

REAGAN ADMINISTRATION WILL TRY TO PREVENT CONGRESS FROM REJECTING SALE OF MISSILES TO SAUDI ARABIA

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, March 12 (JTA) — The Reagan Administration will try to prevent Congress from rejecting its proposal to sell \$354 million in missiles to Saudi Arabia, by stressing the Saudis need the weapons to defend themselves and other Persian Gulf states from Iran.

The missile package which was sent to Congress Tuesday does "not represent a threat to Israel," a senior Administration official asserted in briefing reporters Tuesday. "This sale will not threaten Israel's qualitative military edge nor change the power equation in the Middle East," he stressed.

The proposed sale includes 1,666 Sidewinder air-to-air missiles, of which 995 are the most advanced type of Sidewinder; 200 Stinger shoulder-fired ground-to-air missile systems plus 600 replacement missiles; and 100 Harpoon air-to-sea missiles. The Saudis now have 2500 Sidewinders, 200 Stinger systems with 200 replacement missiles and 178 Harpoon sea-to-sea missiles.

Reasons For Advancing The Arms Package

The official said that the Administration had planned to propose this package at the end of the year but had advanced it because of the threat caused by Iranian troops moving to the border of Kuwait. "That not only threatens our interests but deeply troubles our friends in the area," he said.

The official also pointed to the current unstable situation in South Yemen "exacerbated by Soviet interference" which he said "raises the potential of a renewed threat on Saudi Arabia's southern border."

At the same time, the official conceded that deliveries of the missiles would not start until 1989 and run through 1991. However, he stressed, "the fact of American support for Saudi Arabia will act as a deterrent on Iran."

He added that "acting now will send a clear signal to Iran. It will also reduce the chances that we would have to take emergency action later on our own to protect our own interests."

U.S. Credibility At Stake

Perhaps the most important reason was noted by the official when he said that the Saudis have been pressing the U.S. to move on the sale. "Our bilateral relationship with Saudi Arabia and of equal importance, our credibility with the rest of the moderate Arabs, will be advanced by this sale," he said.

The official would not assess whether the Israel government's decision not to publicly campaign against the sale means a lessening of Israeli opposition. He noted that the Israel Cabinet said that on principle it was opposed to arms sales to Arab countries that are still at war with Israel.

The official said that this would be the last major sale to the Saudis this year except for the possible beginning of delivery in June of AWACS sold in 1981.

Unless both Houses of Congress reject the sale within 50 days, it will go through. Since the House is expected to certainly reject it, the real battle will be in the Senate, where Sen. Alan Cranston (D. Cal.) has already begun collecting signatures for a resolution of disapproval.

Members of the Senate and House have long argued that the Saudis have not been helpful in the peace process and have funded the Palestine Liberation Organization. This same argument will be used in an effort to block delivery of the AWACS. "Friends don't always do what we want and we don't always do what they want," is the way the official answered the argument.

At The Herut Convention: SHAMIR SUFFERS A STINGING SETBACK AS ONE OF HIS STAUNCH SUPPORTERS IS DEFEATED BY SHARON

By David Landau

TEL AVIV, March 12 (JTA) — The power struggle that marked the 15th Herut convention here this week intensified Wednesday after the camp of Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir suffered a stinging defeat at the hands of Shamir's arch rival for the leadership of Herut, Ariel Sharon.

The outspoken hardliner, who is Minister of Commerce and Industry, decisively defeated Binyamin Zeev Begin, a staunch Shamir supporter, for the post of chairman of the key Mandates Committee. The 1,082-865 vote cast in Sharon's favor in the pre-dawn balloting reflected the successful mobilization of the forces of Sharon and of Housing Minister David Levy, another strong aspirant for party leadership, who have joined in an alliance against Shamir and his close associate, Minister-Without-Portfolio Moshe Arens.

The vote also reflected an apparent grass-roots swing against the Herut old guard. Begin, a geologist new to politics, is the son of former Premier Menachem Begin, founder of Herut. He was the choice of the Shamir-Arens camp to face Sharon, in no small measure because of the Begin name which is revered in Herut circles.

