

CBS REPORT ON AIPAC VIEWED AS DISTORTED, BUT NOT DEVASTATING

By Andrew Silow Carroll

NEW YORK, Oct. 24 (JTA) -- A beleaguered American Israel Public Affairs Committee emerged bruised but standing after its bout Sunday night with CBS-TV's "60 Minutes."

AIPAC said in a statement Monday that Mike Wallace's report on the powerful pro-Israel lobbying group attempted to depict its influence as "something negative or sinister."

But while agreeing with AIPAC that the program lacked balance, leaders of American Jewish organizations for the most part felt its charges were tame, compared to what had been feared in the weeks prior to the broadcast.

Those had been trying weeks for AIPAC, which is the most powerful voice in Washington on behalf of Israel and one of the most influential of all American lobbying groups.

AIPAC attempted to deflect ahead of time Wallace's charges that it "sets the line" for some 80 pro-Israel political action committees, in violation of federal laws governing PACs.

But then last week, the group was placed on the defensive after three major Jewish agencies were reported to have criticized AIPAC for acting "out of step with the consensus of the organized Jewish community" on at least three recent issues related to Israel.

The Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations held an emergency meeting Monday to discuss the fallout of the "60 Minutes" broadcast.

'Innuendoes And Inaccuracies'

The meeting, at which members of the umbrella organization agreed that the report was "filled with distortions, innuendoes and inaccuracies," was the second in a week called to discuss criticism of AIPAC.

The central theme of Wallace's report was that AIPAC has exerted undue influence to ensure that Israel receives \$3 billion in U.S. foreign aid, with little or no congressional debate. The report appeared to charge that AIPAC has engineered the defeat of U.S. senators and representatives because of their poor voting records on foreign aid and arms sales to Arab countries.

The report said that AIPAC had instructed pro-Israel PACs around the country to contribute money to the senatorial campaign of Rhode Island Lt. Gov. Richard Licht. Licht, who is Jewish, is challenging the incumbent, Republican Sen. John Chafee, who is seen as less sympathetic toward Israel.

AIPAC officials have said that while the group is prohibited from coordinating the activities of PACs, it often provides information at the request of AIPAC members who are involved in the political process.

The report also included criticism of AIPAC by former Undersecretary of State George Ball and one-time Sen. Charles Percy (R-Ill.).

Ball served in the State Department from 1961 to 1965 and was described by AIPAC Monday as "a longtime critic of U.S. policy toward Israel."

In the "60 Minutes" report, Ball called

AIPAC's influence a "corruption of the American democratic process," without specifying where AIPAC had either acted illegally or unethically.

Percy, who blames his defeat in 1984 in part on AIPAC influence, asked rhetorically, "Who is running our foreign policy?"

Wallace also quoted a CBS poll in which 630 people were asked, "Do you think it is right that the United States gives more money in foreign aid to Israel than any other country?" Wallace said 13 percent said yes, 72 percent said no and 15 percent did not know.

'Something Negative And Sinister'

In its statement Monday, AIPAC said that in virtually every public opinion poll, "the American public has consistently reaffirmed the strong support for Israel as a friend and ally of the United States."

AIPAC said that U.S. foreign assistance to Israel is based on Israel's role as a "critical United States ally, a full-fledged democracy, struggling to survive in a hostile and unstable part of the world."

The lobbying group said "60 Minutes" has attempted to depict lawful participation in the political process as "something negative and sinister."

AIPAC said it is preparing a more detailed refutation of Wallace's charges.

The Conference of Presidents also said in a statement Monday that AIPAC had used no other means to further the American Jewish community's interests on Capitol Hill than those allowed under U.S. law.

In a separate statement, the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith reiterated its support for AIPAC and said "60 Minutes" had failed to show that its success stems "not so much from lobbying but the commitment of Jews and non-Jews all over the country who are dedicated to the well-being of relations between the United States and Israel."

