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BUSH TELLS SOVIETS THAT REFORMS MUST PRECEDE TRADE CONCESSIONS

VALLETTA, Malta, Dec. 3 (JTA) — George Bush ended his first superpower summit conference as president without giving Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev a firm commitment to ease trade sanctions against the USSR, though it is clearly the U.S. administration's desire to do so.

The two countries agreed to set up informal working groups to draft a bilateral trade agreement. But Bush told his Soviet counterpart that the United States is prepared to make trade concessions only if promised emigration reforms are implemented.

That stance pleased leaders of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry, who came here to monitor the summit meeting. They were also pleased that the subject of human rights figured high on the agenda of the two leaders' talks.

Other areas of particular concern to Jews that were discussed by the superpower leaders included German reunification and the Middle East.

Bush and Gorbachev discussed these and other subjects at a news conference Sunday aboard the Soviet cruise ship Maxim Gorky, as did members of their respective entourages, in interviews with the broadcast media.

Brent Scowcroft, the president's national security adviser, said Bush and Gorbachev "talked about a trade agreement as a precondition for most-favored-nation status."

That has been precluded since the Jackson-Vanik Amendment linking trade with Soviet emigration policies took effect in 1974, aborting a trade agreement that had just been hammered out between the two powers.

Bush is said to have told the Soviet leader that he would agree to a waiver of Jackson-Vanik sanctions, but not before the proposed new legislation on emigration becomes law.

Progress 'Almost Too Dramatic'

"The president indicated an 'if,' " Martin Wenick, executive director of the National Conference, stressed in an interview with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. "My sense is what the president said is that 'it's up to you.'"

Bush is expected to ask for a Jackson-Vanik waiver by his next summit meeting with Gorbachev in June, assuming emigration reform legislation is implemented on schedule.

A draft emigration reform bill won overwhelming support in its first reading before the Supreme Soviet on Nov. 14, but is unlikely to be enacted before February.

Baker said he "will work with the Congress to see if we can't repeal some of this legislation that prevents us from having more normal economic relations."

The secretary of state was almost euphoric on the subject of human rights accomplishments.

"We have made so much progress in human rights over the course of the past 11 months with the Soviet Union that it is almost too dramatic to even try to describe," he said on the CBS-TV program "Face the Nation."

Baker said that Bush and Gorbachev focused on human rights during their discussions Sunday.

He said the Americans presented the Soviets with a list of names of divided families and refuseniks. "That's something we have always done at our meetings with the Soviets, and we will continue to do," Baker said.

Bush apparently presented Gorbachev with the names of 20 emigration cases, not necessarily all Jewish. The NCSJ had provided the White House and State Department with a list of over 200 Jewish families denied permission to emigrate.

More Than 11,000 Left Last Month

Meanwhile, Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union is proceeding at a record pace. According to preliminary figures reported by NCSJ, 11,168 Jews left the Soviet Union in November, the highest monthly total on record.

Of that number, at least 1,826, or 16.4 percent, went to Israel. That number is expected to increase. Final figures will be available on Dec. 10.

The November figure, an 18 percent increase over the previous month, brings emigration for the year so far to 62,504, the highest of any year since NCSJ's Soviet Jewry Research Bureau began recording emigration statistics. Prior to 1989, the record emigration year was 1979, when 51,320 Jews left the Soviet Union.

A sustained high level of emigration is one of four concerns NCSJ would like to see satisfied before the United States moves to normalize trade relations with the Soviets.

The others are progress in resolving the cases of long-term refuseniks, strict limits on the use of "state secrets" as a grounds for denying exit visas and a resolution of the "poor relatives" problem, by which family members may prevent others from emigrating by refusing to sign a waiver of financial obligation.

If Bush receives assurances from the Soviets on those four conditions, NCSJ is prepared to support a waiver of Jackson-Vanik sanctions.

But another activist group of summit-watchers, the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry, expressed disappointment over what it called the administration's "abandonment" of its stance on Jackson-Vanik.

The Student Struggle's national chairman, Rabbi Avraham Weiss, insisted that before Moscow receives any trade concessions from the United States, it must "codify its emigration laws in accord with international standards and implement its new laws faithfully."

