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**NO SIGN YET IF BUSH WILL OFFER
SOVIETS A JACKSON-VANIK WAIVER**
By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Nov. 28 (JTA) -- It is not yet clear whether President Bush will offer Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev a one-year waiver of Jackson-Vanik Amendment trade sanctions when the two meet this weekend for their shipboard summit off the coast of Malta.

That possibility has been raised by a number of observers. But the Bush administration has not revealed what proposals, if any, Bush plans to make for what has been billed as a get-acquainted session between the two superpower leaders.

In fact, to stress this informal atmosphere, Bush is only taking along a small number of advisers, rather than the huge group that accompanied President Ronald Reagan when he met with Gorbachev.

The talks are expected to center on the rapid changes in Eastern Europe, where Communist regimes are collapsing one after another, and on what efforts can be made to help their economies, as well as that of the Soviet Union.

It is in this context that Bush might offer as a symbolic gesture a waiver of Jackson-Vanik sanctions. The amendment links most-favored-nation trade benefits for the Soviet Union with substantial emigration reforms.

But chairwoman of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry, Shoshana Cardin, said Tuesday that she doubted Bush would make the gesture now, since the president has stated that he will only consider consulting with Congress on a waiver after the Soviets adopt legislation reforming its emigration laws and implement those changes.

No New Law Before February

The Supreme Soviet did introduce a new law this month that would set a five-year limit on barring people deemed to possess state secrets from receiving exit visas. The law would also reform the "poor relative" provision, under which visas can now be denied because a parent or other relative claims a financial obligation.

But Cardin told a news conference here that the Supreme Soviet is not expected to act on the law before February and therefore has not fulfilled conditions for a Jackson-Vanik waiver.

Cardin announced that she and Martin Wenick, NCSJ's executive director, will be in Malta on Saturday and Sunday "to ensure that human rights remains part of the agenda in these bilateral talks."

"We acknowledge that there has been significant progress in the Soviet treatment of Jews," said Cardin. She pointed to the "dramatic rise in emigration," which may reach as high as 70,000 this year. She also said that the Soviets have "tolerated" a rebirth in Jewish religious and cultural life.

At the same time, Cardin stressed that there are still 107 long-term refusenik families denied visas for state secrecy reasons, and another 107 on the grounds they had poor relatives.

Karmela Raiz, who with her husband, Vladimir, has been denied an exit visa since 1973 on the basis of state secrets, also appeared at the

news conference, with one of her two sons, 12-year-old Moshe. She is here on a tourist visa, while her husband and other son remain in the Soviet Union.

Cardin also said there has been a rise in anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union and faulted Gorbachev for not speaking out. She expressed hope that Bush would raise the issue with him.

AJCongress Favors Waiver Now

As for the new Soviet legislation, Cardin said NCSJ's concern is more with "deeds, not necessarily words." The test for the NCSJ will be the release of the remaining long-term refuseniks, she said.

Cardin added that the NCSJ wants to know from the administration what kind of time period it will set for testing the implementation of the new law before waiving Jackson-Vanik.

The administration has sent conflicting signals on this. Commerce Secretary Robert Mosbacher said recently that a waiver could come within three months of the law's adoption.

But Attorney General Dick Thornburgh told the Council of Jewish Federations in Cincinnati earlier this month that the new emigration rules should be "institutionalized and not just episodic, in the present uncertain flux of Soviet democratization."

Meanwhile, the American Jewish Congress has sent Bush a letter, signed by its president, Robert Lifton, urging Bush to announce an immediate one-year waiver of Jackson-Vanik.

"Emigration has substantially increased nearly every month for the past three years, and in each of the last six months," Lifton said. "And we believe that what happens on the ground is more important than what appears in a statute book."

Lifton added that a waiver "will provide an incentive for the Soviet Union to continue to keep its borders open, and the possibility of the rescission of this waiver will make our continued monitoring of their practices more effective."

