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**ARENS TO MEET FRIDAY WITH BAKER,
BUT NO BREAKTHROUGH IS EXPECTED**

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Feb. 21 (JTA) -- Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Arens will meet here Friday with Secretary of State James Baker, as part of the continuing effort to try to arrange an Israeli-Palestinian dialogue.

Arens, who is stopping here on the way back from a visit to Mexico, requested the meeting, State Department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler said Wednesday.

She said that one of the topics discussed would be a continuation of the dialogue aimed at bringing about a meeting of Baker, Arens and Egyptian Foreign Minister Esmat Abdel Meguid to set the arrangements for Israeli-Palestinian talks in Cairo.

The three-way meeting was to have been held in January, but has been postponed because of differences between Israel and Egypt on the terms of the Israeli-Palestinian session.

But a State Department source said that no breakthrough is expected at Friday's meeting and that the talks will be a continuation of the conversations Baker and Arens have had over the telephone for the last three months.

Nevertheless, Baker is said to be interested in hearing an assessment of the situation in Israel, now that Likud hard-liner Ariel Sharon has resigned from the Cabinet.

Baker has taken a rest from the Middle East since the beginning of the Presidents Day holiday weekend, Tutwiler said, and has not had any of his normal long-distance phone calls with either Arens or Meguid.

But Robert Pelletreau, the U.S. ambassador in Tunis, met with a representative of the Palestine Liberation Organization on Wednesday. As has been the general practice, Tutwiler refused to give any details of the meeting.

**ISRAELIS HAVE LITTLE QUARREL
WITH U.S. HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT**

By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, Feb. 21 (JTA) -- Israel has accepted as correct, "except for minor inaccuracies," the State Department's annual report on human rights around the world, which is once again critical of Israel's treatment of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

That was the assessment Amnon Strashnov, the Israel Defense Force judge advocate general, gave of the report, which was officially released here Wednesday, though copies of it were widely circulated a day earlier.

While the level of criticism of Israeli practices is about the same as last year, the report acknowledges that the Israeli security forces have guidelines governing their behavior.

It devotes considerable attention, for the first time, to the rising phenomenon of intifada-related murders of Arabs by fellow Arabs in the territories.

Reactions by the Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem and by the Israeli Embassy here took the position that while some of Israel's actions were regrettable, they were necessary and no different

from measures employed by other democratic countries to cope with violence.

The report, mandated by Congress and drafted by Richard Schifter, the assistant secretary of state for human rights and humanitarian affairs, says that in 1989, the Israeli Defense Force often did not comply with its own guidelines for treating Palestinian insurgents, resulting in "avoidable deaths and injuries."

But it contains no statement comparable to last year's allegation of "a substantial increase in human rights violations" over the previous year.

432 Palestinians Killed

One alleged violation in 1989 is that while "IDF orders forbid the use of force after the detention of a suspect and the cessation of violent resistance," at least 10 deaths can be attributed to beatings.

Palestinians also were responsible for many deaths in 1989, including those of fellow Palestinians, the report states. A total of 128 Palestinians were killed by their peers for collaborating with Israel, compared to 13 in 1988.

Overall intifada-related violence cost the lives of 432 Palestinians, compared to 366 in 1988. Palestinians killed 13 Israeli soldiers or civilians in 1989, compared to 11 Israelis previously killed since the intifada began on Dec. 9, 1987.

Schifter said Wednesday that in recent weeks, there had been a sharp drop in Palestinian casualties caused by Israeli forces.

"If you look at the last six to seven weeks, the incidents of fatalities as a result of actions of the Israel Defense Force has gone down by more than half," he told the House Foreign Affairs subcommittee on human rights.

He attributed the change to fewer army troops being sent out to patrol trouble spots.

The report also assails the widespread use of "administrative detention for alleged security reasons without formal charges."

Israel issued no new deportation orders last year, but 26 Palestinians were deported after exhaustive appeals, the report says.

