

LIKUD MINISTER RAISES DOUBTS ABOUT DIASPORA'S COMMITMENT

By J.J. Goldberg

NEW YORK, March 8 (JTA) -- Israel is relatively confident of continuing U.S. government backing, but it is none too certain it can rely on support from its co-religionists in the Diaspora, Deputy Prime Minister David Levy told a gathering of Jewish leaders here this week.

"The issues of Israel's security and the dangers we face are clear to the administration," Levy told the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations on Monday.

"Israel is strong and has brought great advances in the Middle East, and has been a deterrent to forces that were undermining the basis of general security as America sees it."

"I want to convince you, not the members of Congress. They know this," Levy said, speaking in Hebrew.

Levy is Israel's minister of construction and housing, and is nominally the No. 2 figure in Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's Likud bloc. His largely sympathetic Conference of Presidents audience included representatives of less than half the umbrella body's 46 member groups.

Levy said his current U.S. tour was mainly devoted to discussions on Project Renewal, the Jewish Agency for Israel-sponsored urban renewal program. Levy's Housing Ministry is a partner in the effort.

A onetime construction worker and union leader who heads his own populist faction in the Likud, the Moroccan-born Levy often is viewed as a key spokesman for Israel's Sephardic working class.

This has made him a lightning rod for complaints, particularly from his own Sephardic constituency, that government aid to Soviet newcomers comes at the expense of Israel's working poor.

Competing For Soviet Jews

Levy seemed to allude to that dilemma in defending Israel's record on aid to Soviet immigrants, which is often blamed for the precipitous decline in the number of Soviet Jews who choose to settle in Israel.

"As minister of housing and construction, I can say that the assistance given to immigrants, especially from the Soviet Union, is the highest given to anyone in the State of Israel," Levy said.

"We are doing above and beyond. If I take on the responsibility that this massive, highly subsidized assistance is the highest preference, then I think the State of Israel is giving and will give top priority to our brethren from the Soviet Union."

"But, my friends, there is a paradox," he said. "Until the miracle comes and those gates are open, we continue struggling. Is the promised land Israel or America? If you compete with us for the Jew coming out of the Soviet Union, it is the end of Zionism."

The Israeli official appeared to be referring obliquely to the assistance extended by American Jewish organizations to Soviet emigrants who wish to settle in the United States.

The United Jewish Appeal this week launched a special \$75 million campaign, half of whose proceeds will aid the resettlement of Soviet Jews in the United States. Much of the rest of the money will be used to fund the absorption of Soviet emigrants in Israel.

On another matter, Levy acknowledged that Israel is faring poorly in world public opinion as a result of the "sophisticated" efforts by the Palestine Liberation Organization to depict itself as "moderate and reasonable."

Israel rejects the new PLO image, he said, and he called on Diaspora Jews to find the "faith and wisdom" to do the same.

"We face a problem that is different from anything we have faced in the past, something that is very difficult to explain," Levy said.

"In all our struggles for survival, this is the first time we have faced such a sophisticated challenge. It could be said that the Arabs have learned much from the Jews, while the Jews have forgotten much of what they once knew."

CURRENT OPTIONS FOR MIDEAST PEACE DISMISSED IN NEW AJCONGRESS STUDY

By Andrew Silow Carroll

NEW YORK, March 8 (JTA) -- A major Israeli think tank has rejected nearly all the options for settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict currently being considered in Israel -- from the left wing's call for a Palestinian state to the far right's proposal for complete annexation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

In their place, the Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies of Tel Aviv University has proposed an extended "confidence-building process" -- to last as long as 10 to 15 years -- during which Israel would not reject the eventual creation of a Palestinian state, nor the Palestinians demand the state as inevitable.

The center's conclusions on six options for peace, but not its own proposal, are contained in a 235-page study sponsored and released by the American Jewish Congress. The findings were issued in Hebrew and English in Israel on Wednesday and were to be released in New York on Thursday.

AJCongress is calling the nearly year-long study, "The West Bank and Gaza: Israel's Options for Peace," the most comprehensive and up-to-date of its kind since the Six-Day War.