**DIPLOMATIC BATTLE UNDER WAY AT U.N.
TO BLOCK RESOLUTION ELEVATING PLO**
By Allison Kaplan

UNITED NATIONS, Nov. 28 (JTA) -- A diplomatic battle is being waged to block the adoption of any General Assembly draft resolution that would upgrade the status of the Palestine Liberation Organization's U.N. observer mission to that of an observer state.

The United States is leading the fight against elevating the PLO's status and has threatened to withhold its contribution to the United Nations headquarters budget if such a resolution were to be adopted.

The current situation appears to be one of the rare occasions in the United Nations when the United States and Israel have found a number of allies for its stand against the PLO among European and non-aligned nations.

Western European countries, developing nations and even some in Arab nations oppose upgrading the PLO's status, according to officials here, including Israeli's Ambassador Johanan Bein.

Bein said that he is "optimistic" that Gen-

eral Assembly action on such a resolution can be forestalled. "I hope that it will not come up for a vote, but if there is a vote, it will be defeated," he said.

If a resolution is brought to the floor, Israeli officials are pinning their hopes on the fact that fear of losing U.S. funding will influence many countries to vote against it.

The United States is responsible for paying 25 percent of the United Nations annual budget, although it presently owes the international organization more than \$800 million in arrears.

Arabs To Decide Wednesday

Two General Assembly draft resolutions addressing the issue are said to be circulating among diplomats. One resolution contains stronger language than the second, but both clearly recognize the PLO leadership as the government of "the State of Palestine."

Diplomats say they expect Arab leaders to decide Wednesday whether they intend to press for either of the resolutions in the face of U.S. opposition. The matter will be discussed then at an Arab League meeting in Tunisia.

But the timing of such a scenario would be tricky, as the General Assembly debate on the "Question of Palestine" is set for Wednesday and Thursday.

In Rome, the U.N.'s Food and Agricultural Organization was also expected to vote Wednesday on an equally controversial resolution, which would not only recognize the PLO as representing a Palestinian state, but would consider the organization an official channel for humanitarian aid to Palestinians.

In Washington, State Department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler said Tuesday that U.S. pressure "within the Arab group and other delegations" regarding both the General Assembly and FAO resolutions is continuing.

Tutwiler's statement Monday threatening to cut off U.S. funding to the United Nations won praise from the leadership of the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations.

A letter signed by Seymour Reich and Malcolm Hoenlein, respectively the chairman and executive director of the Conference of Presidents, said the U.S. position "sends a powerful signal to the PLO, and also to the members of the U.N. themselves, that our country will not permit the U.N. to be converted into a forum for PLO propaganda and will resist any effort to alter the status of the PLO into that of a state."

Strong Rhetoric On The Floor

However, U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar implicitly criticized the U.S. position Tuesday.

The secretary-general "considers that the contribution of the United States to the (U.N.) budget is not in any way linked to anything that happens in the General Assembly, but that it is an obligation under the (U.N.) Charter," Perez de Cuellar's spokesman said at a briefing here.

As the diplomats wrangled behind the scenes over the PLO resolution, the spotlight on the Arab-Israeli conflict shone on the General Assembly floor as well.

More than 40 countries took the podium in the General Assembly hall to address the agenda item titled "The Situation in the Middle East."

As expected, most of the delegates delivered stinging denunciations of Israeli policies and practices, and praised the PLO.

Virtually all endorsed the idea of an international peace conference to resolve the conflict between Israel and Palestinians, and a few specifically attacked the Israeli peace initiative as being irrelevant and useless.

Typical of the strongest rhetoric were the remarks of Saudi Arabia's representative, who referred to the danger of "networks of Zionist influence in some world capitals."

Syria's representative termed Israel "a racist settler-colonialist entity and an active force against peace and security in the Middle East."

Ambassador Bein of Israel dismissed the General Assembly speeches as "the usual repetition of empty slogans."

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

PLO MEETING IN THE HAGUE DRAWS BIG CROWD, BUT FEW POLITICIANS

By Henrietta Boas

AMSTERDAM, Nov. 28 (JTA) -- The Palestine Liberation Organization drew a standing-room-only crowd of more than 1,000 to a public meeting in The Hague last week, dedicated to Palestinian national aspirations.

