

U.S., ISRAEL AGREED ON NEED FOR CONTACTS WITH IRANIAN 'MODERATES,' NORTH TELLS CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, July 9 (JTA) -- Lt. Col. Oliver North said Thursday that while Israel and the United States may have had some different objectives in the Iranian initiative, there was a "basic fundamental agreement" on the need to open contacts with the more moderate elements in Iran.

"I believe that there was sufficient congruence between Israeli objectives and American objectives that made this project worthwhile," North said during his third day of testimony before the Senate-House special committee investigating the Iran-Contra affair.

He said both countries "saw the need to get to some faction within the Iranian government that would lead to a more moderate, more pro-Western government in Iran, if not immediately, then over time."

The former National Security Council aide explained that both countries feared that with no relationship with Iranian moderates, the "chaos" that might result when the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini dies would allow the Soviet Union to move into Iran.

In addition, North said there is need to control the threat from "Iranian-sponsored fundamentalist Shiite terrorism" which, he stressed, exists not only in the Middle East, but also in the Philippines, Indonesia and elsewhere in the Far East.

Explaining the different objectives of Israel and the U.S., North said that the U.S. wanted an end to the Iran-Iraq war, while some in the U.S. believe "Israel may like to see the war go on."

Defended Israeli Nir

During his testimony Thursday, North strongly defended Amiram Nir, who according to a report in the Washington Post was removed as terrorism advisor to Israeli Premier Yitzhak Shamir because of North's testimony on Wednesday. (Shamir's office denied that report, and Nir was unavailable for comment. See story below.)

In that testimony, North said that during a meeting with Nir and Iranian arms dealer Manucher Ghorbanifar in Europe last January, Ghorbanifar took North into a bathroom and proposed that profits from the sale of U.S. arms to Iran be used to finance the Contra rebels in their efforts against the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua.

North said he was told by the late William Casey, then director of the Central Intelligence Agency, that Ghorbanifar was believed to be an Israeli agent, and North said he believed Ghorbanifar made the proposal "with the full knowledge and acquiescence of the Israeli intelligence services, if not the Israeli government."

The Israeli government has relied on Nir for its denial that Israel knew about the diversion of the arms sale proceeds to the Contras.

North, who spoke of his "close relationship" with Nir Thursday, said if Nir was removed because of his (North's) testimony, "I sadly regret it. He is a brave man who served his country well, and I believe tried to help us in trying to

carry out our policies." North especially praised Nir's courage in accompanying him and former National Security Advisor Robert McFarlane to Teheran in May 1986. He noted that Casey would not allow him to go to Teheran without assurances that he would be willing to commit suicide if the Iranians tried to torture him, adding that it was even more dangerous for an official of the Israeli government to go to Iran. "I think the world of that young man (Nir)," he said.

North also said the U.S. could not have intercepted the plane carrying the four Palestinian terrorists who hijacked the Achille Lauro cruise ship in October 1985, without the help of Nir and other Israelis.

Said Nir Had Proceeds Suggestion

However, North did reveal Thursday that it was Nir who suggested that profits from the sale of U.S. arms be used to pay for replenishing the 503 TOW anti-tank missiles the Israelis sold to Iran in 1985. He said the Israelis had earlier mistakenly believed the U.S. would replace the missiles free of charge.

North said Wednesday that profits from the sale had been used to replenish the TOWs, to help the Contras, to continue the Iran initiative and "to continue other activities which the Israelis very clearly wanted and so did we." These activities are still classified, according to North.

He repeated Thursday that he and other officials considered Ghorbanifar a "liar" and untrustworthy, but had used him because he was already being used by Israel as a middleman with Iran. "You don't send Mother Theresa to Teheran," he said.

North added that the U.S., with no contacts in Iran, had to rely on Israel. He said that one reason for the initiative was to provide the U.S. with such contacts. It was for this reason that the U.S. sought a "second channel" to the Iranians, North stressed, adding that the Israelis understood the U.S. need to have its own sources.

NIR STILL HAS JOB: SHAMIR

JERUSALEM, July 9 (JTA) -- The Prime Minister's Office denied Thursday a report in the Washington Post that Amiram Nir, the Prime Minister's advisor on terrorism, has been stripped of his duties.

