



PLO INFORMS U.S. IT MIGHT ACCEPT ISRAELI PLAN IF CONDITIONS ARE MET

By Edwin Eytan

PARIS, June 8 (JTA) -- A ranking official of the Palestine Liberation Organization indicated Thursday that the PLO could reverse its position on the Israeli peace initiative, which it has so far flatly rejected.

But Yasir Abed Rabbo, a member of the PLO's executive committee, made clear that certain conditions would have to be met with respect to the Palestinian elections Israel proposes in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Rabbo spoke to reporters in Tunis just before meeting with the U.S. ambassador to Tunisia, Robert Pelletreau.

Pelletreau is the only American diplomat authorized to have official contact with the PLO. Their meeting Thursday was the third formal session in the U.S.-PLO dialogue that began Dec. 16.

It was the first U.S.-PLO session since the Arab League summit meeting last month in Casablanca, Morocco, at which the Arab states rejected the Israeli initiative.

Rabbo said he would ask the American administration for detailed "clarifications" and said he hoped for a "statement of principles" that could help the PLO change its negative position on the election plan.

The PLO's primary condition is a commitment from Washington that Israeli troops will be pulled out of the territories before the elections and that Arabs in East Jerusalem will be allowed to vote.

It also wants international supervision of the polling stations.

Pelletreau and the PLO official held their dialogue at a government-owned guest house in Carthage, about 30 miles from Tunis.

As usual, each sat at a rectangular table. At their first meeting, nearly six months ago, the tables were placed more than three feet apart. At their second meeting on March 22, they were moved slightly closer.

At the meeting Thursday, the tables touched. Experts are pondering the diplomatic significance, if any, of the narrowing gap.

In Washington, Secretary of State James Baker said that the United States "got into a fair amount of substance" during the talks in Tunis.

The talks dealt with "serious and practical ways that we might progress, in a step-by-step fashion, toward the goal of a comprehensive settlement, through negotiations based, of course, on U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338."

Baker, answering questions Thursday after a luncheon address to the National Press Club, stressed that the U.S. dialogue with the PLO "should not be, and cannot be, as far as we are concerned, an end in and of itself."

"It can only be productive if it can move us forward toward the goal of peace in the Middle East," he said.

Baker said this is also why the United States supports Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's proposal for elections in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"When you advance that proposal in the context of a way to launch the political negotiations, this is meaningful," Baker said. "We think this gives us something to work with to try and move things forward to peace."

Baker also said he knew nothing about a report Sunday in The Washington Post that John Gunther Dean had 35 meetings with the PLO between October 1978 and June 1981, while he was U.S. ambassador to Lebanon. Dean told the Post that they were sanctioned by Cyrus Vance, who was secretary of state during most of that time period.

Vance told the Post he authorized the meetings to discuss security for the Beirut Embassy and the release of U.S. hostages in Iran.

He said that since the meetings were not to discuss political or diplomatic issues, they did not violate the U.S. pledge not to negotiate with the PLO, a policy the United States changed in December.

(JTA correspondent David Friedman in Washington contributed to this report.)

U.S. SAID TO BE EXPLORING IDEA OF DIRECT MOSCOW-ISRAEL FLIGHTS

By Hugh Orel

TEL AVIV, June 8 (JTA) -- The U.S. State Department has asked the Intergovernmental Commission on Migration in Geneva to prepare a plan for direct flights of Soviet Jews from Moscow to Israel, the Jerusalem Post reported Thursday.

The purpose is to reduce the backlog of thousands of Soviet Jewish emigrants in Italy waiting for American visas, an unnamed source in New York told the paper.

At the same time, the Israeli consular delegation in Moscow may be allowed, in the next few months, to process visas for Jews leaving on direct flights from Moscow to Tel Aviv, the source said.

The Israeli delegation moved this week into the old Israeli Embassy building in Moscow, which had been vacant since the Soviet Union severed diplomatic ties with Israel in 1967.

But Israeli visas are still being issued through the Dutch Embassy in Moscow, which has represented Israeli interests since Moscow cut diplomatic relations.

