

ISRAEL DEFENSE MINISTRY DENIES ANY CONNECTION WITH AN ISRAELI CHARGED BY U.S. AUTHORITIES WITH ATTEMPT TO SMUGGLE U.S. ARMS INTO GULF COUNTRY

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, May 15 (JTA) -- The Defense Ministry said Thursday that it is in no way connected with Ze'ev Reiss, an Israeli national arrested at JFK Airport in New York this week and charged by U.S. authorities with an attempt to smuggle American weapons to a Persian Gulf country.

Reiss, an Israel Defense Force reservist with the rank of Lt. Colonel and a former basketball player for the Hapoel Sports Club International, is not known to have requested assistance from any Israeli official. The Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem said it has no intention of intervening in the case.

Reiss was the seventh Israeli the U.S. authorities arrested in the past month, or issued warrants for their arrest. Six were charged with an alleged scheme to sell more than \$2 billion in American weapons to Iran in violation of the U.S. arms embargo against that country. But sources here said there appeared to be no connection between Reiss and the six other Israelis charged by the U.S. last April 22.

The latter include a retired IDF general, Avraham Baram, and William Northrop, who holds dual U.S.-Israeli citizenship. They are presently in Bermuda fighting extradition to the U.S.

The Defense Ministry's statement said Reiss has no present or past connections with the Ministry, is not known to the Ministry staff and has no authorization to trade in arms.

According to reports from the U.S., he is to be flown to Texas where he will be charged formally with conspiracy to illegally sell American-made TOW air-to-air missiles to a Gulf state. It is not clear whether the weapons were to go to Iran or Iraq which have been at war for more than five years.

Reiss was described as a former member of Kibbutz Givat Brenner where he managed its furniture factory. He left the kibbutz five years ago to become a furniture dealer in the U.S.

ISRAELI OFFICIALS SAY THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT SYRIA INTENDS TO ATTACK ISRAEL NOW, BUT THE POTENTIAL FOR ESCALATION EXISTS

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, May 15 (JTA) -- Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin and northern area commander Lt. Gen. Uri Orr said Thursday there was no evidence that Syria intended attacking Israel at present, though both stressed that a potential for an escalation existed.

Rabin told the Labor Party convention in Tel Aviv that Damascus had been implicated in terrorist attacks in London, Vienna, Rome and possibly in the West Berlin nightclub attack as well. The abortive attack on an El Al plane in London resulted from intelligence planning in Damascus, he said.

Israel has no wish to attack Syria, Rabin said, as Israel knows the terrible cost of war. "Our supreme aim as regards Syria is maximum awareness and preparedness, not to escalate but to prevent a clash," he stressed.

"Today, Syria represents the only potential - and I stress potential and not more than that -- of being the only country (that could) make a mistake -- I believe and hope it will not happen -- of any sort of military confrontation," Rabin said. He said that since January, Israel had noted increased Syrian preparations in Lebanon, but not more than before June 1982.

Northern area commander Orr told Galilee residents during a visit to the area hit by Katyusha rockets just before Independence Day that there were no signs at present of any immediate Syrian war preparations. He said that tank and gun positions prepared by the Syrians for the defense of Damascus were not manned at present.

BRITISH BALLET COMPANY PIROUETTES ON A CULTURAL TOUR OF ISRAEL

By Maurice Samuelson

LONDON, May 15 (JTA) -- Dancers of the Sadler's Wells Royal Ballet, one of Britain's premier ballet companies, have provisionally decided to go ahead with a tour of Israel which on Monday they decided to cancel because of fear of Arab terrorism.

Reversing their earlier decision, some 80 of the Sadler's Wells dancers on Thursday voted to send three of their members to Israel to see whether their security could be ensured during next month's tour, for which 15,000 tickets have already been sold.

The company is scheduled to give six performances of Swan Lake, one in Jerusalem and the others at the spectacular Roman amphitheater in Caesarea on the Mediterranean coast, as part of the Israel Arts Festival.

