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U.N. CREDENTIALS VOTE SHOWS SOVIET SWITCH, GAIN FOR ISRAEL

By Allison Kaplan

UNITED NATIONS, Oct. 17 (JTA) -- For the first time since 1982, the Soviet Union has not joined with the Arab countries in their annual move to oust Israel from the United Nations.

The Soviets chose to abstain Tuesday from voting on whether the Arab move to revoke Israel's U.N. credentials should be considered by the General Assembly. The two Soviet republics that hold separate votes, Byelorussia and the Ukraine, followed suit.

The rest of the Eastern bloc countries also either abstained or, in the cases of Hungary, Romania and Yugoslavia, voted in support of Israel.

How they vote is important to Israel, which is eager to restore relations with Eastern bloc nations that cut ties to the Jewish state in 1967. Romania never severed relations, and Hungary restored them last month.

Overall, the General Assembly decisively rejected the Arab attempt in Tuesday's credentials vote, with 95 countries voting in favor of a resolution tabling the Arab move, 37 voting against the measure, 15 abstentions and 12 countries absent.

The vote was marginally better for Israel than last year, when the vote was 95 in favor, 41 against, with seven abstentions and 15 absences.

The attempt to revoke Israel's credentials has been an annual event since 1982, and the vote count is considered an important indication of the amount of anti-Israel sentiment in the United Nations.

Since 1982, a group of Arab countries has moved to amend the report of the General Assembly's credentials committee, calling for Israel's removal. One of the Scandinavian countries -- this year it was Denmark -- then formally moves that no action be taken on the amendment.

This year, Libya's representative, Ali Treiki, spoke for the 32 Arab countries that sponsored the amendment, asking that Israel be ousted because of, among other charges, its alleged "flagrant and persistent violation of the Charter of the United Nations."

Israel "is not a peace-loving nation," he said.

Turkey, Nigeria Vote With Israel

Denmark's representative, Kjeld Mortensen, said that revoking Israel's credentials went against the United Nations' "primary purpose" of promoting peace and security worldwide.

In U.N. circles, voting with the Scandinavian countries is considered as much a show of support for the principle of universality within the United Nations as a reflection of sentiment toward Israel.

For that reason, a number of countries that otherwise vote repeatedly to condemn Israeli practices choose not to try to invalidate the Jewish state's credentials.

Ambassador Johanan Bein, Israel's acting permanent representative to the United Nations, said he considers the credentials vote more important than other votes on Israeli practices.

Bein said the Soviet Union's abstention was

"definitely a move in the right direction." However, he added that he would have preferred it to "take the whole step and do the right thing" -- in other words, vote in favor of the Danish resolution.

The Soviets also abstained in 1982, but have voted every year since with the Arabs.

Bein also said Tuesday's vote reflects some progress in the Arab world and Africa. He pointed out that Turkey, which abstained last year, voted in favor of the Danish move, as did Nigeria, which was absent last year.

The Nigerian vote is significant, he said, both because Nigeria has "a clear Moslem majority" and because the nation's representative, Ambassador Joseph Garba, is serving as the General Assembly president this year.

Oman Casts Vote In Error

Egypt also voted in favor of the Danish move, as it did last year. In a nod to the Arab countries, however, Egypt's representative, Ambassador Abdul Halim Badawi, spoke after the vote and condemned Israeli practices in the administered territories.

There apparently was an error in the voting of the Arab Sultanate of Oman, which went on record as supporting the Danish move. A spokesperson at Oman's mission said the vote was a mistake and that the nation had meant to vote with the other Arab states.

But according to U.N. procedure, the record officially stands as the votes are locked in, and while countries may make an error known, they cannot change their votes.

Seymour Reich, chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, said that while he is encouraged by the votes of Nigeria, Turkey and the Soviet Union, it is unfortunate that Israel's credentials came under attack once again this year.

"One can only express deep disappointment and chagrin," Reich said, "that once again, the Arab world, with only Egypt not going along, decided as a matter of policy to seek Israel's expulsion from the U.N. -- even knowing that the effort was doomed and in the face of American efforts to change their vote."

