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## JEWISH LEADERS WEIGHING FIGHT ON PROPOSED TANK SALE TO SAUDIS By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Oct. 3 (JTA) -- The organized Jewish community has not yet decided whether to make an all-out fight against the Bush administration's plan to sell 315 Abrams tanks to Saudi Arabia.

"We are opposed to the sale," Malcolm Hoenlein, executive director of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, said Tuesday. "We have not yet made a decision on strategy."

But there is little sentiment in the Jewish community, Congress or within the Israeli government for a "knockdown, drag-out fight," a Capitol Hill source said.

The Bush administration has not officially notified Congress of the sale of the M1-A1 tanks, which are expected to cost about \$1.5 billion. But Israeli officials, Congress and Jewish leaders have been told by the administration that it plans to go ahead with the sale.

John Sununu, White House chief of staff, discussed the proposed sale of the tanks briefly in a meeting last week with the Conference of Presidents in New York, Hoenlein confirmed.

The administration has been making an effort to avoid a clash with Congress over the sale. However, there is concern in Congress that the administration has not yet begun consultations with key congressional leaders about the deal.

Customarily, the administration engages in a 20-day consultation period with lawmakers before formally notifying Congress of an arms sale. Once there is official notification, Congress has 30 days to vote the sale down. Otherwise, it automatically goes through.

## U.S. Deal For Israel

The administration is trying to blunt any effort by Israel to oppose the sale.

When Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin met with Defense Secretary Dick Cheney last month, Cheney reportedly said the United States would be willing to pre-position up to \$100 million of weapons in Israel that could be used by either the U.S. military or Israel.

U.S. weapons now pre-positioned in Israel cannot be used by the Israeli military.

There also reportedly was talk of reducing the cost of U.S. weapons that Israel purchases with the \$1.8 billion in military aid it receives annually from the United States.

But Hoenlein stressed that for the Jewish community not to actively oppose the sale it wants to see the administration's long-term plan for selling weapons to the Saudis, "rather than giving it to us piecemeal."

The administration has been sending arms sales to Congress in small packages, in the hope it will not block them individually as it might if they were grouped together as a massive arms sale.

This strategy has worked so far. Last spring, three arms sales totaling \$850 million to upgrade Saudi F-5 and F-15 fighter jets went through easily.

The administration announced last week it

plans to sell the Saudis a \$485 million package to maintain and improve the F-15s, part of a program begun in 1987.

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The sale of the tanks is the next step. However, there is concern that this would be followed by a major arms sale for the Saudis: 110 fighter planes to replace outdated F-5s the Saudis now have. It is not known what type of fighter is proposed, although it expected to be the F-16 or F/A-18.

This sale is expected to arouse more concern in Congress about a potential threat to Israel's security than the tanks.

But, at a news conference in New York last week, Secretary of State James Baker denied that the sale of the tanks or any other weapons to the Saudis would impose a threat to Israel's security.

"We don't contemplate sales like this to any Arab government without first taking into account the question of Israel's security," Baker said. "We are committed to maintaining a qualitative edge for Israel, and that commitment is simply not going to change."

The administration is also making the argument, as it has in the past, that if Congress bars the tank sale, the Saudis will buy the tanks from Britain or France.

## ISRAELI OFFICIALS, JEWISH SETTLERS GEARING UP FOR WAVE OF SOVIET JEWS By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Oct. 3 (JTA) -- Israelis are eagerly anticipating a flood of immigrants from the Soviet Union, none more so than Gush Emunim activists who hope to settle as many as possible in the West Bank.

Optimism has soared as a result of the liberalization of Soviet emigration policy. Since the beginning of the year, nearly 42,000 Jews have left the Soviet Union, and more than 5,000 of them have come to Israel.

While nearly 90 percent of the Soviet emigres still opt to go to the United States, that is expected to change soon because of new American visa policies.

Since Sunday, Soviet Jews and others desiring to settle in the United States have had to apply directly to the U.S. Embassy in Moscow for visas.