He urged a trial period of a year before Jackson-Vanik is waived.

No Hurry On Reunification

Weiss and two other activists from the Student Struggle staged a small protest outside the office of the Maltese prime minister, as Gorbachev and his wife, Raisa, arrived.

Adopting a less confrontational stance than shown at previous summits, they held signs reading "Peace and Freedom for Soviet Jewry" and "Glasnost -- Yes! Human Rights -- Yes!"

The director of the Supreme Soviet's press center, Arkadi Maslennikov, said here Thursday that the pending emigration reform legislation would provide for "a considerable widening of possibilities" for emigration and "remove all

unjustified limitations on entry and exit, according to international law."

The Soviet official acknowledged, however, that there would be certain restrictions on free emigration for those with knowledge of military and other secrets. But those restrictions would be for "very specific time limits," he said. The draft legislation is said to specify a five-year maximum.

Soviet and American officials here also discussed the idea of German reunification, which emerged as a real possibility suddenly last month following sweeping reforms in East Germany, including the symbolic razing of the Berlin Wall.

Many Jews, particularly Holocaust survivors, have expressed apprehension at the thought of a united Germany that could once again dominate Europe economically and militarily.

Baker reiterated his earlier statement that "reunification should proceed gradually. It might be premature to jump from free passage and the right of free travel by East Germans, all the way over to reunification," he said.

Gorbachev remarked that the two Germanys were decided by history, and history should decide their destiny.

On the Middle East, Bush said he was pleased with the "constructive role" Moscow was playing in support of a peaceful settlement of the civil war in Lebanon and on the "West Bank question."

But he made clear that while the United States welcomes Soviet cooperation in the region, it is not interested in collaboration -- meaning Moscow's direct participation in the peace process.

(JTA Washington correspondent David Friedman contributed to this report.)

E.C. MINISTERS TO MEET THIS MONTH WITH ARAB LEAGUE STATES AND PLO

By Yossi Lempkowicz

BRUSSELS, Dec. 3 (JTA) -- A French effort to revive the long moribund Euro-Arab dialogue appears to be succeeding, despite objections from some of France's European Community partners.

The foreign ministers of the 12 E.C. nations and the 22 Arab League countries will convene in Paris on Dec. 22, along with representatives of the Palestine Liberation Organization. The meeting will be hosted by France, which currently chairs the E.C. Council of Ministers.

Such a meeting was proposed last month by French President Francois Mitterrand, in an address to a session of the European Parliament, the E.C.'s legislative body. He coupled his proposal with harsh criticism of Israeli policies.

However, some E.C. countries think the time is not ripe for such a high-level meeting.

Britain, in particular, has expressed reservations. Several sources here have hinted that London will send officials of less than ministerial rank to the Paris meeting to show its displeasure.

European-Arab political dialogue has been static for some years, partly because of European suspicions that certain Arab countries were abetting international terrorism.

Britain took the lead four years ago by leveling such charges against Libya and Syria, both Arab League member states, and isolating them diplomatically and economically.

Libya is threatening to break relations with any Arab country that participates in the dialogue, as long as Libya and Syria are blacklisted and boycotted by the European countries.

U.N. DELAYS VOTE ON RESOLUTION UPGRADING PLO'S REPRESENTATION

By Allison Kaplan

UNITED NATIONS, Dec. 3 (JTA) -- The General Assembly on Friday postponed a scheduled vote on a resolution that would elevate the status of the Palestine Liberation Organization here to that of an observer state.

The vote is now scheduled to take place on Monday.

According to Western diplomatic sources here, the PLO is split on whether to press ahead with a vote on the resolution, which is strongly opposed by the United States and Israel.

The U.S. government last week threatened to cut off funds to the U.N. headquarters budget if the General Assembly adopts any resolution that, in effect, recognizes a Palestinian state. The move would cripple the United Nations, a fourth of whose budget comes from U.S. funds.

The Israeli mission here is lobbying heavily against the resolution, which was introduced during the assembly's annual debate on "The Question of Palestine." Representatives of more than 100 member nations were contacted by Israeli officials last Thursday and Friday, in an effort to mobilize opposition to the proposal.

