

U.S. NOTIFIES CONGRESS OF PLANS FOR SCALED-DOWN SAUDI ARMS SALE

By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, April 28 (JTA) -- The Reagan administration formally notified Congress Wednesday of plans to sell \$825 million in arms to Saudi Arabia.

The announcement came after the administration earlier said it had indefinitely postponed formal notification so that it could confer with members of Congress who oppose the sale. Under the original timetable, such notification was to be given by April 21.

The \$825 million package presented Wednesday is \$125 million less than the earlier proposal. Both packages contain \$500 million in Bradley Fighting Vehicles and TOW II anti-tank missiles, but the revised package reduces from \$450 million to \$325 million the amount of new support equipment for AWACS reconnaissance planes already owned by Saudi Arabia.

Capitol Hill sources concurred that the motive of members of Congress in opposing the sale is to bring attention to Saudi Arabia's attempt last month to conceal its purchase of medium-range missiles from China. Those missiles could hold nuclear warheads, although Saudi Arabia has assured the administration that it will not use the missiles for that purpose.

The sources added that no part of the package poses a particular threat to Israel. For example, the administration's 1987 proposal to sell Bradley Fighting Vehicles and TOW missiles to Saudi Arabia did not provoke large-scale congressional opposition.

A State Department source said that a Saudi decision this week to sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty should have an "ameliorating effect" on congressional concerns about new arms sales to Saudi Arabia, in light of the Chinese missile sale.

By signing the 1968 treaty, which limits the spread of nuclear technology to non-nuclear nations, the Saudis would be pledging not to acquire or develop nuclear weapons.

Members of the House and Senate sent letters to Secretary of State George Shultz earlier this month urging him to reconsider the sale. The House letter was signed by 187 members, while the Senate version had 58 signatures.

Congress now has 30 days to reject the sale; otherwise it will automatically go through.

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee has scheduled a hearing on the proposal for May 9. The House Foreign Affairs Committee is expected to hold hearings soon.

WEST BANK VIOLENCE FLARES AFTER THREE DAYS OF CALM

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, April 28 (JTA) -- Unrest broke out anew in the West Bank Thursday after three days of relative quiet.

Security forces fired tear gas and rubber bullets to break up violent demonstrations in Hebron and Salim village near Nablus. A woman resident of Salim was injured by a rubber bullet and hospitalized.

An almost total commercial strike was observed in the West Bank Thursday. Only the Hebron wholesale market remained open. Public transportation was disrupted in the territory and fewer Arab day laborers reported for work in Israel.

Israeli soldiers uprooted dozens of citrus trees along the main road in western Tulkarm, in reaction to the stone barriers set up on the road during the night. Metal spikes were scattered and motor oil poured on the pavement, causing at least one military vehicle to skid and damage itself.

The trees were destroyed because the perpetrators left tracks leading into a citrus grove bordering the road.

The Israel Defense Force meanwhile opened its Ketziot detention camp to the news media for the first time Thursday. Thousands of Palestinians have been confined there since the uprising began in the administered territories last Dec. 9.

'Respectable' Conditions

The camp commander told reporters that the soldiers guarding the detainees were under strict orders not to use physical violence. Knesset member Dedi Zucker of the dovish Citizens Rights Movement, who visited the camp earlier in the week, confirmed that physical punishment is not used and conditions are in fact "respectable."

But the prisoners are strictly segregated. Those from the Gaza Strip are separated from West Bank detainees. Prisoners under administrative detention are kept apart from others. Administrative detainees can be held for up to six months without trial or formal charges brought against them.

All of the inmates are visited frequently by their lawyers, representatives of the International Red Cross and the Israeli Human Rights Association.

In East Jerusalem, 14 Arab merchants charged with disobeying police orders have been released from jail on 1,000 shekels bail each. The merchants refused to comply with police instructions to observe normal business hours or shut down altogether. Instead, they followed the orders of the Palestinian nationalist underground to remain open three hours a day.

