

**ISRAEL CONCERNED THAT IRAQI AIR FORCE WILL POSE A SERIOUS THREAT TO ISRAEL ONCE THE WAR WITH IRAN IS CONCLUDED**  
By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Jan. 20 (JTA) -- Israel is increasingly concerned that the battle-hardened Iraqi air force will pose a serious threat once Iraq's war with Iran is ended.

Israel Air Force Commander Gen. Amos Lapidot told a group of foreign military attaches Tuesday that Iraqi pilots are currently flying "hundreds of sorties per day." He said Israeli and outside observers have discerned a significant improvement in the quality of Iraqi air power.

Their planes attack at much lower levels than before and their bombing and ground support is more accurate, he said. Though some outside observers maintain that foreign, mainly Pakistani, pilots are flying for Iraq, there is no confirmation of such reports.

Lapidot said the improved capabilities of the Iraqi air force would enable it to fly sorties against Israel in a future war from Iraqi territory without the need for bases in Jordan or Syria.

The Iran-Iraq war is now in its seventh year. While Iran, with much greater manpower, appears at the moment to have the edge on the ground, Iraqi air power is considered superior to Iran's by most experts here and abroad.

According to foreign sources, however, the advanced anti-aircraft and anti-tank weapons sold to Iran covertly by the U.S. and Israel, has been able to blunt Iraq's superior air force and armor.

**Peres Defends U.S.-Iran Arms Deal**

Meanwhile, Vice Premier and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres strongly defended Israel's role in the U.S.-Iran arms deal, at a press conference in Jerusalem Tuesday. He maintained that it was less of an arms deal than mutual probing for "pragmatist" elements in Iran who might one day succeed the aging Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, an avowed enemy of Israel and the West.

It was "a window of opportunity," Peres said, adding that there was nothing wrong with exploring the possibility of a more friendly Iran in the future.

Peres also insisted that the value of arms shipped to Iran in 1985 did not exceed \$5 million to \$6 million, a drop in the bucket compared to the \$400 billion Iran has spent in its war with Iraq over the last six years.

Peres reiterated that Israel agreed to facilitate the American arms shipments to help secure the release of American hostages held by pro-Iranian elements in Lebanon.

Peres leaves for Europe Wednesday for meetings with British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, President Francois Mitterrand of France and with the Foreign Ministers of the European Economic Community (EEC) in Brussels.

At his briefing for foreign military attaches, Lapidot also spoke of the potential menace of the Syrian air force which is expected soon to absorb Soviet MIG-29 combat aircraft. He said Israel is studying the capabilities of the MIG-29s in order to develop counter-measures. He said Syria's anti-aircraft defenses have not limited Israel's freedom

of movement in the skies over Lebanon, but the Israel Air Force now has to be "more careful than in the past."

**IDF PATROL KILLS THREE TERRORISTS**  
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Jan. 20 (JTA) -- An Israel Defense Force patrol killed three terrorists Monday night near Markabe village in the central sector of the south Lebanon security zone. According to a military spokesman, the terrorists were encountered about a mile from Kibbutz Manara in Upper Galilee where they apparently intended to infiltrate across the border into Israel.

The incident brought to seven the number of terrorists killed in the past 24 hours. Four were killed Sunday night in a clash with the IDF just north of the security zone.

IDF sources told Israel Radio Tuesday that the latest interception probably averted a "major incident," as the terrorists were heavily armed. Kalachnikov rifles, revolvers, hand grenades, rockets and a quantity of explosives were discovered near their bodies.

During the past 10 weeks, the IDF killed 12 terrorists in the security zone or just north of it. All apparently were attempting to infiltrate into Israel.

**RABIN ORDERS INVESTIGATION INTO POSSIBLE MISUSE OF FIREARMS BY JEWISH WEST BANK SETTLERS**  
By Gil Sedan and Hugh Orgel

JERUSALEM, Jan. 20 (JTA) -- Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin ordered an immediate investigation Tuesday into the alleged misuse of firearms by Jewish settlers in the West Bank. His order followed a briefing he was given about an incident Monday evening in the Balata refugee camp near Nablus.

According to reports, Jewish settlers driving to prayers at Joseph's Tomb on the outskirts of the city were stoned by Arabs. The settlers gave chase, entered the refugee camp and fired three shots into the air. Security forces rushed to the scene and demanded that the settlers leave. Rabin said he wants a thorough investigation to determine whether the settlers used firearms according to regulations.

The Defense Minister also spent Tuesday morning in Nablus meeting with heads of Arab universities in the West Bank to discuss the increasing incidence of student violence. While he was touring Nablus, a stone was thrown at Rabin's convoy. The assailant was caught and held for questioning.

**Stresses Non-Interference Policy**

During his meeting with Hafez Toukan, the Israel-appointed Mayor of Nablus, and the headmasters of five universities, Rabin stressed that Israel does not want to interfere in academic affairs but that he would not permit the campuses to become centers of unrest for the entire area. According to Rabin, the universities have replaced the refugee camps as the main source of disorder in the West Bank during the past five months.

## DISMAY EXPRESSED OVER ISRAELI DEFENSE MINISTRY'S TRAVEL BAN

NEW YORK, Jan. 20 (JTA) -- Three prominent American Jews have expressed dismay over the Israeli Defense Ministry's decision last week not to issue travel passes to two leading Palestinians from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip to attend an international symposium on the Middle East at the San Diego State University.

Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg, vice president of the World Jewish Congress, Dr. Rita Hauser, former U.S. delegate to the United Nations, and Stephen Shalom, said in a joint statement that the decision not to allow former Hebron Mayor Mustapha Abd A-Nabi Natshe and Gaza lawyer Fayeze Abu-Rahme to join them in high level meetings to explore ways to move the Mideast peace process forward harms the cause of peace and damages Israel's image as a serious seeker of peace.

They noted that, ironically, Abu-Rahme is one of two Palestinians who was approved by the Israeli government as a potential Palestinian representative in peace talks between Israel and a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation. "If he was acceptable then, why is he a security risk now," the three asked.

Israeli security sources said the two Palestinians were denied travel permits because there was a concern they would use the occasion to meet with hostile elements, but did not elaborate.

### 'A Political Not A Security Act'

"Denying travel permits to these Palestinians because of 'hostile elements' with whom they might meet does not seem to constitute sufficient ground for such action," the joint statement said. "Barring Palestinians known for their moderate voice from participating in a constructive dialogue appears to be a political and not a security act."

The San Diego conference, which had been scheduled to take place January 19-23, has been postponed, as all participants, including the Israelis, felt that Palestinian participation from the West Bank and Gaza Strip was essential to such discussions, Hertzberg, Shalom and Hauser noted. They expressed the hope that the Defense Ministry's decision "would be reversed and that it would not constitute a precedent for future actions."

Natshe and Abu-Rahme were to have been part of a large Israeli delegation. The invitees included Knesset members Abba Eban, David Libai and Shulamit Aloni; Prof. Shimon Shamir, a leading expert on Mideast affairs; Hanna Seniora, editor of the East Jerusalem Arabic daily El-Fajer; Hatem Abu-Ghazale, a Palestinian educator from Gaza; and Dr. Sare Nusseibeh of Bir Zeit University in the West Bank. The latter three Palestinians were apparently not subject to the Defense Ministry's travel ban.

Other scheduled participants in the conference were former U.S. Ambassador to Israel Samuel Lewis; former Assistant Undersecretary of State Harold Saunders; former Israeli Justice Minister Haim Zadok; Israeli writer and journalist Amos Elon; a number of American Palestinians; and six leading Egyptians, some of whom are currently in the government.

The conference was to have been hosted by the Fred Hansen Institute for World Peace. The Institute, established at the San Diego State University in 1979, has been a major initiator and sponsor of joint Israeli-Egyptian collaborative

ventures in the fields of oceanography, marine biology and arid lands agriculture.

## UIA GETS \$25 MILLION REFUGEE SETTLEMENT GRANT FROM U.S. GOVERNMENT; \$125,000 ALLOCATED TO ETHIOPIAN OLIM

NEW YORK, Jan. 20 (JTA) -- The United Israel Appeal has received a U.S. government refugee resettlement grant of \$25 million for 1987. This grant, the latest to UIA since 1973, was again initiated by Congress and is twice the amount provided in 1986. The announcement was made by H. Irwin Levy, chairman of UIA's U.S. Government Relations Committee, at the organization's recent Board of Directors meeting in New York City.

Henry Taub, UIA's chairman, stated that thus far UIA has received 12 refugee resettlement grants totaling \$310,077 million to assist in the absorption of refugees in Israel.

The grants, which are supported in both Houses of Congress and in the State Department and the White House, reflect the U.S. government's desire to link its support of refugee resettlement in Israel directly to the philanthropic support of Israel by the American Jewish community, Taub said.

He said that during the same period the grants were made, some \$4 billion was given to Israel by American Jews to assist the country with these immigration and absorption programs.

Taub called the grant program "one of the most successful such programs ever funded by the U.S. government." He pointed out that in recent years the absorption of Ethiopian Jews has been much more costly than the absorption of any other group thus far, thus justifying the need for additional financial support.

### Allocation Of The Grant Funds

Levy said that the 1987 grant funds will be used for refugee resettlement, as follows: en route care and maintenance; transportation; maintenance at absorption centers; hostels and ulpanim; maintenance at youth aliya institutions, financial assistance to the needy or handicapped; maintenance and financial assistance for students and for vocational training; maintenance at homes for the elderly; construction and/or acquisition of apartments.

Irving Kessler, UIA's executive vice chairman, indicated that \$125,000 of grant funds will be allocated for the support of a grassroots organization of Ethiopian immigrants in Israel.

He noted that the organization's members and leaders, drawn entirely from the Ethiopian community in Israel, will strive to develop a sense of pride and achievement in the community, to assist with and further informal education among its membership, and to introduce Ethiopian Jewish culture to Israeli society-at-large.

Kessler said that the organization of Ethiopian immigrants operates with a small professional staff, as well as with volunteers, in Safed, Carmiel, Upper Nazareth, Maalot, Kiryat Shmona and Afula, all localities with large concentrations of Ethiopian immigrants.

He stated that UIA's special allocation will be used for organizational infrastructure and manpower needs, an Amharic-English-Hebrew newsletter, a speakers' bureau, a music-dance-drama performing troupe, a handicrafts project, and an interest-free loan fund.