

U.S. WANTS TO KNOW HOW ISRAELI ARMS ENDED UP IN HANDS OF DRUG TRAFFICKERS

By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, May 7 (JTA) -- The United States expressed concern Monday about a recent Israeli arms delivery to Antigua that ended up in the hands of Colombian drug traffickers.

The original delivery of Uzi submachine guns and Galil assault rifles and ammunition was made to the Caribbean island, where opponents of then Panamanian President Manuel Antonio Noriega were being trained for a possible coup.

The weapons, purchased in March 1989 from Israel Military Industries for \$42,000, were discovered in February on a ranch formerly owned by Jose Rodriguez Gacha, a major Colombian cocaine dealer who was killed by police in December. The value of the weapons has been estimated at \$200,000.

Colombian police reportedly found 232 Israeli-made weapons, including rifles, shoulder-fired rocket launchers and infrared nightscopes.

"We do not know how these weapons ended up in the hands of the Rodriguez Gacha organization," State Department deputy spokesman Richard Boucher said Monday. "The incident is still under investigation by the governments of Antigua and Colombia."

The government of Antigua and Barbuda denied Monday that it had "ordered or paid for such arms." But its Foreign Affairs Ministry has hired a Washington lawyer, E. Lawrence Barcella Jr., to investigate the incident in Israel, where he arrived Monday.

Shipment Linked To Retired Colonel

Israel Television reported that the shipment was arranged by retired Israeli Lt. Col. Yair Klein. It said he was hired by Eduardo Herrera, a former Panamanian ambassador to Israel who wanted to overthrow Noriega.

The Israeli state-run station said the weapons were "bought for the survivalist training school that Israelis were going to set up near the capital of Antigua to train, among others, the Panamanians."

Last year, Klein acknowledged training armed groups in a remote area of northern Colombia. But he denied any involvement with drug traffickers, saying he believed he was helping ranchers defend themselves from guerrillas.

Klein has also been interviewed by the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations as part of a study of how Central American drug dealers are able to obtain sophisticated weaponry.

But Ruth Yaron, a spokeswoman for the Israeli Embassy here, said Israel has no evidence Klein helped arrange the shipment to Antigua.

She said Israel supplied Antigua with "a small quantity" of weaponry after receiving an end-user certificate, which specified the weapons were not to be transferred to a third party. "We have no knowledge how this supply found its way beyond the borders of Antigua," she said.

At the State Department, deputy spokesman Boucher said the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv has "raised our concern about these arms with the government of Israel. We understand the Israeli government is cooperating in the investigation."

EXPECTATIONS OF A UNITED GERMANY RAISED AT WJC GATHERING IN BERLIN

By Charles Hoffman

WEST BERLIN, May 7 (JTA) -- Representatives of world Jewry made clear their expectations of a united Germany and were assured at a gathering here that its dark past will never be repeated.

The occasion was the opening Sunday night of a three-day conference of the World Jewish Congress. It is the first time the WJC has met on German soil since its founding in Switzerland in 1936, when Nazism was on the march in Europe.

The principal speakers were WJC President Edgar Bronfman and West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl.

The gathering was held at the initiative of West Germany's Jewish community and drew an audience of prominent Jewish leaders from Europe, Israel and America.

Their presence signaled that Jews are prepared to adjust to the reality of one Germany, if it adheres unwaveringly to democratic principles and peace.

But the notable absence of a few Jewish leaders, including members of the World Zionist Organization Executive, sent a different message: that time could not obliterate what Germany did when it was last a powerful united country.

Bronfman emphasized the grip of history when he observed at the outset that "there are many Jews who could not bring themselves to be in this city because of the anguish, the pain that Berlin signifies."

He said he understood "the intensity of their anger and their bitterness," but added, "We are here because we have something to say to a united Germany."

Although they delivered their speeches separately, Bronfman and Kohl engaged in a dialogue of sorts.

Prove World Has 'Nothing To Fear'

Bronfman raised several demands that he said the Jewish people must make of a united Germany.

