

**BEGIN ALLOWS PLO EVACUATION**

JERUSALEM (WNS) -- Premier Menachem Begin, concluding a six-hour debate over the war in Lebanon, offered to allow Palestine Liberation Organization forces to leave west Beirut with their personal weapons. The offer by Begin was an unexpected departure from the terms laid down previously by the cabinet which demanded that the PLO surrender its arms to the Lebanese army as a precondition for their evacuation of West Beirut and Lebanon under a safe conduct guarantee by Israel.

While the debate took place, Israel continued to observe the cease-fire around Beirut. The air force dropped leaflets over the city urging citizens to leave west Beirut and take refuge in the Israeli or Christian held areas of the city and its outskirts. The Israel army continued mopping up operations south and east of the Lebanese capital searching for Palestinian or Syrian army stragglers. The army said it was discovering new terrorist arms caches daily.

The debate meanwhile over the "Peace for Galilee" operation

which began June 5 was what amounted to an agreement between the coalition and opposition to disagree without fracturing national unity while Israeli soldiers were still on the front lines. Begin's coalition cast 60 votes in favor of a resolution supporting the government's war aims in Lebanon and its conduct of the war. The Labor alignment mustered 47 votes for its own resolution basically supporting the operation but critical of the broadening of the war after its initial objectives were achieved.

The Begin offer to allow Palestine terrorists to depart west Beirut with personal weapons was made in the course of his summing up speech at the end of the debate. He said Israel had no desire to humiliate the PLO, just rid Lebanon of their presence.

"We will now allow them to leave with their Kalachnikovs" (Russian-made automatic assault rifles), Begin said. "But they must all leave Lebanon, leaving behind their tanks and artillery."

Some sources said Begin's easing of the terms for the PLO reflected mounting

criticism at home of the expansion of the war to the outskirts of Beirut and opposition to the possible entry of Israeli troops into west Beirut and opposition to the possible entry of Israeli troops into west Beirut to oust the PLO remnants by force. It was also suggested that Begin's moderation indicated uncertainty over U.S. policy toward the war in Lebanon after the resignation of Secretary of State Alexander Haig and the nomination of George Shultz as his successor.

According to some sources, Israeli moderation could help U.S. special envoy Philip Habib who is engaged in what has been described as the most delicate phase of his negotiations in Beirut for the departure of the PLO without further bloodshed.

Defense Minister Ariel Sharon, who delivered the opening statement for the government, seemed most interested in refuting charges by Laborite and other critics that he made operational decisions without the knowledge or full comprehension of the Cabinet.

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