The Jaffee Center, founded in 1977 and directed by reserve Maj. Gen. Aharon Yariv, has gained a reputation for providing non-partisan research grounded in strategic and demographic reality. Its staff includes military strategists, political scientists and economists.

The center does not have the influence with the current Israeli government that, say, conservative ideologues at the Heritage Foundation once had with the Reagan administration.

In addition, AJCongress lost much of its leverage with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir after it issued a policy statement in September 1987 urging Israel to end its rule over the 1.5 million Palestinians in the administered territories. The organization remained critical of Israeli policy during the early stages of the Palestinian uprising.

Nonetheless, AJCongress hopes the study, which lists the more mainstream Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith as a co-sponsor, will have to be taken into account in all future discussion of the Middle East.

Yariv, a former Cabinet minister and chief of military intelligence, told a news conference in Tel Aviv Wednesday that the analysis was being brought to the attention of Israeli leaders.

Not Intended To Be 'Prescriptive'

"The study is intended to be descriptive, rather than prescriptive," said Philip Baum, associate executive director of AJCongress, explaining why his organization did not lend its name to the center's ultimate recommendations.

The study finds that of six main options currently on the Israeli public agenda, all contain elements making them unacceptable to the Israelis, the Palestinians or both.

Maintaining the status quo, for instance -- a course currently being pursued by the Israeli government as "the least of all evils," according to the study -- is clearly untenable.

But the remaining five options -- divided between two "unilateral" and three "compromise" measures -- seem equally unpromising. Each founders either on Israel's concern for its military security or the Palestinians' unflagging desire for complete independence.

A unilateral annexation of the territories, the official policy of the Tchiya and Moledet parties, "would begin a spiral toward war," according to the study. In order for Israel to retain its Jewish character, annexation would mean either completely denying Palestinians political rights or "transferring" them to neighboring Arab states.

Either move would create a violent Palestinian reaction and possibly lead to war with other Arab nations. In addition, "the U.S. would disassociate from Israel," and American Jewry "would be increasingly alienated."

The second unilateral option examined is an Israeli withdrawal from most of the Gaza Strip, in essence, the creation of a Palestinian "mini-state" behind a fenced and mined border. By relinquishing responsibility for a vast and growing Arab population, the study argues, the option would be acceptable to the Israeli majority, including Arab citizens.

Likud And Labor Plans Rejected

However, the Gaza mini-state, hostile and destitute, would owe Israel nothing in return for its independence, and "could turn into a Lebanese-style base for terrorism and chaos."

Among the compromise solutions are the two held by Israel's rival political blocs, Likud and Labor.

Shamir's Likud bloc has called for a narrow autonomy set-up for Palestinians. Grounded in the Camp David accords, this option would turn all local matters over to an autonomous Arab administration. Whether that autonomy would extend to control over the land itself spells the difference between "narrow" and "deep" autonomy options.

But Palestinians would reject either option unless it was seen as an interim arrangement leading to an independent Palestinian state, the study says. Unless autonomy talks included that commitment from the Israelis, they "most likely would neither encourage better Arab-Israel relations nor reduce friction and violence."

The Palestinians would most likely also

reject the Labor Party's long-cherished "Jordanian option" -- that is, a Jordanian-Palestinian federation in which responsibility for the territories' defense, internal security and foreign affairs rests in Amman.

Jordan, too, has grown cool toward a plan that threatens the sovereignty of its king: Hussein is a Hashemite Arab, not a Palestinian, and he is loath to bring into his kingdom a population of 1.5 million Palestinians.

Israel, too, should think twice, suggests the study, before setting the stage for a huge, Palestinian successor state to the east.

Finally, the study dismisses a Palestinian state, "virtually the only choice of Palestinians," because of the opposition of most Israelis and the real threat of Palestinian aspirations for a "Greater Palestine."

"Certainly without extensive transition stages to test Palestinian intentions," the study concludes, "Palestinian statehood is potentially extremely risky, from a security standpoint, and is as dangerous for the fabric of Israeli society as is annexation."

