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**CZECHOSLOVAKIA WILL RESTORE TIES
WITH ISRAEL NEXT MONTH, SAYS HAVEL**

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Jan. 22 (JTA) -- The president of Czechoslovakia declared Monday that his country will re-establish diplomatic relations with Israel next month.

President Vaclav Havel made the announcement in Prague to Vice Premier Shimon Peres, the first Israeli Cabinet minister to visit the Czech capital since Czechoslovakia severed ties with Israel after the 1967 Six-Day War.

Czechoslovakia would become the second Eastern European country to restore full relations with Israel. In October, Hungary became the first to do so. Poland, which maintains an interest section in Tel Aviv, is also said to be close to restoring ties.

The formal act re-establishing relations between Israel and Czechoslovakia will be concluded during the upcoming official visit to Prague by Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Arens.

Officials here were appreciative of the Czech leader's deft handling of a potentially awkward situation involving the rivalry between Peres, who heads the Labor Party, and Arens of Likud.

Peres was given the satisfaction of hearing the announcement from Havel. Arens will have the gratification of wrapping up the diplomatic deal.

Arens visited Portugal last week and is presently in Spain. He was scheduled to go to Romania later this week, but that visit has been postponed because of unstable conditions in Romania, it was reported here Monday. No new date has been set.

Peres' visit to Prague follows the arrival in Israel two weeks ago of a delegation from the Czech Foreign Ministry. The delegation met with Israeli Foreign Ministry officials and inspected the old Czech Embassy premises, last used in 1968.

**ISRAELI RELIGION MINISTER VISITING USSR
By Cathrine Gerson**

JERUSALEM, Jan. 22 (JTA) -- Israel's minister for religious affairs, Zevulun Hammer, is on his way to establish religious ties with Soviet Jewry.

Hammer, a leader of the National Religious Party, left on a one-week visit to the Soviet Union on Monday. He will sign an agreement for cooperation between the Moscow Choral Synagogue and the Great Synagogue in Jerusalem.

He is also scheduled to meet his Soviet counterpart, Yuri Mamilavnov, and the patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church.

He will visit the Jewish communities in Moscow, Leningrad and other cities and will be guest of honor at a conference that will bring together representatives of 102 Jewish communities in the Soviet Union.

According to a ministerial aide, Hammer will offer Israeli material assistance to Soviet Jewish communities. In the past, this has included books, religious articles, supplies of kosher food and help to pay teachers of religious and Jewish subjects.

The Israeli minister is scheduled to lead a lesson at the Moscow yeshiva headed by Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz.

**AUTHORITIES RELEASE FAISAL HUSSEINI
THREE DAYS AFTER ACTIVIST'S ARREST**

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM Jan. 22 (JTA) -- The police freed Palestinian activist Faisal Husseini on Monday, triggering a stormier political outcry than the one set off by his arrest four days earlier.

Leftists said Husseini's release only confirmed their original charge that his detention last Friday was a concession to the vocal right, which had been demanding it.

The right wing now is accusing the government of succumbing to political pressure, especially from the United States, which rebuked Israel for detaining Husseini.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir insisted Monday that both Husseini's arrest and release were legal and non-political.

A resident of East Jerusalem, Husseini has been one of the most prominent advocates of non-violent Palestinian resistance to the Israeli presence in the administered territories.

But many Israelis are convinced that he is the arch leader of the intifada. Last Friday, the authorities apparently believed they had the evidence to press charges.

Husseini was arrested technically on suspicion of helping a terrorist cell active in Jerusalem. The police asked to hold him for 15 days while they prepared formal charges.

The court granted them only four days. Rumors circulated Sunday that they would apply for an extension.

Instead, Husseini was released on his own recognizance and a promise to appear for questioning if summoned.

He narrowly escaped physical harm as he left the Jerusalem jail shortly before noon Monday, surrounded by jubilant Palestinian and Israeli supporters.

Menacing Crowds Of Kach Activists

They were menaced by crowds of right-wing Jews, mostly followers of Rabbi Meir Kahane's extremist Kach movement, who attempted to assault Husseini and his friends.

