

KNESSET UNIT PROBING ISRAEL'S ROLE IN U.S. ARMS SALES TO IRAN SAYS IT IS SATISFIED WITH OFFICIAL VERSION
 By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Feb. 4 (JTA) -- The Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Security Committee stated Wednesday that there is no reason to doubt the official version of Israel's role in the U.S.-Iran arms deal.

The statement was issued after two days of closed hearings by the Committee's Intelligence Subcommittee. Details of Israel's cooperation with the U.S. in the arms sales to Iran were provided by David Kimche, former Director General of the Foreign Ministry, and Amiram Nir, the Prime Minister's adviser on counter-terrorism.

Both officials appeared before the subcommittee by special permission of Premier Yitzhak Shamir. Kimche and Nir testified on Tuesday and Nir again on Wednesday. Their testimony apparently satisfied the Knesset members that Israel acted in the Iran arms sale as a loyal ally of the United States and at its specific request.

The Committee's statement made no mention of Israel's alleged involvement in transferring proceeds of the arms sale to the Nicaraguan rebels known as Contras. But apparently it was satisfied that there is no truth to the allegations. Nevertheless, the Committee has not yet concluded its deliberations on the issue.

The hearings were necessary, according to Committee chairman Abba Eban, to clarify Israel's role in view of reports published in the American media implying that Israel was the prime mover in the entire Iran-Contra affair.

PERES TO HOLD TALKS WITH MUBARAK

JERUSALEM, Feb. 4 (JTA) -- Vice Premier and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres will visit Cairo later this month for talks with President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, it was announced Wednesday. The talks will be a continuation of their meeting in Alexandria five months ago when the principal topic was an international conference for Middle East peace and the conditions under which it could be convened.

Meanwhile, Peres told reporters Wednesday that while Israel has not been asked by the U.S. to help in any military operation to free American hostages held by extremist groups in Lebanon, "If we are, we shall be ready to consider it." He said, however, "I do not believe we shall receive such a request."

The subject was raised when Peres, on a visit to Kiryat Gat, observed that the U.S. Sixth Fleet operating off the Lebanese coast was sending a strong message to the Lebanese people. He said the latter have deteriorated to an unprecedented level of lawlessness, unhindered by anyone so far. He said he could not "guess exactly" what American intentions are toward Lebanon.

KNESSET POSTPONES VOTE ON NATIONAL BUDGET TO AVOID COALITION CRISIS
 By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Feb. 4 (JTA) -- The Knesset postponed voting on the national budget until Thursday to avoid a possible coalition crisis arising from a dispute between Labor and Likud over how to manage the 266 million Shekel debt of the Labor-affiliated United Kibbutz Movement (Takam).

The vote, scheduled for Wednesday's session, was delayed to give the coalition partners more time to reach an understanding on the matter. Labor made it clear it would not vote for the Cabinet-approved budget unless Likud members of the Knesset's Finance Committee agreed to spread the kibbutz debt over several years, at a reduced rate of interest. The Treasury has already approved the scheme.

But the Likud Knesset faction demanded that the concession be "enlarged" to include the debts of development towns and of Jewish settlements in the administered territories. There were reports Wednesday night that Labor and Likud leaders had reached an agreement that will ensure that the budget is approved.

A vote against the budget by the Labor Party would be tantamount to a vote of non-confidence in the government.

CHRISTIAN IDENTITY CHURCH MAY BE MOVING INTO KANSAS CITY AREA
 By Elizabeth Kaplan
 Staff Writer, Kansas City Jewish Chronicle

KANSAS CITY, Feb. 4 (JTA) -- Jewish communal leaders are keeping watch for further developments in the proposed formation here of a church affiliated with the Christian Identity movement, a melange of right-wing, white supremacist, anti-Semitic groups and individuals active nationally under the guise of a "church."

The church conducted its first meeting last month in Grandview, Mo., a suburb, and plans to meet again in the future. Between 50 and 75 people, most of them white males, attended the private gathering at Grandview's Heritage Inn on January 17. A second meeting the following day attracted 25 person.