SHAMIR SAYS ROCKY TIES WITH U.S. BETTER THAN TALKING WITH THE PLO

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Oct. 17 (JTA) -- Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir stated flatly Tuesday that he would risk a confrontation with the United States sooner than talk with the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Addressing the Likud Knesset faction, Shamir forecast a period of tension with Washington.

The United States, he said, is trying to get Israel out of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and into negotiations with the PLO.

It is hard to predict whether the Americans will back down, as they have in the past, in which case Israel's relations with the United States would remain as they are, Shamir said.

But if the Americans refuse to back off, relations would change for the worse. "We wish to avoid a confrontation, but we will not give in

-- not even for the United States," Shamir asserted.

He said Likud would not take the initiative to break up its coalition with the Labor Party, but would act to block efforts by Labor to form a new, narrowly based coalition under its leadership.

Shamir rejected a proposal by Knesset member Uzi Landau that he forbid Vice Premier Shimon Peres and Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin to travel abroad.

According to Landau, the two Labor Party leaders are not reconciled to a Likud-led government and create "political turbulence" for it.

Shamir told him a travel ban would spell the end of the coalition.

ISRAEL GIRDING FOR MORE VIOLENCE AS INTIFADA NEARS SECOND ANNIVERSARY By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Oct. 17 (JTA) -- Israeli security forces are girding for a major escalation of violence in the next two months, as the second anniversary of the Palestinian uprising approaches.

Instead of allowing negotiations, the Palestine Liberation Organization has opted for more confrontation, the Israelis say.

The signals are clear in the hard-line resolutions adopted by the PLO's Central Council at the conclusion of its two-day meeting in Baghdad on Monday.

The council reportedly discussed ways to intensify the intifada, including the use of firearms, which it has ruled out until now.

The Israeli defense establishment predicts serious disturbances on dates laden with historical and emotional significance for Palestinians.

They include Nov. 14, the first anniversary of the proclamation of a Palestinian state by the Palestine National Council in Algiers last year; Nov. 29, the 42nd anniversary of the U.N. General Assembly's 1947 decision to partition Palestine into Jewish and Arab states; and Dec. 9, the second anniversary of the outbreak of the intifada in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

In the last two years, Israel Defense Force reservists have borne the brunt of duty in the territories. From now on, IDF regulars will take over to a greater extent, to allow the reservists more time for training.

This would indicate that security planners see no speedy end to the uprising, a view borne out by the stalemated political situation.

Conditions Israel Can't Accept

The PLO Central Council adopted resolutions in Baghdad setting preconditions for a Palestinian dialogue with Israel, which it knew very well Israel would never accept.

The PLO demanded the sole right to determine who will sit on the Palestinian delegation. It insisted that the members represent the "Palestinian diaspora," as well as the territories.

Israel has ruled out any negotiations whatsoever with the PLO and refuses to talk with Palestinians who are not residents of the West Bank or Gaza Strip.

The PLO demands an open agenda for talks without preconditions. Israel insists the only subject will be its proposal for Palestinian elections in the territories.

The only area of agreement between the PLO and Israel is their rejection of U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's five-point proposal for an Israeli-Palestinian meeting in Cairo.

TWO AIR FORCE OFFICERS BLAMED FOR NOT CHALLENGING SYRIAN JET

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Oct. 17 (JTA) -- Two high-ranking Israel air force officers have been held responsible for failing to challenge a MiG-23 jet fighter flown through Israeli air space on Oct. 11 by a Syrian air force pilot.

Gen. Dan Shomron, the Israel Defense Force chief of staff, said Monday night that he has ordered official reprimands for an air force colonel who was duty officer at the time and a lieutenant colonel. He did not identify them.

Shomron told military correspondents he was acting on the findings and recommendations of a two-man committee he appointed last week to investigate the incident.

The 52-page report submitted to the chief of staff earlier Monday charged the colonel with "an error in judgment" and his subordinate with "faulty reporting."

