

**REAGAN WITHDRAWS HIS OFFER TO SELL
ANTI-AIRCRAFT MISSILES TO JORDAN**

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, March 21 (JTA) — President Reagan, bowing to Congressional opposition, has withdrawn his offer to sell 1,613 Stinger anti-aircraft missiles to Jordan and 1,200 to Saudi Arabia.

The announcement was made this morning by White House spokesman Larry Speakes who said the President reached his decision last night. At the State Department, Department Deputy spokesman Alan Romberg said the decision was made after an "assessment of the legislative situation" in which opposition to the mobile ground-to-air missiles had been increasing.

Sen. Bob Packwood (R. Ore.) has gathered 55 signatures on a letter to Reagan opposing the sale of the Stingers, more than half of the Republican controlled Senate. Sen. Robert Kasten (R. Wis.) was planning to add an amendment rejecting the sale as part of an appropriations bill. In the Democratic-controlled House, Rep. Larry Smith (D. Fla.) introduced legislation to block the sale last week.

Hussein's Statements Were The Catalyst

Romberg conceded today that the statements by King Hussein of Jordan refusing negotiations with Israel were the catalyst that insured success to the opponents of the sale. There has long been strong opposition in Congress to providing Hussein with technically advanced U.S. weapons as long as Jordan does not enter the peace process.

Secretary of State George Shultz hinted as much yesterday when he said at his press conference that while Reagan had been "ready to put on a major effort" to get the Stinger sale approved, "There was no question about the fact that King Hussein's statements constitute a very serious setback to chances of Congressional approval."

Hinting At A Quid Pro Quo

Shultz seemed to also be hinting yesterday that he would like to see Congress abandon efforts to force the Administration to move the U.S. Embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem in return for Administration abandonment of the Stingers sale. "There are a variety of other issues that have been raised in Congress that have to do with stability and development in the Middle East," he said. "Particularly the proposal that the U.S. Embassy should be moved to Jerusalem."

Romberg said today that he could not "predict" what the effect would be of the President's decision on the Stingers. But efforts were continuing in both the House and Senate today to gather co-sponsors for the bills directing the move of the Embassy.

Romberg said that the sale of missiles to Saudi Arabia was dropped along with that of Jordan because the two were linked to Congress. He said the U.S. is committed to the security of the two countries and will take "appropriate steps" to ensure it.

Speakes said that Reagan would continue to seek \$220 million to equip two Jordanian brigades for a rapid deployment force able to intervene if pro-Western Arab states are threatened.

**REPORT TO BE RELEASED IN APRIL
SAYS U.S. JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS
WERE FAULTY IN EFFORTS TO SAVE
THE VICTIMS OF THE HOLOCAUST**

By Yitzhak Rabi

NEW YORK, March 21 (JTA) — A report to the American Jewish Commission on the Holocaust, to be released at the beginning of April, concludes that American Jewish organizations were faulty in their efforts to save the victims of the Holocaust because they were not united.

The author of the report, Prof. Seymour Finger of the Graduate School of the City University of New York and the Commission's director of research, said today in a telephone interview with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that "the American Jewish organizations had relatively little power (during the Holocaust in Europe) but they did try to save the Jews. They tried, but they were hampered by a lack of unity. There was not a sustained unified effort on the part of the Jewish organizations to save the Jews of Europe."

Say New York Times Story Was Incorrect

Finger, and Rabbi Moshe Sherer, president of Agudah Israel of America and a member of the Holocaust Commission, also told the JTA that a story in today's New York Times on the report was "incorrect," mainly because it failed to point out that the report is not the Commission's report but a report submitted to it by Finger.

According to Finger, the main points of the report are that "Hitler was the arch criminal who was responsible for the Holocaust and that the Allied governments had the power to do something to rescue the Jews of Europe but were unwilling to divert resources from the war in order to rescue Jews."

Finger said that the Jewish organizations "had more faith in the willingness of President Roosevelt and Churchill to give priority to saving the Jews than was justified by the events."

