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Israeli, Austrian Officials Examine Waldheim Files: ISRAELI ENVOY SAYS FILE CONTENTS INDICATE THAT WALDHEIM'S ALLEGED NAZI PAST CANNOT BE 'LAID TO REST'
By Yitzhak Rabi

UNITED NATIONS, April 9 (JTA) -- Binyamin Netanyahu, Israel's Ambassador to the United Nations, examined the file on former UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim at the UN archives here Wednesday morning and said afterwards that the contents of the file indicated that the matter of Waldheim's alleged Nazi past cannot be "laid to rest." (Related story, P.3.)

Representatives of the Austrian Mission to the UN, who also examined the file at the UN archives Wednesday morning, issued a statement that they had inspected the documents but offered no further comment. Both the Israeli and Austrian representatives were given copies of the file which they said would be conveyed immediately to their respective governments.

Waldheim, a candidate for the Presidency of Austria in next month's elections, has been widely accused of participation in war crimes while serving as a lieutenant in the Wehrmacht in the Balkans during World War II. He is charged specifically with a role in the murder of Yugoslav partisans, women and children and the deportation of Greek Jews from Salonika and from the islands of Crete and Rhodes.

The Waldheim file is part of some 40,000 documents on suspected Nazi war criminals compiled by the now-defunct United Nations War Crimes Commission, stored at UN archives in a building at 345 Park Avenue South in Manhattan. Netanyahu said after inspecting it that there are grounds for further investigation of the Waldheim case.

Need For Further Investigation

"From an initial look at the content of the file it cannot be said that the matter can be laid to rest," the Israeli envoy said. He added, "There is a clear indication of a need for further comprehensive investigation" and that he will send a copy of the content of the file to the Israel government.

Netanyahu noted that he examined the file but cannot reveal details of it. The UN archives are accessible only to representatives of governments in strictest confidentiality.

The Austrian UN Mission issued a statement Wednesday in the names of Karl Fischer and Thomas Klestil, Austria's Ambassadors to the UN and U.S., respectively. They said the Waldheim file contained only a few pages, that they had compared the copy they received with the original but did not read the documents.

The Austrian statement said that "the file, together with documents from the World Jewish Congress, will be sent to Austrian Foreign Minister Leopold Gratz by special courier later today (Wednesday). The Foreign Minister, on behalf of the Austrian government, will hand over the documents to Federal President Rudolph Kirchschlaeger."

A UN spokesman said, meanwhile, that the U.S. so far has not requested access to the Waldheim file. News reports Wednesday quoted a U.S. official as saying that the U.S. would formally ask the UN for access to the file in the next few days.

REPORT THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT IS PROBING DEATH THREAT BY LAROCHE GROUP AGAINST A FEDERAL OFFICIAL
By Rochelle Saidel

NEW YORK, April 9 (JTA) -- The United States Justice Department has launched an investigation into a death threat by the Lyndon LaRouche organization against a federal official, according to a journalist who was a guest on a radio talk show here this week.

The investigation was prompted by a July 7, 1985 editorial in the LaRouchite publication, New Solidarity, which called for "the death sentence" against Neal Sher, director of the Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations, which deals with Nazi war criminal cases.

The same threat was leveled against former Congresswoman Elizabeth Holtzman, who spearheaded Congressional efforts against Nazi war criminals, and Charles Allen, Jr., the journalist who revealed the development on the talk show.

Allen, who provided documentation linking LaRouche with a leading Nazi rocket scientist, Krafft Ehrlicke, in his new book, "Nazi War Criminals in America: Facts ... Action: The Basic Handbook," is described by the media as the "preeminent authority" on Nazi war criminals in America.

Allen also said on the WNWK-FM talk show, Jewish Views and News, hosted by Shifra Hoffman, that the Federal Bureau of Investigation is reportedly looking into the death threats, and has brought the matter and the circumstances surrounding it to the attention of a Federal Grand Jury in Washington, D.C. currently investigating the LaRouche organization. Allen did not name his Justice Department source.

