

VOL. 67 - 72nd YEAR
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 1989
NO. 213

WHITE HOUSE FINALLY INVITES SHAMIR ENDING CONSTERNATION OVER THE DELAY

By David Friedman and Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, Nov. 9 (JTA) -- The White House put an end late Thursday to growing concern in Israel and the American Jewish community that President Bush might decide not to invite Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir to the White House next week.

For much of the week and throughout the afternoon Thursday, Bush administration officials declined to say whether such a meeting would take place. But Jewish officials in New York received word Thursday evening that a meeting has now been set for 3 p.m. Wednesday.

The White House confirmed Thursday evening that a meeting has been set for Wednesday, but would not indicate what time it would take place. An Israeli official here also confirmed that a meeting had been set.

Earlier Thursday, a White House press spokesman told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that he did not know if or when such an announcement would be made.

And at the State Department, deputy spokesman Richard Boucher repeated the administration's official line that Shamir is coming to the United States on a "private visit" to address the Council of Jewish Federations in Cincinnati next Thursday.

"I'm not even sure he's coming to Washington," Boucher said at his daily briefing. This was the same remark made by Bush during a news conference Tuesday.

Statements such as these had caused consternation in Israel and within the American Jewish community, since Shamir had expressed a clear desire to meet with the president while he is in the United States. There was a widely shared fear that the Israeli leader might be humiliated with a public slap in the face from the White House.

Usually, such meetings are announced by the White House well in advance of the scheduled date. An Israeli advance team reportedly had already arrived in the United States to prepare for a meeting nobody was sure would take place.

Bush himself added fuel to the growing doubts about the administration's intentions Tuesday, when he said that he was willing to consider receiving Shamir, but wanted such a meeting to be "constructive" and for there to be "something positive to talk about."

In New York, top officials of the U.S. Jewish community said they had been in touch with the highest echelons of the Bush administration on the matter. Said one official, "We are very concerned about the process and the way it has been presented to the public."

BISHOPS' FINAL DOCUMENT ON MIDEAST SEEN AS BETTER, BUT DISAPPOINTING

BALTIMORE, Nov. 9 (JTA) -- In a move that has disappointed some American Jewish groups, the country's Catholic bishops Thursday unanimously adopted a statement on the Middle East that affirms the right of Palestinians to "territorial and political sovereignty."

The statement, which also recognizes Israel's

security needs, was approved by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops on the final day of its four-day assembly here.

The approved document came under immediate criticism from a number of Jewish organizations, including the Synagogue Council of America, American Jewish Committee, American Jewish Congress and the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith.

The SCA, representing the main religious streams of American Jewry, voiced "great concern for the document's apparent call for an independent, sovereign Palestinian state," and charged that the statement goes far beyond Pope John Paul II's previous calls for an independent Palestinian "homeland."

AJCommittee issued a statement saying the group's leaders "profoundly regret that the resolution has retained the call for Palestinian 'sovereign status.'"

The bishops' 50-page document, their first on the Middle East in 11 years, is the product of more than a year of consultations between a committee of Catholic leaders and representatives of the Jewish and Moslem communities.

When a first draft of the statement was released last month, criticism of the document by Jewish organizations focused on the statement's approach to questions of statehood, security and negotiations.

Even Jewish groups that support the Palestinians' right to self-determination said that including the word "sovereignty" would prescribe a political solution to the peace process before negotiations had begun.

Objections Over 'Sovereignty' Call

Last December, the Vatican reiterated the pope's call that the Israelis and Palestinians "have an identical, fundamental right to have their own homeland."

The bishops' document, by contrast, says that a peace settlement "should formalize Israel's existence as a sovereign state in the eyes of the Arab states and the Palestinians," while at the same time establishing "an independent Palestinian homeland, with its sovereign status recognized by Israel."