Defeat Overshadows Previous Victory

His defeat overshadowed the important victory gained by the Shamir forces Monday when Moshe Katzav, Minister of Labor and Social Welfare, beat Eliahu Ben-Elissar, the choice of the Sharon-Levy alliance for the post of chairman of the convention Presidium. Katzav won by a vote of 940-900. His modest plurality paled before the 56-44 percent victory of Sharon over Begin.

The Mandates Committee is crucial to the outcome of the convention because it has the authority to add delegates to those already registered. Scores of would-be delegates have appealed for seats at the convention on a variety of technical grounds, and Sharon, as chairman, will have a decisive role in ruling on those appeals. The Mandates Committee also rules on the validity of votes cast.

Shamir, visibly furious over the outcome of the Wednesday morning vote, denounced his rivals as "a

gang of criminals" as he strode out of the packed hall on the Tel Aviv fair-grounds. It was perhaps an impulsive remark that he let slip in the heat of anger. But it raised a question as to whether the Herut convention would close behind a facade of unity or as bitterly divided as its sessions so far have indicated the party to be.

The convention was scheduled to run from Sunday night to Wednesday night. But considering the disarray, it is not now expected to end until some time Friday morning. "We will get out of this circus. We will once again become a serious movement," Shamir told reporters Wednesday night. He called Sharon's victory "the result of groups trying to hijack our movement by force."

The next key vote is for chairmanship of the Standing Committee in which David Levy will be pitted against Moshe Arens. The Standing Committee will decide the membership of Herut's new Central Committee, the body that governs the party between conventions and selects its candidate for Premier and its Knesset list in the next elections.

Sharon mounted the podium Wednesday night to propose a slate of 90 members of the Mandate Committee, many of them identified as his or Levy's supporters. Transport Minister Haim Corfu followed with a list of 70 candidates, drawn mainly from the Shamir-Arens camp. There was much shouting and milling about on the convention floor after Presidium chairman Katzav called a recess.

At a caucus of Shamir supporters Wednesday, the consensus was that the younger Begin lost the vote because Sharon succeeded "in turning (their contest) into a personal issue." That was a reference to Sharon's claim in a speech to the convention Tuesday night that there was a "stop Sharon" syndrome which originated in the Labor Party and was "adopted by certain circles in our own movement."

Basis For Pro-Sharon Shift

It was, indeed, clear that many uncommitted convention delegates who sided with the Shamir-Arens camp Monday, shifted their sympathy to Sharon after he claimed with some credibility that Begin's main purpose was to "thwart" him.

Begin has made no secret of his conviction that Sharon must be prevented from rising to the pinnacle of the Herut movement. In this he is believed to reflect the views of his father, who sent a message to the convention opening urging the delegates to unite behind Shamir.

While most observers believe that devices will be found to end the convention with a modicum of good grace and an appearance of unity, political analysts see the week's events as having wrought — or perhaps merely expressed — a massive ongoing change in the party once autocratically ruled by the charismatic Menachem Begin.

While Begin sits in his suburban Jerusalem home, a semi-recluse, his party is seen to be swept along by a grass-roots groundswell made up largely of Sephardic elements no longer content to take second place to the mainly Ashkenazic founding fathers of Herut.

This movement is led by David Levy rather than Sharon. It was Levy's populist rhetoric that fired the rank-and-file delegates from the down-at-the-heel urban fringes and development towns. They were not prepared to support a political unknown, albeit Menachem Begin's son. "There are no princes in our movement," was a slogan much heard in the convention hall.

Another battle cry, perhaps more significant, was "Yesterday a doctor (the younger Begin holds a doctorate in geology) and today a professor," a reference to Arens who had been a professor of aeronautical engineering before entering politics. The slogan is anti-intellectual. Levy caught the mood of these delegates. Shamir did not.

Inevitably, the Levy-Sharon alliance of convenience will fall apart. Both men are immensely ambitious and have strong personalities. Each will soon make his bid for the leadership of Herut. But for the time being, they stand together to erode the power and authority of Shamir.

Shamir's immediate status seems safe. He is protected by the rotation-of-power agreement with Labor Party leader Shimon Peres which underlies the Labor-Likud unity coalition. Under the agreement, Peres must relinquish the Premiership to Likud next October 13 — but only to Shamir.

