U.S. TO OPEN FACE-TO-FACE NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE PLO
By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Dec. 14 (JTA) -- The United States is prepared for the first time to open a "substantive dialogue" with representatives of the Palestine Liberation Organization, Secretary of State George Shultz announced here Wednesday evening.

At a State Department news conference, Shultz said he was designating the U.S. ambassador to Tunisia, Robert Pelletreau Jr., as the "only authorized channel" to conduct negotiations with PLO representatives.

He said that the first item on the agenda of the U.S. talks with the PLO would be to make it clear that "the renunciation of terrorism is central" to efforts to bring peace to the Middle East.

The secretary's announcement reflects a major shift in U.S. policy, which since 1975 has been to avoid direct dialogue with the PLO.

Explaining his decision, the secretary of state said the PLO had met all of the longstanding U.S. conditions for dialogue. He said that the PLO had issued a statement Wednesday "in which it accepted U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, recognized Israel's right to exist in peace and security, and renounced terrorism."

Shultz stressed that the objective of the U.S. decision "remains, as always, a comprehensive peace in the Middle East. In that light, I view this development as one more step toward the beginning of direct negotiations between the parties which alone can lead to such a peace."

No Recognition Of PLO State

But the secretary was careful to note that the United States does not recognize the independent Palestinian state declared at the recent meeting of the Palestine National Council in Algiers.

"The position of the U.S. is that the status of the West Bank and Gaza cannot be determined by unilateral acts of either side, but only through a process of negotiations," he said.

Shultz also emphasized that "the United States' commitment to the security of Israel remains unflinching."

On Tuesday, Shultz rejected the speech made by PLO leader Yasser Arafat at the U.N. General Assembly session in Geneva as not meeting the U.S. conditions for dialogue, saying his statements were still unclear and ambiguous.

At his news conference Wednesday evening, the secretary said he had not changed his policy. The change, he said, was that the PLO had now made its stand clear.

Israel's ambassador to Washington expressed dismay with the U.S. move moments after Shultz finished speaking. "Obviously, we're disappointed with the decision," he said in a live interview on ABC-TV's "World News Tonight" program.

"We don't feel this will advance the peace process," Arad said. "We do not recognize the PLO as a viable partner for negotiations."

But a top American Jewish leader refrained from criticizing the U.S. move.

"Secretary Shultz is a man of honor and integrity, and I have no desire nor intention to engage in criticisms of the secretary," Morris Abram, chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, said in a statement released in New York.

"I believe that he will continue to act as one who understands deeply the importance of the U.S.-Israel alliance, and who will instruct the American representative who meets with the PLO to make very clear the U.S. insistence that the PLO charter must be revoked."

Abram said the "first piece of business" of the U.S. talks with the PLO in Tunisia should be to "demand that Yasser Arafat translate his words into deeds through repeal of the Palestine National Covenant, which calls for the destruction of Israel."

"Unless and until the covenant is repealed," said Abram, "Arafat is only mouthing words, not taking actions."

ARAFAT BREAKS LITTLE NEW GROUND AT NEWS CONFERENCE IN GENEVA
By Edwin Eytan and Tamar Levy

GENEVA, Dec. 14 (JTA) -- Hours before the United States announced its decision Wednesday to open talks with the Palestine Liberation Organization, Yasser Arafat held a much-anticipated news conference at which he appeared to break little new ground, disappointing many of his supporters and sympathizers.

Expectations had been building up all day as Arafat's news conference was repeatedly postponed. The PLO chairman and some 30 members of its executive committee were closeted for 10 hours in a suite at the posh Intercontinental Hotel.

They were presumed to be arguing fiercely over whether Arafat should take the "extra step" that could pave the way for immediate, albeit low-level, contacts with the U.S. government, for the first time ever.

But when Arafat finally appeared to address the assembled news media, it seemed as if no "historic decision" had been made.

The PLO chief repeated the positions he stated Tuesday in his address to the U.N. General Assembly, which the Americans found vaguely promising but inadequate.