The event was publicized in fliers mailed to a broad cross-section of area residents ranging from members of the John Birch Society to Jews, according to Carol Smith, farm crisis worker with the Jewish Community Relations Bureau of Greater Kansas City. The JCRB has been monitoring extremist groups through its farm crisis project.

The flier announcing the program made no mention of the Christian Identity movement, but invited individuals to attend a "Christian Church Formational Meeting."

Speakers on the program included pastors Pete Peters, Jarah Crawford and Ted Wieland, all of whom were identified by Smith as Christian

Identity ministers. "They are absolutely as anti-Semitic as you could possibly believe," Smith said.

A native of Tennessee, Crawford is the author of a pamphlet titled "The Jewish Problem," which was passed out at the meeting. Smith said the publication contains anti-Semitic references in "literally every paragraph."

In one excerpt from the pamphlet, for example, Crawford responds to an article by Daniel Lehmann, who wrote in the Chicago Sun-Times last year that extremist right-wing groups were taking advantage of the farmers' plight.

'Jews Are A Menace To Mankind'

"By the Power of Almighty God and Spirit of our Savior Jesus Christ, Christian America declares war on you and your kind throughout the earth," the pamphlet reads. "We call upon all nations to join us in this Holy cause. You Jews are a menace to mankind; the earth can no longer accept you."

Peters, a native of LaPorte, Colo., served as minister to David Lane, a convicted member of The Order, a Christian Identity group whose members have carried out violent acts in the past. Wieland, also from Colorado, has been proposed as pastor for the local Identity church, according to Smith.

Not Much Response

Reports conflict as to the response the ministers received at the gathering. Two individuals sent to the meeting by the JCRB reported that some of those in the audience seemed very sympathetic but that others were less than stirred by the anti-Semitic words.

In fact, Smith said, the two JCRB observers told her that Peters mustered little response when he asked those present to echo his statements with "amen."

"They said that a lot of people were skeptical," Smith stated. "They weren't already diving into what was being said."

She added that after the event, the JCRB received a call from one woman who wanted to voice her disgust with the whole affair. "She said she felt she had been tricked," Smith said. "She had been really shocked at the anti-Semitism. She thought she was just going to a meeting for a Christian church."

However, another observer at the meeting told The Chronicle that the anti-Semitic rhetoric voiced at the event, with the exception of a statement that violence against Jews could be necessary, received much support.

The observers said that overwhelming cries of "amen" were heard in agreement to statements such as Jews are "Satan's children" and that Jews are the source of many problems in the United States.

Motel Warned About The Meeting

Randy Gould, a member of the steering committee of RUAH/New Jewish Agenda here, went to the motel to protest the event along with three other individuals. They eventually were requested to leave the premises by the Grandview police.

Gould maintained he called the motel upon first hearing of the event and said he warned a motel worker about the Christian Identity movement. He suggested the motel management "find out who these people are and what they stand for," he said. A spokeswoman for the Heritage Inn acknowledged that two calls had come in concern-

ing the meeting. She claimed the callers "asked if the meeting was being held here and, when they were told yes, they made some threats about what would happen -- that there would be protesters and picketers. Then they hung up."

"When we book a room, we have no idea what those people do in their meetings," she added. "What they do there is their own business."

EDUCATION BUDGET CUTS PROTESTED

JERUSALEM, Feb. 4 (JTA) -- About 2,500 teachers and student teachers demonstrated outside the Knesset Wednesday to protest cuts in the education budget. Some 35,000 elementary school pupils were sent home in mid-morning because there were no teachers in the classrooms. A number of Knesset members joined the demonstration in a gesture of solidarity.

Yehuda Eshel, head of the student teachers union, said: "We came to protest the intention to turn the people of the book into children of the streets. We came here to protest against a situation which would turn people who should be a light unto nations into a darkness to the nations."