The 14 were to have gone on trial Thursday. It was postponed because their lawyers have petitioned Attorney General Yosef Harish to dismiss the charges.

SHULTZ SAYS JORDAN WOULD AGREE TO INTERNATIONAL PEACE CONFERENCE

By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, April 28 (JTA) -- Secretary of State George Shultz said Thursday that "under the right circumstances," Jordan would be "agreeable" to the concept of a ceremonial international peace conference on the Middle East.

Responding to a question from Sen. Robert Kasten (R-Wis.) during an appearance before the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, the Judiciary and Related Agencies, Shultz reiterated his call for direct negotiations between Arab countries and Israel.

But he played up the role of an international conference, saying it could "receive reports from the parties" to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The conference would occur two weeks prior to the start of direct negotiations on autonomy measures for Palestinians. According to Shultz's original timetable, the conference was to have occurred in mid-April.

"If negotiations were to succeed, questions would arise about international guarantees" that could be offered by the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council chairing such a conference, Shultz added.

The conference could help resolve economic development issues in the Middle East, as well as the status of refugees created by a political solution, Shultz said. Resolving the fate of refugees is "a subject that international groupings can deal with best."

Egyptian Support

Shultz said he believes that "Egypt shares that view" of supporting such a conference. "I think that under the right circumstances, such a conference would be agreeable to Jordan. But I don't want to speak for them -- they have not said that in so many words."

Syria is in "complete disagreement" with the U.S. concept of an international conference that could not impose solutions, the Secretary said.

On the position of the Soviet Union, which Shultz visited the week of April 11, he said the two sides "did not achieve any breakthrough although we had a lengthy discussion" on the Mideast peace initiative.

He added that the "level of understanding was improved" between the superpowers. The Soviets oppose a peace conference that could not impose solutions, but Shultz said it is "not impossible" that the Soviet Union could change its position.

Shultz, who met in Moscow with Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, said he told the Soviets that the international conference's role is to be "the sponsor of the direct face-to-face negotiations that in our view are the only way you are really going to get anywhere."

'A Time For Decisions'

On Israel's position, Shultz said Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir "has made it evident this is the centerpiece of his opposition to elements of our plan."

In contrast, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin "are willing to work through this process of a nonauthoritative international conference," as long as it leads to direct negotiations, he added.

In Shultz's prepared testimony, he said "this is a time for decisions" on peace in the Middle East. "The situation on the ground does not serve anyone's interests. Rapid, positive change can occur."

He said the parties are still considering the plan, but that the United States is "carrying the initiative forward into a new and more detailed, operational stage."

Through peace, "Israeli security can be enhanced," Shultz said.

"A new relationship of peace with its Arab neighbors can emerge," the secretary said. "Israelis can be free from the increasing human and moral burdens of occupation -- able to devote their considerable talents and energies to building a better future."

LABOR MEMBERS ATTACK PERES PLAN, BUT POLLS INDICATE SUPPORT **JTA Staff Report**

JERUSALEM, April 28 (JTA) -- Foreign Minister Shimon Peres's blueprint for peace through territorial compromise came under attack from both left- and right-wing elements of the Labor Party, at a meeting of its political committee in Tel Aviv Thursday.

Knesset Speaker Shlomo Hillel, a leader of the party's hawks, thought the plan was too vague with respect to the future of Jewish settlements in the territories. Leftists found it lacking in detail and too "amorphous."

The criticism was voiced amid reports that a significant majority of Israelis support territorial compromise in principle and thought Peres, chairman of the Labor Party, could handle the peace process better than Premier Yitzhak Shamir, leader of Likud.

The newspaper Hadashot reported Thursday on an internal study and public opinion surveys recently conducted for the Labor Party. The results, disclosed Wednesday by the party's secretary general, Uzi Baram, showed that about 58 percent of the respondents support territorial compromise.

More than 60 percent support a "non-coercive" international conference for Middle East peace, meaning one without power to impose solutions or veto agreements.