Despite reported urgings by many Western and Arab diplomats, Arafat appeared to be no more explicit in his recognition of Israel's right to exist.

U.S. Says Israel Must Withdraw

When questioned point-blank on that subject, he replied, obviously irritated, "I don't want to go through a stripcase. Read my statement."

And while he reaffirmed support for U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, which implicitly recognize Israel, he also affirmed General Assembly Resolution 181 of Nov. 29, 1947, which partitioned Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states.

Arafat insisted that neither he nor anyone else can stop the intifada, the Palestinian uprising in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which just entered its second year. He implied that its end cannot be a condition for peace talks, because it
would end only when the talks begin.

Ambassador Vernon Walters, the U.S. permanent representative to the United Nations, addressed the General Assembly earlier in the day, delivering a speech that seemed tough on the Israelis and Palestinians alike.

"We must tell the parties that their dispute is resolvable," he said, stressing that the United States "remains an active, committed partner in the search for a comprehensive settlement achieved through negotiations."

The American envoy added, "For Israel, the choice is clear, albeit difficult. In order to achieve the security it deserves and requires, Israel must face up to the need for withdrawal from occupied territories and to the need to accommodate legitimate Palestinian political rights.

The details, he stressed, would be the subjects of negotiations.

"For the Palestinians the choice is equally clear and equally difficult," Walters continued.

"In order to achieve the legitimate political rights they deserve and require, Palestinian demands will have to be accommodated the reality of Israel's existence and security needs, and they will have to commit themselves to negotiations with Israel."

ARAFAT HAS NOT ABANDONED TERRORISM,
ISRAEL'S U.N. AMBASSADOR DECLARES

By Tamar Levy

GENEVA, Dec. 14 (JTA) -- Israel's representative to the United Nations responded to Yasar Arafat's speech here by maintaining that the Palestine Liberation Organization has "not abandoned terrorism."

PLO-inspired intimidation and violence has got to stop, Ambassador Johanam Bein, Israel's acting permanent representative to the United Nations, said in a speech to the General Assembly here Wednesday morning.

He stressed that peaceful solutions can be found only through direct negotiations based on U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

Arafat, in his speech Tuesday, also called for talks based on those resolutions, but within the framework of an international conference. The Israelis contended that his offer was ambiguous and riddled with pre-conditions.

Bein made clear that Israel does not accept the PLO as a negotiating partner, but would talk directly with other Palestinians and with Jordan.

"Israel stands ready to conduct negotiations on this basis with Palestinian leaders from Judaea, Samaria (the West Bank) and Gaza, as well as others who renounce violence," the Israeli envoy said.

The Soviet Union, in its speech, refrained from attacks on Israel which had been standard Soviet rhetoric in past Palestinian debates.

"We have entered an era when the interests common to all mankind will become the basis for world progress," declared Vladimir Petrovsky, the Soviet deputy foreign minister in charge of Middle Eastern Affairs.

He called on Israel to respond to the PLO's overture and take advantage of what he called a unique chance. He urged the Israelis to "abandon the stereotypes and prejudices and accept the olive branch that has been offered."

Petrovsky reiterated Soviet support for an international peace conference for the Middle East. "It is obvious that the diversity and gravity of the problems may require taking some intermediate measures and a stage-by-stage approach. "They should be implemented in the framework of a conference," he said.

'Disturbances Must Cease'

Ambassador Bein, referring to the Palestinian uprising in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, said that "violent disturbances must cease, tranquility and normal daily life must be restored in the territories."

He added that while "political aspirations may be legitimate, car bombs, grenades, shooting and shellings are not."

He insisted that "the PLO has not abandoned terrorism. The killing of women and children in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem is clearly condoned."

Meanwhile, activist Rabbi Avi Weiss of New York and three other American Jews were detained briefly by Swiss police Wednesday afternoon.

They had demonstrated outside U.N. headquarters, where demonstrations have been banned by police for the duration of the General Assembly meeting.