He barely made it to a waiting car, escorted by two Arab Knesset members, Mohammed Miar and Abd-el Wahab Darousha. A few fistfights broke out in the crowd.

Husseini told a packed news conference at the National Palace Hotel in East Jerusalem later that his arrest was politically motivated.

He said the authorities were trying to abort his outreach campaign to convince the Israeli public to back negotiations with the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Husseini has been speaking to peace groups all over Israel along those lines since last month, when he was barred from entering the West Bank or traveling abroad.

Husseini denied he had any role in the intifada and said his interrogators had found nothing to incriminate him.

According to a police communique, he was released because his detention was no longer considered necessary for the ongoing investigation of terrorist cells in Jerusalem.

IDF OFFICER KILLED IN LEBANON DURING ASSAULT ON TERRORISTS

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Jan. 22 (JTA) -- A ranking Israel Defense Force officer was killed in the southern Lebanon security zone Sunday afternoon while leading an assault on a terrorist gang.

Col. Yitzhak Rahimov, 39, was the fifth senior IDF officer killed in action in Lebanon during the past five years.

He was buried at the Holon military cemetery Monday.

Rahimov commanded the IDF liaison unit with the Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army and was in charge of its training program.

The IDF and the largely Christian SLA jointly police the security zone. On Sunday, they became involved in an operation against a heavily armed terrorist gang hiding in an isolated hilltop building near the Shi'ite village of Yaroun.

The terrorists had been reported earlier seeking food in the village. Dressed in green uniforms, they were armed with Kalachnikov assault rifles, rocket-propelled grenade launchers and hand grenades.

IDF and SLA troops surrounded the building but refrained from attacking until it was determined that the terrorists had no hostages. They were acting on orders from Maj. Gen. Yossi Peled, head of the IDF Northern Command.

As Israeli tanks moved up, Col. Rahimov approached them and was shot in the head by a gunman from the building. He died almost instantly, IDF sources said.

The joint IDF-SLA force pounded the building with tank and automatic fire for several hours into the night.

A search after dawn yielded the bodies of three gunmen. A fourth found hiding less than 200 yards away was killed in a brief exchange of fire. There were no further IDF or SLA casualties.

The Abu Nidal terrorist gang, a dissident faction of the Palestine Liberation Organization, claimed in Sidon on Monday that its forces had engaged in "battle against Israel."

IDF sources said Rahimov behaved in the IDF tradition, leading his men instead of issuing orders from the rear.

The colonel, a graduate of Tel Aviv University, was married and the father of three children. He lived with his family at Kibbutz Merom Golan on the Golan Heights.

RABIN SAYS PEACE DEADLOCK THREATENS U.S. AID TO ISRAEL, BUT SHAMIR DISAGREES

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Jan. 22 (JTA) -- Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir is disputing Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin's somber assessment of the mood in Washington.

The Laborite defense chief, who met with Secretary of State James Baker and other top U.S. officials there last week, reported to the Cabinet on Sunday that talk of cutting aid to Israel stems directly from the "dismal state of the peace process."

Shamir insists it is not so.

Israelis were chilled when Senate Minority Leader Robert Dole (R-Kan.) suggested in a New York Times op-ed piece on Jan. 16 that U.S. aid to the five largest recipients be cut 5 percent to provide more help to emerging democracies in

Eastern Europe and Panama.

Israel, which gets \$3 billion annually in military and economic assistance grants, is the largest single beneficiary. Egypt comes in second place with \$2.3 billion.

According to the daily newspaper Ha'aretz, Rabin told his Cabinet colleagues that Dole's proposal was not his alone and hinted that it has the support of President Bush.

The defense minister blamed the idea on a sense in Washington that Israel is not doing enough to move the stalled peace process forward. He said that is a feeling now shared by Israel's oldest and best friends in the U.S. capital.

Shamir flatly contradicted Rabin in an appearance Monday before the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee. He insisted Dole's views are strictly his own and do not reflect the drift of administration policy.

"We have felt no change" in U.S.-Israeli relations, Shamir told reporters afterward.

