

WHITE HOUSE OFFICIAL WELCOMES NCSJ DECISION ON JACKSON-VANIK

By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, June 14 (JTA) -- National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft told the National Conference on Soviet Jewry on Wednesday that he felt the group's conditional support for a waiver of Jackson-Vanik Amendment sanctions came at "the right time."

In an interview outside the White House, Shoshana Cardin, chairwoman of the National Conference, said Scowcroft welcomed her group's support for a waiver should President Bush receive "appropriate assurances" on four emigration issues. She spoke after a delegation of NCSJ leaders met with White House officials, including Scowcroft.

The group's Board of Governors voted 48-3 Tuesday, with one abstention, to support the waiver, as long as there is a sustained high level of Soviet emigration; the Soviets codify promised emigration reforms; there is progress on resolving the cases of long-term refuseniks; and they reverse emigration refusals to those who allegedly had access to state secrets.

The Jackson-Vanik Amendment has denied most-favored-nation trade status and U.S. government trade credits to the Soviet Union since 1975. The amendment permits a waiver of trade sanctions if the Soviets make substantial improvements in their emigration practices.

Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-N.Y.) and Rep. Thomas Downey (D-N.Y.) are planning to introduce a non-binding resolution in Congress this week calling for a waiver of the amendment, provided that the administration receives various assurances.

Brian Connolly, Moynihan's press secretary, said he had not seen a draft of the resolution, so he could not specify the assurances being sought.

Union Of Councils Disagrees

On Capitol Hill Wednesday afternoon, both the National Conference and the other principal Soviet Jewry umbrella group in the United States, the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews, testified before two House Foreign Affairs subcommittees holding joint hearings on the U.S.-Soviet trade relationship.

The Union of Councils has criticized the National Conference's decision to conditionally favor a Jackson-Vanik waiver as a "premature major concession" to the Soviets.

David Waksberg, the group's national vice president, told the two House panels Wednesday afternoon that to waive Jackson-Vanik in advance of promised Soviet regulatory reforms "would be tantamount to betrayal" of refuseniks and the Soviet emigration movement.

The Soviets understand that "if we give a waiver now, it means we are fully satisfied now" with emigration reforms to date, said Waksberg.

But Cardin of NCSJ noted, in testimony prepared for delivery to the congressional panels, that her group is "not satisfied with the progress achieved thus far."

She said that between 400 and 600 long-term emigration cases remain unresolved and that denials based on access to alleged state secrets

are still a major problem. The group is also "seriously concerned about the rise in anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union," she said.

Nevertheless, Cardin said the National Conference believes it is time to abandon the "stick approach" and use the "carrot approach" to try to "move the Soviets to address their emigration policies and practices that are still deficient."

Will Support President's Position

Attending the White House meeting Wednesday morning were Cardin; Martin Wenick, NCSJ's executive director; Mark Levin, the group's Washington representative; and David Harris, Washington representative of the American Jewish Committee.

In addition to Scowcroft, they met with Richard Haass, senior director of the National Security Council for the Near East and South Asia, and Condoleezza Rice, NSC director for European and Soviet affairs.

Scowcroft, for his part, "welcomed our understanding of the need to help move Soviet-U.S. bilateral relations, and he feels that this is the right time," Cardin said.

The NCSJ "assured him that it is our intention to support the president as he seeks assurances" from the Soviets, she said. They did not discuss a timetable for Bush to provide such assurances, she added.

"I made it clear from our perspective the president has the responsibility to develop the assurances that he believes are necessary," she said.

Scowcroft and the NCSJ did not discuss the Stevenson Amendment, a less-powerful measure that withholds U.S. government loan guarantees from the Soviets. "He asked, 'Have you focused primarily on Jackson-Vanik?' and we said, 'Yes, that's really where our concern has been,'" Cardin said.

The meeting was the group's first with Scowcroft. Before a high-level NCSJ delegation visited the Soviet Union in late May, it met with Commerce Secretary Robert Mosbacher, Cardin said.

NEWS ANALYSIS:

NCSJ DECISION CHARTS NEW COURSE FOR SOVIET JEWRY MOVEMENT IN U.S.