Weiss and his group, calling themselves the Coalition of Concern, held a mock funeral here Tuesday for "victims of the PLO."

PERES DISAPPOINTED IN ARAFAT,
BUT OPEN TO FUTURE DIALOGUE

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Dec. 14 (JTA) -- The Labor Party leadership seems to be leaving the door open a crack to possible negotiations with the Palestine Liberation Organization, in contrast to Likud's absolute rejection of the idea.

That was evident in the reaction of Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, the Labor Party leader, to PLO chief Yasar Arafat's speech Tuesday to the U.N. General Assembly in Geneva.

Peres, speaking Wednesday in the Knesset, described Arafat's remarks as "a rhetorical success and a political disappointment."

That was considerably milder than Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's condemnation of the speech the night before as "an act of monumental deception."

While the Likud leader ruled out talks with the PLO under any circumstances, Peres hinted they might become possible if the Palestinian uprising ends in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"Israel is willing to enter into an immediate dialogue with the Palestinians," Peres said, "with only one precondition -- when there is talking, there is no shooting."

Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin, Labor's No. 2 man, indicated in a radio interview earlier that a dialogue could take place only if the so-called intifada is ended.

The Laborites expressed their views at the same time that their party is engaged in negotiations with Likud for a broad-based coalition government. The contrasting positions of the two parties on the Palestinian issue is a major source of tension between them.

Peres, nevertheless, was sharply critical of the PLO. Words for peace cannot replace deeds, he said.

"It is not enough to declare that shooting will be stopped. There must be an immediate end to phenomena such as the stone and gasoline bomb attacks."
U.S. VETOES U.N. RESOLUTION DEPLORING RAID IN LEBANON
By Andrew Silow Carroll

UNITED NATIONS, Dec. 14 (JTA) -- The United States cast the lone dissenting vote Wednesday in vetoing a United Nations Security Council resolution deploring Israel's commando raid deep into southern Lebanon last Friday. The other 14 members of the council voted in favor of the measure.

The United States, it is believed, captured by Lebanon, calls on Israel to “cease immediately all attacks against Lebanese territory” and to “withdraw all its military forces forthwith and unconditionally to the internationally recognized boundaries.”

Since the end of the Lebanon war in 1985, Israel and the South Lebanon Army have controlled a 6-mile-wide “security zone” along the Lebanese side of the border.

The United States said it remains committed to supporting Lebanon's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, as called for in the resolution.

But the United States opposed the resolution because “it criticizes the actions of one party while ignoring the attacks and reprisals that have originated on the other side of the border.

“Moreover, in requesting that Israel cease all attacks on Lebanese territory, regardless of provocation, this resolution would deny to Israel its inherent right to defend itself,” said Ambassador Patricia Byrne, deputy U.S. representative to the Security Council. “This we cannot accept.”

The target of Israel’s air, sea and land attack was the subterranean headquarters of Ahmed Jabril’s Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command, near Naameh, less than 20 miles south of Beirut.

The raid, in which 20 terrorists were believed killed and dozens wounded, was the deepest Israeli penetration into Lebanon since the war.

Israel’s deputy U.N. representative, Ambassador David Matanai, told the Security Council that Friday’s attack was a limited operation aimed at ammunition dumps and anti-aircraft batteries maintained by the Jabril group.

He said the terrorist group was responsible for the November 1987 hang-glider attack, in which six Israeli soldiers were killed.

“Simply put, Israel has no territorial claims whatsoever in regard to Lebanese territory -- not one inch. Israel’s desire is to protect, defend and insure the security of its population from repeated attacks emanating from Lebanese territory,” said Matanai.

KOSHAROVSKY AND FOUR OTHERS WIN PERMISSION TO EMIGRATE FROM USSR
By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, Dec. 14 (JTA) -- The Soviet Union’s most prominent remaining refusenik received permission Wednesday to emigrate.

Yuli Kosharovsky, a Moscow Jewish activist who waited 17 years to emigrate, was notified in writing that he could leave.

