

ISRAELI COALITION CRISIS ON HOLD AS PERES SETS 2ND MUBARAK MEETING

By David Landau and Hugh Orgel

JERUSALEM, Feb. 26 (JTA) -- The anticipated Labor-Likud crisis which many believe would spell the end of the unity coalition government remained on hold Thursday as Israel awaited the outcome of Vice Premier and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres' meetings with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Cairo.

Peres announced in Cairo late Thursday that he will have another round of talks with Mubarak on Friday, which was unscheduled. The two men met Thursday to discuss matters still outstanding with respect to an international peace conference for the Middle East, including Soviet and Palestinian participation and procedural arrangements.

Peres said "new ideas" were raised at their meeting Thursday, but would not say what they were. This aroused the ire of Premier Yitzhak Shamir, who told a caucus of Likud Ministers Thursday that Peres had "not bothered" to report to him and he had no knowledge of what new ideas were raised.

Opposes Soviet Participation

Shamir is adamantly opposed to an international conference including the Soviet Union on grounds that Israel would be isolated and pressured to return to its pre-1967 borders. Peres went to Cairo Wednesday while Shamir was still enroute home from a 10-day visit to the U.S., a fact that further irritated the Likud leader and his colleagues.

On landing in Israel Wednesday night, Shamir told reporters that the Peres-Mubarak meeting could well determine the fate of the unity government. Peres met with Mubarak in Alexandria last September, when he was Premier. They agreed in principle to an international conference. Shamir, then Foreign Minister, was sharply critical.

But nothing emerged from the Likud caucus Thursday to further aggravate the tense situation between the coalition partners. The Likud Ministers said they would react after they learned the outcome of Peres' meeting with Mubarak Friday. Shamir warned, however, that Peres had no right or mandate to agree to anything on Israel's behalf with respect to an international forum.

The Premier said earlier that any agreement Peres brought back from Cairo would have to be submitted to the full Cabinet for approval.

ISRAEL INVOLVED IN IRAN/CONTRA AFFAIR, BUT U.S. RESPONSIBLE FOR ITS DECISIONS, TOWER COMMISSION REPORT CONCLUDES

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Feb. 26 (JTA) -- President Reagan's special review board on the Iranian-Contra affair said Thursday that while Israel was heavily involved and may have initiated the United States efforts in Iran, the decision to sell arms to Iran was an American one for which the U.S. bears full responsibility.

"There was heavy Israeli involvement," former Sen. John Tower, chairman of the three-

member board, said at a White House press conference. "Of course, the final decision of our own participation was our own."

The board, which the President appointed last December 1, released its findings Thursday. Reagan appeared briefly at the start of the press conference to say that he would read the report carefully and report to the nation on it over television next week.

Former Sen. Edward Muskie, (D. Maine), who was Secretary of State in the Carter Administration, said that it was not clear who originated the idea of the U.S. seeking influence in Iran.

It was an "initiative that began either in Iran, in Israel or in the United States," he said.

'Not Full Picture' On Israel

Brent Scowcroft, national security advisor in the Ford Administration and the third member of the board, added that the board did not have the "full picture" on Israel's involvement.

"There is no question that the Israelis encouraged, if (they) did not initiate this policy, and that they did whatever they could when it appeared to be flagging from time to time to renew its vigor," Scowcroft said.

"I think the problem is that our goals and the Israeli goals were not synonymous," he added. "Indeed, in some respects they have been in conflict."

While Scowcroft did not describe the difference in goals, the report does list them:

"Israel had long-standing interests in a relationship with Iran and in promoting its arms export industry. Arms sales to Iran could further both objectives. It also offered a means of strengthening Iran against Israel's old adversary, Iraq."

"Much of Israel's military equipment came originally from the United States, however. For both legal and political reasons, Israel felt a need for U.S. approval of, or at least acquiescence in, any arms sale to Iran."

"In addition, elements in Israel undoubtedly wanted the United States involved for its own sake so as to distance the United States from the Arab world and ultimately to establish Israel as the only real strategic partner of the United States in the region."

