

LIKUD OFFICIALS, BUT NOT CABINET, REVIEWING PEACE PLAN ALTERNATIVES By David Landau

JERUSALEM, March 29 (JTA) — Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir on Wednesday canceled the weekly meeting of the 12-member Inner Cabinet, apparently signaling that he wants no debate of foreign policy options prior to his visit to the United States next week. Labor ministers have been pressing for such a debate.

Behind the scenes, however, Shamir is involved in intensive meetings with a select group of Likud ministers and senior aides to prepare working papers for his Washington talks.

At the center of these ongoing deliberations, it is understood, are various proposals for elections in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and the linkage of such elections to negotiations for interim and final-stage political solutions.

Shamir and his team — which includes Foreign Minister Moshe Arens, Justice Minister Dan Meridor and officials of the Prime Minister's Office — have apparently decided to present their conclusions to President Bush and U.S. Secretary of State James Baker before submitting them to any Cabinet forum in Jerusalem for discussion.

It is still unclear, though, whether the prime minister will give some advance notice of the intended thrust of his proposals to the leaders of the Labor Party — Vice Premier Shimon Peres and Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin — before he leaves for the United States midweek.

Shamir Standing Firm

Among the proposals reportedly being discussed are:

- Rabin's longstanding plan for area-wide elections in the territories, designed to evolve an indigenous political leadership that would then become Israel's Palestinian negotiating partner.

- A Likud alternative, proposing only municipal elections in the territories.

- Another Likud plan in which Israel, together with Egypt and the United States, would propose the composition of a West Bank-Gaza Strip negotiating team to hold talks with Israel on an interim solution, in the framework of the Camp David autonomy plan. Presumably there would have to be some linkage between such talks and negotiations on a final settlement. Elections would only be held after that linkage were agreed upon.

Shamir is determined, according to his aides, not to budge from his firm rejection of the land-for-peace formula or a separate Palestinian state. Similarly, he is said not to hold out any hint of a shift from his solid opposition to talks with the Palestine Liberation Organization.

The aides indicate, however, that the Israeli leader will want the opportunity to mull over the American position after his first round of talks with Baker next Wednesday, and come back with newly refined ideas of his own.

The Jerusalem Post reported Wednesday that President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, who will precede Shamir in meetings with officials in Washington, has rejected an Israeli idea that he and Shamir meet, with Bush, on the White House lawn next week in a symbolic ceremony marking

the 10th anniversary of the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty, signed on that same spot on March 26, 1979.

Mubarak has consistently refused to meet with Shamir, ever since Shamir first took office as prime minister in 1983.

The Egyptian president is scheduled to meet with Bush on Monday. Shamir will meet with Baker next Wednesday and with Bush the following day.

NO PRESSURE ON ISRAEL TO NEGOTIATE WITH PLO, BAKER TELLS JEWISH LEADERS By David Friedman and Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, March 29 (JTA) — Secretary of State James Baker assured Jewish leaders Tuesday that the United States will not pressure Israel to negotiate with the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Baker, who met for 40 minutes Tuesday afternoon with members of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, has been quoted several times in recent weeks as saying that Israeli negotiations with the PLO should not be ruled out.

But Malcolm Hoenlein, executive director of the conference, said Baker told the Jewish leaders that the Bush administration would not press Israel to engage in such talks.

The Bush administration is eagerly waiting to hear the new peace proposals Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir says he will bring with him to Washington next week.

The administration is "very anxious that the prime minister bring some new ideas for the peace process," Baker said in an interview published Tuesday by The New York Times.

They should not be "ideas that have been discussed and surfaced before," he told the Times, but rather proposals that "broke new ground and that would also serve to improve the climate in the region between the parties, so that ultimately we can find a way to get some direct negotiations started."

Shamir said in Jerusalem Sunday that he would propose to the Bush administration "things I have not said before."

"I have no doubt that the prime minister will bring new peace initiatives," said Seymour Reich, who chairs the Conference of Presidents and led the delegation that met with Baker.