By Andrew Silow Carroll

NEW YORK, June 14 (JTA) -- Since its adoption in 1975, the Jackson-Vanik Amendment has been the most tangible proof of the U.S. government's intentions on Soviet Jewry.

As the late Sen. Henry Jackson, the Democrat from Washington, described it in its earliest stages, the law would say to Soviet leaders that Congress is determined to grant favorable trade status only if the Soviets would reciprocate and grant emigration from the Soviet Union.

So it has stood for 14 years, from the heights of Jewish emigration in the late 1970s to its depths in the mid-1980s.

By voting Tuesday to conditionally favor a waiver of the amendment, the National Conference on Soviet Jewry has set a new course for the Soviet Jewry movement.

The new policy signals to the Bush admin-

istration that it has leeway to urge a waiver without incurring the wrath of large segments of the American Jewish community.

The policy recognizes that emigration is at a 10-year high and that U.S.-Soviet relations are warming. While making note of "old patterns of behavior and authority" that still plague Soviet emigration policy, the new policy acknowledges that enormous changes are under way within Soviet society.

But despite the apparent consensus reached among most of the 47 national Jewish organizations and 300 local federations and community councils that make up the conference, there is still disagreement within the Jewish community.

'A Betrayal Of Soviet Jews'

One voting member of the conference called the decision "a betrayal of Soviet Jews," and the second largest Soviet Jewry coalition clearly disapproves of the new direction.

The most vocal opponent to the new policy within the NCSJ coalition is Rabbi Avi Weiss, chairman of the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry.

Weiss said Wednesday that while the NCSJ position only asks for "appropriate assurances" of progress in four key areas of Soviet emigration policy, Soviet Jews themselves are asking that the Soviets be measured only on their actual "performance."

"I am not aware of one major refusenik who does not talk about Jackson-Vanik in terms of performance. That is why this is a betrayal," Weiss said in a telephone interview.

He said Soviet Jews have "begged" that Jackson-Vanik not be waived until the Soviets demonstrate improved performance for at least a year.

Weiss cast one of only three no votes at Tuesday's NCSJ Board of Governors meeting.

The Union of Councils for Soviet Jews, representing 50 local chapters and 100,000 members, is not a voting member of NCSJ.

But its national president made her disappointment clear in a telephone interview Tuesday, saying her organization will not support a waiver until the Soviets codify improvements in their emigration law.

"Assurances can only be delivered in the form of legislation," said Pamela Cohen of Chicago. "We have to turn assurances into tangible results and to provide for a reliable way to guarantee the sustainable levels."

"If the Soviets are repeatedly telling us that they will deal with emigration through a legislative capacity, then it is incumbent on us simply to hold out until they do that."

Time To 'Test The Soviets'

Martin Wenick, executive director of NCSJ, said he did not disagree with Weiss or Cohen that the Soviets should be measured in "words and deeds."

He said Wednesday that the Bush administration "is waiting now for the Soviets to introduce legislation." The president, he said, "has tried to stimulate that process."

Wenick also acknowledged that there are "differences of views" between NCSJ and members of the refusenik community in the Soviet Union. But he said he would "reject categorically" Weiss' contention that the NCSJ decision was a "betrayal" of their interests.

"We share a common objective, but disagree

on how we can best achieve that," he said. "Our sense is that the time has started to come, when changes are taking place, to test the Soviets as to their words."

The metaphor employed by many activists to describe their tactics is that of the "carrot and the stick." Their disagreements boil down to whether to continue to use the "stick" — the punitive measures contained in Jackson-Vanik — or whether to use the "carrot" by easing those restrictions.

The split also reflects contrasting philosophies between the so-called "establishment" NCSJ and the self-described "grass-roots" Union of Councils.

NCSJ, drawing its leadership from the major American Jewish organizations and community councils, has been said to take a pragmatic approach that weighs a wider view of United States, Soviet and Israel relations, along with the best interests of Soviet Jews.

What's Best For Soviet Jews

By contrast, the Union of Councils and the Student Struggle see themselves working directly on behalf of Soviet Jews, holding their interests above political considerations.