He said that, in addition, the Jewish organizations in America at that time were "too patriotic" and were not willing "to break the law" in order to save the Jews. "An exception to that was the Orthodox Jewish organizations, who gave top priority to saving the Jews," Finger pointed out.

Finger said that members of the Commission have seen the report but were not asked "to approve it or disapprove it."

Sherer said that the report "is purely the view of the professional staff of the Commission and not of the Commission members themselves."

Report Praises Orthodox Jewish Organizations

Sherer noted that in the report Finger praises the Orthodox Jewish organizations for "having saved significant numbers of Jews."

But Sherer added that he does not agree with the overall conclusions of the report because Finger "engages in a seesaw effort to be painstakingly candid and at the same time protective about the secular American Jewish leadership whose poor performance during the Holocaust years is J'accuse against the most prominent Jewish leaders of that time."

The Commission, an unofficial group of 35 prominent American Jews, was established in September, 1981, to study what the organized Jewish community did or failed to do to save European Jewry during the years 1939-1945. It was disbanded in August, 1982, in a flurry of controversy over an interim report on the role of the Jewish community. One Commission member, Samuel Merlin, resigned.

Jack Eisner, a New York businessman who had survived the Holocaust and who was the Commission's principal financial supporter, withdrew his support, charging that "the vestiges of the old establishment" were seeking to whitewash their role.

Merlin, the director of the Institute for Mediterranean Affairs in New York, which studies events in the Middle East and World War II, including the Holocaust, along with a team of assistants, wrote an opening draft report that was critical of the established Jewish community in the U.S., for failing to act forcefully and exert sufficient pressure on the Roosevelt Administration to increase immigration quotas for European Jews.

Merlin came under fire from members of the established Jewish community who were also members of the Commission and who sought to have their respective organizations' names and predecessors, in some cases, deleted from the critical report.

When the Commission was disbanded, Arthur Goldberg, the Commission's chairman, a former Supreme Court Justice and U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, said he would help reconstitute the Commission by guaranteeing its financing. Finger said that his published report next month will include an introduction by Goldberg. The New York Times today quoted Goldberg as saying: "As much as it hurts me to have to say it, we did not do enough. Nobody did enough."

LEBANESE RECONCILIATION TALKS END IN TOTAL FAILURE By Tamar Levy

LAUSANNE, March 21 (JTA) -- The Lebanese national reconciliation conference ended here last night after nine days of fruitless deliberations between the leaders of the warring Christian and Moslem factions failed to achieve even a semblance of unity.

"It is a complete failure. Fighting will start soon once again. Nothing has been achieved." That was the only consensus among the various delegates as they boarded their planes to return home. Fighting in fact was resumed only a few days after an "indefinite" cease-fire was called a week ago and reached a new pitch of intensity this morning.

The conference produced no agreements, even in principle, over how Lebanon is to be governed in the future and no formula for sharing political power. It did call for the formation of a constitutional commission of 32 members to be appointed by President Amine Gemayel. The commission's task is to prepare a draft constitution and report its results within six months.

But the conferees themselves acknowledged that this was little more than a face-saving device permitting them to return home not empty-handed. The same was said of another document calling for a separation of forces in Lebanon, return of soldiers to their barracks and a cessation of negative media campaigns.

This was the second national reconciliation conference to end in failure. The first, held in Geneva last November, broke up after four days. But the latest round can be considered at least a Pyrrhic victory

for the Maronite Christian faction headed by Gemayel who remains in office for the time being. It was also a setback for the Syrians who dominated the proceedings behind the scenes and desired an agreement which would have substantially increased the power of the Druze and Shiite Moslem factions which Syria has backed against the Gemayel regime.

Some Lebanese sources close to Druze leader Walid Jumblatt blamed Israel today for the failure of the conference. They claimed that the Christians were under heavy pressure from Israel to yield nothing. Nevertheless, some observers believe that a third round of reconciliation talks is possible sometime in the future.

PLO WILL NOT PARTICIPATE IN OLYMPICS By Kevin Freeman

NEW YORK, March 21 (JTA) -- The Palestine Liberation Organization will not be participating in the 1984 Summer Olympic Games in Los Angeles, according to Olympic Organizing officials in Los Angeles.