DETERMINATION TO PREVENT HOLOCAUSTS UNITES ALL JEWS, ROSENNE DECLARES

NEW YORK, Feb. 4 (JTA) -- "If there is one thing that unites Jews, whether they are Reform, Conservative, or Orthodox, or Sephardim or Ashkenazim, or belong to the right, left, or center, it is that they are first and foremost Jews determined to make sure there will be no more Holocausts."

The statement, by Israeli Ambassador Meir Rosenne, was made to note the efforts and achievements of B'nai B'rith throughout the post-World War II period on behalf of Jews everywhere.

Addressing B'nai B'rith's Board of Governors in New York, Rosenne cited the efforts of the Soviet Union to deprive B'nai B'rith of its standing as a non-governmental organization in the United Nations.

The Soviets were defeated, he said, "because they did not understand then -- and probably don't understand now -- that all the achievements of the Free World in general, and of the U.S. and Israel in particular, are the results of the work and dedication of individuals and voluntary organizations."

Rosenne reviewed Israel's efforts to gain peace with its Arab neighbors. Citing Israel's yielding of the oil-rich Sinai, the Straits of Tiran, and the towns of Yamit and Ophra as a means of persuading Egypt to sign a treaty with the Jewish nation, he said, "We did it because for the Jewish people, the life of one person is more weighty than billions of dollars."

Message To The Younger Generation

Rosenne offered a message to the young generation of world Jews:

"Be proud of being a Jew and of the achievements of Jewish people and the Jewish state.

"Remember the unique privilege you have of living in a country that not only permits but encourages you to study your history and heritage. Take advantage of Jewish education, for without it there will be no Jewish people a century from now. Remember that the doors of Israel are wide open to you; come live with us

and contribute to the development and progress of the Jewish Homeland. Never try to be 'objective' or have any sense of guilt when you defend the Jewish people or the State of Israel. Never forget that while we breathe the free air of democracy, our brethren still suffer in the land of the Gulag and in the Arab lands of oppression.

"And finally, when contemplating what is done in and by Israel, never consider yourselves distant spectators, as though before a television screen; think of yourselves as part of us."

Action Against War Criminals In Canada Urged

Earlier in the three-day semi-annual meeting of the Board of Governors which representatives of 13 countries attended, Elizabeth Holtzman, District Attorney of Brooklyn, NY, called on the Canadian government to bring Nazi war criminals living in Canada to justice.

"In light of the recent report of the Deschenes Commission, and the fact that as many as 3,000 Nazi war criminals live in Canada, the Canadian government should establish a permanent unit, similar to the one in the United States, to prosecute and deport them," she said.

As a member of Congress several years ago, Holtzman created the Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations that probes and deports Nazi war criminals living in the United States.

"The presence of Nazi war criminals in Canada is an affront to decent people everywhere," she declared. Holtzman added that "once forces of hatred and prejudice are unleashed, no one is safe. Our responsibility is to do something about it."

ERRANT MEMORIAL PLAQUE TO ASTRONAUT RESNIK TO BE REPLACED AFTER ALL

By Andrew Muchin

NEW YORK, Feb. 4 (JTA) -- To replace a plaque because the letter c was added to the last name of Judith Resnik, the first Jewish woman astronaut, would have cost the city of Titusville, Fla., 15 "C notes" and time it didn't have.

So the city allowed the 3-by-5 foot bronze plaque to be installed last June in its memorial to the 10 American astronauts who died on duty. But on January 28, an astronaut noticed the error during a ceremony in memory of the seven Challenger space shuttle astronauts.

The mistake soon was reported in the national press, and early this week officials of Titusville, a community of 39,000 across the Indian River from the Kennedy Space Center, answered 30 phone calls offering to pay for a new plaque or to actually make it.

"We've been so blessed with it, I tell you. It has really been heart-warming to know people have cared that much," Jean Seiffert, administrative assistant to the Titusville city manager, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

Seiffert, who also chairs the city's Flag and Memorial Committee that oversaw design and construction of the memorial, decided to accept the first offer of help. She said Robert Neel of Woodlawn Memorial Gardens, Orlando, Fla., will send the plaque to a foundry in Pittsburgh to be either repaired or recast, and will pay for it.