Kosharovsky, 47, plans to be in Israel before the end of January, accompanied by wife, Inna, and three sons, Mikhail, Eliezer and Matityahu.

Four other refuseniks, long prevented from emigrating because of their alleged knowledge of “state secrets,” were also notified they could leave.

They are Vladimir Kislik, Yuri Cherniak and Moisey Rosenblit, all of Moscow, and Evgeny Lein of Leningrad.

Kosharovsky gave his news to Joyce Simpson of the London 35a, a British women’s group that has been in the forefront of the international Soviet Jewry movement.

Simpson passed on the information to the Long Island Committee for Soviet Jewry, a member of the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews.

Lynn Singer, executive director of the Long Island Committee, confirmed the information with Inna.

The National Conference on Soviet Jews and the Coalition to Free Soviet Jews in New York also reported the information.

A native of Sverdlovsk, in the Ural Mountains, Kosharovsky left his job as a radio electronics engineer there in 1968 in anticipation of his visa application, and moved to Moscow.

He applied to emigrate in 1971 and was refused shortly after applying, based on his purported knowledge of “state secrets.”

Grounds For Refusal

In 1981, the grounds for his refusal were officially changed to “insufficient kinship” in Israel.

A few weeks ago, he was told again that the “secrecy” ban would not be used to prevent him from emigrating.

The Kosharovsky’s were married in 1975, in a religious ceremony performed by a visiting rabbi from the West.

They taught Hebrew, which they learned in underground ulpanim. In 1975, Yuli began a seminar for unemployed engineers, was threatened by the KGB and told to discontinue the seminars. He refused.

Soviet authorities ransacked their apartment on more than one occasion, confiscating learning materials. The couple have been under house arrest several times, and their telephone has been disconnected.

Kosharovsky was a friend of Natan Sharansky, then known as Anatoly, in the early days of the refusenik movement.

The refusenik community chose Kosharovsky to speak to President Reagan when he visited Moscow last May and held a reception for dissidents at the U.S. ambassador’s residence. Members of Congress have spoken on his behalf.

He was refused emigration after the May summit meeting between Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev.

U.S. Official Thanked

Kosharovsky asked Singer of the Long Island Committee to personally thank the entire community for its help. He singled out Richard Schiffer, U.S. assistant secretary of state for human rights and humanitarian affairs.

“I know I was on his back,” Kosharovsky told her.

Among the other Soviet Jews who received permission this week were Kislik, 53, a 14-year refusenik and former prisoner of conscience.

Cherniak, 44, is a theoretical physicist who had waited 12 years. Rosenblit, 49, is a computer programmer who had been waiting eight years and received permission Friday.

Lein, 50, a mathematician, had been waiting 10 years. His wife, Irina, is a biochemist. Together with their son, Alexei, they will go to Israel, where their daughter Alexandra and her husband, Mark Levinov, have lived since July 1987.
KILLING OF SETTLER AND SOLDIER INFURIATES JEWS IN WEST BANK
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Dec. 14 (JTA) -- The killing of a Jewish settler and an army reservist in the West Bank triggered a new barrage of criticism here that the Israeli Defense Force has allowed the security situation in the administered territories to deteriorate.

Jewish settlers in the West Bank and their political supporters in Likud are enraged over the incident, which occurred Tuesday in Bracha, a settlement near Nablus.

Hamdan Najar, 25, a shepherd from the nearby Arab village of Burin, killed a settler, Yaacov Parag, 30, apparently with a stone that lodged in his head.

Najar seized Parag's rifle and opened fire on an approaching IDF patrol, fatally wounding reservist Arthur Herstig, 42, of Petach Tikva. He wounded two other soldiers before he was shot to death.

Initial reports of the incident Tuesday did not mention the soldier's death.

Herstig was a widower, and each father of three children and Parag's wife is pregnant with their fourth child. The double killing infuriated the settlers.