ARAFAT LASHES OUT AT WEST GERMANY FOR BEING STINGY TOWARD PALESTINIANS

By David Kantor

BONN, Dec. 3 (JTA) -- Yasir Arafat has accused the West German government of being overly generous to Israel, but stingy when it comes to helping the Palestinians.

The Palestine Liberation Organization chairman complained, in an interview published in Quick magazine, that while Israel has gotten 57 billion marks (\$32 billion) from Bonn, the Palestinians have received a mere "tip."

He said Germany's contribution to the United Nations fund to help Palestinian refugees is "shameful." He claimed it is far less than what other U.N. members give, but he cited no figures.

Arafat was clearly angered and frustrated by the refusal of top government officials to receive him in Bonn.

The opposition Social Democratic Party has invited the PLO chief here, but he has asked for meetings with Chancellor Helmut Kohl and President Richard von Weizsacker, which the Social Democrats cannot arrange. Arafat said he wants to talk to them about peace in the Middle East.

But the government has issued no invitation, although PLO spokesman Bassam Abu Sharif maintains that an invitation was discussed during a meeting he had Oct. 16 at the Foreign Ministry.

The PLO chairman told Quick that he holds the Germans doubly responsible for the Palestinians' plight. "When the Nazis expelled the Jews, they came to my country," he said.

Later, the Jews were able to build their state with all the billions lavished on them by the Germans, Arafat said, apparently referring to war reparations paid to Holocaust survivors by the Federal Republic. "We (Palestinians) were thus twice the victims," he said.

There is a popular theory here that Hitler's persecution of the Jews was responsible for the creation of Israel. It has been advanced by former Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, who said Germany has a special responsibility toward the Palestinians because of the consequences of the Nazi era.

LIBYA REPORTED MAKING POISON GAS AT SUSPECT CHEMICAL PLANT IN RABTA

By David Kantor

BONN, Dec. 3 (JTA) -- Libya has begun to produce poison gas at its chemical plant at Rabta, which was designed and equipped by a West German chemical firm, government officials here confirmed.

The quantities so far have been negligible and experimental, according to a West German customs officer, Klaus-Peter Rieke. But Libyan agents have approached many West German companies in recent weeks to obtain more of the substances needed to go into full-scale production, Rieke told the news program "Tagesthemen."

Jurgen Imhausen, the owner and manager of the company that built the Rabta plant, has been in prison in Mannheim for four months awaiting trial. He allegedly provided Libya with the know-how and materials to produce poison gas.

Prosecution officials made available to television blueprints of the Rabta plant prepared in West Germany and photographs of the plant as it now stands.

"The similarities are striking," said one official. "There is no doubt in our minds that the factory was planned on drawing boards in this country."

Investigators here said full operation of the Rabta plant may be only weeks away and would depend on the ability of the Libyans to get more assistance from West Germany.

The prosecution identified the ingredients for poison gas which Libya has gotten from West Germany.

They are thiodiglycol, thionylchloride, phosphorus trichloride and sodium fluoride.

They are used to produce the deadly gases Lost, Sarin and Soman.

SCHWAMMBERGER REPORTED OUT OF COMA AS INQUIRY INTO OVERDOSE CONTINUES

By Allison Kaplan

NEW YORK, Dec. 3 (JTA) -- Accused Nazi war criminal Josef Schwammburger, who lapsed into a drug-induced coma in his Argentine prison cell on Nov. 23, has regained consciousness and is improving medically, the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles reported Friday.

Rabbi Abraham Cooper, the center's associate dean, said Schwammburger's chief prosecutor, Guillermo Lopez, reported that "Schwammburger's health has improved. He's no longer in a coma."

An investigation into what caused the coma is under way, he said. Schwammburger was on heart medication, and there will be testing to see if drugs other than those for his heart were in his bloodstream, Cooper said.

At the time of the apparent drug overdose, there was speculation that Schwammburger, 77, may have attempted suicide. Argentine Federal Judge Manuel Blanco subsequently initiated an investigation into whether drugs had been forced on Schwammburger, either in an induced suicide attempt or in a homicide attempt.

