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DESPITE PROGRESS, ISRAEL EXPECTS LONG BATTLE FOR HOSTAGES' RELEASE

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Aug. 6 (JTA) -- Despite apparent progress Sunday in resolving the hostage crisis, Israeli officials are digging in for protracted and arduous negotiations to bring about the release of three Israeli soldiers and more than a dozen American and Western civilians being held by Shiite Moslem groups in southern Lebanon.

Experts on terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism say it could be weeks or even months before the situation is resolved.

On Sunday, one of the many Shiite factions holding hostages outlined conditions under which it was prepared to release American hostage Joseph Cicippio. Its message was seen as an encouraging sign that the hostage situation could be resolved.

But the leader of another Shiite group, called the Islamic Amal, threatened to kill an Israeli soldier in its custody unless Israel immediately released Sheikh Abdul Karim Obeid.

The release of Obeid, whom Israeli commandos seized from his home in southern Lebanon on July 28, was also a key condition of the Revolutionary Justice Organization, which is believed to be holding Cicippio and another American hostage, Edward Tracy.

The group released a photo of Tracy in Beirut on Sunday, along with a statement demanding that Israel release Obeid and 450 other Arab prisoners, including 300 detained for activities connected with the Palestinian uprising in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

But by Sunday evening, Israel had not yet received official word of demands from groups affiliated with the Islamic fundamentalist Hezbollah, or Party of God. They are expected to be communicated through the International Committee of the Red Cross, though the organization has denied any involvement in negotiations.

U.S. And Israel Now Cooperating

The Israeli government has repeated its offer to release Obeid and a limited number of Arabs imprisoned in Israeli facilities, in return for the freeing of three Israeli prisoners and foreign hostages held by Hezbollah factions.

Much of Sunday's regular Cabinet session was devoted to the hostage and prisoner exchange issue. Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Foreign Minister Moshe Arens each presented reports.

Arens told his colleagues he was in constant telephone contact with U.S. Secretary of State James Baker. He said there was now full cooperation between the two countries on the hostage affair, following public disagreements and criticism on the first two days of the crisis.

Operative discussions will take place within the 12-member Inner Cabinet, and ministers and senior officials may be expected to be tight-lipped.

Little news is available from official sources, and the Israeli news media are relying heavily on foreign press reports.

According to unconfirmed reports from London, Obeid is being held in a villa overlooking the sea just north of Tel Aviv.

For the first few days of his detention, he reportedly was held in complete isolation, not seeing even his guards. Food was put into his room through a small opening in the door.

But for the last few days, the British reports say, he has been sipping coffee in a salon with a group of interrogators. Senior intelligence officers are said to sit with psychologists, analyzing tape recordings of the interrogation sessions.

London reports also say that instead of Obeid, Israel had first planned to abduct Sheikh Mohammad Hussein Fadlallah, the spiritual leader of the Hezbollah.

Executions Never Carried Out

Fadlallah holds the most senior position among the militant spiritual leaders of the Iranian-backed extremist group, many of whose members got their start in the Palestine Liberation Organization.

But Fadlallah lives in Beirut, and his kidnapping presented too many problems and dangers to the Israeli military unit that ultimately carried out the capture of Obeid.

Experts warn that the extremist and frequently contradictory statements reported to come from the Hezbollah in recent days should be seen in their proper perspective -- as opening bargaining positions that do not necessarily represent the outcome of any direct or indirect negotiations over the hostages that may take place.

Dr. Ariel Merari, a specialist on international terrorism at Tel Aviv University's Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, said in an Israel Radio program over the weekend that the Hezbollah had in the past frequently announced its plans to execute hostages, but had up to now always withdrawn or postponed its threats.

He claimed that there was evidence that no hostage had actually been executed as threatened, even though four or five hostages had died, with their deaths announced as executions.

He said evidence had shown that all had died during torture, with one death due to an illness suffered by the hostage at the time of his abduction and made worse by his incarceration.

To cover up the torture aspect and increase the threat value, the deaths were announced by Hezbollah as deliberate executions.

This is believed to have been the case with U.S. Marine Lt. Col. William Higgins, who Israeli intelligence has said died under torture late last year.