Shamir Wants Vote Of Confidence

Secretary Baker is trying to arrange a meeting with the Egyptian and Israeli foreign ministers to hammer out, once and for all, the terms of an Israeli-Palestinian dialogue that Egypt has offered to host in Cairo.

The three-way meeting will not take place in January, as had been expected. And while there is hope for a February meeting, no date has been set.

The main issue blocking progress is the composition of the Palestinian delegation that would negotiate with Israel over the terms of Israel's proposal for Palestinian elections in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The Labor Party is more flexible on this than Shamir's Likud bloc, which wants to ensure that the Palestine Liberation Organization does not play even an indirect role in the selection of the delegates.

Israel's four most senior ministers, Shamir and Foreign Minister Moshe Arens of Likud, and Rabin and Vice Premier Shimon Peres of Labor, communicated their respective and presumably divergent positions to Washington last week.

As a result, Shamir's powerful rivals in Likud have accused the prime minister of reneging on a promise that all diplomatic traffic dealing with the peace effort in Washington would be subject to prior approval by the Inner Cabinet.

The Inner Cabinet, the coalition government's top policy-making body, consists of six senior Likud ministers and six from Labor.

One of the Likud members, Construction and Housing Minister David Levy, claimed that messages sent to Baker by Shamir and Arens last week were known by Peres and Rabin, but not by the Inner Cabinet.

"How did it happen that the entire leadership has been outflanked, ignored?" Levy asked in a radio interview Monday.

That complaint is one element of the showdown expected between Shamir and his rivals when Likud's Central Committee convenes Feb. 7.

Shamir declared Sunday that he would seek an unequivocal vote of confidence from the Likud rank and file on his policies and leadership as head of the government and of the party.

On Monday, Shamir went a step further, declaring that in the "hypothetical event" that he fails to obtain a majority vote of confidence, he would have no choice but to relinquish the office of prime minister and leadership of Likud.

BELGIAN OFFICIAL SAYS HE'S READY TO MEET WITH ARAFAT IN BRUSSELS

By Yossi Lempkowitz

BRUSSELS, Jan. 22 (JTA) -- The foreign minister of Belgium, Mark Eyskens, is ready and willing to receive Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasir Arafat should he come to Brussels for political or social reasons, the Belgian press reported over the weekend.

Local newspapers quoted an interview with Eyskens that appeared in the semi-official Egyptian newspaper Al-Ahram. A Foreign Ministry spokesman confirmed the story.

Eyskens met Arafat in December during a visit to Tunis, where the PLO is headquartered.

He was quoted as telling Al-Ahram, "I confirm to you without hesitation that we would receive Arafat in Brussels if he comes here on the occasion of a political or social forum.

"There is nothing in our politics that can prevent such a visit," he added.

An official visit to Brussels would be a publicity coup for Arafat, who has been largely shunned in Western capitals. The PLO chief did make an official visit to France last year and made an appearance at the European Parliament in Strasbourg.

The Foreign Ministry spokesman said Arafat would be welcome in Belgium "because of the concessions made these last years, such as the recognition of Israel's right to exist."

He was referring to statements made by Arafat at the November 1988 meeting of the Palestine National Council in Algiers and at a special session of the U.N. General Assembly in Geneva the following month.

The spokesman said there is no official invitation to Arafat from Belgium at the moment. But the foreign minister would meet him if the PLO leader happened to attend "a colloquium or something else" here.

The PLO representative in Belgium, Shawki Armaili, said any invitation to Arafat to come to Brussels, where the European Community is headquartered, "must be at a high level."

He explained it had to come from a government, not from sympathizers or an organization, because Arafat "is the president of the state of Palestine."

Political sources said the government is studying the possibility of raising the status of the PLO's representation here.

U.S. HAS NO EVIDENCE THAT ISRAEL SOLD CLUSTER BOMBS TO ETHIOPIA

By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, Jan. 22 (JTA) -- The State Department said Monday that it has "no clear physical evidence" that Israel has sent cluster bombs to Ethiopia.

