

NO MORE U.S. TALKS WITH PLO UNTIL GEORGE BUSH TAKES OFFICE

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Dec. 28 (JTA) -- There will be no further contacts between the United States and the Palestine Liberation Organization before the new administration takes office in Washington on Jan. 20, Secretary of State George Shultz has told American Jewish leaders.

That was disclosed here Wednesday by Morris Abram, outgoing chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, and Seymour Reich, who will succeed him on Jan. 1.

Both leaders defended the non-judgmental position taken by the conference toward Shultz's Dec. 14 decision to open a dialogue with the PLO, which had been banned by U.S. policy since 1975.

The first U.S.-PLO contact took place in Tunisia on Dec. 16. The U.S. ambassador to Tunisia, Robert Pelletreau Jr., met with four PLO officials. Pelletreau is the only American official authorized by the State Department to talk to the PLO.

Abram and Reich said at a news conference here they were confident that there would be no fundamental change in American foreign policy.

Abram stressed that there was no need to react dramatically "when a friend takes a decision with which you disagree."

He said all the conference could hope to do was to set the conditions it felt PLO leader Yasir Arafat should meet to prove he is serious about peace.

Abram insisted the PLO should put an end to the Palestinian uprising in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and delete the clause calling for Israel's destruction from the Palestine National Covenant, which is the PLO's charter.

He said the Conference of Presidents asked Shultz at a meeting last week to put into writing that America's support of Israel remains firm. Abram also said he was confident President-elect George Bush would prove to be a good friend of Israel.

Reich, 55, who is international president of B'nai B'rith, said he looks forward to dealing with the new government in Israel. He said he hopes it will live up to its promise to "speak with one voice."

U.S. CONCURS THAT PLASTIC EXPLOSIVE CAUSED DOWNING OF PAN AM FLIGHT 103

By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, Dec. 28 (JTA) -- The United States concurred Wednesday with Great Britain's finding that an explosive device caused the downing of Pan American World Airways Flight 103. Government agencies will now help find the culprit.

State Department spokeswoman Phyllis Oakley said the United States agrees with the finding of the British investigative team, which announced in London on Wednesday that a plastic explosive had caused the air disaster.

Up to 270 people died in the Dec. 21 incident, in which a Boeing 747 jet crashed in the town of Lockerbie, Scotland, about an hour after

taking off from London's Heathrow Airport.

Oakley said the Federal Bureau of Investigations and the Federal Aviation Administration are continuing their inquiry into the plane crash.

She said three groups have claimed responsibility for blowing up the plane, including Guardians of the Islamic Revolution, which did so in a Dec. 22 telephone call to the London bureau of the Associated Press. She did not identify the other two groups.

The United States has "no particularly theory" about who planted the bomb, including whether the saboteur was a terrorist group or an individual, she said.

She said the United States agrees with the conclusion of a Finnish investigation that the Abu Nidal group had "no connection to this bombing." The terrorist organization was cited in a Dec. 5 telephone call to the U.S. Embassy in Helsinki warning that a Pan Am plane departing Frankfurt would be blown up in the coming weeks.

ATTORNEY GENERAL TO RE-EXAMINE IDF'S USE OF PLASTIC BULLETS

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Dec. 28 (JTA) -- Attorney General Yosef Harish will re-examine the use of plastic bullets to quell disturbances in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, in view of the sharp increase in Palestinian fatalities since they were introduced, Davar reported Wednesday.

Harish informed the defense establishment this week of his intentions, the Israeli newspaper said.

Plastic bullets were approved to prevent the loss of life. The orders governing their use were issued to Israel Defense Force officers and ranks only after they were examined and approved by Harish, Davar recalled.

During last July, before the bullets were introduced, seven people were wounded in the Gaza Strip. In August, when their use began, seven were killed and 90 wounded in the region.

This month alone, 22 Palestinians have been killed and 310 wounded by plastic bullets in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin told the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee Tuesday that seven persons were killed and 85 wounded in the Gaza Strip last month and that seven were killed and 224 wounded in the West Bank.

Rabin told the committee that one Israel Defense Force soldier was killed in the territories last month and 24 wounded.