Jewish groups objected, in particular, to the first draft's evenhanded use of the word "sovereignty." Apparently in response to those concerns, the bishops added a paragraph in the final document, saying "there must be negotiated limits to the exercise of Palestinian sovereignty, so that it is clear that Israel's security is protected."

At a news conference following the assembly, Archbishop Roger Mahony of Los Angeles acknowledged that there is little agreement on a definition for the term "sovereignty."

"Our focus is on defined territory, autonomy, self-rule, the ability for Palestinians to elect their own leadership and to pursue their future together as a people," said Mahony, who chaired the committee that drafted the statement. "However, some will assign more meaning than we do to the term."

Serving on the committee with Mahony were Cardinal John O'Connor of New York and Archbishop William Keeler of Baltimore.

In a brief floor debate on the final draft

Thursday, Archbishop William Levada of Portland, Ore., addressed Jewish concerns directly by urging priests, in their consultations with Jews, to stress the fact that the document includes a call for limits on Palestinian sovereignty.

Nevertheless, the SCA contended that the repeated use of such terms as "territorial rights" and "Palestinian sovereignty" is damaging, because it "leaves open to interpretation that the Catholic bishops seem to be calling for an independent sovereign state -- something that the U.S. government has carefully not advocated."

Disagreement Between 'Friends'

"The Synagogue Council believes that this statement prejudices what can only be achieved through the process of negotiations, which is the domain of the political entities involved, rather than religious bodies."

The SCA statement also objected to the bishops' calls that the Palestinians be allowed to select their own representatives in all negotiations.

The SCA said that the bishops did not address the Palestine Liberation Organization's "interference in Palestinian self-determination and Arab intimidation of those Palestinians who have stepped forward to try to work with the Israelis towards a solution."

Despite its critically worded statement, however, an SCA spokesman sought to soften the council's objections.

"This is a disagreement between close friends, where the many hours of consultation by the drafting committee were deeply appreciated," said Gunther Lawrence, who appeared to be the only representative of a Jewish organization present at the assembly's closing session.

Lawrence said the SCA's prepared reaction statement was drafted before the bishops' final debate on the Middle East and should have reflected the umbrella group's satisfaction with two additional amendments adopted by the bishops.

In the key passage of suggested solutions, the drafting committee added a paragraph stressing that its suggestions were made not to "limit or predetermine" the negotiation process, but to lay out "the needs and requirements" that ought to be considered in such negotiations.

'Fundamentally Flawed'

Lawrence said the bishops' Middle East statement "should not in any way ignite Jews to anger against Catholics. This is not a rift, but a disagreement," he said.

AJCommittee's statement "welcomed" several elements of the document, including its call for continued support of Israel by both the Catholic Church and the United States, as well as its "demands that the Arab states enter into full diplomatic relations with Israel."

It was issued in New York by Rabbi A. James Rudin and Judith Banki, respectively the group's director and associate director for inter-religious affairs.

Henry Siegman, executive vice president of AJCongress, called the document "an improvement over earlier statements on the Middle East" issued by the bishops.

But he expressed disappointment that the statement "still refers to Palestinian sovereignty as a requirement."

An even sharper reaction was issued by Kenneth Jacobson, director of ADL's international affairs division, who said the statement "contain

a fundamentally flawed recommendation in its call for a Palestinian homeland with territory and sovereignty."

That recommendation, he said, "runs counter to American policy and, by pre-empting options, is unhelpful to progress toward peace."

Nevertheless, he said there is "much that is positive in the document. He specifically cited the bishops' recognition that "progress on the Palestinian issue cannot be made while the Arab states continue their policy of war against and rejection of Israel."

Asked if the statement will help or hinder Catholic-Jewish relations, Mahony said it would be "very helpful."

"We urge Arab Americans and Jewish Americans to examine the totality of the document," said Mahony.

"We look forward to very fruitful study with the Arab and Jewish communities together, to see what we can do together to bring about peace," he said.