ISRAELI JETS BLAST LEBANON BASES; 7 INFILTRATORS CAPTURED AT BORDER
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Oct. 24 (JTA) -- Israeli air force jets blasted terrorist targets in southern Lebanon Monday, while a Palestinian gang attempting to infiltrate Israel was captured on the ground.

The air attack was on terrorist installations in the vicinity of Beit Lahiya in the eastern Bekaa Valley. All aircraft returned safely to their bases.

A military spokesman described the targets as a staging area for terrorist incursions against Israel and said they were destroyed.

The Israel Defense Force and the Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army seized six armed men and a woman in the southern Lebanon security zone Monday morning.

According to reports from the area, the gang came from Sidon on the south Lebanon coast and reached the village of Kafr Kila, in the security zone not far from the Israel border, Sunday night.

They entered a house, demanding to be hidden until ready to embark on what was described as a "hostage-bargain" mission in Israel.

One of the people in the house managed to slip away and alert the SLA.

The Palestinians surrendered.

Meanwhile, Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin reported to the Cabinet Monday morning on the preliminary investigation of the suicide car-bomb attack that killed eight soldiers and wounded seven in a security-zone convoy last Thursday.

He said the IDF convoy was observing standing orders on the space to be maintained between vehicles travelling in convoy.

LEBANON PROTESTS 'SAVAGE' BOMBING, BUT DOES NOT PRESS FOR A RESOLUTION

By Yitzhak Rabi

UNITED NATIONS, Oct. 24 (JTA) -- Calling it "savagely and indiscriminate bombing," Lebanon on Monday sharply condemned the Israeli Defense Force retaliatory attack against terrorists targets in southern Lebanon on Friday.

Although Lebanon declined at this point to ask for a Security Council meeting to discuss its complaint against Israel, diplomats here did not rule out a Security Council debate later this week.

"The Lebanese government rejects absolutely any Israeli justification for its assault against Lebanese towns and villages and innocent civilians," Ambassador Rachid Fakhoury of Lebanon said in a letter to Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar.

The letter was circulated here Monday.

Israeli jets and helicopter gunships carried out wide-ranging reprisal raids on Hezbollah and Palestinian positions Friday, after a suicide car-bomb attack on an Israeli convoy in southern Lebanon two days before killed seven IDF soldiers. An eighth later died of injuries sustained in the blast.

Charging that the Israeli raid Friday was the 18th attack this year by the IDF against targets in Lebanon, the Lebanese envoy said:

"Lebanon calls upon the international community, the United Nations and the Security Council to take swift and decisive action to prevent Israel from repeating its acts of aggression."

PERES 'WINS' DEBATE WITH SHAMIR, BUT VOTERS SAY IMPACT IS SMALL

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Oct. 24 (JTA) -- There were few surprises and no knockout punches in a television debate Sunday night between Premier Yitzhak Shamir and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, who are vying for the chance to head Israel's next government.

While the professional pollsters gave Labor Party leader Peres an edge over his Likud opponent, an overwhelming 92 percent of Israelis surveyed said the debate would not change their opinions when they go to the polls next week. A mere 8 percent said it might.

According to a Maariv poll, viewers thought Peres the better debater by a margin of 48 to 41 percent. Ten percent called the face-off a tie.

The debate, which was not broadcast live, was the first and only televised exchange between the leaders of the two major parties.

Shamir urged the electorate to give his Likud bloc a strong mandate in the next Knesset. Peres appealed for the same for Labor.

Shamir vowed he would not willingly initiate

a new unity coalition government should next week's elections be as close and inconclusive as the last.

A Coalition With Rabin?

Analysts suggested Monday that Shamir was not ruling out another unity coalition, but only one in which Peres headed the Labor component.

That gave rise to speculation that in a post-election stalemate, the Likud leader might attempt to form a unity government with Laborite Yitzhak Rabin, who is defense minister in the outgoing government.

Peres said he would not mind heading another unity government if necessary, but did not seem enthusiastic over the prospect.

Urging voters to give him a decisive mandate to govern, Peres said, "This time I promise, if elected, to start negotiations to get the country out of the cycle of periodic war, and to head toward new economic growth."

