### DAILY NEWS BULLETIN

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VOL. 67 - 72nd YEAR

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 20, 1989

330 SEVENTH AVENUE

NO. 198

(212) 643-1890

# DESPITE WEEK'S TOUGH RHETORIC, SHAMIR PRAISES BAKER'S EFFORTS By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, Oct. 19 (JTA) -- Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir seems to be supporting U.S. efforts to establish an Israeli-Palestinian dialogue, even though he rejects Secretary of State James Baker's specific proposals to bring it about, the State Department indicated Thursday.

PUBLISHED BY JEWISH TELEGRAPHIC AGENCY

"Secretary Baker yesterday received a letter from Prime Minister Shamir that applauds our efforts and encourages us to keep them up," department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler said at a news briefing Thursday.

The letter arrived after a week of scathing criticism by Shamir of mediation efforts by the United States, which he charged were aimed at forcing Israel to negotiate with the Palestine Liberation Organization and get out of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

While Tutwiler did not divulge the contents of the letter, she said it "also dealt with how to get Palestinians and Israelis into a dialogue concerning elections."

But elsewhere in the State Department, comment was less sanguine.

According to a source at the Near Eastern and South Asian desk, Shamir's letter was "somewhat conciliatory." But, the official said, "I wouldn't say the peace process is hinging on the contents of the letter."

Shamir's letter to Baker was seen in Jerusalem as a concerted effort by the prime minister and Foreign Minister Moshe Arens to ease the tension with Washington.

It escalated sharply this week when Shamir declared he would sooner risk a "confrontation" with the United States than talk to the PLO.

#### Friendly Phone Call

Yet after making that and similar remarks Tuesday, Shamir telephoned President Bush in an apparently friendly mood.

According to Shamir's aides, the prime minister and president affirmed to each other that neither wanted a confrontation.

Bush added that the United States does not intend to force Israel to do anything it does not wish to do, the Israelis said.

Yossi Ben-Aharon, director general of the Prime Minister's Office, gave a series of media interviews Thursday in which he characterized U.S.-Israeli relations as a strong "alliance."

He conceded that they had differences, but insisted that did not affect the fundamental solidity of the relationship.

He pointed to strategic cooperation -- without specifying -- as proof of the alliance's strength.

Nevertheless, Ben-Aharon elaborated on Shamir's vociferous objections earlier in the week to American proposals. He claimed they would lead inevitably to Israeli-PLO negotiations, which Israel would not countenance whether direct or indirect.

Ben-Aharon insisted the PLO could under no circumstances be a partner to negotiations.

(JTA correspondent David Landau in Jerusalem contributed to this report.) UNRWA PROTESTS ISRAEL'S RAID OF U.N. AGENCY'S GAZA OFFICE By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Oct. 19 (JTA) -- A U.N. relief agency that oversees, Palestinian refugee camps protested to the Israeli authorities Thursday over the detention, of its personnel and seizure of documents by the Israeli army.

NEW YORK, NY 10001-5010

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for—Palestinian Refugees lodged its complaints in Jerusalem and with the Israeli mission to UNRWA headquarters in Vienna.

Israeli forces reportedly broke into the UNRWA food distribution center in the Deir el-Balah refugee camp in the Gaza Strip on Wednesday, and confiscated papers from the office of the UNRWA refugee services officer responsible for four refugee camps in the Gaza Strip.

When international UNRWA personnel confronted the soldiers, they were detained but released after questioning.

In the West Bank the same day, three local UNRWA employees were arrested for questioning and documents were seized from their offices.

The employees were the camp service officers at the Jalazoun, Dehaishe and Fawwar refugee camps.

The U.N. complaint clicited a sympathetic reaction from the United States.

"As a general matter, we regret any actions that interfere with UNRWA's important humanitarian operations in providing education, medical and relief services to Palestinian refugees," State Department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler said at a news briefing in Washington on Thursday.

Tutwiler said that agency sources confirmed two incidents "involving intrusion by Israeli forces into their facilities. We have called on all parties to exercise maximum restraint to avoid the kinds of confrontations described in these reports," she said.