And it says Jewish settlers "involved in security violations have been treated far more leniently than Palestinians guilty of similar offenses."

Reports On Jews In Moslem Lands

In general, the report concludes, "Palestinians have no means to participate in significant policy decisions" concerning land, natural resources, industry, trade and taxation.

The American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee found the report too lenient and called Wednesday for Schifter's resignation.

Faris Bouhafa, a spokesman for the group, said Schifter "has an obvious conflict-of-interest problem," because he is Jewish.

In Israel, by contrast, Brig. Gen. Strashnov said that, by and large, he has "no problem with the credibility of the report."

Speaking on army radio, he said it amounts to a factual account of the situation in the territories, "except for minor inaccuracies."

For example, he said, the report refers to 10 people who died as a result of brutal beatings, but he knows of only four such "unfortunate" cases of death.

He noted with satisfaction that there was no general accusation of torture as a means of interrogation and that the report states explicitly that there is no policy of violence and torture of detainees.

"The report has not presented anything new that I did not know before," he said. "The question is, why are we forced to use those unpleasant measures?"

The Eastern European section of the State Department's human rights survey discusses growing anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union, but does not mention the phenomenon as appearing in any of the other nations of the region.

It says Soviet Jews "are troubled by the failure of the leadership to speak out against anti-Semitism," although "the reform press has condemned anti-Semitism strongly and repeatedly."

Religious freedoms of Jews were not hindered in 1989 in countries such as Argentina, Iraq, Nicaragua and the Yemen Arab Republic, the report says.

But in Iran, Jews and other non-Moslems face a "great deal of disruptive interference" in practicing their religion, it says.

In Ethiopia, Jews who were victims of murder and thievery were "not attacked primarily because of their religious beliefs," the report says.

It says, for example, that "the burning of a synagogue near Gondar city in November resulted from a fight between two Jewish communities over the location of a new synagogue."

(JTA correspondent Gil Sedan in Jerusalem contributed to this report.)

NJCRC AVERTS A DIVISIVE DEBATE ON TWO CONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTIONS

PHOENIX, Feb. 21 (JTA) -- In an effort to avoid a potentially divisive debate here Wednesday, the American Jewish Congress agreed to withdraw two controversial amendments to a Middle East policy statement being drafted by the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council.

The amendments, distributed in draft form to the more than 400 delegates at NJCRAC's annual plenary session here, would have affirmed that "many within the Jewish community" believe a "two-state solution is the best solution" to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The amendments also would have "expressed concern" to Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir that his statements "rejecting the concept of land for peace appear to rule out sovereignty of any kind" to the Palestinian people living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, in violation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 242.

The NJCRAC Joint Program Plan, the organization's blueprint for national advocacy and activism, to be formally approved in April, will instead include a passage reaffirming its support of Resolution 242.

The AJCongress decision to withdraw the amendments was seen as a victory for those delegates who believed a show of unity with Israel was more important than a statement of the deep disagreements that exist among the 13 national Jewish agencies and 117 Jewish community councils under the NJCRAC umbrella.

The spirit of (unity) was evident," said Maynard Wishner, chairman of the Jewish Community Relations Council of Chicago and chairman of the NJCRAC Israel Task Force.

"There is not argument that there is diversity of opinion," he said. "But umbrella organizations which are tempted to separate on bare majorities can stop being umbrellas very soon."

David Peleg, minister of information at the Israeli Embassy in Washington, said here that he was satisfied that "those suggested amendments were withdrawn."

"I think that this conference this morning sent a clear message," said Peleg, who attended most of the four-day conference. "The fact that (the amendments) were withdrawn shows that (those views) do not enjoy the support of the majority."

Concern About Voicing Dissent

But according to a delegate who supported AJCongress in submitting the amendments, the withdrawal suggested just the opposite.

"To press each resolution at some point becomes counterproductive," said David Saperstein, Washington representative of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.

"But we have a strong feeling that our concern that U.N. Resolution 242 continues to endorse land for peace was strongly made at the conference," he said.