The Post said Premier Yitzhak Shamir took the step after it became clear that Nir lied to him about his secret meeting with Iranian arms dealer Manucher Ghorbanifar.

Nir, contacted at his office, had no comment.

SEPHardic CHIEF RABBI APPEALS TO FRANCE TO SPARE NAKASH

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, July 9 (JTA) -- Sephardic Chief Rabbi Mordechai Eliahu has asked the French Council of Bishops to intervene on behalf of William Nakash, whose extradition to France to serve a life sentence for murder was ordered by the Justice Ministry last week.

The appeal by Eliahu, reported here Thursday, was on humanitarian grounds to keep the

Nakash family intact. His wife is pregnant. The Rabbinical Court has already ordered that Nakash, an Algerian-born Orthodox Jew, must remain in the country. Otherwise his wife would become an "aguna" -- abandoned woman -- unable to remarry under religious law. The Rabbinical Court order conflicts with the Supreme Court, which rejected Nakash's final appeal against extradition. Attorney General Yosef Harish called on the Justice Minister to implement the extradition order immediately.

AFTER ELECTIONS TO ZIONIST CONGRESS, U.S. GROUPS CELEBRATE OR PLAN APPEALS By Margie Olster

NEW YORK, July 9 (JTA) -- American Zionists greeted the results this week of the American elections for the 31st World Zionist Congress with either elation or bitterness.

The Conservative and Reform Zionist slates, which were the undisputed big winners, welcomed what they viewed as an American Zionist imperative for increased religious pluralism in Israel.

But the Students for Israel list, the Americans for Progressive Israel (API) and the Religious Zionists of America (RZA) strongly protested the heavy penalties imposed on their election slates, which translated into a loss of mandates in the 152-seat American delegation to the Congress in Jerusalem this December.

Traditional parties like Hadassah and the Zionist Organization of America (ZOA) lost considerable numbers of mandates from the 30th Zionist Congress, but Hadassah praised the support given to the Reform and Conservative Zionists and noted that religious pluralism was also at the center of its platform. The ZOA issued a statement expressing disappointment at its losses.

The Friends of Labor slate, the only traditional Zionist party to gain mandates in this election, claimed a victory for the Labor Zionist movement.

Conservative, Reform Leaders Pleased

Ismar Schorsch, chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York and the first delegate on the MERCAZ Conservative Zionist slate, applauded his party's gains. MERCAZ, which ran a slate for the first time, won 20 mandates.

"They (the gains) reflect not only the growing sentiments among Conservative Jews to strengthen democratic and pluralistic elements within Israel, but also the readiness to fight actively for that goal," Schorsch said.

Rabbi Eric Yoffee, executive director of the Association of Reform Zionists of America (ARZA), agreed. "The Zionist community is sending a clear message about religious rights in Israel," he said. ARZA received 33 mandates, a gain of 19 from the previous elections that make it the second largest delegation of American Zionists to the 31st Congress.

Representatives of the American Labor Zionist movement applauded the results as a victory for the forces of moderation.

Phyllis Sutker of Chicago, who coordinated the Labor-Na'amat U.S.A. campaign, said, "The dramatic increases recorded by ARZA, MERCAZ, and the increased strength of Labor, who together make up the forces of moderation, shows that the American Jewish community wants to send a message to Jerusalem on issues which effect its future." That message seems to have gotten through to some Israeli leaders. Akiva Lewinsky,

the Labor candidate for chairman of the World Zionist Organization and Jewish Agency Executive, phoned Friends of Labor Israel to express his satisfaction. "I hear the message calling for change, moderation and pluralism and I see the partners with whom the changes can be implemented," he said.

Ben Cohen, chairman of the American Zionist Federation (AZF), which administered the American elections, indicated that many of the votes were reactions to the proposed changes in the Law of Return that would invalidate Conservative and Reform conversions, and which were again defeated in the Knesset Wednesday.

"This is a declaration of independence on the part of diaspora Zionists expressing their own opinion," he said. He added that the results indicated that American Zionists are moving away from traditional Israeli partisan politics and forming their own agenda.