Prosecutor Lopez also indicated there would be an upgrading of the police guard placed around Schwammburger, from municipal protection to a federal guard. Schwammburger is in a hospital in La Plata, some 35 miles south of Buenos Aires.

Schwammburger stands to be extradited to West Germany, where he would be tried for

crimes against humanity. The government of the Federal Republic of Germany first requested his extradition 14 years ago.

Last week, the federal court in Stuttgart formally issued an arrest warrant for Schwammburger, a former SS colonel who is charged with having brutally killed thousands of Jews in at least four Polish towns.

The German court issued the warrant as Schwammburger was awaiting the outcome of an appeal to the Argentine Supreme Court. There had been indications that the appeal would not be heard.

A federal judge first approved his extradition to West Germany in November 1988. Schwammburger's appeal to the Argentine federal appeals court was overruled this past September.

Schwammburger also was wanted for murder by Poland following World War II, according to his listing in the United Nations War Crimes Archives.

The Austrian-born Nazi had been arrested by Austria after the war, but escaped from prison and made his way to Argentina around 1949. The Wiesenthal Center believes he was aided in his escape by the Nazi "Odessa" network.

IDF DESTROYS NABLUS TERRORIST GANG CREDITED WITH SPATE OF EXECUTIONS

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Dec. 3 (JTA) -- The Israel Defense Force believes it has delivered a powerful blow against the intifada by destroying a Palestinian terrorist gang it says specialized in the brutal executions of fellow Arabs suspected of collaborating with the Israeli authorities.

Four gang members, including its three top leaders, were killed, two were wounded and three captured in a shootout with the IDF in the Nablus casbah on Friday.

So far, 70 suspects have been detained. Nablus was placed under curfew and house-to-house searches launched Saturday morning have yielded axes, bayonets and clubs. A curfew also was clamped on a neighboring refugee camp.

The gang, which called itself the Black Panthers, is alleged to have murdered 15 suspected collaborators. They also allegedly solicited money, interrogated suspects and held paramilitary parades in the casbah.

Intelligence efforts put the IDF on the trail of the gang leaders, who were cornered in a barbershop in the Yasmina quarter of the casbah Friday.

Gen. Yitzhak Mordechai, commander of the central region, which includes the West Bank, denied a BBC report that the Israeli soldiers were disguised as Arabs.

According to Mordechai, the gang leader, Imad Nasser, 26, pulled out a loaded pistol when he spotted the soldiers, but was shot dead before he could fire.

Also shot to death was his deputy, Hani Tayem, 22. Mordechai said Tayem was about to fire an M-16 rifle recently stolen from a border policeman injured by stones.

According to the general, the third terrorist leader shot to death was Omar Arafat, 26, who was also armed with a pistol.

The recent wave of murders in the Nablus casbah made the gang's dissolution a top priority.

The IDF had to destroy it to demonstrate its control of Nablus, the largest Arab city in the West Bank and the center of the intifada.

WOMEN'S LEAGUE COMES OUT PRO-CHOICE, BUT REJECTS CASUAL USE OF ABORTION

LOS ANGELES, Dec. 3 (JTA) -- The 200,000-member Women's League for Conservative Judaism met itself squarely in the pro-choice camp on the abortion issue, at the opening of its three-day national conference and open board meeting here Sunday.

At the same time, it rejected the casual use of abortion as a birth control device, stressing that Judaism cherishes the sanctity of life, even potential life.

Several other Jewish women's groups have come out in favor of a woman's freedom to choose abortion, including the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods, the women's congregational arm of the Reform movement.

Evelyn Auerbach, president of the Women's League, said it would act in cooperation with the other main organizations of Conservative Judaism, the Rabbinical Assembly and the United Synagogue of America, to mobilize the movement's 1.5 million members against any further erosion of Roe vs. Wade, the 1973 Supreme Court ruling affirming a woman's right to have an abortion.

"Women must have the ability to make their own determination regarding abortion, without the interference of legislators or jurists," Auerbach declared.

She criticized President Bush for his veto of the recent congressional bill that would have funded abortions for impoverished victims of incest or rape.