Currently, the vast majority of Soviet Jews emigrating on Israeli visas fly from Moscow to Vienna, where they then opt to settle in the United States, rather than Israel. They are then sent to Italy, where they apply to enter the United States as refugees.

That process used to be virtually automatic. But since last fall, there has been a huge backlog, partly because of a dramatic increase in Soviet Jewish emigration and also because the United States has become more selective about which emigres it grants refugee status.

The U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service plans to address this problem by increasing the number of Russian-speaking officials at the American Consulate in Moscow to handle a larger volume of applications for U.S. visas.

The United States eventually hopes that Soviet Jews who want to go to Israel will be

allowed to fly directly to Tel Aviv on Israeli visas. Those who want to settle in the United States would have to emigrate on American visas.

This would please Israeli officials, who have expressed annoyance that as many as 92 percent of Soviet Jews emigrating on Israeli visas have chosen to settle in other countries.

But critics of the idea say Soviet Jews who want to settle in the United States will be forced to go to Israel, since U.S. visas are harder to obtain.

SAN FRANCISCO FEDERATION MAY FREEZE LOCAL SPENDING TO PAY FOR REFUGEES

By D.C. Einstein

Northern California Jewish Bulletin

SAN FRANCISCO, June 8 (JTA) -- Faced with the rising cost of resettling hundreds of Soviet Jewish emigres and an annual fund-raising campaign that may fall short of expectations, the Jewish Community Federation here plans to clamp an unprecedented three-month freeze on allocation increases to its agencies, beginning July 1.

Federation officials said they will hold 1989 allocations to more than 40 San Francisco Bay area agencies at the same level as they received last year. The proposal will be submitted for approval by the federation's board of directors next Wednesday.

The federation does not plan to reduce the money it sends to Israel.

Other American Jewish communities also have faced budget crises as a result of the Soviet influx.

The Los Angeles federation cut its allocations by 8 percent a year ago, and New York already has cut its allocations by some 2 percent this year.

"What the freeze will do, in effect, is to buy time and enable us to better estimate how much we will raise in our Project Freedom and annual 1989 campaigns," said Annette Dobbs, the federation president.

Project Freedom, like the national Passage to Freedom campaign, is a special fund-raising campaign being run by the federation to resettle the more than 1,500 Soviet emigres now expected to arrive in the Bay Area this year.

\$650,000 Shortfall

The federation had hoped to raise \$20.45 million in its annual campaign, including a \$3 million Project Freedom goal, to cover local, national and overseas allotments.

Recent projections have indicated, however, that fund-raising efforts will bring in only \$19.8 million this year -- meaning a shortfall of \$650,000.

So far, Project Freedom has raised some \$1.25 million from individual donations, according to Rabbi Brian Lurie, executive director of the federation. Other resources have added \$875,000.

And federation officials are uncertain how much money the federal government will earmark for emigres, although they are hoping for at least \$600,000.

Had its fund-raising goals been met, the federation "could have funded dramatic increases in local and overseas projects," while still taking care of basic emigre needs," said Dobbs.

But "in Jewish tradition, the mandate is to first take care of the refugee," she said. "In order to do that, a federation freeze was necessary."

Agencies that will be hardest hit by the freeze are those that rely most heavily on the federation for funding, including the San Francisco Bureau of Jewish Education, the Jewish Community Relations Council and the federation itself.

"We're taking it in the spirit of being part of the whole community," said Howard Gelberd, director of the Board of Jewish Education, which draws \$1 million, or 80 percent of its budget, from the federation.

"We're all banding together to deal with the emigre situation, which we're all very enthusiastic about," he said.

In late September, the federation's budget and allocations committee is expected to re-evaluate the situation, deciding whether to extend the freeze, to halt it or to offer increases to agencies retroactively.

ISRAEL SENDS MEDICAL AID TO USSR

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, June 8 (JTA) -- An Israel Defense Force medical team specializing in burn therapy was due to leave for Moscow late Thursday to assist in treating victims of the Trans-Siberian Railway disaster.