Several hundred friends of Israel demonstrated outside.

The Nov. 23 event, organized by the PLO's representative here, Afif Safieh, was scheduled to coincide, more or less, with the United Nations annual day of solidarity with the Palestinian people.

It also marked the first anniversary of the proclamation of an "independent Palestine," by the Palestine National Council and the upcoming second anniversary of the start of the intifada.

That agglomeration of events apparently was too much for Holland's four largest political parties, which had planned to send speakers, but backed off at the last minute.

There was no representative from the Foreign Ministry, though a former foreign minister, Laborite Max van der Stoep, attended.

But Safieh seemed satisfied. He predicted that the Palestine information office here will be upgraded and receive diplomatic status.

Arab diplomats attended, but the Greek ambassador was the only envoy from a European Community member state.

Alman Metten, a pro-Palestinian member of the Dutch Labor Party, spoke in his capacity as a deputy of the Parliament of Europe. The Dutch Parliament was represented by a lone member from a small extreme left-wing faction.

The principal speaker was Professor Dirk Mulder, chairman of the Netherlands Council of Churches. Although his participation had the council's unanimous approval, there was criticism from some pro-Israel Protestant groups and by the Consultative Council of Jews and Christians.

NAVY INTERCEPTS YACHT WITH TERRORISTS By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Nov. 28 (JTA) -- The Israeli navy stopped a yacht bearing the Cypriot flag on the high seas Monday, and removed two passengers it claimed to be terrorists belonging to Yasir Arafat's Al Fatah faction of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

The vessel and its four-member crew were allowed to proceed to its destination, the port of Sidon, in southern Lebanon.

**GERMAN JEWS' FEARS OF REUNIFICATION
FUELED BY KOHL SPEECH TO PARLIAMENT**

By David Kantor

BONN, Nov. 28 (JTA) -- Officially, the Jewish community here is silent on the subject of German reunification. But privately, often indirectly, community activists articulate their fears.

Some spoke of leaving the country after Chancellor Helmut Kohl delivered a major policy speech Tuesday, in which he extolled the idea of one Germany.

"We are ready to develop confederative structures between both states in Germany, with the goal of a federation," Kohl told the Bundestag, West Germany's parliament.

He said that if East Germany holds free elections, the two countries could soon establish a bilateral commission to coordinate policies.

The issue of reunification has emerged so swiftly and suddenly that German Jews have been taken aback. Only a few weeks ago, the Berlin Wall was intact and political reform had not swept the Communist hard-liners out of office in East Berlin.

Now, reunification is considered unavoidable. A member of the Jewish community in Cologne was reported by friends to be considering migration to the United States, Britain or Israel.

Elsewhere in the Federal Republic, Jews are concerned that there will be an upsurge of German nationalism if the two Germans are united to become the strongest nation in Europe.

"Until now, German national ambitions have been barely audible for fear and shame, but that posture is bound to disappear when the Germans are united," one Jewish community member said.

**WOMEN OF THE WALL DEDICATE TORAH
AND WIN RIGHT TO CONDUCT SERVICE**

By Jacqueline Landau

JERUSALEM, Nov. 28 (JTA) -- The right of Jewish women in Israel to pray where and how they choose received one setback and one small advance this week as it confronted opposition from the ultra-Orthodox religious establishment.

A group called Women of the Wall failed to persuade the Jerusalem Magistrates Court to force Jerusalem's Laromme Hotel to allow it to conduct a Torah scroll dedication ceremony Monday night at the hotel.

But the same court ruled Tuesday that the hotel had to allow the women to conduct prayer services inside the hotel this Saturday.

The Jerusalem Religious Council had threatened to revoke the hotel's kashrut license if it allowed the Torah dedication to take place. It intervened at the last moment, although the ceremony had been scheduled months in advance.

The hotel management, fearing it would lose its kosher certification, succumbed to the pressure. The dedication ceremony was held instead in the gymnasium of a nearby school.