Assuming the rotation takes place and Shamir serves out the final two years of the unity government's mandate, his political future and the futures of others in his camp are gravely threatened as the course of the Herut convention has amply demonstrated.

MURPHY SEEKS WAYS TO ADVANCE STALLED MIDEAST PEACE PROCESS

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, March 12 (JTA) — Assistant Secretary of State Richard Murphy met with Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir and Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin Wednesday in another effort by the U.S. Administration to advance the stalled peace process. Murphy, who is Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, arrived here Tuesday from Cairo.

American diplomatic sources here have expressed disappointment that Jordan has failed to bring the Palestinians into the negotiating picture. King Hussein announced last month he was abandoning his year-long effort to persuade Palestine Liberation Organization chief Yasir Arafat to accept the basic conditions for peace talks.

Hussein is now urging the Palestinians in the administered territories to elect their own leaders "to put an end to the Israeli occupation." He reiterated Jordan's determination to assist them, but only if it does not clash with Jordan's security interests. Hussein reminded the Palestinians that Jordan is not a substitute for the PLO.

JNF PROJECTS TO IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR TEL AVIV AREA RESIDENTS

JERUSALEM, March 12 (JTA) — From garbage dump to rose garden. This transformation will result from two Jewish National Fund projects to improve the quality of life for Tel Aviv area residents.

The JNF announced it will create a park on a 750-acre waste site near the depressed Hatikva quarter of Tel Aviv. Grass, trees and flowers will bloom, fertilized by the thousands of tons of refuse which now occupy the area. A similar garbage dump at the south-eastern outskirts of the city, along the highway from Ben Gurion Airport, will also be turned into a park.

Another JNF project involves the transplanting of 1,000 antique olive trees from Galilee to the Jerusalem area. Jerusalem will gain the trees and Galilee an additional 1,250 acres of farmland.

SPECIAL TO THE JTA BRAZILIAN JEWISH COMMUNITY DEBATES ITS ROLE IN FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS

By Manuel Tenenbaum

SAO PAULO, March 12 (JTA) — Brazil's advancement on the road to democracy and the forthcoming Parliamentary elections have sparked widespread debate within the Jewish community as to its stance regarding the elections and vis-a-vis the democratic process in general, the World Jewish Congress reported here.

As a sign of the new democratic era, elections for the Constituent Assembly have become an issue for heated polemics within the Jewish community, particularly among its institutional leaders. "What should the community do?" they are asking — give its support to individual candidates? Promote Jewish candidates?

This polemic, which reflects the changes that democracy has brought to the Jewish communities of South America, is being waged entirely in the open, and organs such as "Resenha Judaica," the Jewish communal newspaper here, give it publicity without inhibition.

Bernard Milnitzky, president of the Confederaçao Israelita do Brasil and president-elect of the WJC Latin American branch, stated:

"The community, since it is not a political party and is integrated into the civilian Brazilian society, cannot have direct representation in the Constituent Assembly. What it can do is to participate in the procedure, acting within the Assembly, to ensure that the constitution to be approved contains safeguards considered indispensable for the proper functioning of the law."

Conditions For Supporting Candidates

Questioned by a reporter on whether there are conditions for the community's support of individual candidates, Milnitzky replied in the negative. He added that "The candidates represent parties with varying, and even opposing, ideologies. It is the community's duty, however, to guide the voters who belong to it with regard to the various ideologies and concerning candidates who, in one way or another manner, are hostile to the community."

Jose Knoplich, president of the Jewish Federation of Sao Paulo, wrote in an article that "The Federation will not remain with folded arms in these forthcoming elections, and intends to mobilize the yishuv (Jewish community) so that Sao Paulo may have a Jewish representation in the Constituent Assembly."

Knoplich explained that the Sao Paulo Federation will make sure that the most important parties, when appointing candidates of Jewish origin, do so in contact with the Federation "so as to avoid harmful divisions."

Another well-known Jewish leader, Marcos Arbatman, feels that community leadership should support one Jewish candidate capable of being elected, in order to avoid the dispersal and waste of Jewish votes.

