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HEZBOLLAH REJECTS DEAL ON HOSTAGES THAT WOULD INCLUDE MISSING ISRAELIS

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, May 9 (JTA) -- The Shi'ite fundamentalist Hezbollah, or Party of God, seems determined to saddle Israel with responsibility for the failure of radical groups in Lebanon to release any more Western hostages.

A Hezbollah leader in Lebanon, Hussein Mussawi, said Tuesday night that his movement does not give Israeli captives the same status as Americans and other Westerners held prisoner.

Therefore, it is "impossible" for the Israelis to be released with the others, Mussawi said in a series of media interviews.

That was his response to Israel's offer to free hundreds of Shi'ite and Palestinian prisoners it holds in exchange for 15 Western hostages and seven Israeli prisoners of war in Lebanon.

The offer was made in a statement issued Tuesday on behalf of acting Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir. It was supported later by former Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin, Israel Defense Force Chief of Staff Dan Shomron and Binyamin Netanyahu, the deputy foreign minister.

The Israeli offer includes one of Hezbollah's spiritual leaders, Sheik Abdul Karim Obeid, seized by Israeli commandos in Lebanon last July.

The Israeli offer was clearly aimed at appeasing opinion in the United States, where leading members of Congress, including supporters of Israel, have expressed impatience with the continued confinement of hundreds of Lebanese Shi'ites and Palestinians by the IDF or the Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army.

The Israelis insist those prisoners are suspected of terrorist offenses.

But a sharp rebuke on the subject Sunday from Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-N.Y.), one of Israel's staunchest friends in Congress, elicited the prime minister's response that Israel is ready "to play its role in any move that brings about the release of all the hostages, including the Israeli prisoners missing in action."

Hostage Freeze Till 1991?

Rabin, Shomron and Netanyahu spoke at a ceremony commemorating Israel's rescue of hijacked Air France passengers held hostage at the airport in Entebbe, Uganda, in July 1976.

Rabin, who was prime minister at that time, said he has always favored military action in hostage situations when possible. When it is not possible, Israel should be ready to negotiate.

Rabin referred to Israel's release of 1,150 Lebanese and Palestinian prisoners in 1985, when he was defense minister. They were exchanged for three IDF soldiers held by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command.

Hezbollah, which is supposed to be strongly influenced by the Islamic fundamentalist regime in Iran, seems to be trying to drive a wedge between Israel and its Western friends, particularly the United States.

Mussawi warned Tuesday night that the entire hostage situation might be frozen until 1991 because the United States refuses to negotiate. He apparently meant the application of pressure on Israel.

ISRAEL CONCERNED ABOUT U.S. STANCE ON U.N. RESOLUTION ON IMMIGRATION

By Allison Kaplan

UNITED NATIONS, May 9 (JTA) -- A three-month battle over a Security Council resolution that would condemn Soviet Jewish settlement in Israel's administered territories reached a fever pitch here this week.

A final vote on the resolution was indefinitely postponed Wednesday morning. But sources said it could be reintroduced at any time.

The Israeli mission here and major Jewish organizations were alarmed by drafts of the resolution that had been circulated this week. They vigorously lobbied the Bush administration against supporting the language.

"The draft under discussion is very disturbing," said Malcolm Hoehnlein, executive director of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations. "We are very concerned about it, and we are engaged in discussions with the administration about it."

"The almost-final touches have been put on a draft resolution which, in our view, is very grave and has in it elements which go beyond the context of what the U.S. would like to say," said Ephraim Doweck, Israel's deputy permanent representative to the United Nations.

What has upset the Israelis the most is not the specific language of the resolution, but the fact that the United States has been centrally involved in negotiations to draft a resolution containing language it would not have to veto in a Security Council vote.

The United States, as one of four permanent members of the 15-member Security Council, has the power to block any resolution by voting against it. If it abstains, however, the resolution can still be adopted.

U.S. Abstention Considered Likely

It is generally believed that the United States would prefer a draft that it could abstain from voting on. But sources in the American Jewish community did not rule out the possibility of a U.S. vote in favor of the resolution.