Intensive media coverage in Israel of the NJCRAC deliberations "made us feel confident that the concerns of the American Jewish public are being heard in Israel," said Saperstein.

Concern here about sending messages of dissent from Israeli policy intensified after a rancorous debate here Monday on the potential settlement of Soviet Jewish immigrants in the West Bank.

Representatives of AJCongress, UAHC, and, to a lesser extent, the National Council of Jewish Women and the American Jewish Committee, led efforts to express the view that American Jews do not support the building of housing for Soviet Jews in the administered territories.

But in a letter distributed to delegates, leaders of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith warned that "the twin problems of the peace process and absorbing Soviet Jews are difficult enough without the people of Israel looking over their shoulders, wondering where their traditional supporters" are heading.

Two Resolutions On PLO Dialogue

In other action, NJCRAC delegates:

- * Agreed to send all members of Congress letters urging support for sustaining the current level of U.S. aid to Israel in the 1991 fiscal year.

- * Approved wording of a resolution that would "encourage" the Bush administration to use its dialogue with the Palestine Liberation Organization to "explore all possibilities for reducing tension and advancing prospects for a peaceful resolution" to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

- * Rejected a suggestion by the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America that the United States end its dialogue with the PLO unless it "formally abrogates those sections of (its) covenant that call for Israel's destruction and takes the lead in ending the uprising in the administered territories."

- * Informed Arizona Gov. Rose Mofford that NJCRAC would not hold further meetings in her state until it passes a law upholding state observance of the federal holiday honoring Martin Luther King Jr.

(Washington Jewish Week staff writer Andrew Silow Carroll contributed to this report.)

**ISRAEL ADMITS TO IRAN OIL DEALS,
CONTRADICTION EARLIER DENIALS**
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Feb. 21 (JTA) -- Israel affirmed for the first time Wednesday that it has had oil dealings with Iran, and that it has also earned profit from the transactions.

The admission, made by Energy Minister Moshe Shahal during a question period in the Knesset, was oblique.

But it clearly contradicted denials by government officials, including one made in December by Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin, that Israel had any contact with the Teheran regime, which is considered a bitter foe.

According to army radio, Shahal, when questioned by Likud Knesset member Ariel Weinstein, said that Israel had earned a \$1.5 million profit on the oil, although he was unwilling to confirm the story, first reported Dec. 18 on NBC News.

Israeli government officials had denied the American news report, which said Israel had paid Iran \$36 million for 2 million barrels of oil delivered to Eilat in November.

Shahal was unwilling to substantiate the story because Israel's policy is not to disclose where it buys its oil.

Nevertheless, he was quoted as telling Weinstein, "If you refer to the oil shipment referred to in the American television report, Israel made that profit, and the sum will be transferred to the Treasury shortly."

Although Iran has presented itself as the mortal enemy of Israel since the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini toppled the Shah in 1979 and established an Islamic fundamentalist regime, there have been persistent reports of clandestine contacts between the two countries.

NBC News reported that Israel had made the purchase as part of an oil-for-hostages deal. The U.S. State Department confirmed the purchase, but refused to comment on the hostage angle.

According to the NBC story, Israel also offered to free hundreds of Shi'ite prisoners, including Sheik Abdel Karim Obeid, a spiritual leader captured by Israeli forces in Lebanon the previous July.

In exchange, Israel would get back its soldiers held by pro-Iranian groups in Lebanon, and other Western hostages could be freed.

**ABSORPTION BUDGET DEMAND SOARS
WITH RISE IN SOVIET IMMIGRANTS**
By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Feb. 21 (JTA) -- Absorption Minister Yitzhak Peretz demanded Wednesday that the government revise its entire budgetary projections and provisions for immigration and absorption.

Peretz, addressing a joint session of the Knesset Finance and Aliyah committees, said the recently decided absorption budget was obsolete because of soaring Soviet immigration.