UNRWA accused the Israeli military of "serious breaches of the privileges and immunities which the agency enjoys as an international body providing humanitarian services to Palestine refugees in the occupied territory."

Senior security sources said the army was investigating suspicions that UNRWA officials were involved in anti-Israel activities outside the UNRWA mandate.

The official said the investigations and detentions were conducted under the close supervision of the Israeli legal authorities, following consultation with the Foreign Ministry.

There was no violation of UNRWA privileges, he said.

(JTA correspondent Howard Rosenberg in Washington contributed to this report.)

## IDF BENT ON ENDING TAX STRIKE; ARAB CAUSE SPARKS SOME SYMPATHY By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Oct. 19 (JTA) -- The Israel Defense Force appears determined to break down the few non-violent manifestations of the intifada.

A priority mission now is putting an end to a tax strike being staged by residents of the largely Arab-Christian town of Beit Sahur in the

West Bank.

The strike, which has lasted for more than a month, is challenging Israeli authority in the area and depriving the Treasury of legitimate revenue.

The residents of Beit Sahur say that they are not receiving services from the Israeli government commensurate with the amount of taxes they paid, and therefore have been withholding their revenues from tax collectors.

The strike reflects a shift in the allegiances of the people of Beit Sahur. Until very recently a somewhat compliant population, the residents of this Christian town now voice their loyalty to the Palestinian cause.

The Palestinians regard Beit Sahur as a symbol of non-violent defiance in the uprising against Israel.

There appears to be no signs of wavering, despite the isolation of the town which Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin has imposed and the confiscation of business and personal property in lieu of the unpaid taxes.

Rabin wishes to stop Beit Sahur from becoming a Palestinian symbol.

Beit Sahur's predicament has also sparked sympathy within some segments of Israeli society.

On Thursday, the IDF declared the town and nearby Bethlehem a closed military zone, to prevent a solidarity demonstration at the entrance to Beit Sahur by about 50 peace activists from Jerusalem.

The IDF also circulated leaflets of its own Thursday, warning the residents of continued pressure until they pay the taxes due.

Several townspeople have been detained, and close to a million dollars in property have been confiscated and will be sold at auction next week.

In Jerusalem, meanwhile, Police Minister Haim Bar-Lev announced "some progress" in the ongoing investigation into the wave of arson against Jewish-owned vehicles in the capital.

He said several very small terrorist cells, of two to three people each, are responsible for this.

Bar-Lev said certain measures used in the administered territories to quell disturbances cannot be employed in Jerusalem.

"Jerusalem is not the territories. Jerusalem is sovereign Israel, where the Israeli law is in force. And according to Israeli law, if somebody puts a mask on his face, this is not yet a reason to be fired at," Bar-Lev said.

# 86 COURT-MARTIALS, 40,000 ARRESTS SINCE BEGINNING OF INTIFADA IN 1987 By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Oct. 19 (JTA) -- Eighty-six soldiers and officers have been court-martialed for offenses such as causing death, violating open-fire orders, assault and damaging property since the start of the intifada nearly two years ago.

Another 500 to 600 soldiers have been summoned to disciplinary hearings for less serious offenses, IDF Judge Advocate General Amnon Strashnow told reporters covering the administered territories Wednesday.

But IDF soldiers are now permitted, with the approval of the Justice Ministry, to shoot at masked Palestinian youths in the territories because they are "hard-core activists of the uprising, responsible for assaulting and killing fellow Arabs," Strashnow said.

The IDF chief prosecutor explained that soldiers may fire live ammunition at the legs of

masked youths if they ignore calls to halt and warning shots fired into the air.

Strashnow stressed, nonetheless, that "this is not a license to kill."

During the course of the Palestinian uprising, which began Dec. 9, 1987, more than 40,000 Palestinians have been arrested, Strashnow reported. That number includes 8,400 held without trial in administrative detention, he said.

Of that number, 1,889 are still being held.

All told, there are currently 9,600 prisoners held in IDF jails, in addition to 4,000 Palestinian convicts held in Prison Service jails.