A "yes" vote would send a clear signal to the Israelis about the depth of U.S. dissatisfaction with its settlement policies, especially if the draft includes specific language condemning settlement of immigrants in Jerusalem.

U.S. representatives have been involved in the negotiations with the non-aligned group of nations over the resolution ever since the Soviet Union brought the issue to the Security Council for debate.

Sources said that it was the Arab nations that decided to postpone the vote, because the Americans and the non-aligned countries were not able to hammer out language that would guarantee an American vote in favor of the resolution.

That fact does not lessen the Israeli government's dismay that the United States is so actively engaged in the negotiations.

"There's no point for the United States, as a friendly country and a staunch ally of Israel, to try and reach an agreement around a debate that was called for by the Soviet Union because of Arab pressure," Doweck said.

"The Arab goals are not settlements or territories, but stopping the immigration to Israel, because they think the immigration is strengthening Israel and will make it more difficult to liquidate," he said.

Dowek said the non-aligned group was giving the Arab nations "an umbrella for diplomatic purposes" and that the United States was, in fact, negotiating with the Arab countries.

"The Security Council and the United Nations, in general, are not the best place for the United States to send messages to Israel or to discuss matters of life and death for Israel with its sworn enemies," he said.

A Sudden Visit To Israel

Hoenein said the Conference of Presidents expressed deep concern to the Bush administration on "the language, the content, and the timing" of the resolution.

He said the resolution "targeted" Soviet Jewish immigration, and he expressed concern that the resolution would come at a delicate time in Israeli politics.

Hoenein spoke on his return Wednesday from a 24-hour visit to Israel with Seymour Reich, chairman of the Conference of Presidents.

According to reports, the meetings, which were held with acting Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and political leaders from a number of different political parties, were "intense" and "serious."

The tone reflected the growing stresses in U.S.-Israeli relations, as well as concern among organized American Jewry about the political instability in Israel.

It was "an opportune time for us to go to get a better sense of what was going on in Israel," Hoenein said.

The trip was a last-minute decision, planned only after last weekend. Hoenein said the discussions covered a range of topics, including the future of the peace process, U.S.-Israel relations and the resettlement of Soviet Jews.

A BADLY SPLIT LABOR PARTY MOVING TOWARD BACKING UNITY GOVERNMENT By David Landau

JERUSALEM, May 9 (JTA) -- The National Religious Party appeared to gain ground Wednesday in its efforts to get Labor and Likud to reconstitute their unity government.

But it may have set off tremors that could create serious divisions within both major parties, especially Labor, where the more dovish elements were in open revolt.

The NRP proposed to launch negotiations between the two big blocs, both of which have failed so far in their efforts to set up narrow coalition governments.

The most positive response came from former Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin and his supporters in the Labor Party. There was a less enthusiastic reception from Likud.

Acting Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir was non-committal. He said he would study NRP's proposals with the amendments offered by Rabin and consult with his Likud colleagues.

But two Likud ministers, Moshe Katsav and David Magen, were worried about the effects joining a unity government would have on the agreements their party has concluded with three right-wing factions: Tehiya, Tsomet and Moledet.

Katsav, who is minister of transport, said

Likud prefers a narrow-based government at this time.

Shamir was given the mandate to form a government by President Chaim Herzog on April 27. He has until May 18 to accomplish the task, though he may ask for a 21-day extension.

He needs NRP's five Knesset votes and the five of the ultra-Orthodox Shas party to establish a Likud-led government.

A Revolt By Labor Doves

While both religious parties are leaning toward Likud, they would prefer another unity government and want to exhaust all possibilities before committing themselves to Shamir.

Labor is in disarray. Rabin has publicly challenged Shimon Peres for the party leadership, blaming him for its failure to form a Labor-led coalition after 36 days of fruitless efforts that ended on April 26.

He called the recent coalition horse-trading "a stinking exercise," a direct slap at Peres.

Rabin's support for a new Labor alliance with Likud has enraged the party's doves. One of them, former Science and Development Minister Ezer Weizman, stormed out of the party leadership meeting Wednesday.

Labor must lead a fighting opposition while Likud and its right-wing allies show the nation "their true colors," he declared.