The report added that "Iran badly wanted" the U.S. Tow and Hawk missiles that Israel could provide to counter Iraqi superiority in planes and armor. "Israel was more than willing to provide these weapons to Iran, but only if the United States approved the transfer and would agree to replace the weapons," the report said.

Not Absolutely Certain

Tower said that the board believes that Reagan approved Israel's first sale of arms to Iran in August 1985, before the shipment took place. Reagan, in his first testimony to the board, said he approved the sale in August, but then later told the board his approval came after the shipment. Since then he has said he cannot remember when his approval came. Tower pointed out that one reason why the board could not come to any conclusions on the extent of Israel's involvement was that the Israeli government re-

fused to allow it to interview the Israelis involved. The Israeli government had agreed to reply to written questions, but had not done so before the report was completed.

Israeli Premier Yitzhak Shamir, during his visit to Washington last week, promised to cooperate with the Senate and House committees investigating the Iran/Contra affair. But it was not clear whether he would allow the Israelis involved to be interviewed.

Israeli Embassy spokesman Yosef Gal said Thursday that the Embassy received the board's questions on February 16. He said they were very detailed and it was "impossible" to provide the information in time. But he said "we are cooperating" with all the investigations.

No Conclusion On Contras

Tower also said the board had not come to any conclusions on the transfer of funds from the sale of arms to Iran to the Contras. He said the board was denied access to the Swiss banks involved, and Adm. John Poindexter, the former National Security Advisor, and Marine Lt. Col. Oliver North, the former National Security Council employee involved in the Iran affair, among others, refused to testify before the board.

However, the report noted, as previously made public, that North, under questioning from Attorney General Edwin Meese, said the diversion of funds "was an Israeli idea."

Shamir denied in Washington last week any Israeli involvement in the diversion of funds.

He also stressed that Israel acted in the Iran affair as an ally and friend of the U.S.

"Even if the government of Israel actively worked to begin the initiative and to keep it going, the U.S. government is responsible for its own decisions," the board's report stressed.

'Nothing Improper Per Se'

It added that "Although Israel dealt with those portions of the U.S. government that it deemed were sympathetic to the initiative, there is nothing improper per se about this fact. U.S. decision-makers make their own decisions and must bear responsibility for the consequences."

Tower said that while the U.S. effort started out as a way to seek influence with moderates in Iran, it "very quickly became an arms-for-hostages affair." He noted that while Reagan could be faulted for his management style, the fault lay with his advisors who did not provide him with the type of advice needed. The board members specifically blamed Poindexter, former Central Intelligence Agency director William Casey and White House Chief of Staff Donald Regan.

The report details the entire Iranian affair in chronological order, but there was little information not already publicly known.

VANDALISM OF SYNAGOGUE WAS RACIST, SHUL'S LAWYER TELLS SUPREME COURT By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Feb. 26 (JTA) -- The lawyer for a suburban Washington synagogue that had been desecrated argued before the United States Supreme Court Wednesday that while Jews can not be considered a race, the vandalism was a racist act.

Patricia Brannan, a Washington lawyer, said that the eight men who sprayed swastikas and anti-Semitic slogans on the Shaare Tefila Congre-

gation synagogue in Silver Spring, Md., on Nov. 1, 1982, acted because they considered Jews to be non-whites.

However Deborah Garren, a Baltimore lawyer representing one of the vandals, claimed that while the act was one of religious discrimination it was not racist as defined by federal civil rights laws adopted in 1866.

Shaare Tefila, a Conservative congregation, was defaced with swastikas and other Nazi symbols and such slogans as "Death to the Jude."

Eight persons were later arrested for the vandalism and two of them were convicted of damaging the synagogue. The synagogue filed a suit in federal court against all eight charging that the congregation's civil rights had been violated.

Suit Seeks Damages

The suit seeks \$3,000 to cover the cost of repainting the synagogue's walls with any other money awarded going to the Montgomery County Human Relations Commission. The synagogue is in Montgomery County, which borders Washington.