Appeals Planned

But some were less pleased with the election results and expressed disenchantment with the American Zionist movement as well as the manner in which penalties were imposed during this election.

The Progressive Zionist List received one mandate and lost three as a result of a 74 percent penalty. The list has filed an appeal which will come before an grievance panel called the Zionist Tribunal.

Arich Liebowitz of the Progressive Zionist List said the slate was penalized for having too many gift memberships, yet he noted he had understood that these memberships were permissible. "Every Zionist organization gives gift memberships," he said.

Cohen said the issue of gift memberships will be decided by the tribunal. Although the rules do not specifically prohibit the gifts, one requirement for eligibility is that all members of Zionist organizations must have dues paid up to date.

Orthodox Leader Claims 'Heist'

RZA, one of three parties that formed a coalition on the Religious Zionist Movement slate, was penalized 93 percent of its votes. That translated into a 56 percent penalty for the slate (calculated according to the RZA's proportion of members to the whole slate).

Rabbi Louis Bernstein, RZA chairman, called the penalty "the biggest heist since the Brink's bank robbery." He would not say, however, why the heavy penalties were imposed on his party. The AZF also refused to disclose to reporters the rationale for the penalties.

"We don't view this as an election matter at all. We view this as an assault on Orthodoxy," Bernstein said. He said he has "not been given a chance to respond" to the charges. Bernstein said he has not decided on an appeal to the Zionist Tribunal because he is skeptical about its objectivity. The tribunal is composed of one member of each Zionist organization in the election.

The divisiveness between the Orthodox and non-Orthodox and the intense focus on religious issues caused concern within the ZOA. Milton Shapira, ZOA president, said "the single issue of religious equity in Israel dominated the campaign."

"...We are concerned that the infusion of religious issues within the Zionist movement may well lead to an increased polarization of the Zionist movement, thereby weakening Israel's base

of support in the diaspora. As strong advocates of religious pluralism, ZOA believes that solutions should be found without fragmenting the Jewish people."

SOVIET LEAVES GENEVA BEFORE ANTICIPATED MEETING WITH PERES

By Tamar Levy

GENEVA, July 9 (JTA) -- Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres will not meet here with Soviet diplomats or with President Mircic Mogrov of Yugoslavia, contrary to reports in the Israeli media that such meetings were likely.

Vladimir Polyakov, the top Soviet specialist on Middle East affairs, left Geneva Wednesday morning after two days of talks with his American counterpart, Assistant Secretary of State Richard Murphy. Peres arrived here on Thursday.

Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Yuli Vorontsov is due here Saturday, by which time Peres will have returned to Israel. A Soviet diplomat told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that the time has not yet arrived for meetings between Soviet officials and the Israeli Foreign Minister.

Peres has a one-hour meeting scheduled Thursday with president Hosni Mubarak of Egypt. Mubarak arrived in Geneva Wednesday afternoon. He acknowledged that he would meet Peres only after he was pressed on the subject by reporters. He appeared less than enthusiastic. "Why not?" was his response.

Peres was to attend the opening session of the conference of the United Nations Trade and Development Agency Thursday afternoon and will meet later with UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar. He is then scheduled to attend a reception given by the Swiss authorities for conference delegates Thursday night and will fly back to Israel immediately afterwards or early Friday morning.

GLASNOST HASN'T HELPED SOVIET JEWS SEEKING VISAS, BEGUN TELLS HEARING

By Marlene Goldman

NEW YORK, July 9 (JTA) -- Despite the new Soviet "glasnost" policy, Soviet Jews eligible for emigration are still denied exit visas, according to long-time refusenik leader Iosif Begun.

Begun testified by telephone Tuesday to a hearing on Soviet Jewry held by the New York City Council Subcommittee on Human Rights, chaired by Noach Dear of Brooklyn.

"There has been no improvement in the (treatment of Soviet Jews), in our case, with immigration," said Begun from a Moscow apartment where refuseniks were gathered.

With Begun was former Prisoner of Conscience Leonid (Ari) Volvovsky, who was released from prison in March and then was denied an exit visa allegedly because he possessed secret documents. He will not be eligible to apply again until 1992.