The United States has placed a ceiling of 50,000 on the number of Soviet Jews it will admit as refugees in the next 12 months. But up to 300,000 are expected to apply for those slots.

Assuming that the large-scale exodus of Jews from the Soviet Union will continue, and with more restrictive American immigration policies in place, Israelis expect 100,000 Jews will come here from the Soviet Union over the next three years.

While that would be the culmination of more than 20 years of aliyah activism here and abroad, it poses severe economic challenges.

The Cabinet, which held its regular weekly meeting Tuesday instead of Sunday because of Rosh Hashanah, took up the delicate subject of financing the absorption of so many newcomers in a relatively short period of time.

The Jewish Agency for Israel estimates it will cost Israel \$3 billion to resettle an estimated



100,000 Soviet Jews expected to arrive here in the next three to five years.

Finance Minister Shimon Peres hopes to raise \$500 million from Diaspora Jewry to cover the immediate absorption of Soviet Jews. Another half-billion would come from private loans backed by the United States. The remaining \$2 billion would be raised in Israel.

But Peres told the Cabinet he did not support the idea of imposing an absorption tax on Israelis to fund that \$2 billion.

## 30 New Families In Ariel

Likud Knesset member Michael Kleiner also emphatically rejected new taxes for absorption. "One should not allow immigration to become a bandwagon to impose more taxes," he said.

Kleiner demanded that the government immediately establish a national absorption authority, headed by Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, to prepare within a month a "national emergency plan" for the absorption of Soviet Jews.

The financial constraints are not an issue for the militant Gush Emunim settlers movement. They are hoping that, whatever the cost, a large number of Soviet Jews expected to arrive in Israel will be persuaded to settle in the West Bank.

Gush Emunim activists are touring absorption centers all over the country trying to persuade Soviet immigrants already in Israel to settle across the "Green Line," the demarcation line between pre-1967 Israel and the territories it administers.

They are taking immigrants on tours of Jewish settlements. Several dozen families have moved to the West Bank in the last few months.

Ariel, the largest Jewish town in the West Bank, has absorbed 30 immigrant families since the beginning of the year. They joined 40 Soviet families already living there.

Naomi Safir, one of the Gush Emunim activists dealing with immigrants, said Tuesday that the movement has been in touch with potential immigrants still in the Soviet Union. "Some of our residents have sent them gifts, such as books," she said.

There are about 50 empty apartments awaiting immigrants in Kiryat Arba, the Jewish township adjacent to Hebron. So far, 15 Soviet families have settled in the town, among them former refusenik Yosef Begun.

## 150 Empty Apartments

The municipality renovated a building to serve as an absorption center, where the immigrants will live and study Hebrew. After nine months, they will get permanent housing.

Mayor Shalom Wach of Kiryat Arba expects an additional 50 families will have settled there by next Rosh Hashanah.

These activists are anxious to increase the Jewish presence in the territories in the face of the Palestinian uprising, which has slowed down settlement activity.

As a spur, the Ministry of Construction and Housing has offered special mortgages to potential settlers in the western Samaria region. The ministry, headed by David Levy, a Herut hard-liner, went ahead with the program despite a veto by the Finance Ministry.

According to figures supplied by Amana, Gush Emunim's settlement division, there are 150 empty apartments throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip ready for occupation by immigrants.

NEWS ANALYSIS: LABOR AND LIKUD PREPARE TO DEBATE EGYPTIAN PROPOSAL FOR A DIALOGUE By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Oct. 3 (JTA) -- Labor Party leaders continued Tuesday to hammer out a detailed response to Egypt's efforts to broker an Israeli dialogue with the Palestinians.

Labor's position will not be final until Wednesday night, when the party's ministers meet in preparation for the Inner Cabinet's foreign policy debate on Thursday.

That session of the government's top policymaking body, consisting of five Labor and five Likud ministers, is expected by many to be a door-die effort to keep the unity coalition government intact.

If Labor and Likud cannot reach common ground on dialogue with the Palestinians, and the 10-point proposal offered by Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, many observers predict the government will fall.