If the surveys, conducted among 1,500 persons during March and April, are correct, most Israelis favor the Labor Party's approach to peace over the Likud approach.

Peres Picked Over Shamir

Baram insisted that the polls were conducted scientifically and the results valid, Hadashot reported. One surprise finding was that 66 percent of the respondents who identified themselves as Likud voters said they were prepared to withdraw from the Gaza Strip and de-militarize it.

Asked which leader they would prefer to handle the peace process, Peres won over Shamir by more than 20 percent. A small minority thought the two leaders should act in concert, indicating a considerable drop in support for the Labor-Likud unity coalition government.

Peres presented his proposals, titled "The Plan for Israel's Peace and Security," to the party's political committee for review. Some of it, incorporated in the Labor Party's election platform, was leaked in part to the news media this week.

After Peres read the document, Hillel complained that it was prepared without consulting the party leadership. He said the article, which stated that the "Israeli settlements in the territories would remain in the area, also after a territorial compromise," was an inadequate guarantee.

Dr. Ephraim Nach, until recently head of the civil administration in the West Bank, criticized the plan from the left. He said it failed to specify with whom Israel would be willing to negotiate to effect territorial compromise.

Reserve Brig. Gen. Avigdor Ben-Gal, who only recently joined the Labor Party, complained that its message was not "understood, not clear and not sharp enough."

Ben-Gal, who has a distinguished record as commander of the northern front, is one of several retired Israel Defense Force generals recruited by the Labor Party to campaign for it

in the upcoming Knesset election race.

Another is reserve Gen. Ori Or, former commander of the central front. The purpose of having these popular military men with outstanding combat command records in the party's ranks is to deflect Likud charges that Labor is "soft on security."

Labor also realizes it must persuade an increasingly hard-line public that territorial compromise will provide Israel with both security and peace.

"Peace and security are two sides of the same coin," Peres has stressed. His idea of territorial compromise has gained ground in what has been called Israel's military-intellectual complex.

One of its branches is the prestigious Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies at Tel Aviv University, headed by reserve Gen. Aharon Yariv, a former chief of military intelligence.

Yariv and his colleagues belong to no political party, but their activities clearly work in Labor's favor and provide powerful support for its platform on issues of defense and foreign policy.

(Contributing to this report were correspondents David Landau and Gil Sedan in Jerusalem, and Hugh Orgel in Tel Aviv.)

PROSPECTS FOR MIDEAST PEACE

ARE DIM, SAY THREE EXPERTS

By Yitzhak Rabi

NEW YORK, April 28 (JTA) -- Three experts on the Middle East agreed here Wednesday night that prospects for peace in the area are dim.

They cited the continued Palestinian riots in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the division within Israeli society and the lack of a reliable Arab partners to negotiate with Israel as the major obstacles for reaching any peaceful settlement in the near future.

"The prospects for peace in the Middle East in the near future are dim at best," James Phillips, a senior policy analyst at the Heritage Foundation asserted.

"I agree, the prospects are remote," said Ambassador Herbert Okun, deputy permanent representative of the United States to the United Nations. "When you look at the situation it's hard to be optimistic."

Johanan Bein, acting permanent representative of Israel to the United Nations, said: "I also agree that prospects for peace in the region are not bright, but I think the overall prospects are better than we can see now," considering the tremendous progress and achievements of Israel and the Jewish people in the last 40 years.

Bein, Okun and Phillips were participating in a panel discussion on Mideast peace prospects, sponsored by the Jacob Goodman Institute for Mideast Research and Information of the Zionist Organization of America.

Okun said that despite the pessimistic outlook for the near future, there are several encouraging facts in today's Mideast.

- Israel's military superiority in the region is overwhelming.

- Egypt, which maintains "a cold peace" with Israel, did not pull out its ambassador to Israel, despite the disturbances and violence in the territories.

- The Soviet Union, which has learned some lessons in Afghanistan, "may no longer wish to play a 'spoiling role' in the Mideast and will not stand in the way of a negotiated settlement.