Obeid's faction of Hezbollah, the Organization of the Oppressed on Earth, claimed it hanged Higgins last Monday.

DOLE STANDS BY CRITICISM OF ISRAEL, DESPITE OBJECTIONS FROM COLLEAGUES

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Aug. 6 (JTA) -- Despite criticism from fellow Republicans, Senate Minority Leader Robert Dole (R-Kan.) stood by statements he made on the Senate floor last week chiding Israel for its capture of Sheikh Abdul Karim Obeid.

Dole, who appeared Sunday on the ABC-TV program "This Week With David Brinkley," said Israel was "irresponsible" in seizing the Shiite

fundamentalist leader from his home in southern Lebanon without taking into consideration that it could endanger the lives of American hostages.

In his comments on the Senate floor last Monday, Dole said "a little more restraint on the part of the Israelis one of these days would be refreshing."

But Israel Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin said Israel took the action knowing that not only American hostages could be killed, but also three Israeli soldiers held prisoner in southern Lebanon.

"We cannot let Israeli soldiers be in captivity without any sign of life for three years without doing anything," Rabin said on CBS-TV's "Face the Nation." He said Israel would continue to use every means, both military and diplomatic, to get the soldiers back.

He said this is the reason behind Israel's offer to free Obeid and 150 other Shiites it holds, in return for the three Israelis, as well as American and other foreign hostages.

Dole was criticized at a Republican Party meeting last week by Housing and Urban Development Secretary Jack Kemp, for displaying "a blame-Israel-first mentality."

"I think Kemp ought to be worried about HUD," Dole responded when asked about the criticism Sunday. "He has plenty of problems there."

'Anger Was Misdirected'

But Dole's Democratic counterpart in the Senate, as well as a Republican colleague, took issue with the views of the senator, who in the past has been regarded as a friend of Israel.

"I think that we have to recognize that each nation ultimately acts on what it defines as its self-interest," Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell (D-Maine) said on the ABC program. "We do that."

Sen. William Cohen (R-Maine) said Dole was speaking out of grief and anger last Monday, when a faction of the Islamic fundamentalist Hezbollah, or Party of God, said it had killed Lt. Col. William Higgins in retaliation for the capture of its leader.

"The anger was misdirected," Cohen said on NBC-TV's "Meet the Press." "The anger should have been directed at the people who murdered Col. Higgins and not at the Israelis."

Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Arens, who called Dole an "old friend of Israel," said he understands Dole's anger and pain.

But the anger should have been "vented against the terrorists and not against the people who fight against terrorism," Arens said on the ABC program.

Both the Israelis and the Americans appearing on the programs Sunday said that Iran was the country that had the main influence over Hezbollah. Arens said the hostages would be released if Iran ordered it.

But Mitchell said that Syria is "ultimately as responsible as Iran for the hostage situation, since it has 40,000 troops in Lebanon, which has contributed to the instability of that country."

He said the Syrians allow these various groups to operate with impunity.

A CBS report Sunday claimed that Obeid has very little influence in southern Lebanon and is not considered important by Hezbollah.

When asked about the report, Rabin replied that Obeid is the Hezbollah leader in southern Lebanon. If Obeid was not important, there would not be such an uproar over his capture, he said.

GENERAL ALREADY HAS HANDS FULL AFTER A FEW DAYS IN WEST BANK By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Aug. 6 (JTA) -- Gen. Yitzhak Mordechai hardly had a moment to relax after he took over the Israel Defense Force central command from Gen. Amram Mitzna on Friday.

By Sunday, Mordechai already had a stormy weekend behind him, with one Israeli soldier wounded in a firebomb attack, one accused Palestinian collaborator murdered, at least two Palestinians wounded in clashes with Israeli soldiers and several curfews imposed.

Army forces raided 17 West Bank villages on Friday, from the Nablus region in the North to the hills of Hebron in the South. The soldiers searched the areas for suspected troublemakers, detaining many.

In clashes with local youths during the raids, two Palestinians, one in Bethlehem and one in the village of Saffa, were lightly wounded.

Mordechai, known for his uncompromising policies in the Gaza Strip, where until Friday he served as head of the southern command, immediately took tough steps against anticipated unrest in the West Bank.

