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GEHEIM

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Aan Zijne Excellentie Prof. Dr. L.J.M. BEEL  
Minister-President

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'S-GRAVENHAGE.

Israel/France

**GEHEIM**ISRAELI-FRENCH RELATIONS

Israel's extreme rightist Herut party, which advocates an aggressive foreign policy, is calling for a formal Israeli-French alliance. During the parliamentary election campaign this summer and fall, Herut leaders apparently intend to accuse Prime Minister BEN -GURION of jeopardizing Israeli security by failing to secure a regular treaty.

The government maintains that a formal alliance is not desirable at this time because it would restrict Israel's freedom of action, and that all the assistance which could reasonably be expected from France has been forthcoming under the existing relationship. Furthermore, it contends that the French Government likewise sees no particular advantage in an alliance at present.

The Herut party has challenged the government to produce evidence to support its position. BEN-GURION accordingly has instructed the Israeli ambassador to make an official approach to Paris to confirm the French attitude. Recent visits to France by Foreign Minister MEIR and the director general of the Defense Ministry may also be related to this effort to minimize the election significance of the issue. At the same time, the Israeli Embassy has sought to limit the unofficial contacts of Herut leaders in Paris, and so far it has succeeded in thwarting their attempts to deal directly with De GAULLE.

The appointment of Jacques SOUSTELLE as deputy premier in the DEBRE cabinet has undoubtedly encouraged the Herut campaign. SOUSTELLE, who has close relations with the Herut party, has long advocated a formal French-Israeli alliance, although his motivations are

primarily anti-Arab, and particularly anti-NASIR, rather than pro-Israeli. He reportedly believes a strong Israel would keep the Arab world preoccupied and permit France to resolve its problems in North Africa with a minimum of Arab interference. French Foreign Ministry officials, on the other hand, have apparently convinced De GAULLE that France should tone down its relationship with Israel and that a pact with Israel would endanger French-Arab relations.

Meanwhile, quiet military cooperation between France and Israel is continuing. Israeli naval units recently participated in anti-submarine warfare exercises with the French Navy, and Israeli submarine crews have been training in France in preparation for the receipt of Israel's first two submarines from the United Kingdom.

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