Cohen, for instance, said Jackson-Vanik "was not designed to be used as part of a negotiating process between the U.S. and the Soviets, but to provide for free emigration."

Said Weiss: "Who in the world is the American Jewish community serving? Are we serving ourselves or Soviet Jews?"

Wenick, the executive director of NCSJ, remains adamant that the NCSJ has formulated a policy that is in the best interest of the Soviet Jews still awaiting permission to emigrate. The strength of the NCSJ position, he said, is borne out in the overwhelming support it received from members Tuesday.

Within the organization, that means the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council, representing 113 local community relations agencies; the great majority of American Jewish federations; and membership groups such as the American Jewish Congress.

Beyond the NCSJ coalition, there is also the World Jewish Congress.

Its executive director, Elan Steinberg, called the NCSJ decision "a positive development" and "essentially the position we brought before the International Council of Soviet Jewry, whose presidium we co-chair."

But Cohen of the Union of Councils said, "I don't know to what extent the grass-roots chapters and activists will feel bound by this position."

Jackson-Vanik provides for free emigration from the Soviet Union, she said, "and we aren't there yet."

DEMOCRATS ELECT PRO-ISRAEL LEADERSHIP By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, June 14 (JTA) — Democrats in the House of Representatives on Wednesday elected Rep. Richard Gephardt (D-Mo.) as their new majority leader and Rep. William Gray III (D-Pa.) as their new majority whip.

Both candidates had been favored by Jewish groups over their competitors, whom they deemed as having weaker records of support for Israel.

House Democrats are scheduled to vote June 21 for a new caucus chairman to replace Gray.

RABIN ATTEMPTS TO APPEASE FRANCE, BUT REFUSES MESSAGE FROM THE PLO

By Edwin Eytan

PARIS, June 14 (JTA) -- Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin made a goodwill gesture before leaving France on Wednesday. It was apparently intended to ease the strains that have developed in Franco-Israel relations since the French invited Yasir Arafat here for an official visit last month.

But at the same time, Rabin reportedly refused to receive a verbal message from the Palestine Liberation Organization leader conveyed by Marie-Claire Mendes-France, widow of the late French Jewish premier.

Rabin spent three days in Paris, mainly to attend the annual air show at Le Bourget. He had meetings with Prime Minister Michel Rocard and Defense Minister Jean-Pierre Chevenement.

President Francois Mitterrand, still smoldering over the way he was vilified for receiving Arafat, refused to meet with Rabin.

But the defense minister, acceding to the personal request of the president's wife, ordered the release of Terry Boulatta, a Palestinian woman held in custody in Israel for alleged membership in a terrorist organization. She will come to Paris for medical treatment.

But it may take more than such courtesies to thaw Israel's relations with the Elysee Palace.

If Israel was angered by Mitterrand's official invitation to "a terrorist," the president was more than irked by the fierce reaction of the local Jewish community, which he reportedly is convinced, was instigated by the Israeli Embassy here.

Israelis Turned Down Foreign Minister

Mitterrand also was said to be upset by Israel's refusal to receive the French ambassador for a briefing on Arafat's meetings in Paris on May 2 and 3.

The Israelis, in fact, declined French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas' offer to come to Jerusalem personally to brief Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Arens on Arafat's remarks while in France.

Mendes-France, who sympathizes with both Israel and the Palestinian cause, met with Rabin on Tuesday and conveyed a message from Arafat saying that he would like to meet with the defense minister. Mendes-France had met with Arafat in Tunis last Friday.

Rabin replied that he did not want to receive the message "officially," according to a report Wednesday in the Israeli daily Yediot Achronot.

"As far as we know, Yitzhak Rabin is not the first minister to receive a personal message from Arafat," the paper wrote.

"But Rabin is the first minister to confirm publicly receipt of this message, although in his words, he refused to receive it officially."

The newspaper questioned the difference between hearing a message and receiving one "officially."

Boulatta, who suffers from a serious liver ailment, has been held in custody for over a year without trial on suspicion of membership in the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, a terrorist faction of the PLO headed by Nayef Hawatmeh.