In addition, one Jewish settler was killed and 27 were injured, most of them slightly.

Rabin said that more than 85 percent of the incidents in the territories last month involved rock-throwing. He said 80 percent of the rock-throwers were children under the age of 14.

According to Rabin, the Palestinian population is sharply divided over whether to continue the intifada, as the uprising is called.

He said the Communists support a cessation, believing the intifada has achieved its goals. Pro-Syrian and religious factions want the uprising intensified.

The diplomatic correspondent of Haaretz,

Akiva Eldar, reported Wednesday that some prominent figures in the West Bank recently expressed willingness for a "cease-fire."

In return, they want Israel to stop arresting and deporting Palestinian leaders and to make other gestures, such as the release of some administrative detainees, Eldar said.

According to the writer, the local figures made those proposals in contacts with American diplomats.

They said that after a cease-fire they would cooperate with an Israeli decision to hold municipal elections in the West Bank, with the tacit understanding that the elected mayors would serve as spokespersons for the Palestinians in political negotiations with Israel.

UNREST CLAIMS MORE ARAB LIVES; SETTLERS DEMAND MORE PROTECTION

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Dec. 28 (JTA) -- Violence, curfews and general strikes continued in the administered territories Wednesday amid growing restiveness among Jewish settlers, who claim the security situation has deteriorated.

An 18-year-old Nablus youth was fatally wounded in a clash with Israel Defense Force soldiers in the Nablus casbah. He died in the hospital.

Unconfirmed reports said a 19-year-old Palestinian had also been shot to death in Rihya village, south of Hebron.

The IDF reported one person dead and 10 wounded in the West Bank Tuesday. Arab sources claimed more than 20 were wounded.

The fatality Tuesday was identified as Omar Khalil, 20, of Abu Ein village, near Ramallah. He was shot during an IDF search operation in his village.

Curfews were imposed on several Gaza Strip refugee camps Wednesday and on the Dehaishe camp, near Bethlehem, after disturbances there.

The underground command of the Palestinian uprising called another general strike in the territories.

Meanwhile, about 50 students from Kedumin College, a Jewish religious school for girls in the Samaria region of the West Bank, demonstrated outside the Prime Minister's Office Wednesday.

The Inner Cabinet was meeting at the time. The students demanded improved security in the territories.

The mayors of Jewish settlements have been on a hunger strike outside the Prime Minister's Office for the past 14 days.

Gush Emunim, the militant Orthodox settlers movement, sent a telegram to Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir Wednesday demanding that he reprimand Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin for saying the army could not prevent all rock-throwing incidents in the territories.

THREE MORE INFILTRATORS KILLED

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Dec. 28 (JTA) -- Three more terrorists were killed in the southern Lebanon security zone Wednesday morning while trying to infiltrate into Israel.

They brought to nine the number who died in such attempts in less than a week.

An Israel Defense Force patrol encountered them trying to cut through the border fence. The patrol opened fire, killing all three. There were

no IDF casualties.

Maj. Gen. Yossi Peled, commander of the northern region, said the terrorists were using bad weather conditions to conceal their activities. He praised the soldiers who intercepted them.

The incident occurred near the Lebanese village of Meis el-Jabal, which faces the Galilee panhandle.

IDF paratroopers killed three terrorists in the security zone on Sunday, less than 500 yards from Kibbutz Manara in Upper Galilee.

Three others, attempting to infiltrate Israel by sea, were reported to have drowned Saturday when their rubber dinghy foundered off the southern Lebanon coast.

PERES COMES UNDER CRITICISM FOR MOVE TO DEVALUE THE SHEKEL

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Dec. 28 (JTA) -- Finance Minister Shimon Peres has come under criticism, less than a week after he took office, for the decision-making process that led to the surprise 5 percent devaluation of the shekel Tuesday.

The devaluation, it turned out, was the idea of Michael Bruno, governor of the Bank of Israel.

It was approved by Peres with little consultation and over the fierce opposition of the director general of the Finance Ministry, Victor Medina.

Those details, which emerged Wednesday, contradicted initial reports that the devaluation was a first step by Peres to implement a broad new economic program.

Peres himself refused to comment on the move. He said testily that he could not be expected to explain everything he does "every moment of the day."