Answering questions at a news conference last week, Peter Ueberroth, president of the Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee, told reporters "there would not be a PLO team at the 1984 Olympic games."

The PLO has never participated in the Olympic Games and it remained unclear whether the PLO had issued a formal application to the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to participate in the games. Only IOC members can participate.

It was understood that one factor weighing against the PLO fielding a team at the Olympics is the PLO's lack of a "territorial" base. Undoubtedly, another would be the PLO's involvement in the massacre of 11 Israeli athletes at the 1972 Olympic games in Munich.

Palestinian and Arab groups in the U.S. did not know whether the PLO had issued a formal application for entry into the IOC. A PLO team would also raise the issue of the current travel restrictions placed on PLO representatives in the United States.

LIKUD, LABOR FACE PROSPECTS OF INTERNAL BATTLES AS BOTH PARTIES PREPARE FOR EARLY ELECTIONS By David Landau

JERUSALEM, March 21 (JTA) -- Likud and the Labor Alignment face the prospect of internal leadership struggles as both major parties prepared today for early elections which political pundits consider to be inevitable.

The Knesset will begin debate tomorrow on an early elections bill introduced by Labor and supported by several Likud Liberals and by the Tami party which announced that it would introduce an early elections bill of its own.

The combination of opposition and coalition forces are sufficient, according to most observers, to pass a bill to dissolve the Knesset and set a date for elections.

Premier Yitzhak Shamir, who tried desperately to avoid an early trip to the polls, appeared resigned today that he will have to face the voters at least a year before Likud's mandate expires in November, 1985. But he would like to postpone the elections as long as possible to give his government a chance to deal effectively with the economy and the volatile situation in Lebanon.

Labor Party chairman Shimon Peres feels his chances of unseating Likud are best if the election campaign is short and free from the internal rancor that has split Labor during its years in opposition. Accordingly, he is seeking to deflect the challenge posed to his leadership by former Premier Yitzhak Rabin. Labor activists believe this can be accomplished by summoning former President Yitzhak Navon to take a major role in the upcoming campaign.

The idea is that a Peres-Rabin-Navon troika, can lead Labor to victory, Navon being immensely popular with the public. Since he is Sephardic, he is expected to appeal to many of the Sephardic voters who supported Likud in the 1977 and 1981 elections.

Furthermore, as a close personal friend of Peres, Navon is not expected to contest Peres' leadership of the Labor Party. As for Rabin, Labor strategists are confident that if the Alignment, together with Tami, succeed in forcing an early summer election date, he will abandon his rivalry with Peres, at least for the time being, so as not to be depicted as a "spoiler" during what would be a brief but bitter election campaign against Likud.

Navon, who is presently in the United States, told the newspaper Yediot Achronot in a telephone interview yesterday that he has not yet received a call from Labor to return home. He said, however, that he would welcome a decision for early elections. According to Davar, Navon will be called home as soon as the Knesset adopts an early elections bill.

Tami leader Aharon Abu-Hatzeira, whose surprise announcement Monday in favor of early elections touched off the race, is trying to persuade Shamir to agree to a May or June date. At a meeting with the Premier last night, he reportedly argued that the sooner the elections, the less chance of a leadership fight within Likud.

Shamir May Be Challenged By Levy

Shamir may be challenged again by Deputy Premier David Levy, as he was last September after Premier Menachem Begin resigned. At that time the Herut Central Committee favored Shamir by a 60-40 percent margin. Relations between the two men have been strained ever since.

While Levy may have gained strength in the interim, most observers believe he could not seriously threaten Shamir unless he is joined by former Defense Minister Ariel Sharon. But a Levy-Sharon team is considered remote.

Sharon, presently a Minister-Without-Portfolio, has made no secret of his ambition to become Prime Minister. But even if he makes a leadership bid on his own, he is not viewed as a serious challenge to Shamir.