Two other Laborites walked out with him: Yossi Beilin, a close aide to Peres, and Haim Ramon, chairman of the party's Knesset faction.

Labor's left-leaning allies were even more scathing in their criticism of a unity government.

Citizens Rights Movement leader Shulamit Aloni called the decision to negotiate with Likud a "death sentence" for the Labor Party. She urged Labor doves to break away now and form a moderate opposition bloc with CRM, Mapam and the Center-Shinui Movement.

Amnon Rubinstein of Shinui accused Labor of "crawling" back into a Likud-led government. Mapam said it felt "swindled" by Labor and insisted that elections are the only solution.

NRP leaders warned Wednesday that there were still major obstacles to a unity government. They cited Labor's insistence on "balance" in any new government, whereas NRP noted that parity in the policy-making Inner Cabinet more frequently than not has resulted in paralysis.

No Agreement On Baker Plan

But the crucial issue, the one over which the last unity government collapsed, has not been resolved. It concerns U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's proposal that Israel engage in preliminary dialogue with a Palestinian delegation, prior to holding elections in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Labor is amenable to the plan, but Likud is opposed. Rabin said Labor is willing to let the issue be decided by the full Cabinet or by the Knesset to avoid another Inner Cabinet impasse.

But he was vague in comments to reporters later as to whether his party is still demanding a favorable Israeli response to Baker's proposal as a condition for joining a government.

Peres, by contrast, pointed out that Labor's Leadership Bureau, its formal policy-making body, decided unanimously last time it met that a favorable response to Baker was essential.

He claimed the outcome of Wednesday's meeting was "not a decision, but rather an ongoing clarification with the NRP."

AFTER 29 MONTHS, MA'ALEH ADUMIM IS SICK AND TIRED OF THE INTIFADA
By Gil Sedan

MA'ALEH ADUMIM, West Bank, May 9 (JTA) -- The residents of this all-Jewish township of 13,500 are angry, frustrated and all too ready to take the law into their own hands.

They are sick of the Palestinian uprising in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which marked the end of its 29th month on Wednesday.

The problem is that the intifada not only shows no signs of ending, it is getting worse.

According to police statistics, at least 161 vehicles owned by Ma'aleh Adumim residents were stoned last month. That was up from 100 vehicles in March.

The people of this township, located due east of Jerusalem, blame the Israeli security forces for inadequate protection.

"The army and the police failed to restore order, so we did," said Mayor Amos Tertman.

On Monday night, a group of settlers headed for Eizariya, an Arab neighborhood on the road connecting Ma'aleh Adumim with Jerusalem.

They were stopped by police, who guessed their intentions. So they took a newly built bypass road and parked their cars at the first road junction leading to the Arab neighborhoods of A-Tur and Zuayem.

The two Arab homes closest to the road became their targets of vengeance. Windows in both were smashed.

The vigilantes entered the yard of Nabil Abu-Gharbiya, smashed the windows of a Volkswagen Beetle parked there, released the brakes and sent it rolling down the steep grade, where it smashed into a utility pole.

'Something Needs To Be Done'

"They came close to 11 p.m.," recalled Abu-Gharbiya's wife, Miyasser. "The children were awakened by the noise of windows shattering. The stones landed all around them," she said.

She said only by the grace of God did her children escape injury. "What kind of people are these, attacking innocent children?" she asked.

They are, in fact, the kind of people who are fed up with the seemingly endless intifada. And they are determined to protect the free flow of Jewish traffic.

Three years ago, after a spate of stone-throwing attacks, 3,000 Jews raided Eizariya, smashing windows and damaging Arab cars. This week's assault was modest by comparison.

According to Ya'acov Melamed, who owns a fast-food restaurant in Ma'aleh Adumim, the solution is to the Palestinian violence is to "break their bones."

Melamed and other residents can easily reduce the risk of stoning attacks by using the new four-lane highway to Jerusalem that bypasses Arab villages. But many residents prefer the old road, because it gets them to downtown Jerusalem more quickly. And besides, they say, it is a matter of principle.

"I like to go on that road. I like the contact with the Arabs, to show them that we are not afraid of them," Melamed said.