The Bank of Israel, the country's central bank, has long advocated a substantial devaluation of the shekel. With a new government in place, devaluation was expected momentarily, causing a rush to buy dollars before their price soared.

Bruno, reacting to reports that the public had purchased a record \$150 million Tuesday morning, decided "on the spur of the moment" to try to end the panic buying.

He believed that with devaluation an accomplished fact, the demand for dollars would drop. He telephoned Peres proposing a 5 to 7 percent devaluation.

Public Confidence Shaken

Peres suggested he consult with Medina, a former senior official at the Bank of Israel. Medina turned out to be firmly against the devaluation and attempted to reach Peres to urge him to call it off.

Bruno again called Peres and got the green light from him to go ahead.

The story, as it emerged through several leaks to the media, has shaken public confidence in the government's financial leadership.

The devaluation was criticized by the Histadrut labor federation, which said it would cause a surge in the consumer price index, and by Finance Ministry sources, who predicted a tax revenue shortfall of 400 million shekels.

The public's hunger for dollars continued Wednesday, raising the strong possibility that another devaluation was imminent.

But the Tel Aviv Stock Market, which suffered a 10 percent loss after the devaluation was announced Tuesday, rallied on Wednesday.

SOVIET AMBASSADOR PRAISES ISRAEL AND FORESEES WARMER TIES WITH JEWS

By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, Dec. 28 (JTA) -- The Soviet ambassador to Washington on Wednesday hailed recent Soviet-Israeli cooperation and said he foresees an improvement in relations between Moscow and world Jewry.

Ambassador Yuri Dubinin made the remarks at a Soviet Embassy ceremony in which officials of the American Jewish World Service presented him a check for \$50,000 to help relief efforts in earthquake-ravaged Soviet Armenia.

The Boston-based group also gave \$30,000 to the Armenian primate, Archbishop Torkom Manougian, which is earmarked for helping Armenia's estimated 40,000 to 50,000 amputees, many below the age of 18.

Dubinin said he was "deeply moved" by the gift. He also said the Soviet people are appreciative of the aid the Israeli government has provided in efforts to rescue victims of the disaster.

The ambassador praised "cooperation between the Soviet Union and Israel" over the recent hijacking of an Aeroflot airliner, which landed safely at Israel's Ben-Gurion Airport.

Asked if the group's gift contribution help improve ties between Jews and the Soviet Union, Dubinin responded: "Of course, of course. And this is one of the manifestations of one of the expressions."

He said that "much more deep, much more important" than the money AJWS provided was the Jewish community's "expression of human deeds."

'Tangible Benefits'

In response, Lawrence Phillips, chairman of the AJWS board, said, "We are obviously elated and thrilled with the expression that the ambassador just made that there might be some tangential benefits" for Jews.

But Phillips said his group had presented the check purely for philanthropic motivations.

Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, director of inter-religious affairs at the American Jewish Committee and a member of the AJWS board, told Dubinin that Soviet Jewry "is very much a matter of concern to us, but we see that as a separate issue" from humanitarian relief.

Tanenbaum also delivered a ringing endorsement of "glasnost," the new spirit of openness under Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev.

He said recent increases in Soviet Jewish emigration are "confirmation of the spirit of glasnost and perestroika (restructuring) and the genuine effort to create a freer, open society for Soviet citizens, including Soviet Jews."

He attributed the policy change to a "general international atmosphere contributing to more humane policies."

Several other Jewish organizations have made contributions to the Armenia relief effort. The first was B'nai B'rith International, which delivered a \$1,500 check to the Soviet Embassy two days after the Dec. 7 earthquake.

The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee has raised more than \$250,000 for Armenian relief efforts so far.

But it is holding onto the money for longer-term rebuilding programs. After a 1985 earthquake in Mexico City, JDC held its contributions for awhile before earmarking its funds to a non-sectarian junior high school there.

SOVIET RABBIS ARRIVE IN ISRAEL, PAINT DISMAL PICTURE OF LIFE THERE

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Dec. 28 (JTA) -- Six visitors from the Soviet Union, including the chief rabbis of its two largest cities, praised the policies of President Mikhail Gorbachev on their arrival here Tuesday night, but painted a dismal picture of Jewish religious life in their country.