Shortly after the change-of-guard ceremony Friday, the general ordered a curfew to be imposed on five refugee camps. The curfews were put in place reportedly because of intelligence reports that unrest was planned for the camps.

After a firebomb attack Sunday on an IDF patrol in Nablus left one soldier wounded, Mordechai imposed another curfew, this time on the Nablus casbah and the Ras el-Ein neighborhood.

Shops Sealed In Khan Yunis

Mordechai previously made frequent use of curfews in the Gaza Strip. Two months ago, he imposed a general curfew on the entire area for a week, keeping some 700,000 people in their homes.

Although he had told his associates that he was well aware of the differences between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, where half the population lives in refugee camps, Mordechai is expected to continue using curfews and other forms of collective punishment in the West Bank as a means of restoring law and order.

Meanwhile, it is believed three Palestinians murdered over the weekend were killed by fellow Palestinians.

One of the murders took place in a village near the West Bank town of Tulkarm. The victim was a Palestinian who had been suspected of collaborating with the Israelis.

The two other killings occurred in the Ketziot detention camp in the Negev.

The bodies of two detainees, Mahmoud Salem Ali Jish, 31, of the El-Bureij refugee camp, and Ziyad Abdul Mahmoud Bana, 28, of Gaza, were found dead Saturday morning in the prison camp.

The men allegedly were strangled by another detainee, Mahmoud Izzat Ali Sha'aban, who confessed to the killings. Sha'aban reportedly told his interrogators that he killed one of the men for collaborating with the authorities, and the other for having sexual relations with another prisoner.

In the Gaza Strip, 20 people were wounded over the weekend in clashes with security forces.

The army sealed off 20 shops Friday on the main street of the town of Khan Yunis. The action was apparently punishment for the throwing of a hand grenade at an army patrol the night before, which wounded three soldiers.

WEST GERMAN GOVERNMENT TO RECEIVE PLO DELEGATION IN BONN THIS FALL

By David Kantor

BONN, Aug. 6 (JTA) -- The West German government has decided for the first time to receive an official delegation from the Palestine Liberation Organization, a top aide to Chancellor Helmut Kohl said Friday.

The meeting is being planned for this autumn. The exact dates and the members of the delegation are still under discussion.

The aide said that Bonn felt it could no longer indefinitely delay the establishment of official contacts with the PLO.

"We are merely doing, very late, what others, including the Americans, have done before," the aide said, referring to the 8-month-old U.S. dialogue with the PLO.

The official also pointed out that European Community leaders agreed at their recent summit meeting in Madrid that the PLO should "participate" in the Middle East peace process, as opposed to simply being "associated" with it, as previous E.C. declarations had stated.

The aide ruled out a visit by PLO leader Yasir Arafat in the foreseeable future, but said that other top officials of the organization may be part of the delegation.

Observers here have speculated that the PLO would send Bassam Abu Sharif, Arafat's right-hand man.

The decision appears to be part of a growing desire on the part of West Germans to engage in dialogue with the PLO.

East Germans Honor Arafat

The movement began three months ago, when the opposition Social Democratic Party decided to invite an official PLO delegation to Bonn, which will arrive in September.

Last month, the PLO permanent representative in Bonn, Abdallah Frangi, was received for the first time at the Foreign Ministry, for an hour-long talk with Juergen Sudhoff, a political director.

Meanwhile, East Germany, which has long had warm relations with the PLO, has given Arafat one of its most prestigious awards.

The PLO leader received a high state decoration known as "The Great Star of Friendship Among the Peoples."

Announcement of the award came Saturday, as the PLO's Al Fatah wing was convening in Tunis and as Arafat celebrated his 60th birthday.

East Germany is a longtime PLO supporter. It provides assistance and facilities for training PLO members in various locations around the country, most notably a complex of military camps near the former Buchenwald concentration camp.

DUTCH BISHOP SAYS JEWISH PROTEST OVER AUSCHWITZ CONVENT IS WRONG

By Henrietta Boas

AMSTERDAM, Aug. 6 (JTA) -- A Catholic bishop here has defended the presence of the Carmelite convent at Auschwitz, saying that protests by Jews over the nuns' presence on the death camp site are unjustified.