Reported On Solidarity Conference

Reich said the Jewish leaders gave the secretary of state their perceptions of the recent solidarity conference in Jerusalem, which drew 1,500 Jewish leaders from around the world, half of them from the United States.

Reich, who is also president of B'nai B'rith International, said that Shamir did not reveal his specific proposals to the Jewish leaders, nor did they expect him to do so.

He said it was made clear to Baker, as it was to the Israeli government, that the Jewish leaders had not gone to Jerusalem to endorse any specific proposals.

The meeting in Jerusalem was a "gathering of Jews throughout the world expressing their solidarity with Israel in time of great tension and

eagerness and anticipation of the prime minister's visit," Reich said.

The solidarity conference issued a 144-word declaration supporting the Israeli government "in its effort to achieve peace and security with its neighbors."

Before Shamir comes to Washington, Bush will meet with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak on April 3. He will meet with Shamir on April 6 and with King Hussein of Jordan on May 2.

Reich said Baker would not "expect peace to break out the day after the prime minister left" Washington. "This was going to be a long process."

Session With Republican Leader

The Conference of Presidents also met this week with Lee Atwater, chairman of the Republican National Committee. Some 70 Jewish leaders participated in the meeting, which took place Monday in New York.

Hoenlein said this was part of an outreach program to bring opinion molders, including members of Congress, together with the Jewish community for an "ongoing dialogue." He said the aim was to "get people together to see the Jewish community and get the Jewish community to see them."

Ron Brown, the Democratic Party chairman, has accepted an invitation for a similar meeting, and it is expected to be scheduled soon, Reich said.

He said Atwater had never before met formally with the Jewish community and many in the Jewish community had never met him. Atwater outlined his proposals for the Republican Party to reach out to Jews and other ethnic groups, Reich said.

In response to a question, the Republican leader expressed his support for voluntary prayer in the schools, something which many Jews oppose.

Reich and Hoenlein expressed satisfaction with the Atwater meeting. But, Robert Blumenthal, director of special projects of the United Synagogue of America, said that while he appreciated Atwater "being up front, people didn't seem enthralled with him."

THATCHER APPEARS TO URGE U.S. TO PRESSURE ISRAEL ON PLO TALKS

By Joseph Finklestone
London Jewish Chronicle

LONDON, March 29 (JTA) — The British government has denied news reports that Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher is suggesting that the United States should pressure Israel to talk with the Palestine Liberation Organization.

"We believe pressure would be counter-productive," a Whitehall official remarked, commenting on statements made by Thatcher during her visit to Morocco this week.

Praising Morocco's King Hassan II for having met in 1986 with then Prime Minister Shimon Peres, Thatcher was quoted as saying, "This is an example from which Israel can learn."

It is time, she added, for well-prepared negotiations to begin. This requires the "influence and resolve" of the United States with Israel, and support from Britain.

Thatcher stressed that direct involvement of Palestinians from "inside and outside" the administered territories is necessary.

British aides accompanying the prime minis-

ter made it clear to reporters that she meant by this the PLO, and that she was determined to deliver this message to Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir in advance of his visit to Washington.

In Jerusalem, Israeli officials declined to comment publicly on her remarks. Some pointed out privately, however, that the British leader had still stopped short of actually referring to the PLO by name — and that this should be seen as a gesture of accommodation toward Israeli sensitivities.

British officials, nevertheless, say privately that they hope the United States will try to convince the Israelis of the necessity of talking to the PLO.

They also hope that the United States will accept the British view that an international conference is essential if the Middle East deadlock is to be broken. The United States supports Israel's position that direct negotiations among individual parties to the dispute are preferable.

Still, there is hope among officials here that Shamir will come up with some novel ideas during his visit to Washington next week.

The British announced Tuesday that Shamir would pay a short visit to London in May. The announcement of the previously anticipated trip was seen by some observers as a compensating gesture for Thatcher's statements in Morocco.