However, the Fourth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Richmond, Va., rejected the suit in a 2-1 decision which said Jews could not use the civil rights law for protection, as they were not a separate non-white race.

At the same time, the U.S. Court of Appeals in Philadelphia ruled that Majid Ghaidan Al-Khazraji, an Iraqi-born professor, could sue under the 1866 acts over his charge that St. Francis College in Pennsylvania denied him tenure because he was an Arab. His case was also heard before the Supreme Court Wednesday.

Brannan, the synagogue's lawyer, argued Wednesday that the intent of the law was to bar racist acts. While she stressed that she did not want the Supreme Court or any other court to rule on whether Jews were a race, she said that the ideology of the Nazis in Germany and neo-Nazis and groups like the Ku Klux Klan in the U.S. is that Jews were non-whites.

She said this was the belief of the vandals and that their intent was racist.

Brannan is a member of the law firm of Hogan Hartson, which is co-counsel in the suit with the Jewish Advocacy Center, a non-profit group founded to bring legal action against those committing anti-Semitic acts.

Suit Sends Message

Kenneth Lipson, a co-founder of the Jewish Advocacy Center, told reporters after the hearing, that the purpose of the suit was to send a "clear message that anti-Semitic violence would not be tolerated."

Rabbi Martin Halpern, the congregation's religious leader, stressed that "our generation has been traumatized by the Holocaust, which has taught us that silence is not the answer to bigotry . . . When one human being or one institution suffers debasement, then we debase all of the human family."

Brannan told reporters that she was particularly pleased that the congregation's appeal to the Supreme Court had been joined by groups such as the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, the International Network of Children of Holocaust Survivors and the American Gathering and Federation of Jewish Holocaust Survivors.

A decision is not expected for several months.

ISRAEL SAID TO HAVE NUCLEAR CAPACITY TO LEVEL ALL MAJOR MIDEAST CITIES

By Judith Colp

WASHINGTON, Feb. 26 (JTA) -- Israel appears to have the nuclear potential to level every major Middle Eastern city, according to a book released this week by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Israel's nuclear program "is far more advanced than previously believed and . . . accordingly, the pace of proliferation in the region in recent years has been more rapid than generally acknowledged," Leonard Spector writes in "Going Nuclear," the third annual Carnegie Endowment for Peace report on nuclear war.

Spector bases his discussion on Israel on disclosures by Mordechai Vanunu, a former Israeli nuclear technician, who provided the basis for a detailed account of Israel's nuclear program published in the London "Sunday Times" last October.

Vanunu's disclosures revealed that Israel may "now possess more than 100 nuclear weapons -- not the 20 to 25 previously thought -- and that some of them may employ nuclear fusion, the principle of the H-bomb, which would make them tens of times more powerful than the atom bombs used in World War II," Spector writes.

Evidence also suggests that Israel deployed a sophisticated short-range missile, the Jericho II, during the early 1980's, which it could equip with a nuclear warhead.

Israel has declared that it "will not be the first to introduce nuclear weapons in the Middle East," a statement repeated by Premier Yitzhak Shamir during his recent trip to Washington.

No Comment From U.S.

Israel continued its nuclear buildup while the U.S. "at least partially aware of the direction of events, turned a blind eye" Spector writes. State Department spokesman Charles Redman refused to comment during a press conference Wednesday about Spector's assertions.

Three other Middle Eastern countries, Libya, Iran and Iraq, have long been interested in acquiring nuclear weapons, but made little progress towards nuclear arming last year, according to the report.

Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi's interest in obtaining nuclear weapons has been thwarted by a 1983 global embargo on nuclear transfers to Libya, says the report. "Although Tripoli has turned to clandestine nuclear dealings in the past, it remains unlikely that Libya will be able to obtain nuclear arms or nuclear-weapons material by that means because such commodities remain unavailable," Spector writes.

Iraq's nuclear program is at "standstill" as a result of the destruction of its reactor by Israel in 1981, declining oil revenues and the costs of its war with Iran, the report states.