Tertman, referring to the Arab homes hit by his townspeople, said, "I oppose any damage caused to innocent people. But I understand our people, who are sick and tired of the situation."

"Perhaps now, the authorities will understand that something needs to be done," he said.

DEFENSE MINISTRY PRODUCES PAPERS SHOWING ANTIGUA ORDERED ARMS
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, May 9 (JTA) -- The Defense Ministry produced documents Wednesday to prove that a \$200,000 Israeli arms shipment to Antigua last year was ordered by the government of that Caribbean island nation, including guarantees that the weapons would not find their way into the hands of a third party.

The documents, consisting of photocopied letters and facsimile machine messages, were studied by a four-man investigative team sent here by the Antiguan government to try to find out how the arms wound up in the arsenal of a leading Colombian drug trafficker.

The probe is being conducted by Patrick Lewis, Antigua's minister-councilor to the United Nations, and three American lawyers, E. Lawrence Barcella, Conan Louis and Ed Seibert.

One of the documents is a letter bearing Antigua's coat of arms and the signature of Vere Bird Jr., identified as Antiguan defense minister.

The government of Antigua and Barbuda, as it is officially known, denied Monday that it had "ordered or paid for such arms."

The letter that Israel's Defense Ministry produced Wednesday promises that the weapons "are contemplated to be used by the Antiguan forces and will not be passed, sold or given to any third party."

But the 500 Uzi submachine guns, Galil assault rifles and other deadly weapons, including shoulder-fired missile-launchers, were discovered on the estate of Jose Rodriguez Gacha, a major Colombian cocaine dealer, after he was killed in a shoot-out with police in December 1989 -- six months after they were delivered to Antigua.

Antiguan Chief Of Staff Linked

Israel admitted that the serial numbers provided by the Colombian authorities matched the weapons sent to Antigua. But it claims to be completely in the dark about how the shipment reached Colombia.

The investigators from Antigua spent about four hours Tuesday interviewing retired Israel Defense Force Lt. Col. Yair Klein, head of Hod Hahanit (Spearhead), a company licensed to export military equipment and know-how overseas.

Klein is currently under investigation for illegally supplying arms and training to mercenaries working for the Colombian drug cartel. He denies the charges.

The Antiguan team also spent two hours Tuesday with Zvi Tenney, head of the Foreign Ministry's Latin American division.

Tenney had some questions of his own, such as exactly who ordered the weapons on behalf of the Antiguan government and who authorized it.

The order seems to have been initiated by Lt. Col. Clyde Worker, Antigua's chief of staff. Subsequent contacts allegedly were made through Maurice Sarfati, a former Israeli living in Miami who has a ranch in Antigua.

Sarfati is reported to have approached Israel Military Industries, manufacturers of the weapons, with a document appointing him "special envoy of the (Antiguan) Ministry of External Affairs."

The Antiguan investigators do not appear to believe that Klein acted as a private citizen. They are reportedly probing for an official Israeli connection with the transfer of the weapons from Antigua to Colombia.

**BRITISH WAR CRIMES BILL FLOUNDERING,
MIGHT INCUR 'CRISIS OF FIRST MAGNITUDE'**
London Jewish Chronicle

LONDON, May 9 (JTA) -- Britain's War Crimes Bill, which sailed through the House of Commons with an overwhelming majority less than two months ago, may be defeated in the House of Lords.

The measure, backed by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's government, would permit the prosecution of Nazi war criminals in British courts.

The strength of its support in the House of Commons was measured by a 273-60 favorable vote on March 19. But opponents in the upper chamber of Parliament have dug in and stand a good chance of killing the bill.

According to Lord Denning, one of Britain's senior and most respected judges, if the government insists on pushing the bill through in opposition to the House of Lords, "there will be a constitutional crisis of the first magnitude."

Denning referred to a head-on clash between the Commons and Lords, which hasn't occurred since 1949.

He spoke to the Jewish Chronicle after a disastrous week for supporters of the legislation in the House of Lords and prospects of a further defeat there next month.

Lord Campbell of Alloway, a Scottish lawyer, successfully amended a Scottish law permitting live evidence in court by television from abroad. His amendment passed 137-62.