(JTA Jerusalem correspondent David Landau contributed to this report.)

NEXT PLO-ISRAELI CONTACTS MAY TAKE PLACE IN SCOTLAND The Jewish Echo

GLASGOW, March 29 (JTA) — The local Peace Now group here is organizing the latest in an international series of dialogues on the Middle East peace process to include both Israeli Knesset members and representatives of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

In a letter to The Jewish Echo, to be published in its Friday edition, the Glasgow Friends of Peace Now announce that they are arranging a meeting to be addressed by a London representative of the PLO.

Sharing the platform will be "a member or members of the Knesset — someone like Dedi Zucker or Shulamit Aloni, or someone else from the Citizens Rights Movement," Tony Tankel, who signed the letter, told the Echo. He hinted that the speaker could be a member of Israel's Labor Party.

If it comes off, the Glasgow meeting will be the latest in a series of contacts Israeli Knesset members have had with PLO officials in recent weeks. Similar exchanges took place in New York, London, Amsterdam and Lausanne, Switzerland.

While Israeli nationals are forbidden by law from having contact with the PLO, Knesset members have immunity from prosecution.

The Glasgow Friends of Peace Now has a wide measure of local support here. Among its members are Mark Goldberg, who is coordinator of Glasgow's Project Renewal program in Dimona, Israel; Nigel Allon, chairman of the Glasgow Zionist Organization; and Tankel, who is secretary of that organization.

The Glasgow Zionist Organization caused an uproar last September, when it published an advertisement in the Jewish Echo, shortly before the Israeli Knesset elections, urging Israel to "speak to the PLO now!"

ARAB LEAGUE SAYS PREPARATIONS UNDER WAY FOR U.N. PEACE TALKS

By Andrew Silow Carroll

UNITED NATIONS, March 29 (JTA) -- U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar is beginning "intensive discussions" with the five permanent members of the Security Council to prepare for a Middle East peace conference, the Arab League's U.N. observer claimed Tuesday.

A U.N. spokesperson was unable to confirm the report Wednesday, and a spokesperson for the U.S. mission said the secretary-general had not approached the American ambassador on the topic.

"I understand that the secretary-general is undertaking today, this afternoon, with the permanent members of the Security Council, discussions on the international conference," Arab League representative Clovis Maksoud told a news conference Tuesday.

He said the discussions would focus on the situation in the territories and the escalating violence in Lebanon's civil war. Maksoud said he discussed both issues with Perez de Cuellar and was satisfied with his responses.

The General Assembly has repeatedly called for an international conference to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict. Perez de Cuellar said recently that the Security Council should lead urgent efforts to promote Middle East peace negotiations.

Both Israel and the United States oppose an international conference. The United States supports Israel's position that there is no substitute for direct negotiations among individual parties to the dispute.

ISRAELI-EGYPTIAN PEACE 'SOLID' AFTER 10 YEARS, ENVOY AFFIRMS

NEW YORK, March 29 (JTA) -- Ten years after Egypt and Israel signed a treaty, peace between the two countries is "solid" and "irreversible," Cairo's ambassador to Washington told a Manhattan synagogue audience Monday night.

El-Sayed Abdel Raouf el-Reedy, speaking at a symposium on prospects for Middle East peace at Park East Synagogue, said moreover that the treaty had encouraged Arabs living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to accept Israel's right to live alongside a Palestinian state.

Reedy, sharing the platform with Israeli Consul General Uri Savir, said the "tide for peace" among the peoples of the Middle East was "overwhelming, putting them far ahead of their governments."

He called it an "unprecedented phenomenon in the region," and said it boded well for peace between Israel and a Palestinian state alongside it.

Now that it is shown that "peace between Israel and an Arab country is possible," he said, "the Palestinian position in particular has been the focus of a more profound transformation."

It is moving steadily toward "acceptance of the two-state solution," he said.

Savir, saying his country joined in celebrating the peace, called for "direct dialogue" among the parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict as the only effective method of achieving progress toward a comprehensive peace.