The offer of aid was extended to the Soviet Union on Wednesday morning by Deputy Foreign Minister Binyamin Netanyahu.

The Soviets responded within hours, saying they would welcome shipments of anti-burn medications. The reply was delivered to the Foreign Ministry by the Soviet consular representative in Tel Aviv, Georgi Martirosov.

The IDF team, consisting of five doctors and a nurse, is headed by Col. Shuki Shemer, deputy commander of the army medical corps.

They were to travel to Cyprus in an Israeli air force transport, where they would board a Russian plane for Moscow.

More than 400 people were killed and at least 600 injured, mainly burned, when a natural gas pipeline exploded in the Ural Mountains on June 3, just as two passenger trains were passing in a narrow gorge.

CZECH PROTESTS NAZIS' RELEASE

By Henrietta Boas

AMSTERDAM, June 8 (JTA) -- Foreign Minister Jaromir Johanes of Czechoslovakia surprised his Dutch hosts during a two-day visit to The Hague this week by accusing the Dutch government of violating the Helsinki human rights accords.

The Czech minister was referring to the release from Breda prison on Jan. 28 of the last two Nazi war criminals imprisoned in the Netherlands: Ferdinand aus der Fuenten, 79, and Franz Fisher, 88.

The two prisoners, who were sent to West Germany, were responsible for the deportation of more than 100,000 Dutch Jews.

They were freed by order of the Dutch parliament, which declared them undesirable aliens.

Johanes said he would raise the matter with the U.N. Human Rights Commission.

The Czech government apparently is angry because Holland has urged the release of a Czech author, Vaclav Havel, who was arrested in Prague several months ago while participating in a peace-demonstration.

QUAYLE URGES ISRAEL TO CEASE TALK OF NEW SETTLEMENTS IN WEST BANK

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, June 8 (JTA) -- Vice President Dan Quayle, in his first interview with an Israeli newspaper, made clear that Jewish settlement activity in the West Bank seriously troubles the Bush administration. He strongly urged Israel to end it.

Excerpts from an exclusive interview with Jerusalem Post Washington correspondent Wolf Blitzer were published Thursday. The full interview will appear next week.

The excerpts, headlined: "Don't Even Talk About New West Bank Settlements," quoted Quayle as saying that Israeli leaders have told him that the announcement of new settlements did not necessarily mean they would actually be built.

"These announcements of new settlements are politically problematic, even if they don't go through," the vice president said.

"It's the announcement of them" that counts, Quayle said. "What it does is that it's just a very political problem." It is "something that I wish there was a sensitivity about," he added.

He repeatedly stressed his strong support for Israel.

Blitzer reported that Quayle's aides told him the vice president appealed for an end to settlement activity in private meetings he held with visiting Israeli leaders, including Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, Foreign Minister Moshe Arens and Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

The aides said Quayle wanted to use his first Israeli interview to underline his strong views on the settlements issue.

It was the second time in little more than two weeks that the administration spoke out on the subject.

Secretary of State James Baker stunned a pro-Israel audience in Washington on May 22, when he urged Israel to "forswear annexation, stop settlement activity" and abandon the "unrealistic vision of a Greater Israel."

Baker spoke at the 30th annual policy conference of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee.

LOUISIANA LAWMAKER IS ACCUSED OF CIRCULATING NAZI LITERATURE

BATON ROUGE, La., June 8 (JTA) -- David Duke, the former grand wizard of the Ku Klux Klan who was elected to the Louisiana state legislature last February, has been accused of selling and circulating anti-Semitic literature from his legislative office in Metairie, La.

Duke ran as a Republican and defeated the party's choice, incumbent John Treen.

The charges were brought by Elizabeth Rickey, a New Orleans member of the Republican State Central Committee, the Baton Rouge Morning Advocate reported Thursday.

Duke confirmed that the books and pamphlets were distributed from the office, which also serves as the office of the National Association for the Advancement of White People, which he heads.

He said the material was distributed by NAAWP employees, not by his legislative assistants, and that the practice has ended, the Morning Advocate reported.