Strashnow described the masked youths as "the hard core facing the security forces in their war against the uprising. They oil the wheels of the uprising, confiscating identity cards, preventing workers from coming to Israel, physically assaulting people and murdering them."

These young men are "terrorizing the population," he continued, underscoring that "some 125 Arabs have been murdered by Arabs during the uprising."

#### GERMAN OFFICIAL'S ISRAELI TRIP SEEN AS INTERMEDIARY FOR PLO By David Kantor

BONN, Oct. 19 (JTA) -- A ranking West German official, who is scheduled to go to Jerusalem next week for what was officially described as "regular political consultations," could in fact be acting as an intermediary between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization.

That possibility was raised here Thursday after the announcement that Jurgen Sudhoff, political director of the Foreign Ministry, would go to Jerusalem, following his meeting here Monday with Bassam Abu Sharif, a senior adviser to PLO leader Yasir Arafat.

Sudhoff was the highest ranking West German diplomat yet to meet with a PLO representative, and Israel lodged a strong protest.

But sources here suggested that Sudhoff's reason for going to Israel now is to convey to the Israelis the ideas he discussed with Abu Sharif.

A spokesman for the Israel Embassy promptly denied that Sudhoff's upcoming visit is in any way connected to his contact with the PLO. It was scheduled long before the Israelis knew he would be meeting with an Arafat aide, the spokesman said.

He added, however, that the German official would be free as a matter of course to raise any subject he wished.

Sudhoff, who once served as press attache at the West German Embassy in Tel. Aviv, is regarded as a sincere friend of Israel.

The Foreign Ministry has explained his meeting with Abu Sharif as an effort by Bonn to exert a moderate influence on the PLO.

Sudhoff reportedly told his guest that the PLO should not insist on being included in a Palestinian delegation to talks with Israel.

The PLO office in Bonn, meanwhile, is capitalizing on its diplomatic achievement.

It is touting the Sudhoff-Sharif meeting as a "breakthrough" toward legitimizing the PLO in German public opinion.

A PLO official said it is time for the German public to realize that the Palestinians have become the victims of the Jews, who were themselves once oppressed in Germany and elsewhere in Europe.



#### HELMS BILL COULD HELP PRISONERS SATISFY UNMET RELIGIOUS NEEDS By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, Oct. 19 (JTA) -- Jews in prison may find it easier to have their religious needs met if the House of Representatives agrees to a measure already adopted by the Senate.

The legislation, sponsored by Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.), would create a "Religious Issues Oversight Board" in the Justice Department's Bureau of Prisons that would rule on grievances from prisoners who felt their "legitimate religious needs" were not being met.

Currently, prisoners who are not satisfied with how prison officials handle their requests must take their cases to court.

Helms' proposal, an amendment to the 1990 TO HELP REHABILITATE FORESTS authorization bill for the Justice Department and other federal agencies, has the general approval of Jewish groups.

Mark Pelavin, Washington representative of the American Jewish Congress, said the idea of creating such a board is "worthwhile." He said many of the religious complaints filed by prisoners "are not moving through the courts very quickly."

Pelavin added that the liberal-leaning AJCongress is "slightly surprised" that Helms, an arch-conservative, sponsored the measure, "but we are going to try work with him." AJCongress has often fought Helms' initiatives in matters impinging on the separation of church and state.

#### Five Faiths Represented

This initiative, too, raises a church-state concern for some Jewish groups: the composition of the oversight board. The amendment states that the board will have five members "each of whom may represent a different major religion of the United States."

Such wording could exclude certain religions and violate the First Amendment clause that prohibits government recognition of some religions and not others.

A Helms aide stressed the word "may." He added that it seemed reasonable to include a Jew, Mormon, Moslem, Protestant and Roman Catholic. on the board, since a prisoner with a religious complaint is likely to be a member of one of those major faiths.

Agudath Israel of America considers it "offensive in principle" for religious decisions at prisons to be made by non-Jews, such as non-Jewish chaplains, said David Zwiebel, its director of governmental affairs.

