

**PERES AND SOVIET AMBASSADOR TO U.S.
MEET IN WASHINGTON ON INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE FOR MIDDLE EAST PEACE**
By Yitzhak Rabi

NEW YORK, May 18 (JTA) -- Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and the Soviet Ambassador to the United States, Yuri Dubinin, held an unexpected meeting in Washington Sunday night that lasted more than 90 minutes. The two officials discussed the issue of an international conference for Middle East peace.

Peres, in a meeting with Israeli reporters in New York Monday morning, hours before his return to Israel, said that the meeting was held at the request of the Soviet Ambassador in the Washington apartment of Edgar Bronfman, president of the World Jewish Congress.

"The Soviet Ambassador told me that Moscow is interested in reaching peace in the Mideast and that they want to play a positive role in the peace process," Peres said about his conversation with Dubinin.

"The Ambassador," Peres continued, "said that the whole world and the Mideast need peace. He noted that a new era is underway in the Soviet Union, under the leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev, and that the change in the Soviet Union's policies also applies to the Mideast."

The Soviet Ambassador told the Foreign Minister that the Kremlin does not intend to arrive at an imposed solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. "I told him that if the Soviet Union wants to take part in an international conference they must come with satisfactory answers to Israel's requests," Peres said. He was alluding to Israel's demands that the Soviet Union restore its diplomatic relations with Israel, which were severed during the 1967 Six-Day War, and that Jews in large numbers be allowed to emigrate from the Soviet Union.

Peres said he asked that Soviet Jews be allowed to immigrate to Israel via direct flights from Moscow to Tel Aviv.

'High Quality' And Very Interesting' Meeting

The Foreign Minister, who described the entire meeting with Dubinin as "high quality and very interesting," said, however, that as far as he is concerned, "The Soviet Union is still not ready to participate in an international conference." He said that no further meetings were scheduled between him and the Soviet Ambassador.

Asked to sum up the American position on the issue of international conference, following his two meetings with Secretary of State George Shultz in the last four days, Peres said: "The Americans, like me, understand that the only way to reach direct negotiations (between Israel and the Arabs) is through the corridor of an international conference. But they do not want to interfere in internal Israeli matters."

Peres said that new elections are the only solution to the political stalemate in Israel over the issue of an international conference. He added, however, that he does not believe in a "narrow government" and does not think, therefore, that Labor has to quit the unity coalition government with Likud. "In the present situation,

the only way out is new elections," Peres said. "We will continue the struggle until we get a majority for a new election."

**SENTIMENT GROWING IN LABOR PARTY
TO END ITS COALITION WITH LIKUD**

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, May 18 (JTA) -- Sentiment is growing within the Labor Party to end its coalition with Likud and take the major issues which have divided the unity government to the voters. This will be put to Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, the party leader, when he returns from his weekend trip to the U.S. Monday evening.

The secessionist camp was strengthened after Communications Minister Amnon Rubinstein of the Labor-allied Shinui Party announced Sunday that he would recommend his party leave the government because it is hopelessly deadlocked on the issue of a peace conference. Rubinstein indicated that he hoped his move would spur Labor to follow suit.

Rancor between the coalition partners was escalated by Sunday's Cabinet decision -- adopted in face of Labor opposition -- to charge Israel Defense Force veterans lower university fees than non-veterans. The \$450 differential was seen as blatant discrimination against Arab students inasmuch as Arabs are banned by law from serving in Israel's armed forces.

Labor Party Secretary General Uzi Baram denounced the decision Monday. He said it put Israel "in line with South Africa." Secessionists maintain that even if Likud managed to put together a narrowly based governing coalition with the small religious parties, Labor must leave now rather than bow to compromises which sully its image.

Short Life For Likud-Led Government

But they are convinced that a Likud-led government would not last long. That view apparently is shared by Shas, the ultra-Orthodox Party Likud has been trying to woo with promises of major religious concessions. Shas MK Rafael Pinhasi said on a television interview Sunday night that if Labor left the coalition a narrowly based government would be short-lived.