The big political controversy of the moment got its share of attention. Shamir denounced as "crass intervention" in Israeli political affairs the interview on an American television network program last Thursday of Jordan's King Hussein.

Speaking on ABC's "Nightline" program, Hussein endorsed the Labor Party's approach to a peace settlement, but warned that a continuation of Shamir's policies would be an "absolute disaster."

Many Israelis, including pro-Labor people, share Shamir's criticism. But Peres called the interview a coup and said he wished there were more such peace moves by Arab leaders "following the Labor line."

Voter opinion seems to be coalescing. Polls over the weekend showed steady shrinkage of the "undecided" category. The broad consensus of the pollsters is a neck-and-neck race between the two big parties and between the two ideological blocs.

KAHANE URGES ELECTION BOYCOTT, SPEAKS OF LABOR-LIKUD CONSPIRACY

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Oct. 24 (JTA) -- Rabbi Meir Kahane, whose extremist Kach party was disqualified from the Nov. 1 Knesset elections, is urging his followers to boycott the voting.

He told a rally of some 2,000 here that the ban was a "conspiracy of the Likud and Labor." He accused Likud of treason.

The Central Election Committee decided unanimously two weeks ago to remove Kach from the ballot, because it found its platform to be racist.

Kahane's appeal against the panel's decision was rejected last week by Israel's High Court of Justice.

Kahane is using the ban to arouse his supporters at street rallies. They vow to fight until "Meir Kahane becomes prime minister."

The American-born rabbi apparently is trying to prove wrong the political pundits who predicted that his movement would fall apart once he was eliminated from the Knesset race.

To keep enthusiasm at a high pitch, he has filed to be a poll watcher in the Israeli Arab town of Shfaram on Election Day.

The move is a deliberate provocation to the Arabs there, who have been harassed by Kahane's cohorts in the past. But the Central Elections Committee says there is no legal way to keep Kahane out of Shfaram on Nov. 1.

SOVIETS MAY REQUEST EXTRADITION OF MAIKOVSKIS FROM WEST GERMANY

By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, Oct. 24 (JTA) -- The Soviet government is weighing the possibility of requesting the extradition of Boleslavs Maikovskis, a former Nazi collaborator who fled the United States and is seeking asylum in West Germany.

Maikovskis, reported to be living now in the West German city of Munster, left the United States facing the possibility of deportation to the Soviet Union, which in 1965 sentenced him to death in absentia for war crimes.

Maikovskis was chief of police of the village of Audrini, in his native Latvia. During the war, he ordered the town burned to the ground and the population massacred.

The 84-year-old retired carpenter had lived in Mineola, on New York's Long Island, since 1951. His departure from the United States has variously been reported to have occurred as early as last November and as late as two weeks ago.

He requested asylum in West Germany last November, but it is not clear whether he did this in person or by mail. A witness claimed to have spoken personally to Maikovskis in Mineola two weeks ago.

A spokesman of the Soviet Embassy in Bonn told a West German television network Friday that the Soviet Union might request Maikovskis' extradition.

An official of the Federal Republic of Germany responded that West Germany might allow Maikovskis' extradition to the Soviet Union if that country were to waive the death penalty.

West Germany has no death penalty.

Last year, West Germany refused to extradite to the United States the Lebanese terrorist Mohammed Hamadei, who took part in the hijacking of a TWA airliner in 1985 in which an American was killed. The West Germans cited at the time the fact that they would be turning Hamadei over to a country that would allow the death penalty, in opposition to their own laws.

In New York, Brooklyn District Attorney Elizabeth Holtzman and Menachem Rosensaft, founder of the International Network of Children of Jewish Holocaust Survivors, announced Monday that they will meet Wednesday with the West German ambassador to the United States and ask that Maikovskis be prosecuted for his war crimes.

The two attorneys, who have long been interested in seeing this case brought to justice, wrote a letter to the ambassadors "to urge your government to prosecute Maikovskis for his war crimes, or to send him to the Soviet Union so he can be held accountable for his crimes."