The one full-time Jewish chaplain in the U.S. prison system, Rabbi Jacob Hocnig of New York's Staten Island, was not available for comment.

According to Helms' legislation, the oversight board would "have the power to order the religious need of the inmate met."

The board members would meet at least once a month, and reach their decisions by majority vote.

Board members would serve six-year terms without compensation except for travel, with Congress appropriating \$100,000 for the Bureau of Prisons to administer their activities.

In reaching its decisions, the board should "take into account the overall security and safety of the inmates, and the financial cost to the taxpayers" of the religious requests, the legislation states.

The Bureau of Prisons sets aside money each

year to meet religious requests of prisoners, which would be tapped if the oversight board deemed it necessary.

The legislation does not state what religious requests would be considered excessive. The one specific limit on the board's powers is that it could not release an inmate from prison either temporarily or permanently.

Two religious requests by Jewish prisoners that are now routinely approved are access to kosher food and permission to wear yarmulkes, said the Rev. Robert Schulze, assistant chaplain administrator at the Bureau of Prisons.

Similarly, headgear warn by other religious groups is also generally allowed, he added.

### ISRAEL CONDUCTS TV TELETHON By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Oct 19 (JTA) -- Israel Television devoted its entire evening program Thursday to telethon entertainment, a public auction and a phone-in aimed at raising funds for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the Carmel National Park and forest badly damaged by intifada-linked arsonists last month.

The main broadcast was from the Churchill Auditorium on the Mount Carmel campus of the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology in Haifa, where a star-studded program of leading Israeli entertainers, singers and artists volunteered their services.

American Jews also joined in the worldwide effort, by means of a 24-hour hotline -- (800) 542-TREE -- set up by the Jewish National Fund, the agency responsible for afforestation and land reclamation in Israel.

At the Israeli Embassy in Washington on Thursday night, Ambassador Moshe Arad announced through a telephone hookup to the telethon that \$850,000 had been raised so far in the United States.

In West Germany, meanwhile, the minister of agriculture, Ignaz Kiechle, informed Israeli diplomats this week that his ministry was willing to help Israel reforest parts of the Carmel.

He was responding to approaches for advice and assistance in an ongoing effort to make the West German public aware of the 2 million trees and 40,000 acres of forest land lost to arsonists of the intifada over the last two years.

Kiechle said the Federal Republic would be willing to send experts to assess the damage and equipment to help in the reforestation efforts.

It was learned from Bonn on Wednesday that some \$10,000 in cash and pledges has been raised in West Germany so far to replant the Carmel forest.

Money was raised by employees of the Israeli Embassy in Bonn at a gathering Wednesday attended by several Bundestag members, who vowed to mobilize support for rehabilitation of the burnt-out woodlands.

Other commitments have come from the ecology-oriented Green Party, whose environmental concerns apparently outweighed its pro-Palestinian political bias.

Although usually critical of Israel, party members chastised the Palestinians, saying that setting forest fires is not the way to "fight for freedom."

(JTA correspondents David Kantor in Bonn and David Friedman in Washington contributed to this report.)



### AMÈRICAN-ARAB GROUP REVIVING POSTER CAMPAIGN IN D.C. SUBWAYS By Howard Rosenberg

washington, Oct. 19 (JTA) -- Citing a sharp decline in media coverage of the Palestinian uprising, the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee has revived its poster campaign in the Washington-area subway system.

The Jewish Community Council of Greater Washington, the local Jewish umbrella group, is not fighting the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority's decision to display two types of ADC posters in half of the system's 700 subway cars.

In a mailing last week, the JCC noted local court decisions upholding the general right of groups to place political advertisements in the system.

Stephen Gell, the JCC's president, said for his group to oppose such a right "would be seriously detrimental to community relations." He said his group would oppose only those posters that were "misleading" or "inaccurate." The transit authority requires groups seeking to display posters to enclose supporting evidence.