President Chaim Herzog and Premier Shimon Peres are scheduled to attend the first night in Caesarea on June 7. Cancellation of the tour would have soured the atmosphere during a visit by British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher which to begin in nine days' time. It would also have been a deep embarrassment to Thatcher at a time when she is trying to convince Americans not to cancel their holidays in Europe because of exaggerated fears of terrorism.

Storm Of Protest Erupts

A storm of protest broke out Wednesday after it was confirmed that the ballet dancers had decided Monday to give in to fears of terrorism by cancelling their tour.

In reconsidering their decision, the dancers yielded to an appeal by London impresario Victor Hochhauser, who arranged the visit and also offered to charter a private aircraft for them as an added precaution.

Disappointment at the ballet company's hesitations was also voiced by the British Council, the government-backed cultural organization which is sponsoring the tour. The Council had

also backed a visit to the Soviet Union by another leading British ballet company which has been cancelled following the Chernobyl nuclear reactor accident.

POLICE SEARCHING FOR KILLER OF BRITISH WOMAN KIBBUTZ VOLUNTEER By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, May 15 (JTA) -- Police are searching for the killer of a young British woman kibbutz volunteer whose semi-nude body was found Wednesday in a eucalyptus grove 200 meters from a road junction in the northern Negev. Police said she was strangled and raped.

The victim was identified as Lucy Amos, 23, of Kingston-On-Thames, near London, who has been in Israel since April 1985 and was working as a volunteer at Moshav Ein Yahav in the southern Negev. She was reported missing on Monday by a male friend, Yehuda Cohen of Kibbutz Dorot in the northern Negev when she failed to arrive as planned to spend Independence Day with him.

He alerted kibbutz members, who discovered the body near the junction of the main Negev highway and the five-kilometer dirt track leading to the kibbutz. Police assume she alighted from a bus at the junction and was walking to the kibbutz when assaulted.

Amos was the second foreign volunteer and the fourth young woman murdered in the northern Negev in recent months. On March 27, a 20-year-old West German woman, Miriam Stucker, died at a Beersheba hospital two weeks after she was found comatose with a bullet wound in her head, in a field near Kibbutz Revivim. She too had been a volunteer and was on her way to meet a male friend.

But police said there appeared to be no connection with the rape-murder of Amos and the other killings because the earlier victims were shot and were not sexually molested. They said they have not ruled out a criminal rather than terrorist motive for the latest murder.

STATE DEPT. TO INVESTIGATE WALDHEIM

NEW YORK, May 15 (JTA) -- The State Department has undertaken an investigation into the war-time activities of Austrian Presidential candidate Kurt Waldheim to determine whether he should be barred from the United States on the basis of his past actions as an officer in the Wehrmacht in World War II.

The Department, according to a letter dated May 5 from Deputy Secretary of State John Whitehead to World Jewish Congress president Edgar Bronfman, will "treat our investigation of the charges seriously and reach a conclusion with due deliberation."

Whitehead, in saying the State Department "is conducting its own investigation" into the 68-year-old Waldheim's past activities, indicated the Department is "assisting" in a parallel Department of Justice investigation.

The Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations has already recommended that Waldheim, the former United Nations Secretary General from 1972-1981, be barred from the U.S. under the terms of the so-called Holtzman Amendment of 1978.

The recommendation from the OSI, written by the agency's director, Neal Sher, urges that

Waldheim's name be placed on an Immigration and Naturalization "watch list," a list maintained by the INS of deportable aliens. The Holtzman Amendment to the immigration law bars entry to aliens who took part in Nazi war crimes.

Says Charges Against Waldheim Are Serious

Whitehead said in his letter that "the charges against Mr. Waldheim are serious," adding that the State Department "will not be in a position to comment on Mr. Waldheim's war-time activities" until the "investigation is complete," Whitehead stressed.

Sher's recommendation, which is currently before Attorney General Edwin Meese, said Waldheim was "a special mission staff officer in the intelligence and counterintelligence branch" of the German Army Group E, which was involved in reprisals against civilians in the Balkans.