But Vice Premier Shimon Peres, the Labor Party leader, indicated that he did not expect a final decision Thursday, but rather the start of an ongoing debate.

Neither Peres nor other party leaders would speculate on the chances of the government falling. Peres said he wanted to concentrate on the substance of the Mubarak proposals.

Haim Ramon, an outspoken dove who chairs Labor's Knesset faction, warned that the government would stay in office only "as long as the peace process stays in motion."

Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and his Likud bloc have rejected Egypt's 10 points because they call for negotiations based on the "land for peace" formula, would allow East Jerusalem Arabs to participate in Palestinian elections and would include in the Palestinian delegation participating in preliminary talks some representatives from outside the territories.

## U.S. Proposing Three-Way Talks

Labor's Knesset faction proposed Tuesday that the government treat the Egyptian points as the opening gambit of a Palestinian delegation in negotiations with Israel.

Behind the scenes meanwhile, Labor and Likud politicians have been trying to devise formulas that could enable a dialogue to begin with the support of Likud, or at least its majority, led by Shamir.

Those efforts seemed to be advanced by news from Washington following Mubarak's meeting there with President Bush on Monday.

According to the reports, the United States informally suggested three-way American-Israeli-Egyptian talks on the composition of a proposed Palestinian delegation.

U.S. Secretary of State James Baker reportedly said such an arrangement would effectively give Israel a veto over the composition of the delegation.

Observers here believe tripartite talks would be acceptable to Shamir.

By proposing the inclusion of Palestinians outside the administered territories, the Egyptian leader is clearly trying to win the tacit cooperation of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

But it is precisely his efforts to have the PLO engage indirectly in talks with Israel that pose the biggest obstacle for Shamir and his party.

# ABIE NATHAN GETS 6-MONTH SENTENCE FOR MEETING WITH TOP PLO FIGURES By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Oct. 3 (JTA) -- Peace activist Abie Nathan received a six-month prison sentence for meetings with Palestine Liberation Organization chief Yasir Arafat and other PLO figures in Tunis and Strasbourg last year, in violation of a 1986 law barring contact with terrorist organizations.

Nathan insisted afterward that he would continue his efforts to establish dialogue with the Palestinians, which he said was the only way to peace.

The 62-year-old Nathan was found guilty by a Ramla magistrates court last Wednesday of violating Israel's law banning contacts with members of terrorist organizations.

Nathan derided the law as "senseless" and an obstacle to peace, calling it a "political law which has no place in a democratic country."

He said he would not appeal the verdict but would begin serving his sentence right after Yom Kippur in order to be free sooner to continue his activities.

Judge Aharon Fass said Tuesday he imposed a stiff sentence because the accused, a public personality, should be made an example to deter others from breaking the law.

He gave Nathan an additional 12 months, that he suspended for the time being but declared enforceable for a period of three years.

## 'It's Not The First Time'

Right-wing nationalist elements complained immediately that the sentence was too light. The Association of Victims of Terrorism accused Nathan of encouraging the PLO and other terrorists to continue their murder of Jews.

But members of the leftist Mapam and the Citizens Rights Movement promised redoubled efforts to get the law amended.

"Before I met with Arafat, I knew I would be breaking the law and was ready to accept punishment," Nathan told reporters. "It's not the first time I will have been to prison."

He recalled that he was jailed for 40 days in 1968 after flying a light plane to Egypt on a one-man peace mission to visit President Gamal Abdel Nasser.

Nasser ordered Nathan ousted from Egypt and he was arrested upon returning to Israel.

Born in Iraq, Nathan served as a fighter pilot in the Indian Royal Air Force during World War II and volunteered for the fledgling Israeli air force during the War for Independence in 1948.

Afterward, he opened a popular Americanstyle restaurant in Tel Aviv.

In the early 1970s, Nathan purchased a small seagoing vessel in Holland, named it "Voice of Peace" and converted it to a "pirate" radio station, broadcasting pop music and peace messages in Hebrew and Arabic from just outside Israel's territorial waters.