The Grand Jury is primarily concerned with alleged financial irregularities in the LaRouchite National Democratic Policy Committee (which has no connection to the Democratic Party), which received nearly \$1 million in matching funds for the 1976, 1980 and 1984 Presidential campaigns. The character of the Grand Jury is sufficiently broad to warrant its looking into the LaRouchite death threat against a federal official -- in itself a federal offense -- Allen said his Justice Department source told him.

Allen also said on the radio program that he categorically condemned all physical attacks by private individuals and organizations against accused Nazi war criminals in America. He castigated the bombings of the late Tschermik Soobzokov of Paterson, N.J., accused of war crimes in the Caucasus, and Boleslavs Maikovskis of Long Island, accused of war crimes in Latvia. (Soobzokov died of his wounds; Maikovskis recovered.) Allen described such attacks on Nazi war criminals as "illegal, immoral and stupid."

MODAI READY TO RESIGN FROM THE CABINET 'IF THE PREMIER WANTS IT'

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, April 9 (JTA) -- Finance Minister Yitzhak Modai announced Wednesday that he would resign from the Cabinet "if the Premier wants it." He told a packed press conference he made his decision "for the good of the nation" after Premier Shimon Peres told the Labor Party convention opening Tuesday night that he would dismiss Modai.

By stepping down voluntarily, Modai would enable Likud to avoid a crisis that could dissolve the unity coalition government six months before the rotation of power. Peres is required to hand over his office to Likud leader Yitzhak Shamir next October 13, under the coalition agreement.

If he fires Modai he would be in violation of the coalition agreement and Likud would find it difficult to preserve the coalition and retain credibility. The agreement expressly forbids the Premier of one party to fire a Minister of the other. Although Modai's Likud colleagues responded to his announcement with an outpouring of support, observers believe the Likud leadership was privately relieved by the Finance Minister's decision.

It would thwart what many believe was Peres' intention to precipitate the downfall of the unity government so that Labor could try to form a narrow governing coalition with several of the smaller parties or, failing that, call for early elections.

Peres refused to comment Wednesday on Modai's announcement. There was some consternation at the Labor Party convention, which moved to Tel Aviv Wednesday after its festive opening in Jerusalem, that Modai's statement was a tactical gambit. He has until next Sunday's Cabinet meeting to make good on his promise to resign. Peres plans to fire him on Sunday.

Modai said at his press conference that he has "carefully weighed" his decision in light of Peres' speech to the Labor convention. He said he felt he has come to the "moment of truth" and that the interests of the nation and the economy required him "not to stand in the way as an obstacle" to the existence of the unity government and the implementation of its economic recovery plan.

"I am sure the nation does not want it (his resignation) but if the Premier wants it, I will hand back to him my mandate," Modai said. He said he owed this "to the people" who bore the hardships of the economic austerity program. He made clear that he would not accept another portfolio in the unity Cabinet. He sidestepped a question about whether he would return to the government after the rotation of power next October.

MEESE: THE U.S. IS SERIOUS ABOUT APPLYING FULL WEIGHT OF THE LAW AGAINST THOSE WHO COMMIT TERROR

By Judith Kohn

WASHINGTON, April 9 (JTA) -- Attorney General Edwin Meese vowed on Tuesday that the U.S. was "serious" about applying "the full weight of the law" to those who commit acts of terror, and called Yasir Arafat "ultimately responsible" for terrorist activity by factions of the PLO.

"We know that the various elements in the PLO and its allies and affiliates are in the thick of international terror, and the leader of the PLO -- Yasir Arafat -- must ultimately be held responsible for their actions," Meese affirmed to resounding applause at a luncheon of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). AIPAC was concluding its 27th annual policy conference in Washington.

Partly because of a new recognition of the threat that terrorism represents, he said, coordinated worldwide efforts to prevent its occurrence enabled the thwarting of 100 terrorist missions aimed against U.S. citizens abroad in 1985. Beyond the Administration's preventative efforts, however, is its policy of "going after those who actively control ... and sponsor the terrorists," the Attorney General stressed.

"We are serious about applying the full weight of the law to indict, apprehend and prosecute those who commit terror against Americans, and to cooperate with other countries against those who commit terror against any citizens anywhere in the world," Meese declared.