The Women of the Wall group, organized a year ago during the First International Jewish Feminist Conference, also held a women's Rosh Chodesh (New Moon) prayer service Tuesday morning at the Western Wall, which is known in Hebrew as the Kotel.

The Torah scroll was donated by the International Committee for Women at the Kotel, a support group of some 500 Jewish women from the Diaspora, many of them religiously observant.

A delegation of 30 women came to Israel

under the auspices of the American Jewish Congress to present the Torah to the Israeli group.

AJCongress reacted angrily to the obstructionism of the Orthodox religious authorities in Jerusalem.

Henry Siegman, the organization's executive director, issued a statement in New York on Tuesday, saying, "It is sad that the rabbinate in Israel should not hesitate to resort to such ugly tactics to deny Jews the privilege of dedicating a Torah scroll."

Torah Procession Through Streets

The failure of the hotel to permit the dedication ceremony did not prevent the group from conducting a Torah procession through the streets of Jerusalem on Monday evening.

About 100 women and a handful of men marched from the hotel to the Yemen Moshe quarter, where the women recited evening prayers under a balmy autumn skyline within sight of Mount Zion.

Torah processions are a familiar sight in Jerusalem. But in this case, it was women who were carrying the scroll and female voices singing the traditional Hebrew hymns.

The only discordant note was struck by a solitary Orthodox woman bystander, who shouted at the group, "You're a bunch of weirdos."

The Tuesday morning service at the Kotel went off smoothly, despite rabbinical and judicial restraints pending a decision by the High Court of Justice on whether the women may conduct organized prayer services at the Kotel.

There was no intervention by female orderlies employed by the Orthodox-controlled Religious Affairs Ministry to keep the worshippers under surveillance.

But the women's services at the Kotel are known to anger the religious authorities, who object especially to women reading from a Torah scroll and chanting prayers.

The women are now banned from reading the Torah at the Wall, pending a court hearing next month of conflicting petitions from the women and the Religious Affairs Ministry.

The women are also under temporary court orders to recite their prayers, instead of chanting them. To read the Torah, they retire to a nearby archaeological garden site.

Women of the Wall has scrupulously observed both halachic injunctions and the orders of the High Court, where its case is still under judicial consideration.

But sources in New York said the group may attempt to hold a Torah service at the Wall later this week.

TOUGH NEW 'GET' LAW GAINS SUPPORT

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Nov. 28 (JTA) -- Sephardic Chief Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu gave guarded approval Tuesday to revolutionary new legislation proposed by the Religious Affairs Ministry to aid wives whose husbands refuse to grant them "gets," or bills of divorce.

Under the proposed law, such husbands could have their civil rights revoked by the courts unless and until they comply with the orders of a Beth Din (religious court) to give the "get."

Those rights could include the right to elect and be elected to public office, the right to work in the civil service, the right to hold a driver's license or the right to sign checks.

ISRAELI LEADERS SPEAK OF THOUSANDS, EVEN A MILLION SOVIETS EMIGRATING

By David Landau and Hugh Orgel

JERUSALEM, Nov. 28 (JTA) -- Israeli officials are revising upward their estimates of how many Soviet Jews are expected to come to Israel in the next few years, now that the Soviet authorities are about to remove virtually all restrictions on emigration.

The assessments vary from reasonable projections to wishful thinking, but there is a consensus that all the resources of the state and the Jewish Agency for Israel must be mobilized for the huge absorption task ahead.

Simcha Dinitz, chairman of the World Zionist Organization-Jewish Agency Executive, addressed the subject at a meeting of the WZO Executive here this week.

He was quoted as saying that between 200,000 and 300,000 Soviet Jews will choose to settle in Israel in the next three years.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir told the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee on Monday that in the last month alone, 45,000 Soviet Jews initiated contact with the Israeli government for the invitations they need to apply for exit visas.

Dinitz told reporters in New York last week that Israel has received more than a million requests from Jews in the USSR for invitations to immigrate.

He said the numbers have increased since the change last month in U.S. policy that no longer grants refugee status to holders of Israeli visas.