"The new Germany must forever teach what happened (during the Holocaust), so that the lowest point ever reached in man's inhumanity to man can never occur again," he said.

The new Germany must never become a nuclear power, Bronfman said. Nor must it have the means of perpetrating mass killing or destruction through biological or chemical warfare.

It should also not help any third party attain such a capability, he said, alluding to the involvement of West German firms in the construction of a chemical weapons factory in Libya.

"Germany must enact strong legislation to prevent such threats against mankind and against Israel, and vigilantly enforce that legislation. Never, never strengthen the enemies of Israel!" Bronfman declared.

"The path for the new Germany should be clear," he said. "The Jewish people pray that you will prove that the world has nothing to fear, that you will follow the path away from your worst traditions and toward the best traditions of which you are so capable."

"The great challenge is to build a Germany firmly rooted in peace and respect for universal human values," he concluded.

In response, Kohl sketched his vision of the responsibilities of a united Germany.

"It remains the duty of all democratic forces to fight without compromise all those who spread anti-Semitic prejudice or deny the Jewish religion and faith," the chancellor said.

Kohl Assails Nationalism

"For us Germans, one of the most important lessons of history is that a democracy must not put itself at the mercy of its enemies, but must actively fight them."

With respect to German relations with Israel, Kohl stressed that "close, trustful dialogue must remain a key element of the Middle East policy pursued by a united Germany. I personally guarantee this," he added.

The chancellor directly addressed the question of whether the Federal Republic's relations with Israel and the way it has dealt with its Nazi past will be continued by a united Germany.

While he answered with a resounding affirmative, he admitted that much educational work must be done in East Germany, so that the people there have a true picture of the terrors and horrors of the Nazi past, instead of the distorted picture created by the former Communist regime.

Kohl also spoke of the dangers of rising nationalism in Europe. He cited "the activities of the anti-Semitic (Russian) organization Pamyat or the riots in Romania against the Hungarian minority" as "proof that we in Europe still have a number of obstacles to overcome."

SOVIET JEWISH IMMIGRANTS NOW SETTLING IN EAST GERMANY, WITH GOVERNMENT HELP By Charles Hoffman

EAST BERLIN, May 7 (JTA) -- About 200 Soviet Jews have recently arrived in East Germany and are settling down under a program organized by the government, according to Irene Runge, a Jewish cultural activist.

Runge is one of the leaders of the Judischer Kulturverein (Jewish Cultural Association), an independent group that was formed during last year's democratic revolution in East Germany. One of the first public acts of the association was to petition the government to give refuge to Soviet Jews who want to leave their country.

Runge said that the Soviet Jews arrive here with East German visas and live temporarily in government-sponsored reception centers until they find jobs and apartments.

The tiny Jewish community of East Germany, which numbers only about 400 active members, is now squabbling about which organization should take care of and welcome the Soviet Jews.

The official community organization, which regards the cultural association as something of an upstart group, wants to take care of the new arrivals.

But it insists it will deal only with those who are Jewish according to halachah (traditional religious law), as opposed to those who claim to be of "Jewish origin."

The cultural association, which is open to all those who call themselves Jews, also wants to recruit the new arrivals into its ranks.

Runge noted ironically that one of the first issues to surface in the newly freed Jewish community of East Berlin is who will take care of the

Soviet Jews, "most of whom don't even want to be Jewish."

In West Berlin, meanwhile, the president of the World Jewish Congress said Monday that American Jewish leaders would seek to raise the quota on the number of Soviet immigrants allowed to enter the United States, if the present rate of emigration continues.

Speaking at a news conference on the occasion of the WJC's first gathering ever on German soil, Edgar Bronfman said the current 50,000 quota was "very fair" when it was set by the Bush administration, in consultation with Congress, last fall.

At that time, he said, "we were thinking of 100,000 Soviet Jews a year coming out. But if the numbers continue to swell, then there will be a concerted effort by the organized American Jewish community to raise the quota, and I think it will be successful," he said.