The visitors are Chief Rabbi Adolph Shayelevich of Moscow; Chief Rabbi Haim Levitis of Leningrad; Aharon Litvan, head of the Jewish community in Odessa; and three other Jewish representatives from those cities.

They are in Israel for a two-week stay at the invitation of the Great Synagogue in Tel Aviv. The invitations have been extended for years, but this is the first time they have been accepted.

It is also the first time since the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 that the chief rabbis of the two most important Soviet cities were allowed to come here on a visit.

They credited this to Gorbachev's "glasnost" (openness) policies. The Foreign Ministry welcomed the visit as "opening a narrow channel of direct contact between Israel and the large Jewish community of the Soviet Union."

But the visitors despaired of the state of religious life in that community.

They attributed the situation to ignorance of Judaism on the part of most Soviet Jews, and 70 years of anti-religious indoctrination by the Communist regime.

Litvan said an entire year can go by without a single Bar Mitzvah being celebrated at Odessa's one synagogue.

He said the synagogue can accommodate 800 people, but that no more than 30 to 50 worshippers attend Sabbath services.

Town Without A Mohel

There is also no mohel in the city, and when their services are needed, one is brought in from Riga, Chernowitz or Leningrad to perform the ritual circumcision, Litvan said.

Levitis said he recently received permission to teach Hebrew and Jewish studies in Leningrad, but only to adults and not to children.

"The adults are like children," he said, in their knowledge of Jewish subjects.

He said the Leningrad synagogue has a minyan every morning, between 50 and 100 worshippers attending Sabbath services and more on holidays.

Shayelevich said synagogue attendance was larger in Moscow.

Both rabbis were ordained at the rabbinical seminary of Budapest, the only one in Eastern Europe. Both speak Hebrew, and Litvan also speaks Yiddish.

Shayelevich is a controversial figure here because he was a member of the government-sponsored Anti-Zionist Committee of the Soviet Public.

Asked on his arrival if he was still a member of the Jewish group, he replied, "The committee no longer exists."

JTA will not publish a Daily News Bulletin on Monday, Jan. 2, because of the postal holiday. We wish our readers a very happy new year.

JUDGE RULES PALESTINIAN IMMIGRANTS CAN BELONG TO SUBVERSIVE GROUP

By Tom Tugend

LOS ANGELES, Dec. 28 (JTA) -- Arab-Americans are hailing a decision by a federal judge who ruled that immigrants have a right of free speech, even when that right is at odds with the government's right to control immigration.

The judge's ruling here last Thursday invalidated the legal basis of a government deportation case against seven Palestinians and a Kenyan woman, who were arrested on charges of membership in the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

The case, however, has drawn national attention well beyond the Arab community.

The outcome has been greeted as a civil rights landmark, which extends the free speech guarantees of the Constitution's First Amendment to all aliens and immigrants in the United States.

The seven Palestinian men, traveling on Jordanian passports, and the Kenyan wife of one of them, are residents of the Los Angeles area who are or were enrolled in local colleges.

They were arrested Jan. 26, 1987, by agents of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, FBI and Los Angeles police.

They were charged with being members of the PFLP, advocating international communism, the destruction of property and posing a risk to national security.

The allegations, denied by all the defendants, were based on an FBI study which described the PFLP, a radical, Marxist offshoot of the Palestine Liberation Organization, as "one of the most ruthless terrorist groups of modern times." The PFLP is led by Dr. George Habash.

The government brought its charges under provisions of the McCarran-Walter Act of 1952.

That law was passed during the height of Sen. Joseph McCarthy's anti-communist crusade, and has long been an anathema to civil rights advocates.

Shortly after the arrests, the government reduced charges against six defendants to lesser visa violations, which, however, can still lead to deportations.

PFLP's L.A. Leaders

That left the two most important members of the group: Khader Musa Hamide, 34, a native of Bethlehem, and described by federal authorities as a "dominant leader" of the PFLP, and Michel Ibrahim Shehadeh, 32, born in the West Bank village of Bir Zeit, identified as a "leader of the PFLP in the Los Angeles area."