The New York Times reported Sunday that U.S. officials "strongly suspect" such sales. In December, former President Jimmy Carter said Ethiopia had received cluster bombs "from one of our Middle East allies," but did not say which.

"The truth is that we have no clear physical evidence that Israel has provided such weapons to the government of Ethiopia," department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler said at her briefing.

An Ethiopian Embassy official here said Monday, "It's news to us. We don't know anything about this."

The Ethiopian official complained about

negative stories coming just a few months after the restoration of ties with Israel in October.

"We would like to develop (relations with Israel) in an all-around manner, like any sovereign country," the official said.

Israel currently supplies small arms to Ethiopia, said a State Department official, who requested anonymity. Middle East experts have speculated that in exchange, Israel has received promises that 10,000 to 15,000 Ethiopian Jews seeking to make aliyah will receive favorable consideration from the Marxist government.

'Wiggle Room' In Rabin Denial

The department official said that the United States has not received any complaints from rebel forces in Ethiopia that cluster bombs are being deployed against them. "They would have made a big stink about it if they have been used," the official said.

During his visit here last week, Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin told U.S. officials that "Israel was not providing cluster bombs to Ethiopia and would not do so," said Tutwiler.

But the source at State said there was "wiggle room" in that denial, because it did not mention any past Israeli bomb sales to Ethiopia.

Israeli Embassy spokeswoman Ruth Yaron was quoted Monday in the Los Angeles Times as saying she could not comment about past sales.

The United States banned U.S. sales of cluster bombs to Israel in 1982, after Israel used them against civilians during its invasion of Lebanon. The ban was lifted in 1988, although no U.S. cluster bombs have been delivered to Israel since then, Tutwiler said.

The United States requires Israel to seek U.S. approval before selling any weaponry based on U.S. technology or design, including cluster bombs. But The New York Times said Israel claims its cluster bomb is based on Israeli technology.

AS FREEDOM COMES TO EASTERN EUROPE, MORE 'RIGHTEOUS GENTILES' SURFACE

By Cathrine Gerson

JERUSALEM, Jan. 22 (JTA) -- The surge for democratic reform in Eastern Europe has had an unexpected repercussion in Israel.

Applications for the award of certificates to "Righteous Gentiles" have soared by 45 percent this year, the Itim news agency reported Monday. "Righteous Gentiles" are non-Jews who sheltered or otherwise helped Jews survive the Holocaust at great personal risk.

Since 1962, 8,200 certificates have been awarded honoring Righteous Gentiles. Only about 40 went to recipients in Eastern Europe, including the Soviet Union, until 1985, when the process of democratization began in Poland.

Poland, where the worst of the Holocaust occurred, came to account for 40 percent of the certificates.

According to Itim, 331 applications have been registered with the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial so far this year.

Justice Moshe Beisky of the High Court of Justice, who heads the Yad Vashem committee that grants the certificates, attributes the sudden increase to the new openness in Eastern Europe.

Former East European Jews living in the West can now visit Eastern Europe to meet with the people who once saved their lives. And East Europeans are free to come to Israel to receive their certificates.

**BRITAIN MOVING FORWARD
ON PROSECUTION OF NAZIS****By Julian Robinson**
London Jewish Chronicle

LONDON, Jan. 22 (JTA) -- Barely a month after it voted overwhelmingly to allow the prosecution of alleged Nazi war criminals in Britain, Parliament is losing no time setting up the necessary judicial machinery.

Home Secretary David Waddington will announce in the House of Commons shortly that criminal investigations are to commence immediately in 78 cases.

The investigations will start well before war crimes legislation enabling prosecutions to go ahead is in place. The bill to be introduced soon is expected to become law by next summer.

Meanwhile, discussion is centering on whether the investigations should be conducted by the police or by a special unit established along the lines of the Serious Fraud Office.

A new unit would be able to cross the boundaries separating the country's police forces and would include experts in various fields.

Investigators could start immediately to gather evidence from witnesses, many of whom live in Eastern Europe, where most of the alleged crimes were committed.