They unleashed their wrath at a stormy meeting Tuesday night with Gen. Dan Shomron, the IDF chief of staff; Gen. Amram Mitzna, commander of the central sector; and Gen. Shaike Erez, head of the West Bank civil administration.

Mitzna was assailed for stating that it was still not clear whether the attack on the settler was politically motivated or the result of a quarrel over land.

Transport Minister Haim Corfu of Likud, who represented the government at Parag's funeral, called his death "cold-blooded murder" that "no one should "try to wrap up as a land dispute."

Benny Katzover, head of the Samaria regional council, charged that Najar deliberately ambushed Parag and the soldiers. Other settlers said the fact the Arab was bold enough to fire on soldiers showed how far gone the situation is.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir told a settler delegation that visited him on Wednesday, "We should do our utmost so that our enemies will be more afraid, and our hold on the area will be more tangible."

The incident climaxned months of tension between the Bracha settlers and the residents of Burin, who claim the settlement was built on land expropriated from them.

CAR CRASH INJURES HEAD OF NRP
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Dec. 14 (JTA) -- Avner Shaki, leader of the National Religious Party, was badly injured in an automobile accident in the West Bank Wednesday.

He was taken to the Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem, reportedly with a broken arm and leg. Shaki was on the way to the funeral of Yaacov Parag, a West Bank settler killed by a local Arab, when his car crashed head-on into a truck near the settlement of Shilo. His driver was slightly injured.

The collision was the second highway accident in less than two months to involve a Knesset member. Micha Reiser of Likud was killed in a car crash at the end of October.

FORMER REAGAN OFFICIAL SAYS SOVIET ARMS CUTBACKS GOOD SIGN FOR ISRAEL
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Dec. 14 (JTA) -- The 10 percent cutback in Soviet conventional weapons promised by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev in his recent address to the United Nations could foreshadow a decline of Soviet support to extremist Arab elements, according to a former official of the Reagan administration.

Kenneth Adelman, former director of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, made his remarks at the fourth annual Jeane Kirkpatrick Forum at Tel Aviv University this week.

Adelman said that if Soviet policies continue on the path of arms reduction, a time could come when the USSR will play a cooperative role in the Middle East.

He warned, however, that the easing of U.S.-Soviet tensions would decrease American reliance on Israel as a Middle East factor that "stands up to the Russians."

The Kirkpatrick Forum included discussions on a wide range of topics, from Soviet arms reductions to the shortage of drinking water in the Gaza Strip.

The forum is named in honor of the former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations.

Dr. Joyce Starr, senior associate of the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, warned that available water resources in Israel and Jordan will fall 30 percent short of meeting needs by the end of the century.

She urged the sharing of water data among Israel and its Arab neighbors, even in the absence of peace agreements.

"Water will be the first issue on the agenda between Israel and the Palestinians," Starr said.

JEWISH TARGETS HIT IN DENMARK
By Eli Kohen

COPENHAGEN, Dec. 14 (JTA) -- Attacks on two travel agencies specializing in trips to Israel are being investigated by the police.

"It is a suspicious fire at a Jewish club last weekend," a police official said.

The office of Israel Tours, a travel bureau in the center of Copenhagen, was invaded and vandalized last week by a group of unidentified, masked youths.

Considerable damage was done within a few minutes, but the assailants had disappeared by the time police arrived.

The travel agency has had to move to a different location.

Meanwhile, the Ariel travel bureau in Aarhus was vandalized no less than seven times and was forced to move to Herning.

Insurance companies have refused to extend its coverage.

Both travel agencies had combined sales of about 3,500 tickets to Israel a year. The attacks have been attributed to anti-Israel sentiments in Denmark.

Arson is believed responsible for a fire that broke out on the stairs to the Polish-Jewish Club here during the night of Dec. 11.

The club is located near the former office of Israel Tours. Its 200 members are Jews who came to Denmark from Poland in 1969, a time of resurgent anti-Semitism in that country.

The police are convinced the blaze was not accidental.