(Contributing to this report were Andrew Silow Carroll of the Washington Jewish Week and JTA staff writer Allison Kaplan in New York.)

SOVIET JEWRY GROUPS GEARING UP FOR BUSH-GORBACHEV SUMMIT IN MALTA By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Nov. 9 (JTA) -- Soviet Jewry advocacy groups are taking steps to ensure that the issue of Soviet Jewry will be addressed when President Bush meets with Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev aboard U.S. and Soviet ships off Malta on Dec. 2-3.

Shoshana Cardin, chairwoman of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry, and Martin Wenick, NCSJ's executive director, plan to be in Malta during what Bush has billed as an informal meeting with Gorbachev, his first since becoming president.

The two presidents plan to meet on a U.S. ship the first day and a Soviet ship the following day.

The NCSJ leaders plan to brief the press attending the summit on the continuing concerns over Jewish emigration, religious and cultural rights and increasing anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union.

"We recognize the positive efforts undertaken by Soviet President Gorbachev concerning a substantial rise in Jewish emigration, and in official recognition of many Jewish religious and cultural organizations," Cardin said in a statement issued Thursday.

"Yet we believe that a number of our concerns in these areas have yet to be addressed and resolved by the Soviet leader.

"We are also deeply troubled by the apparent increase in anti-Semitism in the USSR, which has created a sense of tension and apprehension among Soviet Jews, and we look to President Gorbachev to condemn anti-Semitic, anti-Zionist behavior in the Soviet Union," said Cardin.

The statement followed a meeting Monday in New York in which representatives of Jewish organizations discussed their plans for the summit.

Cardin said she has requested meetings before the summit with Bush, Secretary of State James Baker and Soviet Ambassador Yuri Dubinin. She has already met with Richard Schifter, assistant secretary of state for human rights and humanitarian affairs.

INTIFADA'S 23rd MONTH OBSERVED AS TERRITORIES GO ON STRIKE

By Cathrine Gerson

JERUSALEM, Nov. 9 (JTA) -- Arabs in the West Bank and Gaza Strip went on a general strike Thursday to mark the start of the 24th month of the Palestinian uprising.

Violent incidents were reported, with the worst in Nablus, where security forces rounded up members of an alleged assassination ring, killing one suspect and wounding five.

As news spread, the town erupted with disturbances in which a local resident was killed and a border policeman was slightly injured by a tile thrown at him.

A curfew was clamped on the city, and all was quiet within a half-hour, according to an Israel Defense Force spokesman.

Maj. Gen. Yitzhak Mordechai, commander of the central sector, told reporters Thursday that the gang rounded up in Nablus was one of the most dangerous operating in the territories.

He said they are suspected of the murders of nine local men and women they thought were collaborating with the Israeli authorities.

In addition, they threw firebombs at IDF patrols, he said.

Another senior officer in the area said the gang, which calls itself the Red Eagles, was affiliated with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, a hard-line faction of the Palestine Liberation Organization headed by George Habash.

Meanwhile, Police Commissioner David Kraus is expected to dismiss six policemen who face possible criminal charges in the fatal shooting of an Arab youth in Bethlehem last month and the alleged fabrication of evidence.

Kraus will act on the recommendation of Southern Police District Cmdr. Rahamim Comfort.

The names of the six men have been withheld by court order to protect their safety.

The case, viewed as "a very serious incident" by police officials, has been transferred to the internal affairs division at national police headquarters.

TWO IDF SOLDIERS SLIGHTLY INJURED AS BOMB EXPLODES IN SOUTH LEBANON

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Nov. 9 (JTA) -- A remote-controlled roadside bomb injured two Israeli soldiers in the southern Lebanon security zone Thursday, while a Katyusha rocket salvo hurt a Lebanese civilian near the Israeli border.

Military sources saw no connection between the two incidents, which occurred almost simultaneously.

One of the soldiers sustained what were described as medium wounds, when the explosive detonated close to their vehicle on a routine patrol near Kaukaba village. The other soldier was only bruised.