A test of Palestinian intentions, and Israel's willingness to offer conditions that the Palestinians can meet, are the substance of the center's independent recommendations "toward a solution." The recommendations are contained in a booklet separate from the AJCongress-sponsored volume.

Recognition Of PLO Urged

According to the recommendations, Israelis and Palestinians must embark on a process of "prolonged mutual confidence-building."

The Palestinians would have to agree to cease terrorism and violence in the territories, and give up hope of returning Palestinian refugees to residences inside Israel.

Israel, in turn, "would have to agree to offer genuine, comprehensive autonomy for the West Bank and Gaza, forego its control of most state lands in the territories" and cease building any new Jewish settlements in the territories.

If those conditions were maintained for as long as 10 to 15 years, negotiations could begin between Israel and Palestinians toward a final peace settlement.

For the immediate future, the study group insists that "Israel had best invest considerable effort in searching for limited measures -- probably of a unilateral variety -- that hold out the prospect of even slightly alleviating the pressures and dangers inherent in the status quo."

In addition, Israel must begin to find ways to recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization as an "authoritative representative" of the Palestinians.

"As long as the PLO maintains the moderate course it developed in late 1988," the study says, "an Israeli policy that rejects unconditionally any dialogue with it does not appear to be sustainable over time."

A non-partisan American Board of Advisers oversaw the study in order to ensure objectivity. Its members were Jean Kirkpatrick, former ambassador to the United Nations; Samuel Lewis, former ambassador to Israel; Sol Linowitz, a former special Middle East envoy; Harold Brown, former secretary of defense; Cyrus Vance, former secretary of state; and Walter Mondale, former vice president.

A similar Israeli board of advisers consisted of the presidents of five of Israel's seven major universities.

WEIZMAN TO OBEY SHAMIR'S BAN ON MEETING WITH THE SOVIETS

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, March 8 (JTA) -- In an incident creating tension within the national unity government, Science and Development Minister Ezer Weizman will obey Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's orders forbidding him to meet with the Soviet ambassador to the United States.

Weizman, who is in New York, announced his decision here Wednesday through an aide, Aryeh Shumer.

Weizman, a Laborite, had been invited to meet with Ambassador Yuri Dubinin in Washington this week, reportedly in order to receive a formal invitation to visit the Soviet Union -- the first extended to an Israeli minister.

Deputy Foreign Minister Binyamin Netanyahu of Likud explained in the Knesset that ministers wishing to maintain contact with foreign governments should do so through the Foreign Ministry.

But thought to be behind Shamir's orders was his determination not to allow those representing more moderate policy positions than his own to receive international prominence.

THOUSANDS DEMONSTRATE IN FAVOR OF BUILDING MORE SETTLEMENTS

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, March 8 (JTA) -- The contentious issue of settlements in the Israeli-administered territories flared again, as thousands of Gush Emunim supporters gathered Tuesday night in Tel Aviv to call for a renewed settlement drive.

The demonstration raised the tension level once more between Labor and Likud, whose opposing policies on the settlements are now focused on the Finance Ministry, led now by Labor Party leader Shimon Peres.

As thousands of demonstrators filled Malchei Yisrael Square in Tel Aviv, Peres declared categorically that "the Likud would not get an extra shekel for settlements."

Peres was reacting to threats by the Likud that it would agree to write off the huge debts of the kibbutzim only if the Treasury allocates another 80 million shekels (\$45 million) for the settlements.

Last week, the government and the banks agreed to write off and reschedule four billion shekels (\$2.25 billion) of the kibbutzim's debt, as part of a wide-ranging recovery program.

But Peres countered that he was "not afraid of Likud." Any additional settlement budget, he said, should have been asked for before the new budget was presented to the Knesset.

Many settlers say the Likud-led government, which has professed to support new settlements, is not sympathetic enough to settlement efforts.

The demonstrators Tuesday called for the government to "hit the PLO with eight new settlements," referring to the Palestine Liberation Organization's stated intent to establish an independent Palestinian state in the territories.