Shamir reportedly said half a million Soviet Jews were likely to seek to emigrate in the next two to three years. But he was not clear, in his presentation to the Knesset panel, about how many he expected would come to Israel.

2,000 Arrivals In November

On Tuesday, however, Shamir was certain that up to a million Jews would leave the USSR and that many would come to Israel.

Speaking at the annual Israel Editors Committee luncheon for the prime minister, Shamir said, "According to the simple arithmetic calculations, the number of Jews wishing to leave the Soviet Union will quickly reach a million souls, and a large part of them will come to Israel."

He said 2,000 have arrived so far in November, and another 1,000 would have come if there had been more transportation available.

Direct flights between Moscow and Tel Aviv are expected to begin in January jointly by El Al and Aeroflot, the Soviet airline.

Dinitz told the WZO Executive that "Israel will welcome with open arms every Jew, even the millionth Jew, even if we have to make do with one egg per week."

Dinitz said that all units and departments of the Jewish Agency and WZO would have to focus on Soviet Jewry in the years ahead.

"A quarter of the Jewish people is in a state of movement and flux today, and this must mean a special organizational effort on the part of the Jewish Agency," Dinitz said.

He noted that the Jewish Agency directly covered the cost of bringing olim from the USSR to Israel, and that with current and expected rates of immigration, the money expended on air tickets alone -- assuming direct flights -- would amount to tens of millions of dollars.

JEWISH SETTLERS TO RAISE OWN FUNDS FOR ABSORPTION OF OLIM IN TERRITORIES

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Nov. 28 (JTA) -- Leaders of the Gush Emunim settlers movement are planning to conduct their own fund-raising efforts overseas for the absorption of Soviet olim in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Uri Ariel, secretary of the Council of Jewish Settlements in Judea and Samaria, said his group, which is led by Gush Emunim activists, is considering sending emissaries abroad to raise funds on its own to absorb Jewish emigres from the Soviet Union in the West Bank.

One such emissary, Soviet Jewish activist Yosef Begun, who now lives in Kiryat Arba, is presently with a group on a fund-raising mission to Britain.

Ariel said that the council is being forced to launch its own fund-raising efforts because the Jewish Agency for Israel will not provide funds for absorption of Soviet Jews in the administered territories.

He charged that this "unacceptable" policy is not the result of pressure by the U.S. government, but compliance with the desire of donors to the United Jewish Appeal, which provides the lion's share of funds to the Jewish Agency.

According to Ariel, some 200 families from the Soviet Union have been successfully absorbed in the West Bank in recent months. He said money for their initial requirements came from the council's own funds instead of the Jewish Agency or the government's Immigration and Absorption Ministry.

TEHIYA PARTY TO CHANGE MAKEUP, AND COULD ADD SEAT IN KNESSET

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Nov. 28 (JTA) -- Right-wing opposition in the Knesset may soon receive a significant boost, at least in terms of decibel-power, if the Tehiya party goes ahead with planned personnel changes within its three-seat faction.

Due to take up seats in the Knesset are settlement leaders Gershon Shafat and Elyakim Haetzni, who will replace Tehiya's chairman, Professor Yuval Ne'eman, and Rabbi Eliezer Waldman.

The outgoing Knesset members are known as among the quietest in the Knesset in terms of heckling or otherwise making their personalities felt, while Haetzni, who was No. 5 on Tehiya's party list, is a real orator -- whether from podium or floor.

Shafat is an experienced parliamentarian who would also add weight to the rightist party's performance.

Political sources on Tuesday cautioned, however, that Tehiya would make the changes only if it remains a three-seat faction. But this situation could change if a current court action against the Degel HaTorah party, regarding charges of vote-rigging in the November 1988 elections, goes against the ultra-Orthodox party and results in its losing one of its two seats.

That seat would go to Tehiya, which fell just a sliver short of securing four seats in the post-election arithmetical carve-up of "remainder votes" after the election. If Tehiya grows to a four-seat faction, Ne'eman and Waldman might change their decisions to quit, these sources said.