"The Carmelite nuns have very sincere intentions and do not want to deny what happened to the Jews in Auschwitz," said Monsignor Hendrick Bomers, bishop of the northwest Dutch city Haarlem. He pointed out, however, that a

number of non-Jews died in Auschwitz, as well.

Bomers' statements conflict with those of a number of other European Catholic officials, who have said that a 1987 agreement between Jews and Catholics to have the convent moved from the perimeter of Auschwitz should be upheld.

Bomers made his remarks to a Dutch Jewish weekly newspaper. He was being interviewed on the eve of his forthcoming visit to Israel and the administered territories. He is representing the Roman Catholic bishops in a delegation of the Dutch Council of Churches traveling there.

The delegation will be examining the situation of Palestinian Christians, in a visit that comes at the invitation of the Middle East Council of Churches and the Latin patriarch of Jerusalem, Michel Sabbah.

Bomers said in the interview that he felt the Palestinians as well as the Jews have a right to a state of their own.

He also said he sees Jesus as the Messiah of all peoples, including the Jews. "It would be a blessing for the Jews if they recognized Jesus as the Messiah," the bishop said.

4,537 JEWS LEFT USSR IN JULY, AND MORE OF THEM WENT TO ISRAEL

NEW YORK, Aug. 6 (JTA) -- A total of 4,537 Jews left the Soviet Union in July, the second highest monthly figure to date for 1989, the National Conference on Soviet Jewry reported.

Of that total, 648 Soviet Jews, or 14.3 percent, went to Israel, an increase of some 3 percentage points over June.

As many as 100 additional Soviet Jews may have chosen to immigrate to Israel from transmigration facilities in Vienna or Italy, according to NCSJ spokesman Jerry Strober.

Strober said the NCSJ Soviet Jewry Research Bureau is unable to account for Soviet emigrants who travel to Israel via Italy, some of whom decide to settle in Israel only after they have been denied permission to enter the United States as refugees.

But if the unofficial estimates prove accurate, they would indicate some success on the part of Jewish assistance groups, which have been trying to convince Soviet Jews to choose Israel over Western countries.

Most of the emigrants leave the Soviet Union on Israeli visas and then decide to settle in the United States.

The number of non-Jews leaving the Soviet Union on Israeli visas came to 1,157, according to the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews. These include Pentecostal Christians, for whom Israel has agreed to issue visas.

The July figures bring the Soviet Jewish emigration total for 1989 to 26,688. If that rate is maintained, the total number of Jews let out of the Soviet Union in 1989 would reach 45,750 by the end of the year.

The highest monthly figure for Jewish emigration this year occurred in April, when 4,557 Jews left the Soviet Union.

"We are indeed encouraged by the continuing upward trend in emigration, which has been evident since the beginning of this year," Shoshana Cardin, NCSJ chairwoman, said in a statement.

But Cardin added that her organization remains concerned over the fate of individual long-term refuseniks, such as Leonid Stonov and Irina Voronkevitch. She said the Soviet emigration procedure remains "capricious."

**U.S.-ISRAELI SDI RESEARCH PROGRAM
LIKELY TO CONTINUE, DESPITE CUTS**

By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, Aug. 6 (JTA) -- The \$158 million U.S.-Israeli Arrow anti-tactical ballistic missile research program -- part of the Strategic Defense Initiative -- will apparently continue next year, although cuts are still possible.

Lt. Gen. George Monahan, director of the Pentagon's SDI Organization, recently warned that the Arrow and other "Star Wars" projects would have to be slowed down if Congress approves a 1990 Pentagon SDI budget lower than \$4.1 billion.

The greater threat to the U.S.-Israeli program has been cancellation, which Monahan said would occur if Congress does not set aside at least \$3.2 billion for the Pentagon's SDI program for the 1990 fiscal year, which begins Oct. 1.

In approving the 1990 Department of Defense authorization bill, the House cut the Pentagon's SDI program to \$2.8 billion, while the Senate approved a funding level of \$4.2 billion. Both houses set aside additional SDI funds for the Department of Energy.

When a House-Senate conference committee meets in September to strike a compromise between the two bills, it is expected to agree on a figure halfway between \$2.8 billion and \$4.2 billion, which would be high enough to save the program.