Citizens donated \$12,000 and the city paid \$24,000 for construction of the memorial, which Seiffert said is located in the city plaza. She described the memorial as octagonal, 40 feet in diameter with 11 plaques set in the ground.

Ten of the plaques memorialize an individual astronaut from either the Challenger or Apollo I, which burned on the launching pad. The final large and errant plaque lists all of them. At the center is a six-foot-tall stone that resembles the nose cone of a space vehicle, from which a 60-foot flag pole extends.

The administrative assistant said she knew of one offer of help from a Jewish source. Rabbi Bernhard Rosenberg of Midchester Jewish Center, Yonkers, NY, told JTA that after reading the news report of the error, "I was sick to my stomach." He found a Yonkers monument company to do the work for free.

U.S. JUSTIFIES ITS SALE OF AWACS TO SAUDI ARABIA

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Feb. 4 (JTA) -- The State Department maintained Wednesday that the sale to Saudi Arabia in 1981 of five AWACS radar planes was based entirely on United States concern for the security of the Persian Gulf.

But Department spokesman Charles Redman refused to deny directly a published report that Saudi support for anti-Communist groups around the world, including the Contras who oppose the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua, was part of the deal.

"The AWACS sale to Saudi Arabia was based on U.S. vital interests in the security of the Gulf, the free flow of oil and the security of Saudi Arabia," Redman said. "These reasons for the sale stand on their own merits," he said. "I have no indication of anything beyond those reasons."

But when Redman was asked if he was denying the report published in The New York Times, he would go no further than his statement.

The Times quoted an unnamed businessman who said he refused a request by King Fahd and other Saudi officials to funnel \$15 million to the Contras through retired Air Force Maj. Gen. Richard Secord and his business partner, Albert Hakim.

The two have been identified by Congressional investigators as having been involved in the secret effort to provide funds for the Contras during the time Congress had forbidden any military aid to the rebel groups. Secord participated in the AWACS sale before his retirement.

The businessman told the Times that shortly after the Senate approved the \$8.5 billion sale of AWACS and other material to the Saudis, he met with Fahd at the king's home outside Riyadh. The businessman said Fahd told him that in return for a reduction of the number of Americans who were to operate some of the AWACS most secret equipment, the Saudis agreed to a U.S. request that they "fund movements to fight Communists." Fahd told the businessman that the U.S. was to select the groups to be funded, according to the Times.

The newspaper said the businessman said the requests for his participation was made from late 1983 through 1986 by Fahd; Prince Bandar bin Sultan, the Saudi Ambassador in Washington; and other Saudi officials. Bandar told the businessman, who has had extensive dealings in Saudi Arabia and the Middle East, that the proposal had the Reagan Administration's approval since "we've had similar arrangements with the U.S. for a long time, since I was involved in the AWACS sale," the Times reported.

SPECIAL INTERVIEW THE THREAT FROM WITHIN

By Yitzhak Rabi

NEW YORK, Feb. 4 (JTA) -- The major challenge facing the Jewish people today is to unite its ranks, a prominent Jewish leader asserts.

"The Jewish community today is torn by strife," Seymour Reich, the new president of B'nai B'rith International (BBI), observed in an interview here. "There is controversy and there are incidents in Israel and in Jewish communities elsewhere," he said, mentioning issues such as "Who is a Jew," "get" (religious divorce), intermarriage and assimilation.

The president of the largest Jewish organization in the world, consisting of 500,000 men, women, college students and teenagers, believes that the Jewish people must strengthen its unity in order to deal effectively with the dwindling Jewish population in the world, particularly in the United States.

"We are concerned. The Jewish population is dwindling due to intermarriage and assimilation. The major danger to the Jewish community today is from within. We have been losing our youth. American Jews constitute now only 2.6 percent of the general population, while in the past we constituted three percent of the population," he said.