Speaking to reporters after he was sentenced Tuesday, Nathan rejected suggestions that he might be able to do public service in lieu of going to jail.

"Public service should be a welcome duty, something done from the heart willingly and not a punishment for wrong-doing," he said.

"I do public service all the year round because I want to do it," he added.

SKINHEADS INDICTED IN DALLAS FOR ATTACKS ON JEWISH SITES By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, Oct. 3 (JTA) -- The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith says it is "extremcly gratified" by a federal grand jury's indictment of 16 men tied to a neo-Nazi Skinhead gang in Dallas.

The men, identified as associates of the Confederate Hammerskins, are charged with defacing a synagogue, Jewish center and a mosque in Dallas, and attacking blacks and Hispanics during the summer and fall of 1988.

Last week, U.S. Acting Assistant Attorney General James Turner and Marvin Collins, U.S. attorney for the Northern District of Texas, returned three-count indictments against five associates of the Hammerskins: Sean Christian Tarrant, Jon Lance Jordan, Michael Lewis Lawrence, Christopher Barry Greer and Daniel Alvis Wood.

In July, five adults and six juveniles, also associates of the Hammerskins, were indicted.

The indictments followed an investigation by the U.S. Justice Department, Dallas County District Attorney's Office and Dallas Police Department.

The charges, which include conspiracy and the use of firearms, carry maximum jail sentences of 10 years and fines up to \$250,000.

Attorney General Dick Thornburgh pledged in a prepared statement that the Justice Department would make a priority of "tracking down and prosecuting those who commit violent acts motivated by racial or religious hatred."

## Synagogue Repeatedly Hit

The ADL estimates there are 40 to 45 members of the Hammerskins, with another 60 somehow involved with the gang. Although the Hammerskins have cut a swath of violent activities in various places, "the majority of the Skinhead attacks in Dallas have been anti-Jewish," said Michael Briskman, ADL regional director in Dallas.

One synagogue, Temple Shalom, has borne the brunt of the attacks. The Reform synagogue, first attacked in November 1987, "was the target of the very first vandalism and graffiti of a highly anti-Semitic nature," Briskman recalled.

Temple Shalom was vandalized eight to 10 times in less than two years. Only two weeks after the Thanksgiving weekend attack, two Skinheads disrupted Friday night services inside the house of worship and then fled.

In January and April 1988, Jewish businesses were vandalized and defaced with graffiti.

The Hammerskins used firearms and baseball bats in three nighttime attacks Oct. 8, 1988, on Temple Shalom, the Jewish Community Center of Dallas and the mosque of the Islamic Association of North Texas, in Richardson, a Dallas suburb.

In the Jewish places they scrawled "Hitler Was Right" and "Get Out Jew Pig." On the mosque, they painted "Yahweh Our White God."

Of the five indicted last week, Wood and Tarrant, the Hammerskins leader, served jail time on other charges.

Wood, a 20-year-old who sports a Hitler-like mustache, pleaded guilty in July to fleeing to avoid testifying about damaging and destroying property with an explosive device.

At his sentencing, he asked for leniency, but "when the judge sentenced him to the maximum, he gave the Heil Hitler salute," said Briskman.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES:
JEWISH GROUPS TAKE OPPOSING STANDS
ON MANY ISSUES BEFORE SUPREME COURT
By Andrew Silow Carroll

WASHINGTON, Oct. 3 (JTA) -- American Jewish groups will find themselves in disagreement on a number of issues to come before the U.S. Supreme Court in the new term that began Monday.

But while Jewish groups may have opposing views on such issues as abortion rights, religion in the public schools and a patient's so-called "right to die," few of these disagreements will manifest themselves in courtroom confrontations or even in competing legal briefs.

For example, while Orthodox and non-Orthodox groups continue to disagree on the costs and benefits of a strict separation of church and state, their conflict will not be apparent in the legal briefs filed in cases dealing with that subject.