Israel, which was one of the first countries to join the United States in Star Wars research, wants to develop the Arrow for protection against Soviet SS-21 missiles in Syria and Chinese surface-to-surface missiles sold to Saudi Arabia.

Since 1986, Israel has received nearly \$86 million from the Pentagon to conduct research on the feasibility of building the Arrow.

Under an agreement Israel signed in 1987, it is to receive another \$72 million next year, but that portion of the contract has to be renegotiated. Israel is financing 20 percent of the research effort.

Unlike other funds that Israel receives from the United States, money from the SDI program is designated by the Pentagon, and not by Congress. If the Arrow program were eliminated, then Congress would likely try to set aside specific funds for it.

**BLACK HEBREWS LOSE COURT BATTLE
TO QUALIFY FOR WORK PERMITS**

By Cathrine Gerson

JERUSALEM, Aug. 6 (JTA) -- The High Court of Justice on Sunday rejected an appeal by members of the Black Hebrews sect, asking that they be granted permission to work in Israel, after the Interior Ministry denied them work permits.

A panel of three justices ruled that it would be an "unacceptable situation" to force authorities to grant work permits to people who are in the country illegally to begin with.

The Black Hebrews, who have settled primarily in the southern city of Dimona, maintain that they have a right to live in Israel legally.

The Chicago-based sect claims to be descended from one of the lost tribes of Israel in Africa. Its members began arriving in Israel in 1968. The High Court ruled in 1972 that the Black Hebrews are not Jews and cannot become Israeli citizens under the Law of Return.

But Israeli authorities have had great diffi-

culty deporting them. Once in Israel, sect members renounce their U.S. citizenship in order to prevent deportation.

According to the group's leaders, however, members give up their American citizenship in order to prove the strength of their desire to live in Israel, which they see as their homeland.

The ruling by Justices Meir Shamgar, Gabriel Bach and Ya'acov Maltz said that a resident of Israel who receives a work permit and pays national insurance increases his chances of being recognized as a permanent resident of Israel.

However, the court suggested that if it is ever acknowledged that it is impossible to deport the Black Hebrews, then the Interior Ministry should reconsider issuing work permits.

**GERMANS DENY DRAGGING EFFORT
TO BRING BRUNNER TO JUSTICE**

By David Kantor

BONN, Aug. 6 (JTA) -- West Germany has denied allegations that it is dragging efforts to have Nazi war criminal Alois Brunner extradited from Syria.

The Justice Ministry is intensively seeking Brunner's extradition, a spokesman for the ministry maintained.

Brunner, 77, was a top deputy to Adolph Eichmann and is believed to live in Damascus under the pseudonym George Fischer.

Brunner has been held responsible for the deportation of more than 120,000 Jews to death camps. According to testimony by survivors, he murdered at least one Jew on a transport from Vienna to Riga. He was sentenced to death in absentia by a French military court in 1954.

The West German spokesman strongly denied recent reports here that Bonn was neglecting its commitment to bring Brunner to justice.

The West Berlin-based daily newspaper Taz reported recently that Chancellor Helmut Kohl was not interested in Brunner's extradition and deliberately dragged his feet on efforts to convince Syria to cooperate.

Taz also reported that Brunner acted as an agent for West German intelligence until about 1965. The government here denied the report, which was not supported by documentation.

The Syrian government has rebuffed previous requests for Brunner's extradition by West Germany, Austria and France. The Syrians say that they know nothing about Brunner's whereabouts.

JEWS OF CURACAO WIN COURT FIGHT

By Henrietta Boas

AMSTERDAM, Aug. 6 (JTA) -- Historic manuscripts offered for auction here last year must be returned to the congregation of Temple Mikveh Israel Emmanuel on the island of Curacao, an Amsterdam district court ruled last week.

The manuscripts were being auctioned by Christie's on behalf of a member of the Curacao congregation, Victor Pereira, who had claimed they were donated to him.

When members of the congregation on the island in the Dutch West Indies heard of the intended auction, they demanded that the sale be prevented.

The congregants then petitioned the Amsterdam District Court for the return of the valuable documents, which included correspondence between the Amsterdam Sephardic congregation and its sister congregation in Curacao.