Nevertheless, Peres has been reluctant to lead Labor out of the government and precipitate its downfall. He would prefer to have the Knesset vote to dissolve itself and call early elections. As of last week he was still several votes short of passing such a resolution.

Dispute Over Next Ambassador To The U.S.

Meanwhile, the long-simmering dispute between Labor and Likud over who will be the next Ambassador to Washington seemed further than ever from resolution. Up to now all Labor nominees to succeed the incumbent envoy Meir Rosenne, have been rejected by Premier Yitzhak Shamir. Rosenne's term expires at the end of this month and he is preparing to leave Washington.

Sources close to Shamir disclosed Sunday that he has asked Rosenne to stay on for another two months. Peres' aides said Sunday that the Foreign Minister proposed two other candidates

for Israel's most important diplomatic posting abroad. They are Uri Lubrani, the government's advisor on policy in south Lebanon who was Israel's representative in Teheran before the Shah was deposed in 1979; and Itmar Rabinovitch, an expert on Arab affairs and a professor at Tel Aviv University.

U.S. TO CONTINUE TO 'EXPLORE' FEASIBILITY OF MIDEAST CONFERENCE

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, May 18 (JTA)-- The Reagan Administration has made it clear that it will continue to "explore" the feasibility of an international conference on Middle East peace despite the deadlock in Israel's national unity government over the issue.

"The President and I are not committed to an international conference and we are not asking others to commit themselves," Secretary of State George Shultz told the some 1,200 persons attending the 28th annual policy conference of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) at the Washington Hilton Hotel Sunday night.

But, Shultz stressed that the United States believes that a "real opportunity" exists for making progress and "it is important to explore all possible approaches" including an international conference that would lead promptly to direct face-to-face negotiations.

Such a conference should be looked at "carefully, cautiously, skeptically," he said. "But look it over."

U.S. Won't Interfere In Israeli Politics

Shultz took pains to emphasize that the U.S. was "careful not to intervene in domestic Israeli politics," a reference to the current split in which Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and his Labor Party was pressing for such a conference to the vehement opposition of Premier Yitzhak Shamir and Likud.

"I have the highest regard for and the closest relationships with both Premier Shamir and Foreign Minister Peres and for that matter, with many other Israeli leaders," Shultz said. He added that "all of them are dedicated to peace" and that "all across the spectrum of Israeli politics there is a desire to have direct talks."

Shultz spoke to AIPAC after meetings with Peres in New York on Saturday and in Washington on Sunday.

Peres, in a speech to AIPAC earlier on Sunday, as well as in his other public remarks over the weekend, asserted that he had not come to the U.S. to seek support for his position but to explain it.

"I didn't ask for any statement by Mr. Shultz aimed at Israel," Peres said on NBC-TV's "Meet the Press" Sunday. "I think the United States has clarified its position and I hope they won't rotate from it."

Shultz told AIPAC he believes King Hussein of Jordan "is sincere in his readiness to pursue a negotiated settlement" through direct negotiations with Israel. He said that Hussein also agrees that the international conference, which the king has demanded, "will not impose any solution or veto any agreement made by the negotiating parties."

The Secretary stressed that Palestinians must participate in the negotiations, but "only in a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation." He ruled out any part for the Palestine Liberation Organization in peace talks.

Shultz said the U.S. believes that the way to achieve peace is by "sitting down with people who want to make peace and who are qualified and ready to negotiate."

He then asked whether the PLO was qualified and replied to his own question, "hell, no." He then said to the loudly applauding audience, "PLO," and they shouted back at him, "no."

Says Soviets Are Not Qualified

Repeating his question, he asked about the Soviet Union. He said they "could be" but are not now entitled to participate. "They encourage the PLO to turn even more radical and violent," he said. "They ally themselves with the worst terrorists and tyrants in the region."

In addition, Shultz pointed to the Soviet Union's treatment of Jews and its refusal to increase emigration, as well as its lack of diplomatic relations with Israel, as reasons for it not being qualified to participate in Mideast peace negotiations.