Dear also spoke with Begun's wife, Inna, via telephone at their Moscow home. She attributed the widespread knowledge about Begun's case to American support of Soviet Jews and said the only chance for his emigration is through continued support and pressure on the Soviet government. She asked Dear to call again July 9, her husband's birthday.

Personal testimonies on behalf of relatives unable to receive permission to leave the Soviet Union were presented here by Vladimir Rabinovich

and Leonard Terlitsky. Rabinovich, who in 1980 emigrated with his mother and sister to Israel and the United States, represented his father Naum, a World War II hero now living in Zaporozhje, Ukraine. Naum, honored by the Soviets and Americans for shooting down five Nazi planes and saving an American "Flying Fortress" by guiding the injured plane to a Soviet airport, first applied for an exit visa in 1981, but his application was refused with the reason that his emigration to join his family was "unpurposeful."

Naum, 64, and in deteriorating health, including a recent heart attack, was quoted by his son from a letter that said, "Until I will be able to join them I will continue to grieve and it will not be possible to improve the condition of my heart."

Terlitsky testified on behalf of his brother Mark, who was refused an exit visa in 1976 for reasons of state security. Mark was demoted from his position as an architect and was then fired from his job after attending Natan Sharansky's trial. Mark's mother suffers from Alzheimer's Disease and his daughter, now 20, cannot pursue a career as violinist because of her status as a refusenik's child.

MD. WOMAN NAMED RIGHTEOUS GENTILE

By Judith Colp

WASHINGTON, July 9 (JTA) -- A Polish woman who protected a Jewish widower and his granddaughter during World War II and later became his wife was honored as a Righteous Gentile last week at the Israeli Embassy.

Lucia Nowicki Eisen, 77, who now will be remembered at Jerusalem's Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial, helped fellow Pole Aisik Eisen escape from a concentration camp by smuggling him clothes belonging to her husband, who was killed during the war. She later provided him with her husband's identity papers, money and an apartment. They were wed in 1945.

She also took care of Eisen's granddaughter, Julia, by telling people she was her niece. A second granddaughter, Antonina, was left in a Catholic children's home and could not be found after the war.

Nowicki Eisen, who came to the U.S. after the war and lived with her husband until his death in 1980, resides in Takoma Park, Md. She was honored by the Israeli Embassy before an audience of some 85 individuals including Julia and her family.

NUDEL PESSIMISTIC ABOUT VISA

TEL AVIV, July 9 (JTA) -- Soviet refusenik Ida Nudel believes that she and other long-time refuseniks are being used by the Soviet leadership as bargaining chips for future East-West negotiations.

Nudel acknowledged that more exit visas are being granted to Soviet Jews, but is pessimistic about her own chances of receiving a visa soon. She was interviewed Thursday by JTA Bonn correspondent David Kantor, who is accompanying West German President Richard Von Weizsacker on his visit to the Soviet Union.

Nudel has been denied a visa on grounds that she is privy to state secrets. She worked years ago for a scientific institute doing microbiological research. "The only secret I know is that the Soviet Union is 100 years behind the U.S. and Japan in microbiology," she told the

reporters. Israel Television broadcast part of an interview its European correspondent, Yisrael Segal, had with refusenik Iosif Begun at his Moscow apartment Wednesday night.

WHY DIDN'T N.H. GOVERNOR SIGN ISRAEL DOCUMENT? WAS IT CREDIBILITY? POLITICS? By Judith Colp

WASHINGTON, July 9 (JTA) -- New Hampshire Gov. John Sununu has refused to sign a pro-Israel proclamation endorsed by his 49 peers reportedly because he said signing would damage his credibility as an Arab-American to facilitate dialogue in the Middle East.

The proclamation, which repudiates the 1975 United Nations resolution equating racism with Zionism, was signed in 1986 by the governors, President Reagan and Congress.

Sununu's reasoning was reported by Gary Wallin, president of the Jewish Federation of Greater Manchester, NH, who met with the Governor twice to petition for his signature. Wallin said Sununu told him that he has "close relationships" with a Saudi Arabian prince and a brother of Jordan King Hussein.