A copy was sent to Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin. It will be discussed in secret session by the Inner Cabinet.

Shomron said the entire report would be made public except for security-sensitive material.

It found no fault with the air force's detection and defense apparatus.

The supersonic Syrian jet was flying at high speed and low altitude when it crossed the Israeli border into the northern Golan Heights. It was picked up and tracked instantly by air force radar and other monitoring devices, the report said.

Was Tracked By Radar

All mandatory procedures were put into effect by the air force defense system according to standard practice.

However, they were halted "at some point" because of a faulty report leading to an error in judgment, the report said.

The committee, headed by Brig. Gen. Herzl Bodinger, recommended that the air force reprimand the colonel for poor judgment and inform the lieutenant colonel of his faulty reporting, "which contributed to the error in judgment."

Shomron said that as a rule, if an unidentified aircraft enters Israeli air space, it is deemed to be hostile and every effort is made to bring it down.

That should have been the case with the Syrian MiG. But there is always the possibility that a lone plane will enter Israeli air space "on a one-way ticket," the chief of staff said.

He said it was "highly unlikely" that a single plane even on a bombing mission would pose a real threat.

Many other signs of preparation for hostile activity would have been detected, allowing the air force time to significantly reinforce the defense apparatus, Shomron explained.

The Syrian pilot, Maj. Mohammed Bassem Adel, said at a news conference last Friday that his instruments indicated he was being tracked by Israeli radar from the moment he crossed the border until he landed at a civilian air strip near Megiddo, about four minutes later.

He said he flew at over 800 mph, at about 150 feet, and turned off all electronic systems that could signify hostile intent.

Adel has reportedly asked for political asylum in Israel. He says he will not return to Syria, where he has been branded an "abominable traitor."

UNESCO BODY VOTES UNANIMOUSLY TO POSTPONE PLO VOTE FOR 2 YEARS

By Edwin Eytan

PARIS, Oct. 17 (JTA) -- The General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization decided by unanimous vote Tuesday to postpone for two years consideration of the Palestine Liberation Organization's request for admission as the "state of Palestine."

But Israel was dissatisfied and complained angrily that the PLO's bid will be allowed to come up for consideration at the next session of the General Conference in October 1991.

The 161-member General Conference of UNESCO is that agency's equivalent of the U.N. General Assembly. Its biennial session opened here Tuesday and will run through Nov. 16.

The PLO's application for membership in UNESCO was the General Conference's first order of business.

The decision to defer it was recommended Oct. 10 by the UNESCO executive committee, the organization's 51-member governing body. Ratification of its decision by the General Conference was expected.

Israel voted for the resolution because "we did not want to break the consensus by voting against" it, said its delegate, Ambassador Ya'akov Aviad.

"But we want vehemently to protest against" it, he said after the vote was taken. Aviad said the decision to reject the PLO should have been final, not merely a postponement.

The PLO has been trying to establish international recognition by seeking entry into U.N. specialized agencies as a full member with sovereign rights.

It has had no success so far, largely because of American opposition.

'Road To Washington' Through Israel

The United States, the largest contributor to the United Nations, has rallied its Western European allies and others in support of Israel's efforts to thwart Palestinian ambitions.

But UNESCO is the "weakest link," because the United States is not a member. It withdrew in 1985, charging mismanagement and anti-Western bias.

The American defection cost the agency \$47 million in revenues plus the loss of additional payments for social projects.

The U.S. observer mission had sufficient clout to block debate over the PLO's admission to UNESCO by making clear that the United States would never return if the PLO became a member.

But Arab delegates have pointed out that Washington has made no clear commitment to re-join, even if the PLO is barred. It has fallen to UNESCO's director general, Federico Mayor Zaragoza, to obtain such a commitment.

An international delegation of experts met with him here Monday to urge that he continue his efforts in that direction.

Mayor, a Spaniard who has been very sympathetic to Israeli and Jewish needs, said in an interview in Le Monde last week that he realized "that one of the roads to Washington" is through Israel.