The leader of the Sao Paulo Hebraica, Bernardo Goldfarb, intervened in the debate to state that "The Jewish Federation is not qualified to indicate anybody," adding, "We have to defend our interests vis-a-vis the entire Constituent Assembly, and make the elected candidates aware of the community's points of view."

Since the establishment of the civilian regime in Brazil a year ago, there has been an avalanche of appointments of Jewish public officials in the State and municipal administration. Some are linked to the Jewish community, many are not.

With Parliamentary elections in the offing, the majority of Jewish candidates have chosen to contest seats in the State Parliaments. At this level, their chances are better than on the federal level, since the entire Jewish population of Brazil is no more than one percent of the general population.

SOVIET DELEGATE TO UN UNLEASHES A FIERCE ATTACK AGAINST ISRAEL

By Tamar Levy

GENEVA, March 12 (JTA) — A fierce attack on Israel by a fist-pounding Soviet delegate who likened Zionism to neo-Nazism triggered an angry three-way exchange pitting Israel and the United States against the Soviet Union at a session of the United Nations Human Rights Commission here.

"We have never heard such harsh language and such blatant hate at this UN forum," said one Western delegate referring to Soviet delegate Dimitri Bykov's tirade against Israel. The verbal warfare erupted last week in the course of a debate on measures against totalitarian ideologies and practices.

Representatives of Jewish non-governmental organizations attending the session said they could not recall when a Soviet delegate had been so openly anti-Semitic and so unrestrained in his attacks on the U.S. as well as Israel.

Bykov alleged a spiritual, political and ideological relationship between fascism and Zionism, and accused Israel of practices in the Middle East that aped Hitler's laws and methods. He also charged that Jews helped Hitler to power and financed his war machine.

Ephraim Dubek, the Israeli delegate, said he had never heard such virulent and vicious anti-Semitism in the Palais des Nations and doubted that even the Nazis ever resorted to such diatribes against Jews in the old League of Nations.

He said he thanked God the USSR has no common borders with Israel because the Soviets "would have no qualms to unleash their tanks and armor on Tel Aviv and Jerusalem as they did in Budapest, Prague and Kabul and were on the verge of doing in Warsaw."

U.S. delegate Richard Schifter was drawn into the fray when Bykov accused the U.S. of harboring Nazi war criminals and allowing them to work for Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty. "That criticism from the Soviet Union comes with particular ill grace because the poisoned fruit of a system which one thought came to an end 40 years ago has sprouted new roots in that country," Schifter said.

He noted that the U.S. is a free country where the spoken word was not a basis for punishment. Individuals found to have been Nazi war criminals are deported, he said, and recently one was extradited to Israel to stand trial.

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Despite opposition by Orthodox elements, the Israel Philatelic Service will issue next May three new stamps, depicting the three main trends in Judaism. One stamp will depict Yeshiva University, the second will be dedicated to the Rabbinical Beit Midrash of the Conservative movement, the third to the Hebrew Union College of the Reform movement.

SPECIAL INTERVIEW

CARL SAGAN: STAR WARS ENDANGERS ISRAEL

By Aviva Cantor

NEW YORK, March 12 (JTA) — Dr. Carl Sagan, the space scientist known for his struggle against the nuclear arms race, has voiced strong opposition to Israel's joining the U.S. "Star Wars" (Strategic Defense Initiative) program, which Israel has indicated it is ready to do.

"Star Wars is bad for the world, which includes Israel. Anything that is bad for the world is bad for Israel. . . . If the world is destroyed, Israel is destroyed as well, Jews are destroyed as well," he told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

Sagan expressed these views in an exclusive interview with JTA on the eve of his receiving the Shalom Center's first Brit HaDorot (Covenant of the Generations) Peace Award at the Plaza Hotel here. The Award, shared with Boston's Jewish Coalition for a Peaceful World, was recently presented to Jews who work to prevent a nuclear holocaust.

The scientist and author, who is the David Duncan Professor of Astronomy and Space Sciences and Director of the Laboratory for Planetary Studies at Cornell University, is engaged in researching and alerting the world to the threat of a "nuclear winter" as the consequence of an atomic war, and to preventing such a war.