In one such case, Board of Education vs. Mergens, the court will consider whether an Omaha public school should extend official recognition to a student Bible-study club that wishes to meet on school grounds, against the school board's wishes.

Groups that support a strong separation of church and state are using the case to try to overturn the 1984 Equal Access Act, which requires public schools to grant religious clubs the same access to school facilities enjoyed by other extracurricular organizations.

The American Jewish Congress is directly involved in the case, acting as counsel to the lawyers for the school board.

The American Jewish Committee and the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith have filed friend-of-the-court briefs supporting the school board's position.

Orthodox groups have not filed briefs in the case, but will be monitoring it closely for signs of a shift in the court's position on church-state separation. Several Orthodox groups have urged that the court take a less "absolutist" position on this issue.

## Against 'Right To Die'

Orthodox groups admit to mixed emotions on the case. On the one hand, they fear the Equal Access Act would allow fundamentalist Christians to use the public schools as a base for proselytizing. Yet they are concerned that placing limitations in this area will erode the free exercise of religion.

On another issue, Agudath Israel of America is so far the only Jewish group planning to file a friend-of-the-court brief in the "right-to-die" case, Cruzan vs. Harmon.

The Orthodox group supports the state of Missouri's right to maintain the life of a comatose patient over the objections of the patient's family and against the expressed wishes of the patient herself.

In the case of 32-year-old Nancy Beth Cruzan of Carterville, Mo., members of her family say the implicit consitutional right to privacy allows them to decide when to pull the feeding tube that keeps the comatose woman alive.

The Missouri Supreme Court, however, ruled that the state retains an "unqualified interest" in preserving life.

For Agudath Israel, the case has implications for health-care providers whose religious beliefs

may proscribe them from terminating life. Its brief will argue that the right of privacy is not absolute and, taken to an extreme, could be used to justify suicide.

In another case with direct religious implications, AJCongress is filing a brief in support of the Oregon Supreme Court, which ruled that American Indians who use the illegal drug peyote in religious ceremonies are constitutionally immune from prosecution.

## Tax Break For Religious Sales

Marc Stern, co-director of legal affairs at AJCongress, acknowledges that drug abuse is a major national problem.

But he said his brief would urge the court not to restrict the right to free exercise of religion with too broad a determination on the use of illegal substances or practices.

The National Jewish Commission on Law and Public Affairs, which represents Orthodox interests, is monitoring the Oregon case, although it has not yet prepared a brief.

Another religion case that bears watching, although no Jewish group currently intends to intervene, is Jimmy Swaggert vs. Board of Equalization.

In it, the television evangelist will argue that his constitutional right to free exercise of religion prevents California from imposing a sales tax on the religious items he sells in the state.

While Jewish groups would not want to see any erosion of free exercise of religion, some are concerned that a ruling in the evangelist's favor could be tantamount to government endorsement of religion, which is prohibited by the Constitution.

In three abortion cases to come before the high court, Jews will not be as divided as they were during last term's Webster vs. Reproductive Health Services debate, when the court broadened the ability of individual states to regulate abortion.

## Support For Pro-Choice Stance

Non-Orthodox Jewish groups are lining up on behalf of abortion rights advocates in the cases, two of which review a teen-ager's right to have an abortion without notifying her parents and one of which requires abortion clinics to be equipped with advanced medical equipment.

In signing onto a brief initiated by the Center for Population Options, the National Council of Jewish Women will argue that parental notification and consent requirements mandated in Minnesota and Ohio threaten the mental and physical health of pregnant teen-agers.

Other Jewish groups joining various legal briefs supporting the pro-choice side include AJCommittee, AJCongress, ADL, B'nai B'rith Women, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and Women's American ORT.

Unlike Webster, the abortion cases currently before the court do not directly address religious issues, such as the definition of life, nor the landmark Roe vs. Wade decision, which established abortion as a constitutionally protected right.

As a result, Orthodox groups that support an overturn of Roe are not expected to become as actively involved in the case as they were in Webster.

In general, Jewish groups will watch this court term for further evidence of the court's shift to the right and its implications for Jewish affairs.