Peretz appeared before the joint session to urge additional allocations for absorption, including housing and the creation of jobs for the immigrants.

The minister, who represents the ultra-Orthodox Shas party, received broad support from the legislators.

Michael Kleiner of Likud, chairman of the Aliyah Committee, said the government would

have to think in terms of a \$250 million to \$300 million absorption budget for this year.

Ariel Weinstein, also of Likud and a ranking member of the Finance Committee, suggested that work begin immediately on a revised budget for absorption and housing, to be available by May.

A prediction made to the joint session, that some 100,000 Soviet Jews would come to Israel this year, was reiterated to reporters in Jerusalem by a senior official in charge of aliyah.

The figure was essentially corroborated by Simcha Dinitz, chairman of the Jewish Agency and World Zionist Organization Executives.

Dinitz told the government agency coordinating body that the current rate of 7,000 Soviet immigrants a month is likely to rise to 9,000 a month as new exit routes are established.

Some 750,000 of the Soviet Union's estimated 2.5 million Jews will seek to leave over the next 10 years, the unidentified senior official said.

**ARAB GROUP LOBBYING CONGRESS
TO CUT FOREIGN AID TO ISRAEL**
By Cathrine Gerson

JERUSALEM, Feb. 20 (JTA) -- The American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee is spearheading a campaign to convince Congress to cut aid to Israel if Jewish emigrants from the Soviet Union settle in the West Bank or Gaza Strip.

James Abourezk, a former U.S. senator who helped organize the ADC after leaving the Senate, described the group's plans in an interview on Jordanian television, which is seen in Israel.

Abourezk, who is national chairman of the ADC, will also visit the Soviet Union, where he said he intends to meet with "the Soviet Jewish leadership, in order to explain to them the real situation in Israel."

He said Soviet Jews now believe Israel is a land of milk and honey. "Only when they arrive, they find out the truth, but then it's too late," he said.

The former Democratic senator from South Dakota said he also plans to meet with Soviet officials "as high as possible" to explain the ADC's position on Soviet Jewish immigration to Israel.

Abourezk alleged that "Israeli right-wing settlers, with the help of Israel, are recruiting Soviet Jews to settle in the occupied territories."

An American of Lebanese ancestry, Abourezk said his aim is to warn members of Congress that "there is enough conflict now" in the Middle East and no need to worsen it by the "massive settlement of Soviet Jews in the occupied territories."

Israel has consistently denied charges from Arab countries that the absorption of Soviet Jews is directed to any specific area of the country. According to official statistics, a total of no more than 130 Soviet Jews settled in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1989, out of more than 12,000 who immigrated here.

Abourezk, who is visiting the ADC chapter in Amman, helped to organize the organization in 1981, two years after leaving the Senate. He said the ADC plans to move more openly into the U.S. political arena, because "Congress and the administration are the key players" in the Middle East.

He said his committee would show how the United States is using the tax money of American citizens to brutalize the Palestinians living under Israeli administration in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

**JEWS NEED NOT FEAR ONE GERMANY,
WEST GERMAN AMBASSADOR ASSERTS**

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla., Feb. 21 (JTA) -- The West German Ambassador to the United States assured a Jewish audience here Monday that Jews need not fear a united Germany.

But an Israeli envoy who addressed the same gathering earlier was not as certain.

Ambassador Moshe Arad of Israel spoke Saturday night at the American Jewish Congress convention here. He told the 500 delegates that although Israel recognizes the right of the German people to determine their own destiny, "we are totally justified in observing with trepidation the movement toward German unification."

Arad acknowledged that "West Germany has recognized its responsibility and has been a friend of Israel for 40 years." But he pointed out that East Germany has only now "recognized the responsibility of the entire German people" for the crimes of the Nazi era.

Jurgen Ruhfus, the West German ambassador, delivered his first public address on the subject before a major Jewish organization.

"A stronger German role, a Germany growing together, will be viewed in some parts with concern," he admitted.