He said he would pay an official visit to Israel this winter, something his predecessor, Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow of Senegal, always refused to do.

ISRAEL UPSET AT WEST GERMANY FOR RECEIVING SENIOR PLO AIDE

By David Kantor

BONN, Oct. 17 (JTA) -- The Palestine Liberation Organization achieved its highest level of official contact with the West German government Monday when Bassam Abu Sharif, a senior adviser to PLO chief Yasir Arafat, was received by the political director of the Bonn Foreign Ministry, Jurgen Sudhoff.

The Israeli Embassy promptly protested, expressing "deep regret" that a Foreign Ministry official met "a high-level representative of a terror organization."

The Israeli statement said the meeting was all the more negative because it lent political weight to the PLO, thereby interfering with ongoing efforts to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Sudhoff reiterated after the meeting that Bonn stood by its longstanding position that the conflict should be resolved through an international peace conference with the participation of the PLO.

Israel's protest was expected. Some West German diplomats feared the Israelis would bring up Bonn's special relationship with Israel arising from the Holocaust.

But the embassy statement contained no hint of Germany's Nazi past.

The Israelis apparently realized that such a reaction would backfire, setting off another round of anti-Israel rhetoric in the Western German news media.

In any event, Sudhoff, who once was press attache at the West German Embassy in Tel Aviv, is known as a sincere friend of Israel.

Pressure On Kohl's Party

His meeting with Abu Sharif is believed to have been the result of pressure on Chancellor Helmut Kohl's conservative government after the opposition Social Democratic Party's announcement several months ago that it intended to invite a PLO delegation to Bonn.

Kohl's right-wing coalition apparently did not want to appear "out of touch" with political realities, one inside source explained Tuesday.

Another official observed privately that the PLO was legitimized by the United States when Washington decided to open a dialogue with it in Tunis last December.

It has taken Bonn more than 10 months to catch up, the official said.

Other government sources pointed out that the PLO contacts are in line with decisions by the 12-nation European Community to contribute to Middle East peace efforts by maintaining lines of communications with all parties to the conflict.

Independent observers here believe that Bonn is cautiously testing Israeli reactions to expanding contacts with the PLO.

Only last month, the PLO's permanent representative here, Abdahalla Frangi, was allowed for the first time to visit the Foreign Ministry for a talk with a high-level official.

Frangi was arrested by the German authorities in the 1970s on suspicion of planning terrorist acts. He was barred from the German Federal Republic.

But the ban was lifted after a legal battle and probably as a result of Arab political pressure and his personal status. Frangi is married to a West German.

WALLENBERG KIN RECEIVE HIS EFFECTS, BUT DOUBTS ON HERO'S FATE REMAIN

NEW YORK, Oct. 17 (JTA) -- News of a meeting Monday between Soviet authorities and the family of Raoul Wallenberg has been greeted with reserved gratitude by supporters of the World War II hero, as questions over his exact fate remain unanswered.

In an emotional ceremony in Moscow, the Soviets presented Wallenberg's family Monday with the personal effects of the former Swedish ambassador, who is credited with saving the lives of tens of thousands of Hungarian Jews.

It is the first time in the nearly 45 years since Wallenberg vanished that the Soviets have produced tangible evidence of the man, who disappeared in January 1945, after Soviet troops entered Hungary.

But despite repeated Soviet insistence that Wallenberg died of a heart attack in Lubianka Prison in 1947, his family remains unconvinced and believes he may still be alive today.

In Washington, Rep. Tom Lantos (D-Calif.) and his wife, Annette, two native Hungarians who worked with Wallenberg and who spearheaded a campaign to find out his fate, welcomed Monday's ceremony.

Nevertheless, the Lantos, who are founder and chairperson of the International Free Wallenberg Committee, were not swayed by the Soviet declaration that Wallenberg died in prison.

"The Soviets have not told the whole truth," Annette Lantos said. "The story is not closed, the mystery is not solved."