One of the posters, which went up on Monday, shows three Arabs carrying the red, green and black Palestinian flag, with an American eagle in the background. It reads: "Americans fought for freedom and independence in 1776, Palestinians are fighting for these same rights today."

The other poster has large Palestinian and Israeli flags, which state in block letters, "Palestine-Israel: Two Peoples, Two States."

Both posters ask viewers to "support Palestinian independence" and to call their congressional representative at (202) 224-3121.

The JCC termed the posters "Arab propaganda attacks" and said it "does not believe that our community should remain tacit" to them.

It urged board members to write letters in support of Israel to members of Congress and to President Bush; to write letters to newspapers and other media; and to gain support for Israel among family, friends and community groups.

In 1987, the ADC paid the subway system to display a poster calling on the United States to withdraw the diplomatic credentials of then-Israeli military attache in Washington Maj. Gen. Amos Yaron. Yaron was implicated by an Israeli commission in the 1982 massacres at the Sabra-Shatila Lebanese refugee camps.

Last year, the ADC paid for two posters that focused on aid to Israel and Israel's human rights practices.

#### MEMBERS OF CONGRESS ASK BAKER FOR MORE DETAILS ON ARMS SALE By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Oct. 19 (JTA) -- Thirty-seven members of the House of Representatives signed a letter sent to Secretary of State James Baker on Thursday, asking for more information on the Bush administration's proposed \$3 billion sale to Saudi Arabia of 315 tanks and other military equipment.

The letter, initiated by Reps. Mel Levine (D-Calif.) and Lawrence Smith (D-Fla.), was described by a Capitol Hill source as "moderate."

It was signed by a bipartisan majority of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, as well as by Majority Leader Richard Gephardt (D-Mo.) and

Vin Weber (R-Minn.), a Republican House leader.

In a separate statement, Levine said the sale should be examined as to how it furthers U.S. foreign policy priorities in the Middle East. He pointed out that the Saudis' position in the peace process has been "abysmal."

"Their vote just two days ago to deny Israel's credentials at the United Nations underscores that the Saudis continue to cast their lot with the most radical and rejectionist Arab countries," Levine said.

However, the letter to Baker did not express outright opposition to the sale of the Abrams Ml-A2 tank to the Saudis. But it was critical that there had not been "greater consultation with Congress before a decision was reached on the Ml sale."

The administration sent Congress unofficial notification of the sale on Oct. 11, triggering 20 days of consultations before the administration must provide formal notification. Congress then has up to 30 days to reject the sale; otherwise it goes through automatically.

Pro-Israel members of Congress, while not happy with the proposed sale, are trying to avoid another bruising battle over arms being sold to the Saudis.

In their letter, the members of the House raised several specific questions. "We would like to know about the strategic threat necessitating this sale; about the type of armor, ammunition and improvements the tanks will have, as well as what components will be in the total package," the House members said.

They also asked whether the sale will replace or add to the number of tanks in the Saudi arsenal, where they will be based, what controls over their use will be placed by the United States and "their effect on the overall military balance in the region."

The letter underscored that answers to these questions "could facilitate the forging of a consensus on this particular sale and hopefully lead to more routinized procedures between the branches on arms transfer problems."

## ACCORD REACHED ON DIRECT FLIGHTS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND SOVIET UNION By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Oct. 19 (JTA) -- Direct commercial flights between Tel Aviv and Moscow -- operated by the state-run El Al and Aeroflot airlines -- are likely to begin early next year, under an agreement in principle reached in Moscow on Wednesday between directors of the two airlines.

The service would begin with one flight a week operated by each of the airlines, increasing in frequency later as traffic warrants. Flight time will be about three-and-a-half hours and cost about \$400.

The El Al-Aeroflot flights would service the growing number of Soviet citizens, mainly Jews, coming to Israel on one- to three-month visits, as well as new immigrants.

Soviet authorities had indicated last year that potential traffic between the two countries did not warrant the operation of regular flights. But the experience of flights between Ben-Gurion Airport in Israel and Budapest and Romania has apparently made them change their minds now.

Israel hopes the direct service will increase the number of immigrants and reduce the dropout rate.