Weizman To Lead New Centrist Party

Meanwhile, a new-old face entered the picture last night when former Defense Minister Ezer Weizman announced that he would head a new centrist party in the next elections. Weizman, who resigned from Likud over policy differences with Begin after the 1981 elections, accompanied his announcement with a barrage of criticism against the Likud-led government.

He accused it of failure to seize the opportunities presented by the 1979 peace treaty with Egypt to broaden the peace process. He linked this with Israel's economic morass, contending that proper

exploitation of the peace would have given Israel vital regional markets for its exports. At present the economy is burdened by a \$1 billion foreign trade gap.

Weizman referred to a "team" working with him to form a new party but did not divulge their names. Some observers believe they include Gen. Mordechai Hod, a former Air Force commander; Dan Tolkowsky, also a former Air Force chief and now a banker; industrialist Avraham Shavit; and Binyamin Ben-Eliezer, the coordinator of West Bank activities.

Weizman himself has been involved in shipping, automobile importing and automobile rental since his retirement. His new party, if it materializes, is expected to have a strong business orientation.

Announcement Greeted With Derision

But Weizman's announcement was greeted with derision from both the left and right. His criticism of the war in Lebanon prompted Labor Party dove Yossi Sarid to ask, "Where was he for the past two years?"

Yitzhak Berman, a Likud Liberal who resigned from the government over the Lebanon war and may establish an opposition party of his own, called Weizman an "opportunist." "Ezer kept his mouth shut, kept his options open, and sat waiting for a call from Begin or Shamir to rejoin the government," he charged.

Political observers predict that any new centrist party would make a poor showing in the next elections. They recalled the attempt by Yigael Yadin, the world famous archaeologist, whose Democratic Movement for Change (DMC) won 15 Knesset seats in the 1977 elections, only to fall apart and disappear by the time the next elections were held in 1981.

Likud politicians, while disowning Weizman, would welcome a new party under his leadership on the supposition that whatever votes it drew would be at the expense of Labor. But Laborites who supported the DMC seven years ago—contributing to Begin's landslide victory over Labor that year—are believed to be disillusioned with any attempt to form a new centrist party.

CANADA TO ACT AGAINST WAR CRIMINALS By Michael Solomon

MONTREAL, March 21 (JTA) — Canada may revoke the citizenship of anyone who lied about committing war crimes when applying for immigrant status in Canada, Solicitor General Robert Kaplan told the Justice Committee in Parliament yesterday.

He said, "This is a totally domestic method of dealing with bringing war criminals to justice in Canada." The option could be used in cases where the Canadian government has not received an extradition request from another country or where the country making such a request does not have a democratic system providing for fair trial, Kaplan explained. He was referring to repeated extradition requests by the Soviet Union for alleged Nazi war criminals living in Canada.

Robert Simmonds, Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), told the committee that he and other members of the national police force have visited foreign countries to collect information to support extradition requests or moves to revoke Canadian citizenship. He said the RCMP has found enough evidence in "a couple of cases" to recommend that citizenship be revoked. Neither Simmonds nor Kaplan would disclose the identities of the Canadian citizens under investigation as alleged war criminals.

JEWISH GROUPS SAY DEFEAT OF SCHOOL PRAYER AMENDMENT IS A VICTORY FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

By Ben Gallab

NEW YORK, March 21 (JTA) -- Major Jewish organizations hailed today the rejection by the Senate yesterday of a proposed constitutional amendment to permit prayer in the public schools, agreeing generally the vote was a victory for religious freedom.

While the Republican-controlled Senate cast a majority for the proposal, for which President Reagan had lobbied vigorously, the vote fell short of the needed two-thirds majority required in each house as a first step for a constitutional amendment. The vote was 56 to 44, 11 short of the two-thirds of the 100 Senators needed for approval. Sen. Lowell Weicker (R. Conn.) led the fight against Senate approval.

Howard Friedman, American Jewish Committee president, said the American people now had the time to "think more deeply" about the "dangers" of changing the First Amendment guarantee of protection of religious liberty.