Waldheim has repeatedly defended his war-time record, saying that while he had some knowledge of German atrocities against Yugoslav partisans and others, he was not involved in the activities. He has denied WJC charges that he had knowledge of the deportation of thousands of Greek Jews from Salonika.

Whitehead's letter was in response to a letter from Bronfman to Secretary of State George Shultz on April 16. In that letter, Bronfman described Waldheim as "a man who is a proven liar" and "unrepentant of his past activities."

THREE ZIONIST GROUPS DISRUPT SOVIET UNION DAY AT VANCOUVER EXPO

VANCOUVER, British Columbia, May 15 (JTA) -- One American Jewish student was expelled from Canada and several others were detained Wednesday when members of three New York-based Zionist organizations protested the treatment of Russian Jewry during Soviet Union Day at Expo '86.

Tamir Elia, 20, of Brooklyn, N.Y., was arrested by Canadian police and given 36 hours to leave the country after he participated in a vocal protest during the opening ceremonies of the Soviet Day celebration. Elias, a member of the Tagar student Zionist activist movement, was taken into custody after he interrupted a speech by Vasily Shamshin, Soviet Minister of Communications.

As Shamshin took the podium to address more than 3,000 people gathered in the Expo's Plaza of Nations, Elias and several other Zionist demonstrators called on the Soviet official to "end the Holocaust against the Russian Jews."

Loud chants of "Let Our People Go," and "Stop Oppressing Soviet Jews," greeted Shamshin as he was introduced by the Master of Ceremonies. Expo security officials removed the students from the building before Shamshin was able to continue his remarks.

Throughout the day, other Zionist activists continued to raise the issue of Soviet Jewry at the world's fair. Members of the Herut Zionists of America and the Betar Zionist youth organization distributed materials on Soviet Jewry, solicited signatures on petitions to the Soviet government, and held a press conference in front of the Soviet pavilion. During the press conference, two additional activists were expelled from the fairgrounds.

Elias, who was held for several hours at the local police station, complained after his release that he had been forcibly strip-searched in front of other prisoners during his detention. He said that he would voluntarily obey the order by the Canadian Immigration Department to leave the country.

SHCHARANSKY SAYS IT IS VITAL FOR WESTERN REPORTERS TO MAINTAIN CONTACT WITH SOVIET JEWS AND WITH DISSIDENTS
By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, May 15 (JTA) -- Natan (Anatoly) Shcharansky stressed Thursday that it was vital for Western correspondents in the Soviet Union to maintain their contacts with Jewish activists and dissidents. "The free flow of information is a necessary condition of their survival," he said in a speech to the National Press Club.

Shcharansky said many in the United States mistakenly believe he was sentenced to prison in the Soviet Union nine years ago on the "false" charge of providing "secret" information to the Central Intelligence Agency.

Instead, he explained, he was charged with "high treason" because of his "close contact" with the Western press, especially American correspondents, and for providing them accurate information on human rights conditions in the USSR and the plight of Soviet Jewry.

Shcharansky said Soviet Jewish activists and dissidents and the Western correspondents are "natural allies." He noted that the correspondents are confined "practically in a ghetto" and the only Soviet citizens who will meet with them are the dissidents and Jewish activists.

He told a story of a West German correspondent who refused to attend a meeting he arranged with an ethnic German in Moscow because the correspondent feared he would be expelled from the USSR.

No Other Way Of Working With The Soviets

"There is no other way of working with the Soviets, of keeping the world really informed of what is happening in this country, but irritating them," Shcharansky stressed. "For them the very fact of passing unofficial information about the Soviet Union is a crime." Shcharansky added that the Soviets said this "openly for the first time in my case" and can in the future use this to charge other Jewish activists.

To express his appreciation for the efforts of American correspondents, Shcharansky presented the National Press Club with a painting of the Western Wall by the Jerusalem artist, Yossi Stern.