Okun said that "it is not clear at all" that

the recent peace initiative of Secretary of State George Shultz is going to succeed, mainly because both Israel and the United States are approaching general elections, and the continued uprising in the West Bank and Gaza.

"The violence (in the territories) has shown that there is a strong and growing Palestinian conscience," he said. A way has to be found to meet Palestinian needs together with Israel's security demands, he said.

No Partners In Peace

Bein said that the major problem for Israel in its quest for peace is that "there is no partner for Israel in the Arab world" to negotiate with. He said that after watching Tuesday night's "Nightline" program from Jerusalem on ABC-TV, in which Israelis and Palestinians were interviewed, "One wonders if there is anybody (among the Palestinians) to speak to."

As for the division among Israeli leaders on an international peace conference, Bein contended "We all want negotiations. The question is the modality." He said that both leaders of Labor and Likud want to reach a solution through "direct negotiations without preconditions."

Bein observed that during the War of Independence, Israel had to fight seven Arab countries; in the Six Day War in 1967 she confronted only three Arab countries, and in the Lebanon war in 1982 only one Arab country. "Now we have a struggle with the Palestinians" in the territories, he said. It is not war -- and looking back, he asserted, there is a reason for guarded optimism.

Phillips, expressing "pessimism" for peace prospects in the short-run, said nonetheless that in the long run "things can change" because negotiations are "no longer a taboo" in the Arab world.

ABUL ABBAS SEEKING NO. 2 PLO POST

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, April 28 (JTA) -- The terrorist leader responsible for hijacking the Achille Lauro is seeking the No. 2 spot in the Palestine Liberation Organization, according to Avi Benayahu, writing in Al Hamishmar Thursday.

The aspirant is Mohammed Zaidan, also known as Abul Abbas, leader of the Palestine Liberation Front which seized the Italian cruise ship in Egyptian waters in October 1985, and murdered one of its passengers, an American Jew named Leon Klinghoffer who was confined to a wheelchair.

Zaidan would like to replace Khalil al-Wazir, who was assassinated at his villa in suburban Tunis on April 18 by a commando-style hit squad, widely believed to have been Israelis.

Wazir, better known by his nom de guerre, Abu Jihad, which means Father of the Holy War, was the commander of Al Fatah, the PLO's military branch.

Zaidan is thought to be close to PLO chief Yasir Arafat. But he is not the only candidate for Wazir's job, Benayahu said. Several ranking Al Fatah men are being "tested" in the field, to see how well they perform terrorist attacks and other operations.

It is therefore not surprising, Benayahu wrote, that the attempt by terrorists Wednesday to infiltrate Israel from Lebanon, near Kiryat Shmona, was the work of the Abul Abbas gang. The attempt was foiled.

**DUKAKIS REAPS JEWISH SUPPORT,
WINNING 89 PERCENT IN P.A. VOTE**
By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, April 28 (JTA) -- The support Jews have shown for Gov. Michael Dukakis of Massachusetts in the Democratic presidential primaries continued Tuesday in Pennsylvania.

Dukakis received 89 percent of the Jewish vote, according to a poll by The New York Times/CBS News. The Rev. Jesse Jackson, the only other remaining contender for the Democratic nomination, received 7 percent of the Jewish vote.

Accept for blacks, who voted 95 percent for Jackson, all other demographic groups in Pennsylvania voted overwhelmingly for Dukakis. As in the previous primaries, the Jewish vote for Dukakis was the highest percentage of any group.

This trend has been evident since Super Tuesday March 10, when a poll of 14 Southern and border states showed that Dukakis received 65 percent of the Jewish vote, the only group that gave him more than 50 percent.

In the strongest demonstration of support on Super Tuesday, Dukakis received 80 percent of the Jewish vote in Florida as well as the major share of the Jewish vote in Maryland and his home state of Massachusetts.

In the New York primary April 19, where Jewish voters turned out in record numbers, Dukakis received 77 percent of their vote. Sen. Albert Gore Jr. of Tennessee, who made a major effort to win the Jewish vote, received only 16 percent.