But "Germans themselves have awakened with horror at what they did in the past and say, 'Let this never happen again,' " the envoy declared.

He said the "integration of Germany into the community of free nations is the best assurance that the world need not fear a unified Germany."

Ambassador Arad emphasized that Israel "looks with hope and concern for a renewed commitment against racism, Nazism and anti-Semitism by a united Germany."

For Israel and the Jewish people, he said, today's remarkable changes in Eastern Europe contain "both hopes and dangers."

**EJC SAYS GUILT FOR HOLOCAUST
MUST BE BORNE BY ONE GERMANY**
By Yossi Lempkowicz

BRUSSELS, Feb. 21 (JTA) -- A united Germany will have to remember forever its collective guilt for the Holocaust, the European Jewish Congress declared in a resolution adopted here this week.

German unification, rising anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union and the European Community's deteriorating relations with Israel were areas of concern addressed by the EJC at a meeting Monday and Tuesday.

It was called to consider anti-Semitism in various countries, in light of the historic changes taking place in Eastern Europe.

The EJC is the Western and Eastern European branch of the World Jewish Congress. Its resolution on German unification recalled the sufferings of European Jewish communities at the hands of the Third Reich and expressed concern over the prospects of a united Germany.

"It is imperative that all forms of racism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia and exclusion be outlawed" in the united country, the resolution said.

"This Germany will have to recognize today and forever its collective guilt for the Shoah and its victims."

Another resolution voiced alarm at "the wave of anti-Semitism today in the Soviet Union,

which is inspired by ultranationalist movements acting more and more openly." It urged the Soviet authorities to act against the phenomenon, including the enactment and enforcement of stiffer laws.

The EJC expressed dismay over last month's vote by the European Parliament in Strasbourg, France, recommending trade sanctions against Israel and the suspension of scientific cooperation with that country. The E.C. legislative body was expressing displeasure with Israel's treatment of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The EJC welcomed the groundbreaking ceremony in Poland for an interfaith prayer center, where Carmelite nuns are to be relocated from their present quarters on the grounds of the former Auschwitz death camp.

It expressed hope that "the definite departure of the Carmelites, in peace and dignity, will occur within a reasonable time."

**COMMITTEE IS FORMED TO NEGOTIATE
WITH EAST GERMANY ON REPARATIONS**
By Elena Neuman

NEW YORK, Feb. 21 (JTA) -- The Israeli government and the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany have set up a joint committee to coordinate future negotiations with East Germany on the payment of war reparations.

The move follows East Germany's announcement on Feb. 8 formally acknowledging its share of responsibility for Jewish victims of Nazi persecution.

The committee, whose activities got under way Monday in Jerusalem, is composed of officials of Israel's Finance and Foreign Affairs ministries, and representatives of the claims conference, which is based in New York.

They will devise a platform to serve as the basis for negotiations with representatives of the German Democratic Republic.

The decision to establish the coordinating committee followed a series of meetings Dr. Israel Miller, president of the claims conference, had with Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, Vice Premier Shimon Peres and Foreign Minister Moshe Arens.

"We're at the stage of getting ready for negotiations," said a spokesperson for the claims conference. "We're not there yet. It's all very new. We have created a coordinating mechanism, because that's what we had before we entered negotiations with the German Federal Republic in 1952."

That was the year of the Luxembourg Agreement, which became the foundation of West Germany's massive indemnification program. It has amounted to billions of dollars in reparations in the form of goods and services to the State of Israel, Jewish organizations and the nearly destroyed Jewish communities of Europe.

It also has awarded millions of dollars to individual survivors of the Nazi Holocaust, which are distributed by the claims conference, an organization established in 1951 by 22 Jewish national and international organizations to represent the interests of the Jewish victims of Nazi persecution.

The extent of the GDR indemnity remains to be seen. The relative economic backwardness of East Germany, compared with its Western counterpart, has become evident in recent months.

But as observers have pointed out, West Germany, too, was not in great economic straits in 1952, following its defeat in World War II.