She urged Bush to demonstrate that he represents "all of the people, not just special interest groups" by reversing that veto.

About 400 Women's League delegates are here to develop programs that will address problems of ecology, crime, drugs and illiteracy.

ISRAEL, USSR JOIN ALL THE WORLD FOR EXCHANGE OF THEATRICAL TALENT

By Cathrine Gerson

JERUSALEM, Dec. 3 (JTA) -- Israel and the Soviet Union are setting the stage for a major exchange of theatrical talent.

Israel's famous acting troupe, Habimah, which had its origins in Moscow more than 70 years ago, returns there next month for what promises to be a long run.

Israelis, meanwhile, can look forward to a visit by Moscow's renowned Taganka Theater, which will perform at least three plays here starting next June. The troupe will be accompanied by the Soviet Union's newly appointed minister of culture, Nikolai Gubienko, but not in his official capacity.

Gubienko, an actor by profession, will be performing with the company, theater administrator Alexander Yefimovitch told a news conference at Beit Sokolov on Sunday.

Gubienko directed the Taganka from 1983 to 1985. He was named minister of culture by President Mikhail Gorbachev only two months ago.

Yefimovitch predicted full houses for Habimah and said its tour will probably run at least six months.

Though tickets have not gone on sale yet, orders are pouring in for performances through next July at the Taganka office in Moscow, which is handling the Habimah tour, Yefimovitch said.

Israel Television will record its opening in special broadcasts from Moscow in January.

LAVI TECHNOLOGY USED TO DEVELOP DEVICE TO AID CANCER DETECTION

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Dec. 3 (JTA) -- The abandoned Lavi fighter plane project is helping an Israeli company produce a new device for the early detection of cancer.

The machine, called the cytoscan, was developed at a cost of \$9 million by the Tamam Precision Instruments company, a subsidiary of Israel Aircraft Industries' electronics division.

It expects to sell about 20 worldwide in the coming year. The device is expected to sell for \$175,000.

IAI sources said the manufacturing principles, employing lasers, are a spinoff from the Lavi, Israel's second-generation jet fighter-bomber, which reached the prototype stage before it was canceled in 1987 because of excessive costs.

The cytoscan was developed by Israeli scientists on the basis of principles devised by a British-born husband-and-wife medical team.

The couple, who now live in the United States, had difficulty raising money to advance their ideas and turned to Israel for capital and manufacturing know-how.

The cytoscan can diagnose a cancerous growth within 60 minutes, using a blood sample, and can also determine the kind of cancer and its location in the body, according to a report in Ma'ariv on Friday.

It can detect and locate lung, breast and skin cancer and cancer of the large intestines. It cannot spot cancers where there is no solid tumor, such as blood cancer.

Experts say the equipment will be used initially in follow-up tests on women who have had surgery for breast cancer. But it will be some time before it is used in pre-cancer detection in presumably healthy persons.

The Israeli scientists credited with developing the cytoscan are Mordechai Deutsch and his instructor at Bar-Ilan University's physics department, Professor Aryeh Weinreb, and Dr. Reuven Tirosh.

ISRAELIS IN PHILIPPINES REPORTED SAFE

By Cathrine Gerson

JERUSALEM, Dec. 3 (JTA) -- All Israelis in the Philippines are safe following the failed coup attempt there this weekend, Israel's ambassador in Manila said Sunday in a telephone interview broadcast here on army radio.

The envoy, Yoav Bahiri, put the number of Israelis there at about 100, including tourists and permanent residents.

President Corazon Aquino appears to have defeated the attempted military coup, which began last Thursday. There was heavy fighting for a time in the heart of Manila.

OIL SPILL THREATENS HERZLIYA BEACH

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV Dec. 3 (JTA) -- An oil spill threatened the beach at Herzliya, north of Tel Aviv, after the small coastal tanker Eyal grounded off the seaside resort town Friday.

About 20 to 40 tons of oil leaked from a tear in the vessel's hull.

Bad weather hampered attempts to pump the remaining 600 tons into another tanker, so that the Eyal could be lightened and towed for repairs.