Concerned About His Mother And Brother

In response to a question, Shcharansky said he was concerned that his mother, Ida Milgrom, and his brother, Leonid, had not yet been allowed to emigrate as had been promised when he was released. But he said this will not make him "less outspoken" since if he were to do so there would be no chance they would be allowed to emigrate to Israel.

Asked about being a "secular Jew," Shcharansky at first didn't understand the term. "The Jewish religion is an important part of my life and it became a very important part of my life while I was in prison. He said reading the Book of

Psalms in prison gave him a "strong spiritual communication with my wife, my people and the land of Israel" and helped him face his difficulties.

He added that his wife, Avital, "is an observant Jew and I am far from being an observant Jew" but these were just different ways of expressing the same spiritual feelings.

He noted that the Israeli press made much of the supposed religious differences with his wife, "but once I stopped reading this press all the problems disappeared."

Asked whether he was concerned about Palestinian prisoners in Israel, Shcharansky replied that after just three months in Israel he was still trying to learn about its society. But he said that from the first moment he arrived in Israel he saw that it was a real democracy.

Israel's Ambassador, Meir Rosenne, was on the podium when Shcharansky spoke. Shcharansky attended the Israel Embassy's annual observance of Independence Day Wednesday.

NAVON LAUNCHES BEN GURION CENTENNIAL YEAR IN THE U.S.

NEW YORK, May 15 (JTA) -- Former President Yitzhak Navon of Israel launched the Ben Gurion Centennial Year Celebration in the United States with a call to the Jewish people to complete the legacy of Israel's first Prime Minister, David Ben Gurion, in three areas that were especially close to him, which still await fulfillment.

They are, Navon said, settlement of the desolate Negev which comprises 60 percent of the area of the State of Israel and is the place where Ben Gurion lived and is buried; advance the scientific and technological levels of the State of Israel; and give all Jewish children in the diaspora a meaningful Jewish education.

Navon, who is Minister of Education and Culture in the Israeli Cabinet, addressed more than 800 persons at a gala Israel Independence Day celebration co-sponsored by the World Zionist Organization-American Section and the American Zionist Federation at the New York Hilton Hotel here.

Honored by the WZO and AZF on this occasion were Max Fisher of Detroit, who was cited as a "preeminent leader of the American Jewish community," and George Segal, sculptor, and Theodore Bikel, actor, who were presented with the Israel Achievement Awards by Israel's Ambassador to the U.S., Meir Rosenne. Bernice Tannenbaum, chairperson of the WZO-American Section, and Ben Cohen, president of the AZF, presided.

Navon said, "If we wish to uphold the legacy of Ben Gurion, we must enlist the Jewish people to the exalted task of making this the year in which the desert begins to flourish, and cities, villages and settlements are founded in the Negev, where he lived and died, and which he envisioned as the reclaimed and flourishing heartland of Israel's future."

Navon announced that President Reagan has agreed to be Honorary Chairman of the American Committee of the Ben Gurion Centennial Celebration. He said that "the Centennial of the birth of the 'Founding Father' of Israel honors the man whose prophetic vision, indomitable will and labor helped to create the social and political basis of the Jewish State."

AJCOMMITTEE LEADER DEFENDS HIS ORGANIZATION'S REJECTION OF 'A SINGLE ISSUE AGENDA'

WASHINGTON, May 15 (JTA) -- The American Jewish Committee's firm rejection of "a single issue agenda" for American Jews -- "the assertion that there is only one issue for Jews, and that issue is Israel" -- was vigorously defended Thursday by David Gordis, executive vice president of the pioneer human relations organization at its 80th anniversary annual meeting here.

Addressing 500 delegates from around the country at a plenary session at the J.W. Marriott Hotel, Gordis also spoke out strongly for the AJC's traditional policy of non-partisanship in political matters and its commitment to pluralism in all aspects of Jewish life. The annual meeting began Wednesday and continues through Sunday.