As recently as last week, officials of the New York-based Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society indicated they would seek the same ceiling of 50,000 Soviet refugees for the next fiscal year, which begins Oct. 1.

WHO OPENS SESSION BENT ON HEALTH, NOT THE POLITICS OF PLO ADMISSION By Tamar Levy

GENEVA, May 7 (JTA) -- The World Health Organization opened its annual assembly here Monday, apparently determined to devote the two-week session to urgent global health issues, instead of political wrangling over admittance of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Ambassador Itzhak Lior, the Israeli delegate to the U.N. agency, predicted that the PLO's bid for admission as the self-proclaimed state of Palestine would be shunted aside.

The United States, which has had limited contacts with the PLO through its headquarters in Tunis over the last two years, may have convinced the Palestinians that to press their case would only antagonize the delegates, who want to keep politics out of this year's session.

Nevertheless, some means of satisfying Palestinian aspirations, or at least saving face, are being pursued behind the scenes.

A small victory for the PLO would be to designate the Palestinian Red Crescent to channel the \$18 million the WHO provides annually for the health needs of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

But even that face-saving device appears unlikely.

The Cairo-based Red Crescent is headed by Dr. Fathi Arafat, a medical doctor and brother of PLO chief Yasir Arafat.

The Israelis charge it is a PLO front and do not permit it to operate in the territories. The United States accepts the Israeli view.

John Bolton, the U.S. assistant secretary of state for international organization affairs who is attending the WHO opening, described the Palestinian Red Crescent as "an arm of the PLO."

"Our impression is that the overwhelming majority of the countries are against it," he said at a news conference Monday.

The United States wields considerable influence at the WHO, by virtue of providing more than a quarter of its annual budget.

The U.S. Congress is committed to withdrawing American financing if the PLO is admitted to the 167-nation agency.

GERMAN FIRMS REPORTEDLY LINKED TO SECOND LIBYAN POISON GAS PLANT

By David Kantor

BONN, May 7 (JTA) -- Diplomatic sources here have confirmed that the United States has provided the West German government with information about a second chemical weapons factory under construction in Libya.

But the government has not yet verified reports that some West German companies are involved, the weekly news magazine Der Spiegel reported Monday.

Spokespersons for the opposition Social Democratic and Green parties have warned the authorities in Bonn to treat the reports seriously and take quick action.

They recalled how the West German government injured its credibility when it initially dismissed American information, later shown to be true, that the Libyans were building a poison gas factory with material and technological assistance from West German firms.

The new plant is said to be modeled after the factory at Rabta, some 40 miles south of Tripoli, which was reported partially destroyed by fire recently. Subsequent reports indicate the fire may have been a hoax and that the Rabta plant may still be operational.

The new factory is being built underground in the area of Sabha, about 300 miles southeast of Tripoli. Der Spiegel claimed the West German industrial giant Thyssen was shipping equipment to the factory.

Meanwhile, Jurgen Hippenstiel-Imhausen, founder and owner of the chemical plant that bears his name, will go on trial June 11 in Mannheim, the local prosecutor announced Sunday. He is accused of illegally helping Libya build the plant at Rabta.

IDF GENERAL REPRIMANDED FOR CHIDING IDF ON INTIFADA

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, May 7 (JTA) -- An Israel Defense Force general who publicly criticized the army for not being sufficiently tough in fighting the intifada has been reprimanded by the IDF chief of staff, Gen. Dan Shomron.

Maj. Gen. Moshe Bar-Kochba, whose sharp remarks were published last week in an interview with the newspaper Hadashot, was summoned by Shomron, who reminded him that his right to criticize the IDF was limited to closed meetings of the army's high command.

Bar-Kochba, nicknamed "Brill," criticized the IDF for failing to learn the lessons of the Lebanon war, and said the army was not doing a proper job of suppressing the Palestinian uprising.

Bar-Kochba reportedly asked the chief of staff for permission to state his charges directly to acting Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, who is also acting defense minister.