Declaring that the Committee firmly opposed any constitutional amendment to allow school prayer as a "divisive act" which could injure the rights of religious minorities and others, Friedman said the human rights agency remained ready to join with others to help "construct a consensus around the teaching of such core American values as honesty, compassion, patriotism, reverence and respect for the rights, freedom and feelings of others."

U.S Saved From Divisiveness

Gerald Kraft, president of B'nai B'rith International, said the vote saved the United States from the divisiveness that would permeate the classroom if the students were subjected to daily decisions about differing versions of prayers.

Reiterating earlier arguments against the proposed amendment, Kraft said that if a prayer "has real content, it is bound to either offend or to put pressure on someone. If it has no real content, then it makes a mockery of religion and ultimately encourages spiritual shallowness."

He lauded the action of the Senators "who chose to maintain the constitution as the brilliant unencumbered document that has allowed American pluralism and democracy to endure."

Victory For Church-State Separation Principle

Rabbi Mordecai Waxman, president of the Synagogue Council of America, representing the rabbinical and congregational agencies of Reform, Conservative and Orthodox Judaism, said the defeat of the prayer amendment "is a victory for the principal of the separation of church and state which has served both religious and non-religious people so well."

He said the United States was a country with a strong religious commitment precisely because "minorities have been free to follow their religious beliefs and because majorities have been circumspect about the rights of others."

Asserting that the function of the public schools is to communicate general knowledge, Waxman declared that "prayer is not a proper function of the public schools and neither the public schools nor children should be used as vehicles by religious bodies to advance their viewpoints."

Howard Squadron, president of the American Jewish Congress, said the vote in the Senate was "a welcome reaffirmation" of the "continuing vitality" of the principle of church-state separation, as well as "a recognition of the critical importance of preserving religious pluralism."

He declared that the opposition to the proposal by so many religious groups "demonstrates that, far from representing hostility to religion, the prohibition against joining religion and state is indispensable to the integrity of religious beliefs."

"This vote should put an end to ill-conceived and ill-advised efforts to upset those historic arrangements which have served our pluralistic society so well," he said.

Reaffirmation Of Founder's Ideal

Seymour Reich, chairman of the civil rights committee of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, called the vote "the Senate's reaffirmation of the Founding Fathers' ideal that government must be kept separate from religion."

He said the vote "does not take prayer out of the schools -- individual students always had, and still have, the right to pray privately, in whatever manner or locale they choose. The Senate's action leaves intact 20 years of Supreme Court precedent banning official school prayer activities."

Julius Berman, president of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, sent a telegram to Weicker, declaring that the Orthodox Union "strongly" supported the Senator's efforts "to preserve the integrity of the United States Constitution by opposing" the proposed amendment.

Rabbi Alexander Schindler, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, said the Senate "acted wisely" in rejecting the amendment. "In doing so, it has reaffirmed the historic constitutional principle of separation of church and state." He added that "religious liberty and religion itself will continue to flourish in America so long as this wise enactment of our Founding Fathers remains inviolate."

UN HAS FIRST PURIM PARTY

UNITED NATIONS, March 21 (JTA) -- The International Council of B'nai B'rith Monday night hosted the first United Nations Purim party ever held at UN headquarters. Speaking for International Council chairman Philip Lax, who was unable to attend, Dr. Harris Schoenberg, director of United Nations Affairs, said he hopes it will be the first annual UN Purim party and that there will always be something to celebrate.

Illustrating his remarks with Purim and UN stories, Schoenberg recalled the central role of Jews who contributed to the drafting of the UN Charter and the codification of an international bill of human rights.

"Like Mordecai and Esther of old, they had served the common welfare after helping to rid the world of a vicious tyrant with genocidal intent," Schoenberg said. "Today we again face anti-Semites, this time inside the UN. Jews feel alienated and threatened. But with the help of modern Jewish heroes and heroines we will overcome the hatemongers and restore the UN to the purposes and principles of its Charter."

TEL AVIV (JTA) -- Sando Giorgio of Rumania won the 42.1 kilometer main event in the fourth annual Tel Aviv marathon, a Purim contest sponsored by the Haapoel Sports Club here. There were 320 entrants, including visitors from 15 countries competing in the race.