Sagan rejected the theory, advanced by some Jews, that a reduction of nuclear weapons by the United States would create an "imbalance" vis-à-vis the Soviet Union and thus leave Israel more vulnerable in the Middle East.

The Actual Situation

"All this is simply buying the baloney of the Reagan Administration," he said. "The actual situation is that the Soviet Union can destroy the U.S. many times over, and the U.S. can destroy the Soviet Union many times over. Both sides have an invulnerable nuclear capability, and therefore the idea of an imbalance is silly." He called the number of nuclear weapons in the world — 60,000 — "obscene."

Furthermore, Sagan said, it is a "mistake to think of Israel's survival . . . as determined only by what happens in the Mideast. A nation can be utterly destroyed in a nuclear war even if no nuclear weapons are dropped on its territory. We are all dependent on each other." Avoidance of nuclear war must be the first priority for the Jewish community—and everybody else, he said.

Sagan was severely critical of Israel's alleged military and nuclear collaboration with South Africa. "I think it's very similar to Israel cooperating with Nazi Germany," he told the JTA. "It's very hard to understand how a nation composed largely of people who fled from a vicious and racist regime can then become militarily allied with a vicious and racist regime."

Asked whether such cooperation is justified because of Israel's struggle for survival, Sagan retorted: "Is everything permissible, no matter what principle, in terms of perceived national survival? Would that have an acceptable (justification) for people siding with the Nazis in World War II? What did Jews think about that?"

The same "survival justifies everything" view by some U.S. government agencies after World War II led them to import German scientists who had worked

with the Nazis, for the purpose of building rockets here. "It goes straight to U.S.-Soviet enmity," he said, which is also the issue in the nuclear arms race. "The question is, is anything permissible in the case of opposing the Soviet Union?"

Sagan believes that the most likely conclusion that would emerge from an independent commission's investigation of the importation of those scientists and other experts — proposed by Brooklyn District Attorney Elizabeth Holtzman, a former New York Congressional Representative — would be that "we thought it more important to have weapons to fight the Russians than to prosecute the criminals of World War II."

Cites The Influence Of Hitler

The development of rockets, and of nuclear fission, were not the only "legacy" of Nazi Germany, said Sagan. In a major address at the World Jewish Congress convention in Jerusalem earlier this year, he said that "Nazi Germany has provided us with an armory—the means and the attitudes sufficient for nuclear obliteration," Sagan continued:

"I am struck by how profoundly (the U.S. and the USSR) are influenced by Adolf Hitler. Each nation acts as if a Hitler is in charge of its adversary. Each threatens the other with instruments of mass destruction developed in Nazi Germany. Each uses propaganda techniques refined in Nazi Germany."

Sagan was asked by JTA whether Jews, because of the Holocaust, should have some special perspective on nuclear war — or a "duty to warn that this planet can be transformed into a crematorium," as one rabbi put it. He replied:

"Those who have experience with mass murder organized by the nation-state, but also with propaganda and deceit organized by Hitler Germany, ought to be especially sensitive to similar activities by various nation-states."

But at the same time Sagan, when asked whether his being Jewish influenced his efforts to help prevent nuclear war, answered, "not especially." The world, he told JTA, is at grave risk, and everybody — all religions, races, and ethnic groups — "are all in this together."

"There is no special ethnic or religious sensibility that applies here," he said. "In fact, it is the very opposite: the fact that we are all equally threatened has some potential of bringing us together." Jews, like all other groups, should put preventing a nuclear holocaust at the top of their list of priorities "not because they are Jews but because they are human."

POLAND HAILS ISRAELI BALLET TROUPE

TEL AVIV, March 12 (JTA) — Israel's Bat Dor Ballet Company, now touring Poland, received a 15-minute standing ovation from a full house audience at its premiere performance in Warsaw's Grand Theater Tuesday night, the company's general manager, Barry Swersky, reported in a telephone interview from the Polish capital Wednesday.

The audience included the wife and daughter of Premier Wojciech Jaruzelski, Swersky said, the Ministers of Culture and Interior, members of Parliament and figures from the arts. It was the first appearance of a major Israeli cultural group in Poland. Bat Dor will give a second performance in Warsaw Wednesday night and will perform twice in Lodz and Gdansk.