A senior Israel Defense Force source said the number of assaults on IDF troops and the allied South Lebanon Army in the security zone has increased recently.

But all such attacks were repelled and attempts to infiltrate Israel from southern Lebanon were also foiled, the source said.

He attributed them to Amal, the mainstream Shi'ite militia, and Hezbollah, the guerrilla force of the pro-Iranian Shi'ite extremists.

POLL REVEALS EAST JERUSALEMITES WOULD PREFER A REDIVIDED CITY

By Cathrine Gerson

JERUSALEM, Nov. 9 (JTA) -- A random poll of East Jerusalem Arabs has led the pollster to conclude that "time is running out" for the unified city and to suggest a revamping of its political structure.

The survey, conducted by Professor Abraham Ashkenasi, showed that just over 50 percent of the respondents would like the city redivided into Jewish and Arab sectors, the situation that prevailed from 1949 to 1967.

Only 25 percent favor an open city.

Ashkenasi, who specializes in minorities and refugee problems at the Free University of Berlin where he teaches international politics, said the poll made clear that the overwhelming majority of Jerusalem's Palestinian community desires sovereignty for the Palestinian people.

A majority of those polled expressed preference for a secular Palestinian state. Ashkenasi found significant, however, that 30 percent of the Moslems questioned would opt for an Islamic state.

The poll was commissioned by the Hebrew University's Leonard Davis Institute for International Relations.

In a booklet accompanying the results, Ashkenasi said that "time is running out on a continued, relatively peaceful unified city.

"The growth of religious fundamentalism and political intolerance, especially in the young, will be fueled by failed political and economic programs."

RABIN: PALESTINIANS WOULD TALK BUT THEY'RE SCARED TO DEATH

By Gil Kezwer

TORONTO, Nov. 9 (JTA) -- Many Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip would like to negotiate with Israel, "but they are scared," Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin told an audience here this week.

More than 130 Arabs in the territories have been assassinated since the intifada broke out on Dec. 9, 1987, for alleged collaboration with Israel, including 25 in the last month alone, according to Rabin.

The Israeli defense chief and former prime minister addressed the biennial convention of the United Synagogue of America, the congregational branch of Conservative Judaism, that was held here this week.

Rabin spoke at length of the prospects for peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors, including the Palestinians. He stressed that the peace process must be incremental to succeed and that there can be no "open sesame" solutions.

"I believe the wisdom of the Camp David accord was to recognize that to try to move from the current situation to (a comprehensive) peace (settlement) in one step would lead to an explosion," Rabin said.

Rabin acknowledged that for war and peace, Israel needs a broad national consensus which is lacking today.

"At present, we are divided on a permanent solution," he said. "One camp believes in keeping the full Land of Israel. The other believes in keeping the Jewish state Jewish in (demographic) character. The permanent solution will be decided by democratic means."

SMALL EAST GERMAN COMMUNITY ASKS GOVERNMENT TO FACE FACTS By David Kantor

BONN, Nov. 9 (JTA) -- East Germany's tiny Jewish community is taking courage from the surging demand for reforms sweeping the country, to publicly confront the Communist regime with longstanding concerns of its own.

In a statement released in Dresden on Monday, the Jewish community organization called on East Germany to end 40 years of denying responsibility for the Holocaust, to establish diplomatic relations with Israel and to acknowledge that anti-Semitism is no less prevalent in the East than in the West.

The Dresden statement was released against the background of massive pro-democracy demonstrations the likes of which had never been seen in that southeastern German city.

The change of climate was affirmed by the extensive coverage the East German news media gave to the desecration of a Jewish cemetery in Erfurt last week, which would have been unthinkable a short time ago.

Details of the statement were not available here for several days because telephone lines from East Germany were blocked by thousands of refugees fleeing to the West trying to call relatives left behind.

