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IRAQ AGAIN THREATENS TO ATTACK ISRAEL, BUT JORDAN SENDS A REASSURING MESSAGE
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, June 19 (JTA) -- As Israel's new leaders were searching for ways this week to demonstrate their commitment to the peace process, they were confronted by ominous signs of hostile intent from two hard-line Arab states.

Iraq's President Saddam Hussein, whose recent warnings against Israel have set off alarms here and in the United States, on Monday again threatened to attack the Jewish state with all available means, if Israel took action against any Arab country.

Hussein even made the point of including Syria in his protective embrace, despite the fact that its leader, Hafez Assad, is his own arch-enemy. He appeared to be emphasizing that confrontation with Israel is paramount to any internal Arab differences.

The Iraqi leader's dire warning was viewed in Jerusalem as an expression of Arab concern that Israel might retaliate against Libya for the role it played in the abortive Shavuot attack on Israel's beaches by terrorists belonging to the Palestine Liberation Front, led by Abul Abbas.

Libya helped train the terrorists and contributed advice and other assistance to the intended seaborne attack, which was thwarted on May 30.

Meanwhile, Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi reportedly has instructed his scientists to speed up the development of nuclear arms and ballistic missiles. Gadhafi's instructions coincided with news reports that Libya has begun building a second chemical warfare plant.

A spokesman at Israel's Foreign Ministry made a point of stressing Tuesday that Israel has no aggressive intentions against any Arab countries.

A Message From King Hussein

While Israeli officials say there is presently no reason to worry over the threats from Iraq, they believe that a Syrian-Iraqi alliance against Israel should be regarded as dangerous.

Former Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin voiced concern to American Jewish groups last week that a potentially dangerous alliance could develop on Israel's eastern front, composed of Syria, Jordan and Iraq.

In an apparent attempt to calm such concerns, which have been echoed by other Israeli leaders, Jordan's King Hussein has conveyed a message to Israel, transmitted through the United States, indicating that no Arab army would be deployed in his country.

Yediot Aharonot reported Tuesday that Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir responded to King Hussein's message by assuring Jordan that Israel had no aggressive intentions against it and is interested in maintaining the stability of the Hashemite regime.

His message was reportedly sent after the Jordanian leader gave a lengthy news conference Monday, during which he said he had received information that the new Shamir government had designs on Jordan.

Shamir did express concern Tuesday about

Libya's growing military might, even though military experts here have dismissed Libya's nuclear and chemical warfare potential as "remote."

The Israeli leader, speaking after he visited ailing Foreign Minister David Levy in an Afula hospital, said Gadhafi's new chemical weapons plant has introduced "dangerous elements into the artificial atmosphere of tension" the Arabs are trying to create.

Shamir expressed hope that "the entire world will see to it that that danger will be done away with." He stressed that Israel would act against such a threat from Libya "through political means."

BUSH ASKS SHAMIR TO DEVELOP IDEAS TO ADVANCE PEACE PROCESS

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, June 19 (JTA) -- President Bush has sent a private letter to Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir asking for Shamir's views on how the peace process should proceed.

Bush also gave some of his own "suggestions," White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater said Tuesday.

Fitzwater said the letter was sent last week to congratulate Shamir for successfully putting together a new government. William Brown, the U.S. ambassador to Israel, delivered the letter to the prime minister last Friday.

The letter appeared to be a restatement of U.S. policy toward Israel, including support for the security of the Jewish state and the continued emigration of Soviet Jewry.

The president "looked forward to working with Mr. Shamir on behalf of the freedom of Soviet Jews," Fitzwater said.

But Bush also reiterated his opposition to Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip which the president considers an "obstacle to peace," the spokesman added.

The bulk of the lengthy letter, however, was aimed at getting the peace process moving again.

Fitzwater said Bush "reiterated his strong support for the Israeli government's May 14, 1989 initiative as the most realistic way forward in the peace process."

An Israeli diplomat said Bush asked Shamir to resume the process where it left off three months ago, with the United States waiting for Israel to decide whether to accept Secretary of State James Baker's proposal for Israeli-Palestinian talks in Cairo.