Bar-Kochba, a longtime supporter of Shamir's Likud bloc, is known to have been piqued when Shomron was promoted to chief of staff two years ago, instead of him.

He claims he could have ended the intifada long ago if the tough measures he calls for had been taken.

They include a massive IDF presence in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, deploying tanks and other equipment in Arab towns and throughout the countryside.

NRP CALLS FOR A UNITY GOVERNMENT THAT WOULD POSTPONE REPLY TO U.S.

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, May 7 (JTA) -- The National Religious Party has given Likud and Labor until Wednesday morning to agree to form a new unity government.

"I believe it's in the cards," Rabbi Yitzhak Levy, NRP's secretary-general said Monday night, after separate meetings with acting Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir of Likud and the two Labor Party leaders, Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Rabin.

The sticking point is that under the NRP plan, the new government would have two months before deciding how to proceed with the peace process.

The NRP proposal was "not rejected" by Shamir, who said he had to consult with his Likud colleagues before replying, Levy told reporters.

But Peres and Rabin -- who, according to the rabbi, were "hardly broadcasting on the same wavelength" -- balked at the two-month hiatus. They consider it urgent that a new Israeli government respond quickly to U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's proposal for an Israeli-Palestinian dialogue.

The NRP clearly prefers a broad-based government to a narrow regime from which one of the two major parties would be missing.

But should its efforts fail, it would probably join a narrow Likud-led government, Levy said, adding that it would be up to the party's Executive to decide.

PROTESTERS FOR ELECTORAL REFORM JEER KNESSETERS AS SESSION OPENS

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, May 7 (JTA) -- Several thousand demonstrators demanding electoral reform greeted Knesset members with jeers and catcalls as they drove up to the gates for the opening of the summer session Monday.

Police and Knesset guards kept order, but the message was clear.

Placards reading "Bribe-takers!" and "Go home!" left no doubt that the public is fed up with a system that has left Israel without a government since March 15.

Anger built up over the long Pesach recess, as the two major parties offered all manner of inducements, in fruitless efforts to entice minor parties to join them in fragile, narrow coalitions.

Little more than a week ago, on Independence Day, petitions bearing a half-million signatures were presented to President Chaim Herzog, urging him to initiate changes in the electoral process.

Now two Labor members of the Knesset, Avraham Burg and Haggai Meirum, have submitted a private members bill, calling for a presidential commission to review proposals for electoral reform.

They propose a 15-member panel, chaired by the president of the High Court of Justice. It would have the legal powers of a judicial commission of inquiry, able to call witnesses and take evidence.

The commission would submit its recommendations to the president and the Knesset.

Parliament would decide by roll-call vote which reforms to adopt, and would then dissolve itself. Elections would be held under the new system.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES:**FOR MANY FEDERATIONS, EXODUS DRIVE IS NO LONGER A FORMIDABLE CHALLENGE**

By Allison Kaplan

BALTIMORE (JTA) -- To professional staff and lay leaders of Jewish federations across the country, November seems like a lifetime ago.

It was then that they first learned they would be asked by the United Jewish Appeal to raise an unprecedented \$420 million for Operation Exodus, a special campaign for Soviet Jewish resettlement in Israel, over and above their regular fund-raising obligations.

At the quarterly meeting of the Council of Jewish Federations here last week, it became apparent that in a few lucky communities, Operation Exodus is not only a concrete reality, but practically a mission accomplished.

The Baltimore federation, for instance, has already topped its Operation Exodus goal of \$11 million. San Francisco has raised more than \$13 million of its overall \$25 million goal.

Other federations, many of whom are not blessed with million-dollar donors, have chosen to put off launching Operation Exodus and are hastily trying to wrap up their 1990 campaigns before they begin soliciting again.

The initial success stories, and the \$130 million that has been pledged nationwide to Operation Exodus so far, can be credited largely to multimillion-dollar gifts.

But UJA officials are predicting that the special campaign will soon reach beyond the ultra-rich and hit its halfway mark by June.