Shultz said that if there are negotiations the U.S. position will be based on President Reagan's Sept. 1, 1982 Mideast peace initiative which he stressed is an "initiative not a plan." He said all parties will be free to put their own proposals on the table without any preconditions, as well as walk away if the conditions for the talks are not met.

Asked why the U.S. embassy is not moved to Jerusalem, Shultz replied that while the U.S. believes Jerusalem should remain united, it also believes that all territories captured by Israel in 1967 should be open for negotiations.

The Secretary stressed several times that relations between Israel and the U.S. are closer than ever and that both the Administration and Congress are committed to strengthening it even further.

"I feel that one of the warmest and best things that have happened to me in this job is the expansion of my already wide list of Jewish friends," Shultz said after it was noted he is the first person to have been asked and accepted to address the AIPAC policy meeting for a second time. He first spoke to AIPAC in 1985.

U.S. PLANS TO SELL 60 F-15s TO SAUDIS

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, May 18 (JTA) -- Secretary of State George Shultz confirmed Sunday night that the Reagan Administration plans to sell some 60 F-15 fighter planes to Saudi Arabia. The sale is "structured in a way that we believe protects the Israeli interests," he said in response to a question after his address to the 28th annual policy conference of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC).

He stressed that the planes would not increase the number of F-15s the Saudis now have, but would replace planes that are no longer usable. About five planes would be sent immediately and the others would be delivered to keep the Saudi "inventory" of 62, sold in the Carter Administration, constant.

The sale, which reportedly also include hundreds of Maverick air-to-ground missiles, would have to be approved by Congress. Shultz said the sale is in U.S. interest because of "the tension" in the Persian Gulf and the "stability" provided by such advanced arms for the Saudis.

FIRST SOVIET-BORN JEW ORDAINED AS A CONSERVATIVE RABBI AT JTS

By Margie Olster

NEW YORK, May 18 (JTA) -- Leonid Feldman used to teach Soviet children scientific atheism, a required course which ridiculed religion and belief in a God. Last Thursday, he became the first Soviet-born Jew ordained a Conservative rabbi at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America (JTS).

"Today is a victory celebration for a 4,000 year old tradition. The Soviet Union is the most successful atheistic machine. But this just proves that Judaism is more powerful than anything," Feldman said.

"I realize that I'm very lucky, very fortunate. But with this comes a responsibility," he said. The responsibility, according to Feldman, is to teach American Jews and especially Soviet Jews who settle in America, to be Jewish.

Feldman and 22 other men and women were ordained in the JTS commencement Thursday. Also, the first two women cantors ordained in the history of the Conservative movement, Marla Rosenfeld Barugel and Erica Lippitz, received their diploma of Hazzan at the ceremony.

Feldman, who has become a cause celebre in the American Jewish community, has accepted a job at CLAL (The National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership). One of Feldman's dreams for the near future is the establishment of a Soviet synagogue in Brighton Beach which he hopes will bring Soviet Jews back to Judaism. About 40,000 Soviet Jews live in the Brighton Beach section of Brooklyn.

A Journey Fraught With Obstacles

Feldman, 34, told the JTA that his spiritual and physical journey to the rabbinate was fraught with obstacles. As a refusenik in the Soviet Union, Feldman said he was briefly imprisoned and staged a hunger strike just before he received permission to emigrate to Israel in 1976.

After spending three years in Israel, he came to America, hoping to study education at Columbia University in New York. But as an illegal resident with little money, the school would not accept him. He said he had been homeless, despondent, lonely and even suicidal after he came to America.

Feldman said the turning point in his odyssey came one night when he was standing on the George Washington Bridge in Manhattan and thinking about jumping off. "I said to myself, the Soviets did not break me. I'm not going to let the freest country in the world break me," Feldman recalled.

As a young physics teacher in the Soviet Union, Feldman described himself as a "passionate atheist" and a good communist. He believed in scientific atheism and said he was "anti-religion." But one day, a refusenik gave him the book that would change the course of his life -- Leon Uris' "Exodus."

After reading it in one night, Feldman said he realized for the first time that the Jews had a country of their own, a language of their own and an ancient history.