The Lords are due to give a second reading of the bill on June 4. But Campbell has introduced a motion to drop the second reading.

"Constitutionally, the bill could go back to the Commons again," Denning said, "and they could insist on it going through again to the Lords. "But it would mean a crisis between the Commons and the Lords," he said.

Government Could 'Let It Drop'

Legal experts do not believe the Thatcher government, having declared the bill a matter of conscience, will go to the mat on the issue.

"I think the government will accept defeat if the Lords throw it out next month," said Professor Michael Zander of the London School of Economics. "Given the governments's general difficulties, I wouldn't be surprised if they let it drop," he added.

Conservative M.P. Teddy Taylor, a member of the All Party Parliamentary War Crimes Group, agreed. "If the Lords accept Campbell's amendment, then it is dead," he said.

On the other hand, he said, "the government has said it will do everything it can to push the bill through."

Taylor believes the measure should be enacted even if no one is ever prosecuted under it.

Sir Thomas Hetherington, the former director of public prosecutions, on whose recommendations the War Crimes Bill was drafted, said, "It would be a great pity if the Lords threw it out."

Labor M.P. Greville Janner, a leader of organized British Jewry, thought it anomalous that an unelected body should kill a measure overwhelmingly adopted by an elected body.

A Home Office spokesman said, "It is not a question at the moment of the bill being abandoned. However, this is not like a normal government bill, and it has been made clear that it is a matter of conscience."

**CHILLING TALE OF SOVIET ANTI-SEMITISM
GIVEN BY DAUGHTER OF VICTIM OF STALIN**
By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME, May 9 (JTA) -- A chilling firsthand account of anti-Semitism spreading through the Soviet Union has been given by the daughter of one of the victims of Stalin's "Doctors' Plot."

A scenario reminiscent of that which existed 37 years ago is being re-enacted, said Natalia Rapoport, a pathologist who spoke in Milan last week.

She was promoting a book by her father, Yakov Rapoport, one of the doctors arrested for the alleged plot. Titled "The Lab Coat Plot," it was published in the Soviet Union last year and has just appeared in Italy.

Rapoport said that after publication, she received a wave of hate mail and telephone calls from people saying there really was a Jewish plot to murder Stalin.

"Just a few days before I left for here, a proclamation which appeared all over Siberia was brought to the Jewish Cultural Center in Moscow, saying that the Doctors' Plot is real and that Jews go into medicine because they can use it to kill," she told her Milan audience.

Rapoport attributed the recent surge of popular anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union to the worsening economic situation there. "The people are terribly frustrated and are looking for a scapegoat," she said.

"Jews are accused of having been the initiators of Communism with Marx and Trotsky, and therefore responsible for present and past misery.

"This sentiment has been openly declared and has become the banner of the political party Pamyat," she said.

Rapoport claimed Pamyat, which is viciously anti-Semitic, has the support of the Soviet government, even though President Mikhail Gorbachev is not an anti-Semite, she said.

She explained the alleged Doctors' Plot in 1953. The paranoid Stalin planned to stage a mass trial and execution in Red Square, organize a pogrom and, on the pretext of protecting the Jewish population, organize a mass deportation of Jews, Rapoport said.

Stalin died nine days before the trial was to start, and the doctors who survived were released from prison.

LAG B'OMER COMES PROUDLY TO THE USSR
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, May 9 (JTA) -- Hundreds of thousands of Jewish youths will march in Lag B'Omer parades all over the world this Sunday, organized by the Chabad Lubavitch movement.

Special emphasis has been placed on parades in the Soviet Union.

Chabad emissaries went there to prepare for the marches, which will take place in about 60 locations all over the country, including Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev and as far away as Siberia.

About 700 parades are expected in Israel.

The parades will honor the sage Shimon Bar Yohai, who helped compile the Mishnah and the Zohar. He is revered for the years he spent hiding in a cave during the Jewish revolt against Rome, to devote himself to Torah study.

According to Jewish tradition, Bar Yohai died on Lag B'Omer and willed that he not be mourned, but rather that bonfires be lighted in his memory. This became a Lag B'Omer tradition.