Constantly In The Headlines

In many ways, the federations have had much of the publicity work for the mass appeal done for them. Barely a week now goes by when the upsurge of anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union and the Israeli struggle to secure transit routes for Soviet emigres is not in the headlines of major newspapers.

The wide exposure leaves them confident that Operation Exodus will have continued success, as federations move from appealing to the highly affluent toward reaching the general public through large-scale advertising.

Excitement about the exodus of Soviet Jews and concern about conditions for Jews inside the USSR has produced a phenomenon federation leaders have not seen in years: potential contributors coming to offer help, without being solicited.

"Other than during wars, this is the first time I've seen people come forward like this," said Miriam Schneirov, president of the Federation of Jewish Agencies of Greater Philadelphia.

A \$15 million contribution to Operation Exodus by publisher Walter Annenberg led Schneirov's federation to increase its Exodus goal.

Schneirov spoke incredulously of donors who gave \$5,000 to the federation general campaign coming up with as much as \$100,000 for Operation Exodus. And people who did not give a cent to the general campaign have come forward with contributions of \$15,000.

Brian Lurie, executive director of the Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco and its surrounding areas, called soliciting for Operation Exodus "exhilarating" -- a word rarely used to describe the process of soliciting UJA pledges.

"If you ask, you're going to get what you are asking for," Lurie told his counterparts in Baltimore enthusiastically. "You can raise your

goal. You can double your goal. You can triple your goal."

San Francisco has voluntarily doubled its assigned UJA goal for Operation Exodus.

"We felt the \$420 million figure was based on a low estimate" of Soviet immigrants coming to Israel, said Annette Dobbs, president of the San Francisco federation.

Long-Term Impact Unclear

Amid all this enthusiasm, however, is the unanswered question of what the Operation Exodus campaign will mean in the long run. Will it spark a renaissance in giving among American Jews or is it a one-shot phenomenon that could actually hurt future fund raising if givers feel they have been tapped out?

"We've had a couple of bad experiences with emergency campaigns," said Philip Cohen, who is on the board of trustees of the Jewish Federation of Cincinnati. He recalled that in 1968, a year after the emergency campaign for the Six-Day War, fund raising in his community suffered.

About a third of American Jewish communities have been able to wrap up their 1990 campaigns, so they can devote full-time attention to Operation Exodus.

But the remaining two-thirds of federations felt they could not plunge into the Exodus drive without falling short of their 1990 general campaign goals.

Of those federations, about half have begun soliciting major gifts, but will not fully launch the Exodus campaign until well into the spring. Another half are postponing Operation Exodus altogether until late summer or fall.

As they listened to the Baltimore and San Francisco success stories, some federation leaders wondered if they were missing the moment to raise funds while the issue was in the headlines.

"I wonder if we may not have missed the spontaneity that these people grabbed a hold of," said Dr. Richard Ament of the Jewish Federation of Greater Buffalo. "But it's too late, we can't go back."

'Way To Solidify The Community'

Richard Friedman, executive director of the Birmingham Jewish Federation, said getting the campaign off to an early start in his community was vital. Birmingham is now two-thirds of the way toward its \$2.4 million goal for Exodus.

"I think that taking advantage of the moment was critical to our success so far," he said.

The electricity surrounding discussion of Operation Exodus at the CJF meeting stemmed from a sense that the campaign will be a two-way street. Americans are giving money to Soviet Jews, but the Soviet Jewish aliyah is giving something back to the psyche of those American Jews who devote their time and energy to raising money for Israel.

The aliyah is boosting Israel's image, which has been battered badly in recent years, and reminding American Jews that the Jewish state was created as a haven for Jews in distress.

That is an idea that, according to the fund-raisers, appeals directly to the hearts -- and the pocketbooks -- of even Israel's harshest critics.

"The issue has not only urgency but authenticity," said Friedman of Birmingham. "It is a marvelous way to solidify the community and bring together the fractious parts. We have to remind them that this is not just another UJA campaign. This is a moment in Jewish history."