No Comment On Call For Arafat's Arrest

The Attorney General made no reference to ongoing efforts by the Heritage Foundation, a conservative think-tank, and the National Jewish Coalition, as well as nearly half the Senate, to see a warrant issued by the Justice Department for Yasir Arafat's arrest on charges of involvement in the murder of two Americans 13 years ago.

A letter signed by 44 Senators last February called on Meese to investigate allegations that Arafat was behind the 1973 assassination of U.S. Ambassador to Sudan Cleo Noel and Charge d'Affaires Curtis Moore in Khartoum, and to seek an indictment of the PLO leader if appropriate.

Most recently, Sens. Frank Lautenberg (D. N.J.) and Charles Grassley (R. Iowa) sent the Attorney General a de-classified 1975 study conducted for the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, which asserts that the Khartoum operation "was approved by Yasir Arafat."

But Meese stressed the importance of revising U.S. extradition treaties "so that people who commit (terrorist) crimes ... cannot hide behind the loophole of claiming that these are political acts." He also called for a death penalty for the taking of hostages, and for approval of a pending bill that would make terrorist attacks on U.S. citizens overseas a crime under American law.

Calls For Closing Embassies

In a speech at the same luncheon, Israel's Ambassador to the United Nations, Binyamin Netanyahu, called for the closure of Embassies belonging to countries known to be sponsoring terrorism. In addition to Libya, Iran and South Yemen, who do not have Embassies in Washington, he referred specifically to Iraq, Syria and "some East bloc countries."

"Without these Embassies you have a real problem conducting terrorism consistently, because terrorism needs safe ways to move funds and weapons to people," Netanyahu said. Beyond economic and political sanctions, Netanyahu stressed the importance of the "military option" in the battle against international terror, even if it results in terrorist reprisals.

WIESENTHAL: UN WALDHEIM FILES ARE INCOMPLETE; YUGOSLAVIA HAS UPDATED FILES AND SHOULD RELEASE ALL OF THEM
By Kevin Freeman

NEW YORK, April 9 (JTA) -- Simon Wiesenthal called on the government of Yugoslavia to release all documents it has on the war-time activities of Austrian Presidential candidate Kurt Waldheim.

The Vienna-based Nazi hunter told reporters at a jammed news conference here Wednesday that the file on Waldheim released by the United Nations to the governments of Israel and Austria earlier in the day was not complete.

He pointed out that the War Crimes Commission file on Waldheim would only include information through December, 1947, when the commission was dissolved. But he noted that the Yugoslavs would have additional information since he was wanted by that government as a war criminal.

Wiesenthal's news conference followed a 40-minute meeting he had with UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar, described as "substantive" by Rabbi Marvin Hier, dean of the Los Angeles-based Wiesenthal Center.

Hier, who attended the meeting between Wiesenthal and the UN official, said they discussed the possibility of making public all the files on some 40,000 persons in the UN archives of the War Crimes Commission, and the need for the Yugoslavs to open their files on Waldheim.

The Yugoslav State War Crimes Commission, according to Yugoslav press reports, condemned Waldheim, the former UN Secretary General from 1972-1981, as a wanted war criminal and called his extradition "mandatory."

Last months, the World Jewish Congress produced a page from the United States Army's "Combined Registry of War Criminals and Security Suspects" (Crowcross) which reported that Waldheim was being sought by Yugoslavia on suspicion of complicity in what the registry listed as "murder."

Wiesenthal Cautious In Statements About Waldheim

But despite the evidence and allegations linking Waldheim to Nazi atrocities, including the deportation of thousands of Greek Jews from Salonika, Wiesenthal remained cautious in his statements about the former UN official.

He appeared to reserve judgment on Waldheim, saying in response to a question that he needed to review all the documents, including files from Yugoslavia. Asked whether in view of the allegations Waldheim should back out of his Presidential campaign, he said this was a matter for Waldheim to decide.

But he stressed that the Austrian people should be made aware before the elections on May 4 of Waldheim's past war-time activities. "It seems to me that on the basis of my experience, that for a matter of justice and historic truth the Yugoslavs must send to Austria the files to give the people a full picture," he said.