In Israel, the Defense Ministry said Rabin acted at "the personal request of Mrs. Danielle Mitterrand," the wife of the French president.

ANTI-ISRAEL RESOLUTION RELEGATED TO BOTTOM OF LABOR BODY'S AGENDA

NEW YORK, June 14 (JTA) -- A proposed resolution condemning Israel for alleged mistreatment of Palestinian workers was relegated Wednesday to third place on the agenda of the annual conference of the International Labor Organization, which opened in Geneva on June 7.

That raises chances that it will not be dealt with by the time the conference closes on June 28, the Jewish Labor Committee informed the Jewish Telegraphic Agency on Wednesday. The committee has observers in Geneva.

Some 2,000 delegates representing the 150 nations belonging to the U.N. agency are attending the parley, officially called the 76th International Labor Conference.

The anti-Israel resolution was slotted for discussion after the world body takes up the subjects of the environment and international debt, which placed first and second respectively in the sequence of resolutions.

The Soviet Union reportedly favored the move to accord the Palestinian resolution low priority.

"This represents a resounding defeat for those elements within the ILO" pressing for the resolution on Palestinian workers, the JLC said in a statement here.

ISRAELI SECURITY GUARD INJURED IN AX ATTACK IN THE GAZA STRIP

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, June 14 (JTA) -- An armed Israeli security guard was hospitalized with a fractured skull Wednesday after he was attacked by two Arabs in the Gaza Strip.

The incident occurred at Beit Lahiya, a few miles south of the Ezra Checkpoint on the "Green Line" dividing the territory from Israel proper.

The victim, Sami Daloya, 27, of Ashdod, was guarding an oil truck while its driver refueled.

According to his account, two Arab youths approached him in a menacing manner. One pointed a Baretta pistol, but Daloya managed to shoot first and possibly wounded the youth.

The second attacker then struck him on the head with an ax. Both Arabs fled. Daloya was taken to Soroka Hospital in Beersheba.

Elsewhere in the Gaza Strip, the janitor of a Palestinian school in Tal as-Sultan was attacked by local youths wielding knives and axes. He was in critical condition at a hospital in Khan Yunis.

ISRAEL STRIKES TERROR BASES IN LEBANON

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, June 14 (JTA) -- Israeli air force jets attacked terrorist bases eight miles southeast of Beirut on Wednesday and scored accurate hits, a military spokesman announced.

All aircraft returned safely to their bases.

The targets were described as headquarters and training grounds of the Palestine Liberation Front and the Tala'at Yacub faction, located in areas controlled by Walid Jumblatt's Druse militia.

According to the spokesman, the two groups joined forces to mount a Katyusha rocket attack two weeks ago on the Israeli border town of Metulla. They also attempted to infiltrate Israel.

The air raid was Israel's sixth attack on sites in Lebanon this year. The last one was carried out May 21 in the Sidon area.

SHULTZ'S FIGHT AGAINST TERROR LAUDED AT ADL AWARD LUNCHEON

By Allison Kaplan

NEW YORK, June 14 (JTA) — Former Secretary of State George Shultz called terrorism "modern barbarism" and urged the world Wednesday to "keep working to know what a terrible thing it is."

"Every country has the right of self-defense," Shultz said, "and that is the right to take the offense against terrorists."

Shultz was speaking to the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith as he accepted the organization's Marilyn and Leon Klinghoffer Award for Exemplary Action Against International Terrorism.

The mutual affection between Shultz and the Jewish community was evident at the ceremony, which highlighted the opening day of ADL's 76th annual meeting here.

Both Israeli and American Jewish leaders lavished praise on the former secretary of state, lauding him for his consistent support for Israel, during his time in office, as well as his tough stand on Soviet human rights policies.

"Oy, do we miss you," said Joel Sprayragen, chairman of ADL's international division.

That affection seemed undiminished by Shultz's decision last December to initiate a dialogue between the United States and the Palestine Liberation Organization.

"The American Jewish community has a romance with you," Ambassador Max Kampelman told Shultz. Kampelman credited Shultz with playing a major role in encouraging the changes now occurring in the Soviet Union.

