

BEGIN SAYS SOVIETS

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In another development, the Prime Minister's office confirmed that Israel had given an understanding to the Lebanese Christians to use the Israel Air Force to defend the Christians if the Syrians use their air force against them. A statement issued by the Prime Minister's office denied an Haaretz report that the undertaking had been given in writing.

But it admitted that a verbal understanding had been made at a meeting between unidentified "Cabinet ministers including then Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan and Chief of Staff Rafael Eitan" and Christian representatives at a meeting held in December, 1979, and confirmed verbally again on April 8, 1981, offering air force aid.

In a related report from Tel Aviv, the Israeli army admitted that Syrian missiles had shot down a pilotless drone reconnaissance aircraft over the Bekaa valley in Lebanon. It was the second unmanned plane lost to Syrian missiles since the missile crisis started in early May.

Some eight missiles have reportedly been fired by the Syrians since the crisis started but no piloted planes have been hit. Drones are not equipped with missile jaming devices such as are reportedly carried aboard Israel's normal aircraft.

**DEMO SENATOR WANTS  
LEBANON CENTER OF TALKS**

WASH. (WNS) -- A former Democratic Senator from Florida proposed what he termed as the "Habib option" in which Lebanon would be made the center of the Middle East negotiations, since all the "actors" in the

Arab - Israeli conflict are already involved there.

Richard Stone, appearing on a National Public Radio talk show said that Philip Habib, President Reagan's envoy now in the Mideast has been able to prevent a war

from breaking out over Lebanon and should be put in charge of Middle East negotiations.

Also appearing on the program were, James Akins, a former Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, and Ghasson Tuani, Lebanon's Ambassador to the United Nations. Both agreed that a settlement of the Palestinian problem is vital to settling all other problems in the Middle East. But Tuani noted that the presence of some 400,000 Palestinian refugees in Lebanon had created "a Lebanese question which has become as

acute as the Palestinian question."

He said that Lebanon is a country where all other "external conflicts in the Middle East are being played out and Lebanon has become a "sideshow, a convenient dumping ground for all other conflicts in the region." Tuani noted that Israel and Syria had agreed to extend the mandate for the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force, which showed that they wish to avoid war across their common border. But he said the two countries are willing to fight in Lebanon.

**MINISTER CLEARED OF CHARGES**

JERUSALEM (WNS) A Jerusalem District Court acquitted Religion Minister Aharon Abuhatzaira of bribery charges. Also acquitted were the other three defendants, his advisor Moshe Gabai, diamond merchant Shmuel Daskel and Rabbi Amram Korach. Abuhatzaira and Gabai had been accused of granting increased funds to religious institutions in Bnai Brak in return for which they received payments from the institutions.

Just as Abuhatzaira

Jerusalem District Court, a new indictment was submitted to the Tel Aviv District Court in which Abuhatzaira was charged with deceit, violation of trust and conspiracy. The Minister and his assistants are accused of receiving money improperly from the Interior Minister to the Ramleh municipality when Abuhatzaira was Ramle Mayor, and of stealing money during the period of 1975 to 1977.

*Reagan's Message  
to Zionist Group*

"I am pleased to send my warm personal greetings to the American Assembly for Zionism and Israel.

I welcome this opportunity to commend the Zionist Movement for building a society rooted in the democratic ideals shared by our country, and I support, as have my predecessors, the establishment of a modern Jewish state on the site of the ancient Jewish homeland.

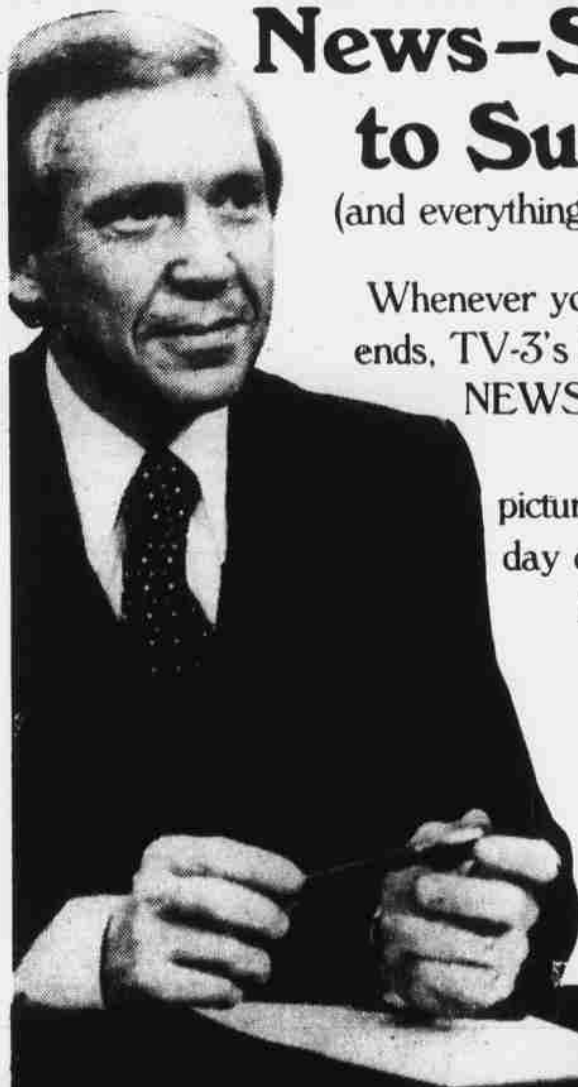
Israel is a major strategic asset, a staunch ally whose military strength stands as a deterrent to Soviet aggression in the Middle East. When our country enhances Israel's security with military assistance, economic aid and diplomatic support, we advance our strategic interests and contribute to the preservation of peace and stability in the region.