At the end of the rally, a group of settlers set off toward the territories in a motorcade of eight vans, in an attempt to set up an illegal settlement at Talmon, in the Ramallah region.

The settlers eventually erected some tents on the site, but the army closed off the area Wednesday and demanded that the settlers evacuate the region.

THREE PLO MEMBERS GET VISAS TO ATTEND CONFERENCE IN U.S.

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, March 8 (JTA) -- Three members of the Palestine Liberation Organization have been granted visas to attend a conference in New York this weekend, the State Department said Wednesday.

"None of the three have any record of personal involvement in terrorist activity," department spokesman Charles Redman said. He said all three had previously received visas for conferences, and that one had studied here.

Redman identified the three as Nabil Shaath, a senior adviser to PLO leader Yasir Arafat and a member of the Palestine National Council's political committee; Afif Shaath, the PLO's representative in the Netherlands; and Noha Nicholas Tadoros, who was later identified as a Lebanese woman who used to work for the PLO mission to the United Nations.

Israel, meanwhile, has banned Mustafa Natshé, the deposed mayor of Hebrón, from traveling to the United States for the conference, according to news reports from Jerusalem.

Earlier this week, the United States granted a visa to Palestinian activist Faisal al-Husseini, director of the Arab Studies Center in Jerusalem, to also attend the conference, which will be held at Columbia University.

Redman said Tuesday that Husseini, who was recently released from an Israeli prison, "is not a PLO member and therefore does not require a waiver" from the 1974 law barring members of the PLO from entering the United States.

He said Wednesday that the law allows the attorney general to issue waivers on the recommendation of the secretary of state, which was done in this case.

The conference is sponsored by the university; Al-Fajr, an Arabic pro-PLO newspaper in Jerusalem; New Outlook, an Israeli left-wing magazine; American Friends of Peace Now; and the American Council for Palestinian Affairs.

U.S. CONDEMNS U.N. COMMITTEE'S STANCE ON ISRAEL AS ORWELLIAN

By Tamar Levy

GENEVA, March 8 (JTA) -- The United States, voting against another U.N. body's resolution condemning Israeli actions in the administered territories, made a statement Tuesday deriding the organization's view of Israel as one of a make-believe world.

It also indicated it would continue its dialogue with the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Marshall Breger, a member of the U.S. delegation to the U.N. Human Rights Commission meeting here, said after the vote Tuesday, "In dealing with the Arab-Israeli conflict, this and other United Nations bodies have created an artificial language having little, if any, relation to reality."

"A semi-official 'Newspeak' reminiscent of George Orwell has grown up, an Alice-in-Wonderland language, in which the world is turned inside out."

The resolution, which once again called on Israel to withdraw from the territories and welcomed the Palestinians' declaration of an independent state, was adopted by a roll-call vote of 31 in favor and one -- the United States -- against. There were two abstentions.

GREEK PAPER ACCUSES JEWS, CIA OF PLOTTING AGAINST PREMIER

By Jean Cohen

ATHENS, March 8 (JTA) -- A newspaper in Greece that has made a career out of anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism is now accusing the Jews, the CIA and the leader of the Greek opposition of plotting to defame embattled Greek Prime Minister Andreas Papandreu in order to bring down his Socialist government.

The daily morning paper Dimokratikos Logos (Democratic Word) has done so in a reference to the cover story of the current European issue of Time magazine, in which Papandreu is accused by Greek fugitive George Koskotas of receiving large bribes.

According to the Greek paper, opposition leader Kostas Mitsotakis "discussed with the powerful U.S. Jewish lobby the plot to bring down the government of Andreas Papandreu."

The Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece convened Wednesday in an emergency session on the matter.

Dimokratikos Logos and its sister publication, Avriani (Tomorrow's Paper), have long printed anti-Jewish and anti-Israel stories.

A Greek government spokesman, Sotiris Kostopoulos, asked to comment on the Time story, said, "We have stated in the past that the plot against the prime minister of the country is being directed by foreign and local centers. We have no intention to add any clarification to the above statement."