He became a Zionist activist with no special attachment to the Jewish religion. After the Soviets did not permit him to emigrate, Feldman said Natan Sharansky advised him to go on a

hunger strike as a last resort to publicize his case. For this, he said he spent a month in Soviet prison.

Following his release in 1976, Feldman spent three years in Israel, serving in the army and teaching physics. Feldman, a chess master, was also invited to judge in the World Chess Olympiad in Haifa.

'Felt I Had Some Kind Of A Mission'

Education was a consistent part of his life. He decided in 1980 to go to New York to study at Columbia University Teachers College. But with no papers, no money and no luck, this aspiration was frustrated.

His fortunes changed considerably when he went to Los Angeles to visit an old friend. There, he was offered teaching jobs and became interested in religious studies.

"I always felt I had some kind of a mission -- I was an idealist in the Soviet Union, a good communist. During the few years between becoming a Zionist and leaving the Soviet Union, I had no goal. I was desperate. Judaism gave me a goal. It filled a gap, an emptiness that communism left in my soul."

Feldman said two Jewish scholars and authors, Dennis Prager and Joseph Telushkin, had a tremendous impact on his intellectual interest in Judaism. After reading the book Prager and Telushkin co-authored, "The Nine Questions People Ask Most About Judaism," he slowly became more observant and began taking courses at the Jewish Theological Seminary affiliate in Los Angeles, the University of Judaism. Then, the dean of the university suggested he take his studies one step further and become a rabbi.

Months later, he transferred to the rabbinical school at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York.

Need To Educate Soviet Jews To Judaism

Feldman said he feels he has a unique calling to educate Soviet Jews about Judaism because he understands their education and lack of knowledge about Judaism.

"There are 40,000 Soviet Jews in Brighton Beach who are uneducated about Judaism. There are people there who never heard of Shul, who don't believe in God, they are atheists . . . I have a special understanding because I too was a passionate atheist," he said.

But not only the Soviet Jews suffer from the lack of Yiddishkeit, Feldman said. "Jewish life in America is disastrous. This is the freest country in the world and the most ignorant Jewish community in the world except for the Soviet Union."

He noted that every American Jew can take Hebrew lessons if he wants to. "Ioscf Begun spent 20 years in prisons and psychiatric wards for teaching aleph, bet." But most American Jews cannot even say "how are you" in Hebrew, Feldman said.

PANAMA'S PRESIDENT VISITING ISRAEL

JERUSALEM, May 18 (JTA) -- Panama's President, Eric Arturo de Delvalle, arrived in Israel Sunday on a state visit. De Delvalle, who is Jewish, spoke of close ties between Israel and Panama at a state dinner hosted by President Chaim Herzog.

'GET' PROPOSAL UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE NEW YORK BOARD OF RABBIS

NEW YORK, May 18 (JTA) -- The New York Board of Rabbis unanimously approved a resolution calling on its members representing every trend in Judaism in the U.S. to encourage their congregants, in the event of civil divorce, to obtain a Jewish divorce, a "get."

The resolution was drafted by Rabbi Haskel Lookstein, Board president, and its approval is believed to be the first such action ever taken by a major rabbinic group comprising Orthodox, Conservative, Reform and Reconstructionist rabbis.

The resolution states: "On moral and humanitarian grounds, we find it abhorrent when one spouse refuses to participate in the 'get' process after a civil divorce and when the other spouse desires a 'get.'" The measure urges all rabbis and congregations and the entire community "to deny all privileges of membership to a person who holds another Jew captive in such a manner."

The resolution recommends that the rabbis urge all couples to sign a prenuptial agreement pledging both partners to cooperate in arranging for a "get" before a rabbinic tribunal should their marriage terminate in divorce. Lookstein has done this for some time at his synagogue, Congregation Kehilath Jeshurun in Manhattan.

Lookstein said the resolution "represents a major step forward in solving one of the most troublesome and divisive problems in Jewish family -- the religious divorce." He noted that "there are literally thousands of men and women, mostly women, who have obtained a civil divorce but who are prevented from remarrying because of a vindictive former spouse who refuses to cooperate in the 'get' process."