On a recent visit to Israel, Reich called on the Jewish State to create "a body made up of representatives of all Jewish religious groups, in Israel and throughout the world, whose purpose would be to foster a healthier climate among Jews." Furthermore, Reich, who is a lawyer by profession, called on the Knesset to strengthen criminal sanctions against unlawful acts performed against the background of religious intolerance. "Individuals inclined toward that kind of violence must understand the harsh consequences that will result from them," he said.

Legitimacy Of Differences

The 53-year old leader said that his organization recognizes the legitimacy of different interpretations and outlooks of Judaism and Jewish identity. "We will encourage members of every group in Israeli society that believes in dignified co-existence," he stated. BBI, he said, makes itself available to all Jews -- Conservative, Orthodox or Reform. "We offer ourselves as a vehicle to accommodate the different views in the Jewish community and to serve as a meeting ground," Reich said.

Asked to list the other priorities on the agenda of the BBI, Reich, who spends two days a week at the organization's headquarters in Washington and the rest of the time in New York where he is a senior partner in the law firm of Dreyer & Traub, started with the plight of Soviet Jewry.

Soviet Jewry Issue

"We are campaigning very hard on behalf of Soviet Jews," he said. "We are trying to focus world attention on the Soviet Union's inhuman treatment of its Jewish citizens." He said that the highlight of BBI campaign for Soviet Jews will culminate between noon and 2 p.m. on February 26, when B'nai B'rith will stage rallies in 43 cities across the nation during which well known personalities will read the names of 12,000 Soviet refuseniks at city halls, state capitals, and college

campuses. The rallies, he noted, will be coordinated jointly by BBI and B'nai B'rith Women, in conjunction with the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, B'nai B'rith Hillel and the B'nai B'rith Youth Organization.

Another issue of priority with BBI is the State of Israel. "We are continuously alert and concerned on the need to educate the American public and Congress of Israel's strategic partnership with the United States," he said, adding that efforts are also made from time to time to correct the image of Israel in the media when the media "misunderstands certain action of Israel."

Israel Is Not Being Scapagoated

In Reich's view, the American people "have not scapegoated Israel" in the Iran arms sales affair. He noted, however, that some American officials made some statements "in an attempt to blame Israel," but their attempts failed. "When the Iran arms sales scandal broke out I was in Israel, where I met with Premier Yitzhak Shamir, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin. All three told me that Israel did not have prior knowledge or involvement in the diversion of funds from the arms sale to Iran to the Contras," he stressed.

Reich said that he and other BBI leaders have a direct access not only to the Administration in Washington, but to government officials in other countries around the world.

He said that American Jews thrive in America, because "Jews thrive best in democracy." He observed that anti-Semitism is no longer a major threat to American Jews. "Anti-Semitism is no longer respectable here," he pointed out, noting that anti-Semitism today is associated with extreme right-wing groups such as the KKK or the Posse Comitatus, whom he described as "fringe elements on the far right who have embarked on a mission of hatred against Jews."

FORMER ISRAEL AIR FORCE COMMANDER APPOINTED CHAIRMAN OF IAI BOARD By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Feb. 4 (JTA) -- Maj. Gen. (Res.) Mordechai Hod, former commander of the Israel Air Force, has been appointed chairman of the Board of Israel Aircraft Industries (IAI), it was announced Monday. The appointment was approved by Premier Yitzhak Shamir and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, in consultation with Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Minister-Without-Portfolio Moshe Arens.

Arens, a former Defense Minister and an aeronautical engineer by training, had blocked Hod's appointment on grounds of conflict of interest. The general was, until recently, the Israeli representative of Northrop, a major American manufacturer of military aircraft, and was as such opposed to the Lavi, Israel's second generation jet combat plane which is manufactured by IAI.

Arens, a vigorous backer of the Lavi project, withdrew his objections after Hod informed him last week that he no longer represented Northrop and was determined to produce the Lavi as head of IAI.

The appointment has political as well as military ramifications. Hod is a protégé of Ezer Weizman, another former Air Force Commander. One of Weizman's conditions for agreeing to merge his Yahad Party with the Labor Party was that Hod be named chairman of IAI.