Rickey charged that "the fact that Duke

continues to distribute Nazi literature through his legislative office is proof that Nazism is not in his past but in his present. Any claims to the contrary are fraudulent and misleading."

She said that she and a group of Tulane University graduate students obtained the material as part of a research project.

Among the items were Hitler's "Mein Kampf"; "Did Six Million Really Die? The Truth At Last," which claims the Holocaust never occurred; "The Turner Diaries," a novel about violence against Jews and non-whites; and "Imperium," which Rickey said argues for the preservation of Western culture through Nazi-style racist policies.

Rickey said her point in revealing the information "is not the technical matter of his distribution of Nazi literature but that it is a reflection of his philosophy," the Morning Advocate reported.

Duke denied this, the paper said. Asked about selling anti-Semitic audio tapes claiming the Holocaust was a hoax, he said he has stopped "any sort of controversial stuff, because that stuff is not part of my agenda. That's my past."

SEPHARDIC JEWS RACE THE CLOCK TO COMPLETE '92 COMMEMORATION

By David Kantor

TOLEDO, Spain, June 8 (JTA) -- A dedicated group known as Sephard '92 is working against time to complete its project -- "The Rediscovery of Jewish Spain" -- by 1992, the year Spain will celebrate the 500th anniversary of Columbus' discovery of the New World.

It will also be the quincentennial of the expulsion of Jews from Spain by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella.

While the commemoration of the voyage of discovery will be a celebration, the rediscovery of Jewish Spain will be an acknowledgment of what Spain lost when its Jews were banished.

Sephard '92 is working in close collaboration with the government as well as public and private organizations in Spain and other countries to accomplish its ambitious agenda.

To help the government disseminate information about the history and culture of Spanish Jews, Sephard '92 announced last week that it will recreate the famous Toledo school of translators by 1992.

Spanish Jews contributed greatly to the school, which was vital in transmitting classical culture to Europe.

Jews who lived in Toledo and elsewhere in Spain were also noted for their scientific accomplishments in the fields of astronomy, cartography and medicine.

Noteworthy, too, were the contributions made by Spanish Jews who served as royal advisers, politicians, financiers and community leaders.

Many Jews were ministers in both the Muslim and Christian states of Spain at a time when that was impossible in the rest of Europe.

Sephard '92 intends to call attention to that history through high school and university courses; academic, artistic and literary competitions of international scope; and congresses, symposia and a large-scale traveling exhibition to tour cities in Spain and abroad.

The group plans to publish books, leaflets and journals and to restore monuments of religious and artistic interest.

RESOLUTION ON ETHIOPIAN JEWS HAS SOME JEWISH GROUPS NERVOUS

By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, June 8 (JTA) -- American Jewish groups have been hesitant to endorse a resolution introduced last week in the U.S. Senate that calls on President Bush to condition any improvement in U.S.-Ethiopian relations on better treatment for Ethiopia's estimated 15,000 Jews.

The groups appear to be worried that the resolution is too strongly worded, especially in urging Bush to involve the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Thomas Pickering, in a diplomatic initiative on behalf of Ethiopian Jews.

The resolution says Pickering should petition the U.N. World Food Program, Security Council and General Assembly to press Ethiopia "to develop and implement a policy for the sustained emigration of Ethiopian Jews."

The resolution was introduced June 2 by Sen. Pete Wilson (R-Calif.) and co-sponsored by Sens. Rudy Boschwitz (R-Minn.) and Alan Cranston (D-Calif.). Boschwitz and Cranston are Senate co-chairs of the Congressional Caucus for Ethiopian Jewry, of which Wilson is a member.

At about the same time as the resolution was introduced, Ethiopia withdrew its formal request to have Washington restore full diplomatic ties, which were broken in 1980 when the two countries recalled their ambassadors.

But the timing of the resolution had nothing to do with the Ethiopian move, a Wilson aide said in an interview Wednesday.