COURT ORDERS MINISTRY TO RESOLVE PROBLEM OF ETHIOPIAN MARRIAGES

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Oct. 24 (JTA) -- The religious establishment is under court order to facilitate marriages within the Ethiopian Jewish community.

Israel's High Court of Justice gave the Ministry of Religious Affairs 90 days Sunday to establish an "Institute for the Heritage of Ethiopian Jewry" to settle controversies surrounding Ethiopian marriages.

The court, acting on the appeal of Beita Israel, the organization of Ethiopian immigrants, also criticized the ministry for foot-dragging on the issue.

The problem arose when the Chief Rabbinate refused to recognize the marriages of Jewish immigrants from Ethiopia, unless the couples underwent special conversion rites.

The Ethiopian Jews who are devout took offense to that demand.

After a sit-down of several days' duration outside the rabbinate headquarters in Jerusalem in October 1985, a settlement was reached.

The Ethiopians, the Religious Affairs Ministry and the Chief Rabbinate Council agreed to set up the heritage institute, which would rule in cases where the Jewish authenticity of an Ethiopian immigrant was questioned. But the institute has yet to be established.

JEWISH AGENCY OFFICIAL'S ATTACK ON SOVIET OLIM STUNS LEADERSHIP

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Oct. 24 (JTA) -- A scathing attack on Jewish immigrants from the Soviet Union by a ranking official of the Jewish Agency for Israel stunned overseas Jewish leaders in Israel this week.

It was delivered by Meir Sheerit, treasurer of the Jewish Agency and World Zionist Organization, at a meeting of the agency's Board of Governors in Tiberias.

Embarrassed officials hastened to attribute Sheerit's outburst to his relative inexperience. The Likud Knesset member is serving his first term in the WZO-Jewish Agency Executive.

Sheerit, who is of North African origin, compared the conditions that greet Soviet olim with those confronted when his family arrived in the 1950s, a time of severe austerity in Israel.

He flayed the Soviet newcomers for complaining, demanding and criticizing. He claimed that the money spent on one immigrant family from the USSR "could be used to prevent the yerida (emigration) of six Israeli families."

Sheerit singled no one out by name. But his attacks appeared to be aimed at two of the most prominent Soviet Jewish refuseniks who arrived in Israel in recent years.

They are Natan Sharansky, who recently urged a special fund-raising effort for Soviet Jewish immigrant absorption, and Ida Nudel, who has publicly criticized the way Israeli society treats Soviet olim.

The Jewish Agency and the government announced, meanwhile, that they are postponing for 18 months the government's planned takeover of immigrant absorption facilities and services, some of which the agency now handles.

The delay drew criticism from various immigrant organizations. They want all absorption services concentrated under one roof, at the Ministry of Absorption.

ISRAEL'S ECONOMIC SLOWDOWN CONTINUES

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Oct. 24 (JTA) -- A general economic slowdown in Israel continued during the third quarter of the year, the Bank of Israel, the country's central bank, announced Monday.

Although employment rose, industrial output was down, there were fewer sales to the local market and a steady rise in exports ended. The construction and hotel industries also reported a drop in activity.

Last week, economists expressed concern about a rise in the cost-of-living index.

THE ISRAELI ELECTIONS: HOW THE VOTING SYSTEM WORKS

[Part 2 Of A Series]

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Oct. 24 (JTA) -- A senior British broadcaster here to cover the Nov. 1 Knesset elections for the BBC said he came two weeks early to have time to memorize the names of all 27 parties running and what they stand for.

The remark was only half in jest. It highlighted the paradox of the Israeli political system: It may be the purest form of democracy practiced anywhere in the world, but for 40 years has prevented the election of a stable one-party government.

An examination of the mechanics of Israeli elections may explain why there is a strong movement gaining momentum to reform the system.

What are the rules?

