." Haig said the U.S. will "continue in the framework of Camp David and according to (United Nations Security Council) Resolutions 242 and 338 to reach a comprehensive settlement and only after careful consultations with the parties."

Haig denied that the U.S. emphasis on the autonomy talks has been diminished. He referred to "the strategic realities of the Middle East" which "reinforce the peace process and must always be kept in mind. We must not be exclusively concerned, for example, with oil diplomacy or with Arab-Israeli differences in isolation. They must be viewed against a background of increasing Soviet interventionism in the area and the commonality of concern with respect to all the nations in the region to deal with this danger. These are not mutually exclusive conceptions, they are mutually reinforcing conceptions."

Meanwhile, Shamir in an address to the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations warned that any delay in resuming the autonomy talks could endanger the whole peace process. "There are many factors which are interested in killing the peace process," Shamir said listing the Soviet Union, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and the West European countries. "If there is a postponement of the process the area is free for various attempts which could be harmful to the process." He stressed that Israel considers reviving the talks "the most important and most urgent issue."

## EDWARD KENNEDY TO SPEAK AT GROSSINGERS

NEW YORK, N.Y. -- Senator Edward Kennedy will be the featured guest speaker at next month's Jewish National Fund 80th anniversary National Assembly to be held at Grossinger's, New York.

In announcing Senator Kennedy's appearance at the three-day gathering, Rabbi William Berkowitz, President of the JNF, said the Massachusetts Democrat is expected to make a major statement on the current domestic and international situation.

"As a distinguished Senator and leader of the Congressional opposition, as well as a long-time friend of Israel and the Jewish people," Rabbi Berkowitz said, "Senator Kennedy's appearance at our National Assembly will add a significant dimension to the proceedings and deliberations outlining the major tasks facing the JNF in the years ahead."

Dr. Samuel I. Cohen, Executive Vice President of the JNF, said Senator Kennedy is scheduled to speak at 4 P.M. on Monday,

March 30th, before an anticipated audience of several hundred.

Dr. Cohen announced that the general public is welcome to this event and said a special effort is underway to invite members of the Jewish community from the surrounding area.

The JNF is the agency responsible for afforestation land reclamation and site development in the Land of Israel.

## U.S. WARNS AGAINST DEPRIVING ISRAEL AT UN

WASH. (WNS) -- The United States has warned the Non-aligned Movement attempts to deprive Israel of its credentials in the United Nations General Assembly would have "the greatest consequences" for the "future of the United Nations itself." The Non-aligned Movement, in a communique from New Delhi, urged member states to vote against accepting the credentials of Israeli delegates at the next meeting of the General Assembly and the UN specialized agencies.

A similar declaration was made at the Islamic summit con-

ference in Saudi Arabia in January. The U.S. warning was in a prepared statement read by State Department spokesman William Dyess in response to questions about the New Delhi communique. "It is our view that the Mideast part of the

communique contains a number of absurd formulations," Dyess said. "I will not take them up point by point, but I will note so that there will be no misunderstanding on the part of anyone, that any challenge to Israel's credentials in the UN General Assembly would be illegal and a violation of the UN Charter."

NEW YORK (WNS) -- Rep. John LeBoutillier (R-C, NY) pledged here that as a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, "I'll be the strongest pro-Israel advocate in the whole Congress." Appearing on columnist Victor Riesel's weekly interview radio show on WEVD, I.e. Boutillier, who at 27 is the youngest member of the house, said that as a non-Jew "my position will be more credible than if coming from someone who is Jewish."

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