Wiesenthal also expressed reservations about labeling someone a war criminal before all the evidence has been reviewed. "To call someone a war criminal," he said, "they must have very hard evidence." Asked by a reporter whether that evidence was present in the case of Waldheim, Wiesenthal said, "I don't know," adding that the answer can only come from Yugoslavia.

RESOLUTIONS INTRODUCED IN HOUSE AND SENATE TO DISAPPROVE OF REAGAN'S PROPOSED ARMS SALE TO SAUDI ARABIA
By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, April 9 (JTA) -- Resolutions were introduced in the House and Senate Wednesday to disapprove of President Reagan's proposed sale of \$354 million in sophisticated missiles to Saudi Arabia.

Sen. Alan Cranston (D. Calif.) and Rep. Mel Levine (D. Calif.), who introduced the resolutions in their respective chambers, said at a press conference in the capital that the resolutions were signed by 61 Senators and 153 Representatives. Both said that they expected to get a two-thirds majority of their respective bodies to vote in favor of the resolutions, which would be needed to over-ride a Presidential veto.

Both Houses of Congress must adopt the resolutions to reject the sale by May 8 or it automatically goes through.

Cranston rejected the suggestion that the decision by the Government of Israel and the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) not to fight actively against the sale, despite their opposition to it, would hurt the effort to defeat it. Cranston noted that many Senators had signed his resolution after the announcements by Israel and AIPAC.

Sen. Howard Metzenbaum (D. Ohio) said that while he was somewhat "perplexed" by the AIPAC decision, he and other members of Congress do not vote based on what Israel or AIPAC wants. Rep. Vin Weber (R. Minn.) said that all members of AIPAC are against the sale but the organization had made a decision on tactical grounds not to fight against it.

Fed Up With Dictators And Potentates

Cranston, in opposing the missile sale, said, "We are fed up with Third World dictators and potentates who thwart vital American national interests and then expect unhampered delivery of our most advanced military weapons."

He said that the Saudis were not providing oil "as a favor to us, but to make money," and they were interested in stopping the advancement of Communism "in their own interest, no less than ours."

But Cranston said that he was particularly concerned about Saudi support for terrorism--including its backing of Libya's Muammar Qaddafi, its bank-rolling of the Palestine Liberation Organization, and Syria -- as well as the Saudis having "thwarted every effort by Jordan to join in the peace process."

Cranston and others at the press conference expressed particular concern about the proposal to sell the Saudis 200 Stinger shoulder-fired ground-to-air missile systems plus 600 replacement missiles. Cranston noted that the Stinger is a highly portable weapon and has been called "the ideal terrorist weapon."

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee is scheduled to hold a hearing on the proposed Saudi Sale April 17. The House Foreign Affairs Committee has not yet set a date for its hearing but is expected to schedule one within the next two weeks.

SPECIAL INTERVIEW

ISRAEL'S TWO CHIEF RABBIS SAY
REFORM AND CONSERVATIVE MOVEMENTS
ARE CREATING A DIVISIVE 'NEW TORAH'
By Yitzhak Rabi

NEW YORK, April 9 (JTA) -- Israel's two Chief Rabbis -- Ashkenazic Chief Rabbi Avraham Shapira and Sephardic Chief Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu -- said that the Reform and Conservative movements in America "are creating a new Torah that can divide the Jewish people. They must not change halacha (Jewish religious law) and must stop converting to Judaism according to their new laws," the two rabbis said.

In an interview with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency at the Israel Consulate here, Eliyahu said: "The Jewish people is not a race, it is a religion. The halacha sets the rules of conversion. The Reform and Conservative (movements) want to create a new Torah and they want us to recognize their new religion. By their new laws, they encourage assimilation. They want to force their opinion on us and change halacha."

Shapira added: "The Reform and Conservative rabbis want to convert goyim and make them Jews against halacha. How can you make a goy a Jew when part of the Jewish people (the Orthodox) doesn't want him?"