"He said the National Security Council was using him as a conduit for passing information to them and he said he didn't want to ruin his credibility by issuing the proclamation," Wallin said.

Sununu's spokesman, Greta Graham, said such claims are "overblown."

"I don't know how it got to the point that some people think the Governor is an operative for the National Security Council shuttling back and forth between the (Middle East) forces," she said.

But Graham also said that Sununu, who introduced the keynote speaker at the annual conference here of the National Arab Americans Association last month, has acquaintances in the Arab community which put him in a "unique position" to foster dialogue in the Middle East.

She also said that while Sununu opposes the Zionism-equals-racism doctrine, he does not sign proclamations dealing with foreign policy issues. This was the first reported reason for his refusal to sign the proclamation.

But Wallin countered that Sununu has signed proclamations dealing with such foreign subjects as Bastille Day, Captured Nations Week, Cuba and the invasion of Afghanistan.

Sununu's refusal to sign the proclamation has made its way into the New Hampshire Republican primary. The Governor, a Republican, is heading up the state campaign of Vice President George Bush. Bush, according to local newspapers, has urged Sununu to sign the proclamation.

One of Bush's opponents, Rep. Jack Kemp (R. N.Y.), issued a campaign statement Monday calling upon the Vice President to repudiate Sununu who was described as a "loose cannon in international negotiations."

AFRICAN MAGAZINE CLAIMS ULTERIOR MOTIVES IN ISRAEL'S AFRICA TIES

By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, July 9 (JTA) -- A British-published African weekly news magazine has taken a swipe at Israel's renewed ties with Africa. Articles in the July 9 African Concord claim that Israel has pledged to develop African agricultural

and health programs with the ulterior motive of selling arms, building African armies and establishing an intelligence network to pass information to South Africa.

The magazine also reports that Israel continued active military and business engagements in Africa during the years of discontinued official diplomatic relations. Indeed, Israeli media have reported on ongoing business ties.

The magazine was one of several Black publications made available for the press at the convention of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People here.

Concord correspondent Victor Ndovi describes Israeli Premier Yitzhak Shamir's week-long June visit to four African nations as an "African offensive," and claims it was in response "to growing domestic political and economic pressures from the United States."

Shamir visited Togo, Cameroon, Liberia and Ivory Coast, countries which over the past four years resumed diplomatic relations with Israel that were broken off during the Yom Kippur War of 1973.

Money And Military

Ndovi writes that as Israel itself cannot afford to offer monetary aid to Africa, which Shamir admitted during his visit, Israel seeks financial backing, mostly from the U.S.

A "key aspect" of Israel's agreements with the African nations, Ndovi writes, is military. Thus, Shamir promised Togo military training assistance that would include the training and arming the presidential guard. In Cameroon, where the government of President Paul Biya defeated a coup in 1984, "Shamir was greeted by a presidential guard displaying Israeli-supplied weapons and wearing uniforms manufactured in Israel," Ndovi writes.

Although he notes that Israel claims its military programs in Africa "are not designed to intervene in domestic affairs but buttress domestic security and to combat 'international terrorism,'" he reports that "in Kenya, an Israeli commando unit based at Machakos helped to foil the abortive air force-led anti-Moi government coup in 1982."

He describes Israel's military capability as "attractive" to the "fragile and unstable governments and the uncertain loyalties" of many African countries. Ndovi lists the nations of Benin, Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Malawi (which never broke relations with Israel), Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Tanzania and Zaire (which resumed ties with Israel) as receiving Israeli help for their military training and security agencies.

The writer also reports that the Israeli secret service Mossad has provided several African nations, including Ghana, Uganda and Zaire, with sophisticated intelligence training. He also claims the Mossad has recruited local agents "in every African country with Israeli assistance," and that Israel has passed on "this invaluable assistance" to South Africa.

Ndovi cites a U.S.-Israel Memorandum of Understanding of 1981 that allowed Israel for the first time to sell weapons to Africa that were paid for by the U.S. Thus, he says, through financial aid ostensibly for Israel, the U.S. uses these funds "to curry influence by proxy with African states."