Iran has "extensive nuclear hardware, materials and technology" that had been built up by the Shah, although it has made no recent progress in its nuclear program, Spector notes. But Iran's "nuclear activities pose a future proliferation threat and deserve to be monitored."

Pakistan made considerable progress in its nuclear activities in 1986 so "it is at a nuclear-weapons threshold: it either possesses all of the components needed to manufacture one or several atom bombs or else just remains short of this goal," Spector writes. But the U.S. and Soviet

Union may prevent Pakistan from conducting a nuclear test, he adds.

ITALIAN DEFENSE MINISTER SAYS SOVIETS DON'T YET BELONG IN MIDEAST TALKS

By Margie Olster

NEW YORK, Feb. 26 (JTA) -- Italian Defense Minister Giovanni Spadolini Wednesday supported Israel's objection to Soviet participation in any international conference on Mideast peace unless the Soviets resolve the issues of Jewish emigration and diplomatic relations with Israel.

Spadolini, a former Italian Premier, was speaking at an Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith luncheon in his honor. His remarks followed a European Economic Community Foreign Ministers' vote this week that such a conference be convened with Soviet participation.

Turning to terrorism, the Defense Minister said he had recently completed a tour of Israel and what he termed the moderate Arab states of Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Saudi Arabia. All endorsed the idea of an international conference on terrorism to formulate "new norms of international law aimed at guaranteeing the relations between states and at safeguarding the people's liberty of movement," he said.

He stressed the urgency of such a forum. "International terrorism is a threat which affects all world balance; a threat which from the Middle East to the Persian Gulf succeeds in influencing even the balances within the Soviet Union . . ."

Says U.S. 'Paralyzed' On Terrorism

After meeting with President Reagan earlier this week, Spadolini concluded that the U.S. Administration had been paralyzed on countering terrorism because of the Iran-Contra scandal. He said he could report only one remark of the President's because the meeting was confidential. Spadolini said Reagan told him, "I have never exchanged weapons for hostages." He called on the U.S. to take leadership initiatives against terrorism.

Spadolini's own strong stand against terrorism brought down the coalition government of Italian Prime Minister Bettino Craxi last summer following the hijacking of the cruise ship Achille Lauro. The Italian authorities had apprehended Abu Abbas, the alleged mastermind of the hijacking, but released him in the face of Arab pressure. Spadolini then withdrew his party from the coalition and Craxi's government collapsed.

On Wednesday, Spadolini received a plaque from the ADL honoring him for "his courageous leadership" in the fight against terrorism and his support for peace in the Middle East.

It was noted that Spadolini, who heads the pro-American Republican party in Italy, is a strong supporter of Israel. Speaking in Italian with a translator he quipped that one of Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi's ministers told him he was "twice a Jew and capable of killing Jesus a second time." Spadolini bragged about the collection of insults and threats he received accusing him of being "a dirty Zionist."

IT COULD BE WORSE FOR IRANIAN JEWS

GENEVA, Feb. 26 (JTA) -- The persecution of Jews in Iran increased in 1986, but they do not suffer as much as other non-Islamic minorities, according to a report presented to the United Nations Human Rights Commission here.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES: GOLAN DRUZE RESTLESS

By GII Sedan

JERUSALEM, Feb. 26 (JTA) — Five years after Israel formally annexed the Golan Heights, the 12,000-strong Druze community there continues to resist the political reality that they are part of the Israeli state.

Initially, their resistance took the form of sullen refusal to accept Israeli identity cards. More recently there have been open demonstrations against Israeli rule.

Though overshadowed by the wave of violence that spread in the West Bank and Gaza Strip last week, an incident on February 14 underlined the seriousness of the situation there. An outburst of pro-Syrian emotions among the Golan Druze was triggered by the scheduled unveiling of a statue of Sultan El Atrash, the legendary leader of the Druze revolt against the French Mandate authorities in 1925.

It occurred in Majdal Shams, the largest Druze village on the Golan. Israeli police assembled at the village early in the morning, a Saturday, as a precaution against possible demonstrations. Druze youths did indeed demonstrate. Some throwing stones, others armed with chains and clubs, chanting anti-Israeli and pro-Syrian slogans, they clashed with police.