Light Turnout

While the turnout in New York was large, the Pennsylvania vote was light, especially among blacks in Philadelphia, indicating that most Democrats believe that after the New York primary, Dukakis has the nomination all but wrapped up.

Dukakis now has 1,255 of the 2,081 delegates needed for the nomination. Jackson has 856 delegates.

The Republican primary in Pennsylvania assured Vice President George Bush of the GOP nomination. He now has 1,156 delegates, 17 more than needed for nomination.

The strong Jewish support in the primaries for Dukakis, whose wife Kitty is Jewish, would indicate that he should win the Jewish vote in November. But much may depend on what kind of role Jackson is given, especially if he is given a say in foreign affairs.

On the Republican side, Bush is the candidate with the most difficulties in the Jewish community. His public comments so far have stressed that he supports the close relationship the Reagan administration has developed with Israel.

But analyses in the general, as well as the Jewish, press have predicted that Bush would seek to move closer to the Arab countries and take the "even-handed" approach advocated by State Department Arabists.

SOVIET EMIGRANTS MUST GO TO ISRAEL
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, April 28 (JTA) -- The Foreign Ministry has confirmed that Jews wishing to leave the Soviet Union to immigrate to Israel will soon be forced to pick up their Israeli visas at the Israel Consulate in Bucharest.

Until now, the visas have been issued by the

Dutch Embassy in Moscow, which looks after Israel's interests in the Soviet Union.

Once in possession of the Soviet exit visa and the Israeli entrance visa, the emigrants have until now used them to go to Vienna. From there, they were free to go wherever they could obtain another entry visa.

The new regulations are meant to eliminate this "drop out" of Soviet Jews granted exit visas for Israel.

Of the 8,000 Jews granted exit visas to Israel this year, only 20 percent came here.

An Israeli official is quoted here as saying that any Soviet Jew granted an exit permit on the strength of an Israeli entry visa was duty-bound to come to Israel. Once here, he or she had the full right to go on wherever they wished, he said.

GREECE WITHHOLDS ISRAELI GRAPEFRUIT
By Jean Cohen

ATHENS, April 28 (JTA) -- Greek authorities are withholding imported grapefruit from the retail market, pending the results of tests to see if it is contaminated.

The precaution, announced by Evangellos Seferiadis, an official of the Ministry of Commerce, followed the poisoned grapefruit scare in Rome where grapefruit from Israel was pulled off the market because of anonymous warnings that it had been sabotaged.

Seferiadis, who is president of the central fruit and vegetable market in Athens, said Greece imports limited quantities of fruit from other countries, including Israel.

It is routinely tested as required by law, but will be checked again before it is distributed to retailers, the official said.

According to Seferiadis, the tainted grapefruit has been found only in Italy. But the scare seems to have been a false alarm. The state-owned television channel, RAI, announced in Rome Wednesday that a blue substance found in imported grapefruit and thought to be poisonous turned out to be a harmless coloring agent.

**EAST GERMANY CRACKS DOWN
ON NEO-NAZI ACTIVITIES**
By David Kantor

BONN, April 28 (JTA) -- The East German authorities are cracking down on neo-Nazi activities, which they once claimed did not exist in the Democratic Republic.

The official news agency, ADN, reported Wednesday that nine neo-Nazis went on trial in the Oranienburg district court Monday, charged with spreading anti-Semitic propaganda and displaying Nazi symbols.

East German officials Thursday also confirmed Western reports that seven neo-Nazis received prison sentences in Dresden at the end of March for circulating anti-Semitic propaganda, assaults on individuals and destruction of property. The sentences ranged from eight months to four years.

The neo-Nazi problem was acknowledged for the first time in December 1987, when the authorities announced the trial of several neo-Nazi groups, including some extreme right-wing organizations.

Some of those prosecuted included the so-called "skinheads," gangs of teen-agers and young adults who shave their heads, wear Nazi-like costumes and engage in disorderly conduct, often of an anti-Semitic nature.