It became clear by Thursday that never before in its history has the East German Jewish community been willing and able to speak in such clear terms on the issues of the Holocaust and ties with Israel.

The Jewish community, which by latest estimates numbers no more than 800, expressed eager support for the reform process now under way in the country.

Its statement stressed, however, that reform should include a reassessment of how the Nazi past has been treated in East Germany.

'Textbooks Should Be Rewritten'

"Textbooks should be rewritten as soon as possible," the statement said.

It specified three areas where new or different information should be offered students: German history during the Nazi era; the persecution of Jews by the Nazi regime; and the discrimination and persecution of Jews in the early post-war years, when Stalinism prevailed in East Germany.

The statement asserted that "Nazism and anti-Semitism are the heritage of both German states," and added bluntly that in East Germany, assessing and making amends for the Nazi past has been clearly insufficient.

It charged that "false shame" contributed to playing down such incidents in East Germany, and that the regime must talk openly about manifestations of anti-Semitism and hatred of Jews.

The Erfurt cemetery desecration indicated a change in the atmosphere.

The Jewish community urged the authorities to investigate the incident, which had triggered outraged protests from individuals and various groups, including the Protestant clergy.

The official East German news agency ADN reported the vandalism, as did regional newspapers in Thuringia, where it occurred.

Many gravestones were overturned and others were daubed with swastikas and anti-Semitic slogans.

Police reported the arrest of a 14-year-old

they said was linked to the incident, but added that the investigation was continuing.

A police spokesman admitted that similar occurrences in the past went unmentioned in the news media.

Until quite recently, in fact, the only anti-Semitic incidents reported by the East German media occurred in West Germany, which was portrayed as a hotbed of neo-Nazism.

East Germany has traditionally denied it had anything to do with the past, as atrocities against Jews and others were blamed on "capitalist" and "fascist" West Germany.

East Germany never paid reparations to Jewish victims of Nazism, in contrast to the estimated \$43 billion (at today's exchange rate) made available by West Germany since 1952.

East Germany has long maintained a hostile posture toward Israel. Its controlled press regularly equates Israelis with Nazis.

East Germany trained thousands of Palestine Liberation Organization members in its territory.

PLO chief Yasir Arafat has been a guest of honor at many events in East Berlin. On Oct. 7, he was received by Erich Honecker, then still the East German leader, and stood in the front row when the East German army paraded in East Berlin to mark the country's 40th anniversary.

KOHLS POLAND VISIT CAUSES FLAP

By David Kantor

BONN, Nov. 9 (JTA) -- Jewish activists are up in arms over the itinerary of West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl's current visit to Poland, which has him touring the former Auschwitz death camp this Saturday.

They consider it an affront to have scheduled the visit on the Jewish Sabbath.

Heinz Galinski, an Auschwitz survivor who is chairman of the West German Jewish Community and a member of Kohl's official entourage, said there was no way he would accompany the chancellor to Auschwitz on Saturday.

The situation created a mini-crisis on the first day of Kohl's six-day trip.

ISRAEL ENTERS ERA OF CABLE TV

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Nov. 9 (JTA) -- Israel, for better or worse, got wired for cable television this week.

Subscribers will now be able to select from 24 channels, some operating around the clock, for a fee of about \$50 a month.

In addition to Israeli television, they will have a choice of programming from Jordan -- officially an "enemy" state; Christian missionary broadcasts in English from Lebanon; and a dozen or more news and entertainment shows via satellite from the United States and Europe.

All of this will start on Jan. 1.

In the meantime, the first cable television franchise began operations on an experimental basis in Bat Yam, a suburb of Tel Aviv.

The \$20 million investment started with 120 clients, who were offered a two-month trial limited to several hours a day of programming.

In return, they have to report to the franchiser what programs they like and the quality of reception.

Cable facilities, expected to be countrywide in 18 months, are provided by Bezek Telecommunications, the government-owned phone company.