But he added a warning about "the Middle East arms race," saying that the introduction of chemical weapons and land-based missiles into the area "imperils the political progress made thus far

and threatens the economy of the entire region."

Savir conceded that "the problem of resolving the conflict between the aspirations of the Palestinian Arabs and the security needs of Israel is incredibly difficult."

"That is why I believe we must move slowly, step by step, with interim solutions to our goals, rather than a grand solution all at once."

"Peace, not war, is inexorable," because it "is in the interests of both sides," Savir said.

GREECE SENTENCES PALESTINIAN, POSTPONING EXTRADITION TO U.S.

By Jean Cohen

ATHENS, March 29 (JTA) -- A Greek court sentenced a suspected Palestinian terrorist to eight months in prison Tuesday, and in doing so frustrated the U.S. government's request for his immediate extradition.

Mohammed Rashid, who was arrested at Athens airport last May and convicted of carrying a forged Syrian passport, is believed by the United States to have been involved in the bombing of a Pan American flight over Hawaii in 1982. A 16-year-old Japanese youth was killed and 45 other passengers were wounded in that incident.

The Greek move Tuesday ensures that no extradition proceedings will take place until Rashid's eight-month sentence is served. The extradition petition will then be taken up by the Greek Supreme Court.

Rashid has been in jail while the Greek Supreme Court reviewed a lower court's decision on the U.S. extradition request.

Last month, during a check, prison guards found two homemade blades in his cell. A lower court acquitted Rashid of charges he was plotting an escape, but the public prosecutor appealed against the acquittal.

The three-member appeals court in Piraeus sentenced Rashid to eight months for possession of the weapons, but gave him the option of buying off his sentence at 400 drachmas (\$2.18) per day.

His lawyer said he would appeal for a retrial to the Supreme Court.

Resemblance To Zomar Case

The case bears striking resemblance to that of Abdel Osama al-Zomar, who is believed responsible for the 1982 machine-gun attack on Rome's main synagogue that killed a 3-year-old boy and left 35 wounded.

In December, Greek Justice Minister Vassillis Rotis refused to comply with a Greek Supreme Court decision authorizing the extradition of Zomar to Italy.

Zomar, who was released from prison after serving 2 months of a two-year sentence, was allowed to go to Libya.

The head of the Greek Jewish community, Joseph Lovinger, had called for world ostracism of Vassillis in a World Jewish Congress meeting in January, because the justice minister called Zomar a "freedom fighter."

In New York, the WJC said, "If another Zomar incident were to occur in this case, it would have serious repercussions."

In Washington, State Department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler said Wednesday that "the government of Greece knows that we consider its actions in the Rashid case to be a key indicator of its willingness to cooperate in countering terrorism."

SUPREME COURT AFFIRMS RIGHT NOT TO WORK ON ONE'S SABBATH

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, March 29 (JTA) -- The U.S. Supreme Court ruled unanimously Wednesday that someone cannot be denied unemployment benefits because he refused to work on his Sabbath.

The decision in the case, Frazee vs. the Illinois Department of Employment Security, reversed the denial of benefits to a man who refused to work on Sunday because he belonged to no organized church or denomination.

The American Jewish Congress hailed the decision as "an important vindication of the right to observe your religious tradition in a way that is appropriate to your personal belief. It is an important victory for religious belief," the organization said.

In another case Wednesday, AJCongress asked the Supreme Court to review a lower court decision requiring an Omaha, Nebraska, school board to give official recognition to a student Christian Bible Club.

If the high court agrees to hear the case, Mergens vs. Westside Community Schools Board of Education, it could use the opportunity to rule on the 1984 Equal Access Act.

That law requires public schools to grant the same access to religious clubs as they do to other extracurricular groups.

HUNGARIAN PREDICTS RESUMPTION OF TIES WITH ISRAEL BY SUMMER

By Cathrine Gerson

JERUSALEM, March 29 (JTA) -- Diplomatic ties between Israel and Hungary will be resumed "within three months," a former prime minister of Hungary predicted on a visit here this week.