Gordis noted: "The validity of our traditional AJC agenda has been challenged recently by powerful and prominent voices urging a sharp narrowing of Jewish concerns. More and more frequently in Jewish organizational life we hear the assertion that the only issue for Jews is Israel -- that statements and positions on Israel are the sole criteria by which political candidates should be judged or supported, financially or otherwise, without regard to other issues."

But, he added, "Our support for Israel gains in effectiveness because we are recognized not as narrow advocates of self-interest, but as fully involved participants in the full range of American and international issues."

Questionable Overnight Jewish Heroes

In that connection, Gordis pointed out that "Political and religious leaders whose views on the separation of church and state, on matters of social policy and other public concerns run counter to the views of most American Jews -- and may even threaten vital Jewish interests here and abroad -- are transformed overnight into Jewish heroes on the basis of a carefully crafted statement or two supportive of Israel."

He observed: "Alliances are urged, and political alignments are pressed upon the Jewish community on the basis of this single issue. The separation of church and state, we are told, is not that important; Israel needs all the friends she can get, whatever the price paid for this friendship. Is the nation weighing policy alternatives regarding the levels of military appropriations and the funding of social programs? We are assured that we need not concern ourselves with determining a proper balance among national priorities or make painful choices."

"There is just a single principle to be applied: It is inconsistent for those who advocate support for Israel to oppose any military program at any time.... We are relieved of the need to consider vital issues carefully and to advocate what we feel is best for our country and for the world."

Continuing, Gordis declared: "Our commitment to Israel's strength, security and vitality is unshakable. Our efforts to promote understanding of and support for Israel's needs are wide and deep, as is our determination to strengthen Israel-diaspora relationships and increase intergroup understanding inside Israel

"But our credibility is rooted in the breadth of our concerns as Americans and as Jews. Our support for Israel derives both from our Jewish

consciousness and from our commitment to America and its democratic values We reject out of hand the notion that our Jewish and general loyalties are in conflict with one another."

The Nature Of The Confusion

The AJC, Gordis said, has "no quarrel with organizations that focus exclusively on pro-Israel advocacy. We support AIPAC (American Israel Public Affairs Committee) and participate in its work. What we reject is the confusion of that portion of the Jewish agenda, important as it is, with the whole"

Gordis recalled that American Jews have always "pursued justice and compassion in line with the authentic spirit and teachings of our heritage." In that context, he noted that American Jews have participated in movements to protect and extend human rights and improve intergroup relations and thereby "have made an indelible contribution to the growth and enhancement of American life."

"I am convinced," he said, "that the overwhelming majority of American Jews remains committed to that participation -- even though some influential leaders, who have grown disheartened because these efforts are sometimes painful and never easy, urge us to turn away from our traditional social concerns and to formulate our positions in the narrowest self-interest."

Pressure To Conform

Gordis said that the AJC has also come under pressure to conform to "a pattern of political alignment" developed by national Jewish agencies in recent years. "Some American Jewish leaders have found it expedient to indicate broad Jewish support for one or another policy of the current administration, even when there is little evidence of such support."

"Advocates of partisanship in Jewish public life argue that a political party or administration will only support Jewish interests if American Jews articulate their support for that party or administration's goals and ideology. We challenge that assertion."

Gordis said the AJC believes strongly "that Jews should be represented all across the American political spectrum. But we believe that Jewish organizations must stand apart from, and above, partisan politics. Our policy positions must be determined through the careful analysis of the issues and in light of our broad interests, value and objectives, not by the need to conform to any party line."

Gordis asserted, "Our commitment to Jewish pluralism is one reason for our serious concern about the intensification of tensions among the religious ideological groups in Jewish life. Political realities in Israel have exacerbated these tensions in the United States, and we are working hard to bring together individuals from the different groups, both here and in Israel, who seek to restore civility to Jewish interrelationships."

"Unless we can close the fissures that have developed, we face the possible bifurcation of the Jewish people and the emergence of two different Jewish communities that will not intermarry and will barely interact except in conflict. It is vital that we apply our human relations and bridge-building skills to this most ominous challenge now facing us."