First, a party or faction need win only 1 percent of the votes cast to be admitted to the Knesset. The threshold has been this low since the state was founded, because the small parties with their large leverage have resisted all efforts to raise it.

The number of seats a party gets in the Knesset is calculated by counting units representing one-120th of the votes cast, since there are 120 seats in the Knesset.

In theory, if only 120,000 people voted nationwide, every 1,000 votes for a particular party would translate into one seat for that party.

In practice, the parties end up with remainders -- an odd number of votes between X thousand and Y thousand.

Remaining Votes

In order that those votes are not wasted, the parties conclude "remainder agreements" before the elections. Party A and Party B agree to pool their remainders. The Knesset seat goes to the one with the highest remainder if the sum of the two remainders tops 1,000 votes.

Likud presently has such an arrangement with Tehiya and Labor with the Citizens Rights Movement, to mention only the two largest parties.

There are no state or district constituencies in Israel. Therefore, the voter does not vote for an individual candidate representing a locality, but for an entire party list.

Each party decides at its convention where each of its candidates will be slotted on its list. Those nearest the top have a better chance of making it to the Knesset than those near the bottom of the list.

This is a pristine form of proportional representation and is considered by many to be badly flawed. It makes for a faceless democracy.

Polling stations are usually located in neighborhood schools. The voter, having shown an ID card to the appropriate officials, enters the privacy of a booth to be confronted by a bank of pigeon-holes.

Each hole contains slips of paper with boldly printed letters that are each party's code. For Labor it's Aleph Mem; Likud has Mem Het.

The voter selects a slip, inserts it into an unmarked envelope and deposits the envelope into a sealed ballot box.

The polling stations close at 9 p.m. local time. Minutes later, the exit polls are giving the

news media a broadly accurate prediction of the outcome.

But because the electorate seems to be evenly divided between hawks and doves, the inevitable coalition-making must await a more accurate tally late in the night.

Coalition-Building

Then Likud or Labor -- or both -- begin casting around for suitable partners in government.

By law, the president, who is chief of state and non-partisan, must hold consultations with the leaders of every party that wins a Knesset seat and ask one of them to undertake the task of forming a government.

The chosen leader has 21 days to accomplish this. He or she can ask for one 21-day extension.

The law does not require the president to turn to the single largest faction, and he need not do so if he feels after the consultations that a smaller faction has the overall support of a majority of the Knesset members.

Israel's system can be fairly said to attain an almost perfect level of democracy for the individual voter. Virtually every vote counts, because as long as a party achieves 1 percent of the poll nationwide, it can enter the Knesset.

But the county has paid a high price for this. In Israel's 40 years of independence, no party has been able to govern alone.

The large parties always need the support of the small parties for a governing majority in the Knesset. This gives the small parties disproportionate influence on legislation and national policies.

The Labor-Likud national unity government that emerged from the 1984 elections represented the ultimate distillation of the imperfections of Israel's system.

Neither party could build a coalition. They were forced into a marriage of convenience hateful to both. They may very well be forced into another one, if the 1988 elections are as inconclusive as those four years ago.

But there is one area where Israel can be proud. Voter turnout invariably is high. Last time it topped 80 percent. There is a lower turnout of Arabs than Jews, but even the Arabs reach 70 percent.

ISRAELI ATHLETES FINISH 16TH IN PARALYMPICS IN SEOUL

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Oct. 24 (JTA) -- Israel's handicapped athletes won 41 medals and emerged 16th out of 66 competing countries in the Paralympics, the international games for the physically handicapped which just ended in Seoul, South Korea.

The Israeli team, which is due home on Thursday, is bringing back 12 gold medals, 13 silver and 16 bronze.

It won medals in all eight sports events entered, and was especially strong in swimming.

By contrast, the Israeli team that competed in the regular Olympic Games in Seoul last month returned without a single medal.

The team received a message of congratulations from President Chaim Herzog before departing South Korea.

The 62 Israeli men and women who participated in the Paralympics included those wounded in Israel's wars, as well as civilians incapacitated by diseases such as polio or accidents.