Zionism is the expression of your commitment to redeem the land of Israel and to build a state, economy, and society that will achieve the cultural revitalization, spiritual renewal and economic self-determination of the Jewish people in a nation dedicated to democracy and liberty for her people.

I join the many who are expressing solidarity with those who are building a democratic, free, and stable society in a part of the world that is essential to American security.

Again, you have my best wishes for a successful and productive meeting."

JERUSALEM (WNS) -- Labor Party chairman Shimon Peres has been invited to attend the inauguration of French president elect Francois Mitterand, it was reported. Peres reportedly spoke to Mitterand May 11, the day after the French elections. Peres has been on friendly terms with Mitterand for more than two decades but it was reported he may be unable to attend the ceremonies because of his total preoccupation in the election campaign.



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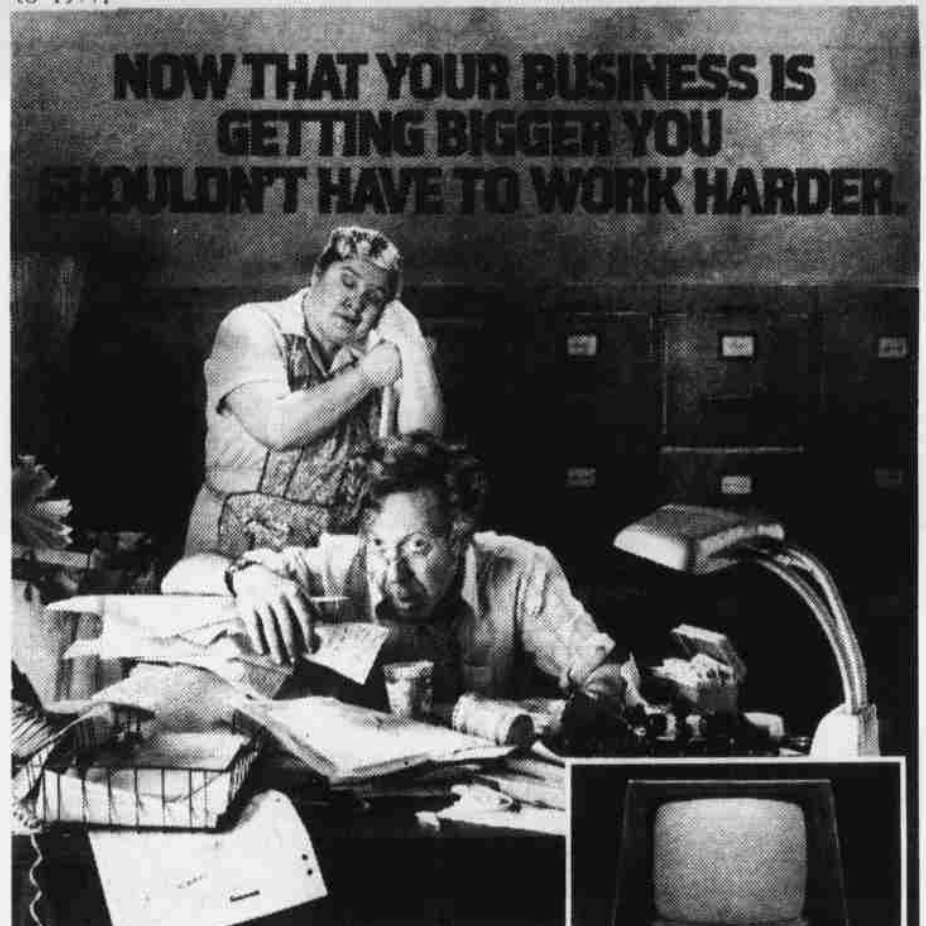


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