Eight policemen were injured and at least 11 Druze were arrested. The demonstration coincided with the fifth anniversary of Israeli annexation.

Originally Were Friendly

The situation is ironic. When Israel captured the Golan Heights in the 1967 Six-Day War, the Druze, alone among the populations of the occupied territories, proved friendly. Their four villages surrendered without bloodshed. Relations with the Israeli authorities developed the same patterns of friendship and cooperation which characterized Israel's relations with the Druze minority within its own borders.

The Druze in Israel are considered the most loyal minority. Like all Israeli citizens, except Arabs, they do compulsory military service and have proven dependable and often heroic soldiers in Israel's wars with its neighbors. There are 45,000 Israeli Druze in 18 villages.

Many hold senior positions in the border police. The declared policy of the government was to integrate the Druze as much as possible into Israeli society, though this policy often has not been implemented.

The Druze are fiercely independent. They broke away from Islam in the 11th century. Although they are considered to be ethnic Arabs, many regard themselves as a separate ethnic entity. They have their own spiritual leaders. And despite complaints of discrimination, most Israeli Druze identify with the State.

Came To Accept Israel

In contrast, the Golan Druze maintain loyalty to Syria, which they regard as the legitimate sovereign of the Golan Heights. Nevertheless, after the Six-Day War they seemed to accept that Israel was there to stay, pending an overall political settlement of the Israel-Arab conflict.

Many took jobs in Kiryat Shemona and other Jewish border towns. Their children studied Hebrew diligently and many entered Israeli universities. At the same time, the border with Syria remained relatively open. Golan Druze frequently

visited their families on the Syrian side, many of whom hold senior positions in the Damascus establishment.

But peaceful coexistence changed in 1982 when the Likud government, with the backing of the Labor Alignment, annexed the Golan Heights, terminating military rule and subjecting the territory to Israeli civil law.

The Druze community balked at carrying Israeli ID cards. Rallying around their religious leaders, they staged a silent revolt. For five months they remained within the confines of their villages, refusing to present Israeli ID cards at police barriers.

The self-imposed confinement gradually ended. In June 1982, the Lebanon war shifted public attention away from the Golan Heights. More and more Druze reluctantly accepted Israeli ID cards. But the Heights became a center of political unrest.

Basically, the Golan Druze saw annexation as an attempt to enforce a new loyalty upon them. They refused to give up their loyalty to Syria, which they regard as their country, and because of family ties there.

Will Israel Ever Leave

Some Israelis believe the Druze loyalty to Syria is only an expedience. Frequent talk by various Israeli leaders of possible negotiations with Syria over the Golan has caused many Druze to wonder if the Israeli presence was indeed permanent. Israel's return of the Sinai to Egypt in exchange for a peace treaty heightened those concerns.

The pro-Syrian demonstrations are seen in some Israeli quarters as a hedge against the possibility that the Golan, or part of it, may one day be returned to Syria. Israelis who insist that the Golan is an eternal part of Israel say that if Israel makes the Heights non-negotiable as it has East Jerusalem, the anti-Israeli mood among the Druze will change.

Meanwhile, Druze Knesset member Zeidan Atashe of the opposition Shinui Party blamed the police presence for the violence at Majdal Shams.

Although the Heights are an integral part of Israel with a different legal status than the administered territories, the policy there remains the same as in the territories. Political demonstrations likely to incite the population are forbidden.

JDC FUNDS REBUILT MEXICAN SCHOOL

NEW YORK, Feb. 26 (JTA) — A junior high school in Mexico City, destroyed in the September 19, 1985 earthquake, is holding classes in a new building built through the combined efforts of the American and Mexican Jewish communities, which raised \$2.5 million for the purpose, the Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) announced.

The JDC responded to the Mexican disaster with a "JDC Open Mailbox" which funnels contributions by American Jews toward non-sectarian disaster relief.

CORRECTION: The February 23 story "Kahane denounced by most Jewish communities" misidentified the Jewish newspaper of the Twin Cities. It is the American Jewish World.