Papandreu plans to sue Time over the "despicable" article, the Greek government said on Wednesday.

Koskotas, who is now in prison in Salem, Mass., and fighting extradition to Greece, is the former owner of the Bank of Crete and of a press empire that collapsed in August when it was found he was embezzling funds.

The affair created Greece's biggest political-economical scandal ever. There have been rumors in Greece since the scandal broke that high officials were involved in the affair.

The scandal, subject of daily parliamentary and judicial inquiries, is so explosive that the entire Greek press, with the exception of Dimokratikos Logos and Avriani, has called on the government to resign.

Defamation of Papandreu is not new. He has been the subject of Greek media scorn for the last few years, much of it because of his appearance in public with a young mistress.

KOSHER RESTAURANT COMING TO MOSCOW

By Cathrine Gerson

JERUSALEM, March 8 (JTA) -- Moscow's Jews will soon be able to eat at a kosher restaurant, to be opened shortly under the direction of one of Israel's leading chefs.

Moroccan-born Shalom Kadosh, who is the executive chef of the Jerusalem Sheraton Plaza Hotel, said the restaurant would specialize in the type of French kosher food of which he is an expert, but that he would also serve traditional East European dishes and specialties.

Financed by American Jews concerned about the absence of a kosher restaurant in Moscow, the restaurant will not be profit-oriented.

Although Kadosh expressed optimism on the opening of the eatery, he could not say exactly when it would open.

NEW REGIME IN PARAGUAY PLEDGES TO FIND, EXPEL NAZI WAR CRIMINALS

By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, March 8 (JTA) -- On the heels of the Justice Department's announcement that another former Nazi collaborator had deported himself to Paraguay, the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith reported from there that its provisional president has pledged "immediate efforts to locate, arrest and expel Nazi war criminals living in the country."

General Andres Rodriguez made the promise in a March 3 meeting in Asuncion, the Paraguayan capital, with Rabbi Morton Rosenthal, director of the ADL's department of Latin American affairs.

Rosenthal was accompanied to his meeting at the government palace by U.S. Ambassador Timothy Towell.

Rosenthal went to Paraguay upon learning from U.S. Rep. Bruce Morrison (D-Conn.) that Rodriguez was willing to receive information from organizations that track down Nazi war criminals.

Morrison, who is chairman of the House Judiciary subcommittee on immigration, refugees and international law, was the first elected U.S. official to meet with Rodriguez.

The subcommittee has jurisdiction over the Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations, which prosecutes Nazi war criminals in America.

Morrison was invited to Paraguay in January, before the coup that toppled Gen. Alfredo Stroessner, by opposition figures there operating under a group called the National Accord, according to his legislative aide, Paul Donnelly.

Desire To Change Reputation

Morrison went there after the coup, accompanied by former U.S. Ambassador Robert White, former Arizona Gov. Bruce Babbitt and officials of the Commission on U.S.-Latin American Relations. Babbitt and White returned before his meeting with Rodriguez.

In the meeting, Morrison brought up the main issues of concern to the U.S. government regarding Paraguay: human rights, free elections and drug enforcement.

He then added a fourth, on "Paraguay's historic patronage of war criminals."

Rodriguez told Morrison he "wanted to change his country's reputation," and expressed a willingness to receive requests on such war fugitives.

Donnelly said the congressman had been briefed on this issue by the Simon Wiesenthal Center.

Last month, Rosenthal told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency there might develop "a possibility that Nazis living in Paraguay might become vulnerable" in the wake of the coup. At the time, Rosenthal provided no names of any Nazis believed to be in that country.

But ADL reported March 3 that Rosenthal gave Rodriguez information from the league's Special Task Force on Nazi War Criminals on "two Nazi war criminals who fled to Paraguay from the U.S. during the past two years."

They are Serge Kowalchuk, who fled deportation proceedings sometime in the past two years, and George Theodorovich, who fled there in December, as the Justice Department announced last week.

OSI had asked that the two men be deported to the Soviet Union to stand trial.