Copies of the resolution are being sent to rabbinic organizations throughout the country.

U.S. SHOWS AUSTRIA THE DOCUMENTS THAT CAUSED WALDHEIM'S BAN FROM U.S. By Reinhard Engel

VIENNA, May 18 (JTA) -- U.S. Justice Department officials Friday presented to Austrian Justice Minister Egmont Foregger the documents that led to Austrian President Kurt Waldheim's ban from the United States.

U.S. Ambassador Ronald Lauder said the "extraordinary and unprecedented" action of explaining a U.S. internal decision was taken at Austria's request.

The U.S. Justice Department placed Waldheim on a "Watch List," barring his entry as a private citizen into the U.S., on April 27. President Reagan has pledged not to invite him as a head of state.

Waldheim, a former United Nations Secretary General, has admitted that he concealed part of his service as a Nazi officer, but claimed he took no part in war crimes. Yet in barring Waldheim, the Justice Department cited evidence that while serving in Yugoslavia, Waldheim ordered the murder of Jews, Gypsies, Serbs and resistance fighters.

Parliament Supports Waldheim

On Thursday, the Austrian Parliament approved a resolution championing Waldheim against his U.S. ban.

The declaration supports the government's rejection of the U.S. decision and its subsequent recalling for consultations of the Austrian Ambas-

sador to the U.S. The resolution also calls on the government to do everything necessary to help Waldheim in his defense and condemns all forms of discrimination, including anti-Semitism.

In the debate over the declaration, Foreign Minister Alois Mock noted that Waldheim had not received due process and ought to be considered innocent until proven otherwise.

Presenting a Jewish view of the Waldheim affair, Paul Gross, president of the Austrian Jewish Communities, said Friday he did not advocate Waldheim's resignation since it could lead to accusations that Jews caused his fall. But he did urge Waldheim to admit his mistakes.

Gross added that the Jewish community receives a considerable amount of anti-Semitic mail and threatening letters.

SOVIET OFFICIALS SAY JEWISH EMIGRATION WILL RISE IF DIPLOMATIC TIES IMPROVE

By Michael Solomon

MONTREAL, May 18 (JTA) -- Highly placed Soviet officials told three visiting members of the Canadian Parliament last week that the Soviet Union might allow more Jewish emigration and take other human rights action if its relations improve with Israel and the U.S.

The MPs -- Conservative William Attewell, chairman of the Canadian Parliamentary Committee for Soviet Jewry; New Democrat Howard McCurdy; and Liberal Lucy Pepin -- were accompanied by Janet Goldman of the Toronto Committee of Soviet Jewry.

They were told by Vadim Zagladin that about 22,000 applications for emigration, mostly by Jews, are pending. The Canadian delegation also met with Viktor Afanasyev, editor-in-chief of the newspaper Pravda; and Alexei Glukhov, first deputy chief of the Foreign Ministry's Directorate for Humanitarian Affairs.

McCurdy said that Soviet officials pointed to the rise in Jewish emigration this year and suggested that the West should be more patient and remember that the Soviet bureaucracy is sluggish.

Barbara Stern, chairman of the National Committee for Soviet Jewry of the Canadian Jewish Congress, told JTA that "we hope this is the beginning," but noted that new Soviet emigration codes only "institutionalize the existing procedure, making it even more difficult for Jews to apply for exit visas to Israel ... Should the Soviets introduce a definite policy, I am sure that we'll see more than a million applications for emigration from Soviet Jews."

TEL AVIV (JTA) -- Tel Aviv University has signed an agreement for scientific cooperation with the University of Konstanz in West Germany, providing for exchanges of faculty, graduate and undergraduate students. The program is funded by the Lion Foundation, established by Kurt Lion of Kreuzlingen, Switzerland.

CORRECTION: The number of people at the Salute To Israel Parade was inadvertently reported to have been 250,000 in the May 18 Bulletin. The correct number should have been 750,000.

There will be no Daily News Bulletin dated May 25, Memorial Day, a postal holiday.