'More Credible Check' Urged

Rep. Lantos said, "The Soviet government must do a much more credible check of the facts. Repeating a lie that has already been discredited does not answer the question 'Where is Wallenberg?' Glasnost calls for the Soviets to do considerably more to resolve the mystery of Wallenberg," he said.

In Los Angeles, the Simon Wiesenthal Center issued a statement urging the Soviets to "tell the family of Raoul Wallenberg the entire, painful truth about the fate of the Holocaust's greatest hero.

"While we applaud the Soviet Union's humanitarian gesture in allowing this historic trip, it would turn into a cruel hoax if authorities continue to allege that Raoul Wallenberg died in prison in 1947."

In New York, the Raoul Wallenberg Committee of the United States said it would not issue a statement until the family made one of its own.

In Moscow, the family was presented with the former Swedish diplomat's passport, several notebooks and even some money. But the artifacts "do not prove that Raoul is dead," said Nina Lagergren, Wallenberg's half-sister.

The Soviets said they found the papers during a recent search of KGB archives.

"It was just terribly emotional to see Raoul's handwriting and his passport, his portrait, his identity papers in Budapest," said Lagergren.

She was accompanied by Wallenberg's half-brother, Guy von Dardel, as well as Per Anger, Wallenberg's diplomatic associate during the war, and Sonia Sonnenfeld, the secretary of the Swedish Raoul Wallenberg Association.

Lagergren presented Soviet officials with a list of 20 persons who said they had seen Wallenberg since 1947.

ISRAEL AID, OTHER JEWISH INTERESTS IMPERILED, FOR NOW, BY BUDGET CUTS

By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, Oct. 17 (JTA) -- Lobbyists on Jewish issues were sent scurrying here this week to see how their favorite programs would be affected by President Bush's order Monday to make across-the-board budget cuts to meet deficit-reduction targets.

The cuts ordered are 5.3 percent in non-defense programs and 4.3 percent in Pentagon programs.

While they may very well be restored within a few weeks, it is not immediately clear how U.S. aid to Israel and other items of interest to Jews may be affected.

For example, Israel had been scheduled on Oct. 30 to receive its \$1.2 billion in economic aid for the fiscal year.

An official at the American Israel Public Affairs Committee said it has not yet been determined whether Israel will receive the full figure and be asked to refund 5.3 percent of it, or if it will receive all but that \$63.6 million.

Israel could also receive 11 months of full funding, with one month reduced by 5.3 percent, the AIPAC official added.

It is also not immediately clear how Israel's military aid, \$1.8 billion in credits to be spent on U.S. weaponry, will be affected by the cut.

Bush's "sequestration" of federal programs came after Congress failed to agree on its 1990 deficit reconciliation bill.

That bill, for the fiscal year that started Oct. 1, brings total spending for the fiscal year in line with the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings deficit target of \$110 billion for 1990.

Child-Care Bill Not Dead Yet

To make it easier to negotiate the reconciliation bill, lawmakers decided to remove non-essential items that would take a long time to negotiate, including catastrophic health care, federal aid for child care and a reduction in the capital gains tax.

But landmark child-care legislation is still expected to be hammered out soon in a House-Senate conference committee.

Both the House and Senate "are strongly committed to coming out with a bill" to aid child care, said Sammie Moshenberg, Washington representative of the National Council of Jewish Women.

She said the child-care package may be negotiated in time to be passed in final form on Nov. 2, when Congress must approve a bill to raise the federal debt ceiling so that the government does not run out of money.

But in any event, she expects Congress to approve a child-care bill by Thanksgiving.

Jewish groups are especially interested in whether the conference committee will allow federal funds to be given to churches and synagogues that offer sectarian child-care programs.

Both the House and Senate bills would allow religious institutions to receive such funds for their child-care programs.

But while the Senate would allow such funds to go to religious-oriented programs, the House has approved language that would restrict such funds to non-sectarian programs.

Orthodox Jewish groups are supporting the Senate version, while several other Jewish groups back the House version.