'I Believe In What He Did'

The Israelis had an equally warm message for Shultz. "There was never any doubt in our minds to Mr. Shultz's commitment to Israel's well-being," said Moshe Arad, Israel's ambassador to the United States.

"You constantly demonstrated your abhorrence of terrorism," said Lisa Klinghoffer, who joined her sister, Ilse, in presenting the award.

The father of the two women, Leon Klinghoffer, was killed by terrorists in the 1985 hijacking of the cruise ship Achille Lauro. His widow, Marilyn Klinghoffer, who was also aboard the ship, died four months after her husband.

Lisa Klinghoffer said her mother, who met with Shultz shortly after the hijacking, had spoken of the secretary's concern for the family.

After her remarks, the Klinghoffer daughter was asked if she had any difficulty with Shultz's decision to talk with the PLO. After remaining silent for nearly a full minute, she finally quietly endorsed Shultz's move, saying, "I believe in what he did."

Shultz was the second leader to receive the award. British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher received it two years ago for her firm actions against Syria, after that state sponsored an attempted bombing of an El Al jet in London.

PLOT TO BOMB FRANKFURT AIRPORT

By David Kantor

BONN, June 14 (JTA) — Security was tightened at Frankfurt airport Wednesday after authorities reported a terrorist plot to bomb installations there.

Frankfurt has the busiest airport in West Germany.

Police offered no details but confirmed that the security alert was linked to the life sentence imposed by a German court last month on Mohammed Hamadei, a Lebanese terrorist convicted of hijacking a TWA airliner in 1984 and murdering an American passenger.

According to media reports Wednesday, the police uncovered an Arab terrorist ring that was planning a series of attacks to back up demands for Hamadei's release.

No arrests were reported.

HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR GETS 5 YEARS FOR HURLING ACID AT NAZI'S LAWYER

By Catharine Gerson

JERUSALEM, June 14 (JTA) — The Jerusalem District Court sentenced Yisrael Yehezkeli, a 71-year-old Holocaust survivor, to five years in jail, with two years suspended, for throwing acid in the face of the Israeli lawyer representing convicted war criminal John (Ivan the Terrible) Demjanjuk.

Yehezkeli was convicted March 13 of aggravated assault for tossing the acid at chief defense attorney Yoram Sheftel, severely injuring his eye.

The attack took place Dec. 1 at the funeral of another Demjanjuk attorney, Dov Eitan, who committed suicide jumping from the top floor of a Jerusalem hotel.

Yehezkeli himself is not a concentration camp survivor, having spent the war years in Russia, but his family was lost in Treblinka.

The court Wednesday also ordered Yehezkeli to pay Sheftel \$6,000 (the bill of the Boston ophthalmologist who operated on his eye), plus \$5,300 compensation for his suffering.

After the sentencing, Yehezkeli said he felt no regret for his attack, expressing his astonishment that a Jew could defend a Nazi. Yehezkeli, who said he would appeal, could have received a 20-year sentence.

Judge Ezra Hadaya, in his judgment, said that "the crime cries to high heaven."

Demjanjuk, a 69-year-old Ohio autoworker born in the Ukraine, was sentenced to death April 25, 1988, for crimes against humanity, crimes against a persecuted people, war crimes and crimes against the Jewish people.

He was convicted a week earlier after the court firmly established his identity as "Ivan the Terrible," the Nazi guard who operated the gas chambers at the Treblinka death camp where some 800,000 Jews died.

BETH DIN RABBI DIES IN JERUSALEM

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, June 14 (JTA) — Some 40,000 mourners attended the funeral here Wednesday of Rabbi Yitzhak Yaacov Weiss, doyen of Jerusalem's ultra-Orthodox community.

Weiss, who died early Wednesday at the age of 88, presided over the Beth Din (religious court) of the ultra-Orthodox Eda Haredit.

Streets were closed to traffic as large crowds gathered in Mea Shearim as soon as word of his death reached the neighborhood.

Born in Galicia, Poland, Weiss headed several yeshivot in that country before moving to Hungary, where he served as rabbi in the town of Grossvarden.

Weiss immigrated to Israel 19 years ago from Manchester, England, where he had served as the city's rabbi.