A State Department official said that the Bush administration had not reached a decision on the Ethiopian request by the time it was withdrawn. "We never said 'yes' and we never said 'no' to the Ethiopian request," which was submitted in March, the official said.

Demands 'Tangible Progress'

The official added that the administration "has been willing to sit down and talk with Ethiopia on the issues that divide us." These include human rights, economic reform, Ethiopia's 27-year-old civil war and its "meddling in affairs" of neighboring countries.

"Those types of discussions have not yet taken place," the official said.

The Senate resolution charges that Ethiopia "denies both emigration opportunities and foreign visitation rights to the Ethiopian Jewish community."

Before an upgrade in relations, Ethiopia would have to make "tangible progress in human rights conditions for Ethiopian Jews, including the freedom to emigrate, travel and observe religious holidays," the resolution stipulates.

Thousands of Ethiopian Jews were airlifted to Israel during the secret U.S.-Israeli Operation Moses airlifts in 1984 and 1985. But thousands more remain in Ethiopia, separated from families in Israel, Western Europe and the United States.

Rep. Stephen Solarz (D-N.Y.) plans to introduce an identical resolution in the U.S. House of Representatives within the next week or two, a Solarz aide said Wednesday. Solarz and Rep. Benjamin Gilman (R-N.Y.) are the House co-chairs of the Congressional Caucus for Ethiopian Jewry.

The last congressional action on Ethiopian Jewry came Sept. 30, when Congress asked for human rights reports on Ethiopia every 90 days, dealing mainly with food distribution and Ethiopia's forced resettlement of its population.

Abraham Bayer, director of international affairs at the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council, the umbrella policy-planning group for 110 local Jewish community relations councils, declined to take a stand on the Senate resolution, while expressing "great anguish that Ethiopian Jews are not being reunited."

'Carrot' Or 'Stick' Approach?

Similarly, Barbara Ribakove, executive director of the North American Conference on Ethiopian Jewry, would not comment on Wilson's resolution until her group's executive board studies the issue in the next few weeks.

Like Bayer, she said her group is "very much in favor of having the question of family reunification on the agenda between the United States and Ethiopia."

Will Recant, executive director of the American Association for Ethiopian Jews, initially expressed concern that the Senate resolution was too strongly worded. But in a later conversation, he said his group feels the resolution is "appropriate."

Recant said there are "two different approaches" that can be taken by the Bush administration toward Ethiopia: "the carrot and the stick."

The "carrot" would offer Ethiopia an upgrade in relations before it improves its treatment of Jews, Recant explained. Indeed, the Ethiopian leader, Lt. Col. Mengistu Haile Mariam, suggested such an approach when he was visited in March by Reps. Gary Ackerman (D-N.Y.) and Mickey Leland (D-Texas).

He told the lawmakers that if the United States upgraded relations with Ethiopia, he would improve his government's human rights policies toward Jews.

The "stick" approach, on the other hand, "demands human rights improvements in advance," Recant said. He praised the approach used in the Wilson resolution as "more appropriate in the face of what the Ethiopian government has been doing."

The Senate resolution would also require Ethiopia to end its "villagization" program, which combines small villages into larger towns for administrative purposes.

"Villagization" allows the government to distribute food during famines more easily. But it also forces assimilation of Ethiopian Jews "who have been living separately for centuries," said Bayer of NJCRAC.

"What is very painful for every Jew is to witness families being separated," Bayer said. He said Ethiopian Jews depend on "tribal units that have kept them whole for centuries."

KOOR GETS REPRIEVE FROM CREDITOR

By Cathrine Gerson

JERUSALEM, June 8 (JTA) -- Bankers Trust of New York has officially withdrawn its liquidation petition against Koor Industries, in the wake of an agreement between the financially strapped Israeli giant and a steering committee consisting of its local and foreign creditors.

The conclusion of the agreement prompted Bankers Trust to withdraw the liquidation petition placed in Tel Aviv District Court eight months ago for Koor's \$20 million debt to the company.

Bankers Trust issued a statement York on June 2, expressing "hope that Koor will be able to extricate itself from its present problems."