ISRAEL EASES PLEDGE REGIREMENT

FRENCH GOVERNMENT ACCUSED

JERUSALEM (WNS) -- Israel announced a change in the requirement that all seeking foreigners work permits on the West Bank must sign a pledge against support of the Palestine Liberation Organiza-tion "or any other hostile organization as defined by law." In-stead, the civil administration on the West Bank announced that the pledge has been incorporated into the application for a work permit which each applicant must fill out and sign.

Immediate reaction from West Bank academics, who refused to sign the pledge on grounds that it infringed upon academic freedom, charged that the change was merely intended cosmetic, to stifle the storm of controversy the pledge requirement has generated in Israel and abroad. But Israeli legal of-

insisted the ficials change was substantial.

These officials said that although the text is identical, the appli-cant is no longer re-quired to sign a plenge but merely to sign a form to the effect she has that he or been warned that their work permit will lapse if they should engage in any act in support of the PLO or any other hostile group. Accorging to some observers, this dif-ference, though subtle, should enable foreign academics on the West Bank to sign the appli-cation without compromising the principles of academic freedom.

Pressure to rescind the pledge requirement mounted in recently, especially after reports said that Israel would extend it to foreign clergymen and women who work in social, educational and medical insti-

West tutions on the Bank. In the U.S., Secretary of State George Shultz sharply criticized the pledge requirement and urged the academic communities in Israel and elsewhere to speak out against it.

In Washington, the State Department said it welcomed the change of policy by the Israeli authorities but refused to take credit for it. The Department spokesman said it "welcomes what appears to be a moderation" of the earlier directive that would have academics sign the pledge. The spokesman said the matter was an internal Israeli decision and that Shultz' criticism was not the reason for the Israeli action.

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PARIS (WNS) -- The | France charged here. government French has brought Franco-Israeli economic relations to a virtual since the standstill beginning of the war in Lebanon, the Israeli Ambassador to

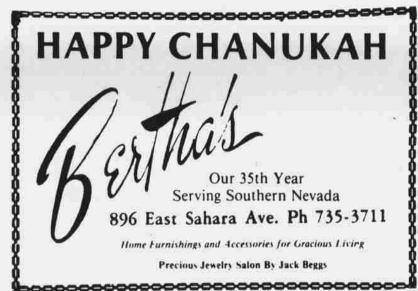
Meir Rosenne charged that the decisions taken at a meeting of the Franco - Israeli joint economic commission which last met in April, have not

been implemented and

the French have attempted to slow down commercial exchanges between the two countries.

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