They were recharged under another provision of the McCarran-Walter Act that prohibits advocacy of "unlawful damage, injury or destruction of property." It was this loosely drawn provision that was declared unconstitutional by U.S. District Judge Stephen Wilson.

"In this case," the judge noted, "the government is trying to stifle certain ideas from entering our society from certain aliens through its immigration power."

Wilson, who was appointed by President Reagan in 1985, added that his ruling would in no way hinder the United States from using other existing laws to combat terrorism and threats to national security.

Justice Department prosecutors announced that they will appeal the judge's decision to a higher court.

MEMBERS OF THE 12TH KNESSET

NEW YORK, Dec. 28 (JTA) -- Following is a roster of the members of the 12th Knesset. The members are listed in order of rank within their respective party delegations.

LIKUD: Yitzhak Shamir, David Levy, Yitzhak Moda'i, Ariel Sharon, Moshe Arens, Yigael Hurvitz, Moshe Nissim, Moshe Katsav, Binyamin Netanyahu, Avraham Sharir, David Magen, Aharon Abuhatzera, Binyamin Begin, Dan Tichon, Dan Meridor, Eliahu Ben-Elissar, Gideon Patt, Ya'acov Shamai, Ronni Milo, Pinhas Goldstein, Haim Corfu, Ehud Olmert, Uriel Lynn, Ovadia Eli, Ariel Weinstein, Reuven Rivlin, Yigal Cohen, Yehuda Perah, Michael Eitan, Yehoshua Matza, Yosef Goldberg, Gideon Gadot, Dov Shilansky, Pessah Grupper, Uzi Landau, Tzahi Hanegbi, Shaul Amor, Sara Doron, Zalman Shuval, Yehoshua Saguy.

LABOR: Shimon Peres, Yitzhak Rabin, Yitzhak Navon, Yisrael Kessar, Ezer Weizman, Shlomo Hillel, Uzi Baram, Moshe Shahal, Ora Namir, Shoshana Arbeli-Almoslino, Gad Ya'acobi, Ya'acov Tsur, Mordechai Gur, Haim Ramon, Avraham Katz-Oz, David Libai, Haim Bar-Lev, Amir Peretz, Rafael Edri, Arieh (Lova) Eliav, Avrum Burg, Avraham Shohat, Shimon Shetreet, Micha Harish, Binyamin Ben-Eliezer, Eli Dayan, Nava Arad, Yossi Beilin, Gedalia Gal, Shevah Weiss, Eli Ben-Menahe, Michael Bar-Zohar, Emmanuel Zisman, Efraim Gur, Nawaf Massalha, Haggai Meirum, Raanan Cohen, Micha Goldman, Edna Solodar.

SHAS: Yitzhak Peretz, Rafael Pinhasi, Yosef Azran, Arieh Gamliel, Yair Levy, Shlomo Dayan.

AGUDAT YISRAEL: Moshe Feldman, Menahem Porush, Avraham Verdiger, Shmuel Halpert, Eliezer Mizrahi.

CITIZENS RIGHTS MOVEMENT: Shulamit Aloni, Yossi Sarid, Ran Cohen, Dedi Zucker, Mordechai Virshubski.

NATIONAL RELIGIOUS PARTY: Avner Shaki, Zevulun Hammer, Hanan Porat, Yigal Bibi, Yitzhak Levy.

DEMOCRATIC FRONT FOR PEACE AND EQUALITY (COMMUNISTS): Meir Wilner, Tawfik Toubi, Charlie Biton, Tawfik Zayyad.

TEHIYA: Yuval Ne'eman, Geula Cohen, Eliezer Waldman.

MAPAM: Yair Tsaban, Haim Oron, Hassin Faras.

TSOMET: Rafael Eitan, Yoash Zidon.

MOLEDET: Rehavam Ze'evi, Yair Sprinzak.

CENTER-SHINUI MOVEMENT: Amnon Rubinstein, Avraham Poraz.

DEGEL HATORAH: Avraham Ravitz, Moshe Gafni.

PROGRESSIVE LIST FOR PEACE: Mohammed Miari.

ARAB DEMOCRATIC PARTY: Abd-el Wahab Darousha.