"The point of controversy is not 'Who is a Jew'. The struggle is against the Reform and Conservative way of conversion. We are not against the four or five million Reform and Conservative Jews in America. They will always be Jews. The point of contention are the some 5,000 people whom the Reform and Conservative converted, not according to halacha."

Eliyahu, in a direct appeal to Reform and Conservative Jews, said: "We ask of you, don't divide the Jewish people. Our task is to unite the nation, but you create a new Torah that can divide the Jewish people."

Secular-Religious Tensions In Israel

The Chief Rabbis, who were in New York on a five-day visit to attend Yeshiva University's 100th anniversary, were asked about the escalation of tensions between secular and religious Jews in Israel.

"There are extremists on both sides," Eliyahu replied. "In our opinion, the majority of the Israeli people are sympathetic to religion and keep the traditions of the Jewish people. But there are groups who are creating the escalation because they do not accept the fact that most of the people favor religion."

Shapira noted that the Chief Rabbinate has been working to build bridges between religious and secular Jews in Israel. "Escalation (of tension) is not good for the people of Israel. We, therefore, are organizing meetings between secular and religious groups to promote understanding and friendly relations."

Shapira contended that since the establishment of the State of Israel there has been a "consensus" regarding the character of the Jewish State. "The consensus has been that, as a State, the character of Israel will always remain Jewish, while inside one's home every person can do as he pleases." Now, however, Shapira charged, "there are elements who want to break the consensus." He cited the opening of movie theatres in Israeli cities and towns on Friday nights as an example of "breaking the consensus."

Imperative Need For Jewish Education

Turning to the issue of Jewish education in the diaspora, the two religious leaders warned that lack of Jewish education is the major factor in the growing assimilation of the young Jewish generation. "Without Jewish education there will be more and more assimilation," Shapira said. Eliyahu added: "The Jewish community must mobilize itself and support Jewish education and make it available to those who can't afford it. This must be done to preserve the future of the Jewish people."

Issue Of Ethiopian Jews In Israel

Eliyahu and Shapira, who were both born in Jerusalem, expressed the hope that the Ethiopian Jews who immigrated to Israel last year will be fully integrated into Israeli society. They said that the Chief Rabbinate recognized them as Jews but that in order to remove any doubt, the Rabbinate asks for ritual immersion in individual cases.

"The newly-arrived Ethiopian Jews are incited by certain elements among them," Shapira and Eliyahu said. "We recognize them as Jews, as a group, but because in certain individual cases there might be a doubt, we ask that they undergo ritual immersion," Eliyahu said.

Major Challenge To Israeli Rabbinate:
15 NEW IMMIGRANT ETHIOPIAN COUPLES
ARE WED AT A PUBLIC CEREMONY BY THE
COMMUNITY'S OWN RELIGIOUS LEADERS
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, April 9 (JTA) -- Fifteen new immigrant Ethiopian couples were wed at a public ceremony here Tuesday in what was a major challenge to the rabbinical authorities. The marriage rites were performed by Kessim -- the Ethiopian community's own religious leaders who are not recognized by the Israeli Rabbinate as halachic rabbis.

The marriages are not expected to be recognized by the Rabbinate or registered by the Interior Ministry, which is under Orthodox control. The Absorption Ministry announced, however, that it would regard the couples as family units, the same as any other new immigrants.

The two Chief Rabbis, Mordechai Eliyahu (Sephardic) and Avraham Shapira (Ashkenazic) are visiting the U.S. and could not be reached for comment. The Interior Ministry declined to comment.

The Israeli Rabbinate only reluctantly recognized the Ethiopian olim as Jews. They have refused to authorize marriages among them unless the bride and groom submit to ritual immersion, a symbolic rite of conversion. The Ethiopian community, devout practitioners of Mosaic law, regard this as a gratuitous insult. It has been a bone of contention since the immigration of some 10,000 Ethiopian Jews between November, 1984 and January, 1985.

Local rabbis attempted to prevent Tuesday's weddings by threatening to withdraw the kashrut certificates from the catering establishment which had rented its hall in the Yad Eliahu quarter to the Ethiopian couples. The caterers cancelled their contract at the last minute, even while guests were arriving. But a neighboring hall offered its premises and the ceremonies were conducted there.