Professor Jeno Fock, who was prime minister when Hungary severed diplomatic relations with Israel in 1967, also said Monday that he thinks that Poland, Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia are likely to renew their diplomatic relations with Israel soon and that "the Soviets are likely to follow later, as well," the Jerusalem Post reported.

Fock, who served as prime minister from 1967 to 1975, arrived in Israel last week heading a delegation of representatives of MTESZ, the Federation of Technical and Scientific Societies in Hungary. The delegation has toured the Technion in Haifa and visited high-tech development sites.

Last week a spokesperson for the Hungarian Foreign Ministry told a news conference in Budapest that he does not think ties could be renewed soon.

The spokesperson said Israel would have to show "some gestures" indicating a softening of its opposition to an international peace conference on the Middle East before ties could be resumed.

Fock now says it was a mistake for Hungary and all Soviet bloc states besides Romania to cut diplomatic ties with Israel at the time of the 1967 Six-Day War, because it neither unified the Arabs nor forced Israel to make concessions. Israel and Romania retained full diplomatic relations on the ambassadorial level.

During the past two years, the Soviet Union and Israel have exchanged consular delegations, Hungary and Poland have opened interest offices in Tel Aviv, and Israel has set up similar low-level representation in Budapest and Warsaw.

SCANT MENTION OF JEWISH VICTIMS AT BUCHENWALD TRIGGERS A PROTEST

By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, March 29 (JTA) -- The Workmen's Circle, a fraternal Jewish socialist organization, has lodged a protest with the East German government for its failure to record the numerous Jewish deaths at Buchenwald.

The group lodged the protest in response to an article in Saturday's New York Times. The article reported that the East German memorial at the site of the camp "does not commemorate the victims for what they were, and it denies to the United States recognition for having liberated Buchenwald."

"We are shocked and dismayed," Dr. Barnett Zumoff and Motl Zelmanowicz, co-chairmen of the Public Affairs Committee of the Workmen's Circle, wrote in a letter to Ambassador Siegfried Zuckmann, chief United Nations delegate to the German Democratic Republic.

They asked for "immediate rectification" of the situation.

Only one tablet at the memorial mentions Jews: the 10,000 German and Austrian Jews brought to Buchenwald after Kristallnacht, Nov. 9, 1938.

Most of the 56,549 who died in Buchenwald were Jews.

The camp was liberated by the Fourth Armored Division of Gen. George Patton's Third United States Army on April 11, 1945.

One man remembers it well: Nobel peace laureate Elie Wiesel, who was liberated there on that day nearly 44 years ago.

Wiesel said in a telephone interview that the Times article was the first acknowledgement he had that there was hardly any mention of Jews at Buchenwald. He now intends to visit the camp in the next few months.

"I would like to go back to see the truth," he said. "I think we should respond with organized outrage."

VICIOUS EXCHANGE IN THE KNESSET

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, March 29 (JTA) -- One of the most venomous exchanges recorded in Israel's parliamentary annals erupted in the Knesset Tuesday, at a stormy session of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee.

The main protagonists were Yossi Sarid, firebrand of the leftist Citizens Rights Movement, and Geula Cohen, outspoken member of the right-wing party Tehiya.

"Fifth columnist," Cohen shouted at Sarid, to which he responded, "liar and madwoman--you ought to be locked up."

Senior Israel Defense Force officers present to brief the committee sheepishly left the hearing room as the spat ascended into mega-decibels, with other members powerless to soothe the passions.

The episode began, according to sources present, when Cohen implied that Sarid, during a committee visit to the West Bank, had told local Palestinians that their uprising was a spur for the peace process.

As the exchange proceeded, Cohen shouted that the Shin Bet, Israel's domestic intelligence service, ought to deal with Sarid. He retorted that if he were the Shin Bet, he would have Cohen put in a straightjacket.