Ministers will be meeting on the subject during the next few weeks. The final decision rests with the full Cabinet, which must also decide on the precise shape of the war crimes bill.

There is a controversy over whether to include in it changes in the rules of evidence, as recommended in the report on war criminals in Britain.

The report, which led to the legislation allowing war crimes trials in Britain, was written by Sir Thomas Hetherington, former director of public prosecutions, and William Chalmers, his counterpart in Scotland.

Several members of Parliament who favor the trials object to changing the rules of evidence. Some think it would violate basic freedoms.

One of the most contentious changes would involve the admissibility in court of recorded video evidence in the same way that written depositions are now allowed.

This would enable submissions to be made by defense or prosecution witnesses unable to appear in court.

**NEW BELGIAN JEWISH NEWS AGENCY
TO PUBLISH FRENCH DAILY BULLETIN****By Edwin Eytan**

BRUSSELS, Jan. 22 (JTA) -- A daily news bulletin based on the news service of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency was formally launched here last Friday.

It will be published by Agence de Presse Europeenne Juive (European Jewish News Agency), which has been set up to serve the Belgian Jewish community but also to inform the general press on the European Community's relations with Israel and the Jewish world.

APEJ is a non-profit organization, backed by most Jewish organizations in Belgium. It will publish a four-page bulletin in French five days per week and plans in the near future to issue a Flemish edition.

It also plans to serve the small but active Jewish community in Zaire, a former Belgian colony. A member of the Kinshasa Jewish com-

munity, Jacques Levy, is a member of the board.

The president of the five-member board of directors is Bob Lebacqz, Belgium's former ambassador to Israel and a known backer of Israeli and Jewish causes. Markus Pardes, a past president of the Coordinating Committee of Jewish Organizations in Belgium, is the vice president.

At a ceremony launching the publication Friday, Lebacqz said that Belgium's Jews have long felt the need for a local Jewish daily publication that could give an objective view of developments in Israel and the Middle East.

The agency's editor, Yossi Lempkowicz, who is also JTA's correspondent in Brussels and a veteran news editor with the Belgian news agency Belga, stressed that his organization is completely independent, not linked to any existing body.

Its aim, he said, is to provide comprehensive and objective coverage of local and foreign developments, with particular stress on European Community developments as they affect Israel and the various Jewish communities.

Mark Seal, JTA's executive vice president, welcomed the new publication on behalf of JTA's board of directors in New York and said that it fits in with JTA's policy of encouraging new Jewish publications and the dissemination of JTA's news service to all Jewish communities, large and small.

The ceremony also was attended by the current president of the Belgian Coordinating Committee, Lazard Perez, who replaced Dr. Jacques Wybran, murdered last year by what are believed to have been Arab terrorists.

Others attending included Jacques Lipsyc, president of the local equivalent of the United Jewish Appeal; Zvi Nadav, the local representative of the Jewish Agency; the Israeli ambassador to Belgium; a personal representative of the American ambassador here; and representatives of most other major local Jewish organizations.

APEJ is the second daily news bulletin based on JTA's news wire to be published in Europe. Jour J, a private enterprise, has been appearing for the last two years in Paris.

ISRAEL AIRCRAFT MAY OPEN U.S. PLANT
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Jan. 22 (JTA) -- The government-owned Israeli Aircraft Industries may open a plant in Illinois.

The IAI is negotiating with the state, whose governor, James Thompson, is presently in Israel with a delegation of 50 Illinois businessmen.

Thompson's press secretary, David Fields, said the governor hopes to initial an agreement when he visits the IAI plant in Lod this week. The delegation is on a nine-day mission to promote foreign investments in their home state.

The planned American subsidiary would be located in Rockford, a city less than 100 miles northwest of Chicago, and would be used to recondition U.S. Army helicopters for sale to third countries.

IAI is not new to the United States. It already has an aircraft maintenance plant in Miami, Fla.

Fields said Illinois is offering special incentives to induce investments, and several other American states are doing the same. He said he hoped Rockford gets the IAI plant, which would generate 150 jobs.

The successful bidder will not be known until April.