Bush also asked if the new Israeli government had other ideas on how to proceed in the effort to bring about elections leading to negotiations for Palestinian autonomy in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the diplomat said.

Republican congressional leaders who met with Bush on Tuesday reported the president said there were "reasons to hope for success."

Fitzwater said the only explanation he could offer for this comment was that with the Israeli government now in place, "at least we have an entity to work with."

The letter was revealed by Bush in an interview with the Philadelphia Inquirer, published Tuesday.

In the interview, the president seemed to reiterate Baker's warning before a congressional committee last week that the United States might drop its efforts to bring about peace in the Middle East unless Israel and the Palestinians showed a greater desire to move forward.

"We aren't going to pick up our marbles and go home," Bush said. But he also said that if Israel and the Palestinians do not show they want to go on, "there may be a hiatus" in U.S. involvement.

A DOWNBEAT SHIMON PERES WARNS OF THE COSTS OF STALLING PEACE

By Allison Kaplan

NEW YORK, June 19 (JTA) -- Israeli Labor Party leader Shimon Peres seemed like a tired prizefighter as he pressed for the continued life of the Middle East peace process Monday in a speech to American Jewish leaders.

Peres warned that if the peace process ends, there will be "an escalation of threats, terror, violence and preparations for war."

Peres' Labor Party colleague, Yitzhak Rabin, made similar predictions while he was in the United States last week.

Speaking to the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, Peres warned that Israel must refrain from damaging relations with the United States, European nations and the Soviet Union.

The relationship with the United States and the Soviets, he said, is particularly important in view of the continuing emigration of Soviet Jews.

"As long as there is the slightest danger that the gates may be closed, we must use the good offices of the U.S. to impress upon the Russians that they must stay open," he said.

Without directly attacking the new coalition's position on the issue of the settlement of Soviet Jews in the administered territories, Peres pointed out that "the West Bank, all told, is only 3,000 square kilometers" (1,200 square miles), while "one-half of Israel, the Negev, is open and inviting."

He was circumspect when asked whether the United States should cut off its dialogue with the Palestine Liberation Organization.

"The United States will do right if it will press on certain Palestinian elements to stop violence," Peres said, adding, "All measures should be taken to show to the Palestinians and the PLO that we will not compromise on terrorism."

But he did not elaborate on what he thought those measures should be. "Keep the pressure on, and if they won't denounce terrorism, draw the necessary conclusions," Peres said.

EL AL BEGINNING FLIGHTS TO PRAGUE

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, June 19 (JTA) -- El Al and the Czechoslovak airline CSA are to begin weekly scheduled service between Tel Aviv and Prague next week, El Al's director general, Rafi Harlev, announced Monday.

The establishment of regular flights further strengthens the ties between the two countries, which resumed diplomatic relations in February after 23 years.

The Israeli airline will now be flying to six destinations in Eastern Europe: Bucharest, Romania; Budapest; East Berlin; Prague; Warsaw; and

Zagreb, Yugoslavia. In total there will be 11 weekly flights to Eastern Europe, Harlev said.

But the agreement between El Al and the Soviet airline Aeroflot for much-desired direct flights between Tel Aviv and Moscow still has not been implemented, because of the Soviet government's refusal to ratify it for political reasons.

Czechoslovakia has begun discussions with Israel on the subject of transporting emigrating Soviet Jews to Israel. The new flight routes are expected to facilitate those plans.

Harlev said that political reasons are also holding up the conclusion of new mutual agreements with several major European airlines, which El Al hopes will help the Israeli airline ready itself for the economic consolidation of Europe planned for 1992.

TRIAL BEGINS FOR RISHON LE-ZION KILLER

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, June 19 (JTA) -- Trial proceedings began Tuesday in Tel Aviv District Court for Ami Popper, the self-confessed killer of seven Palestinian day laborers in Rishon le-Zion on May 20. Ten others were wounded in the assault.

Judge Arye Even-Ari ordered Popper detained in custody until the end of the hearings, but told his attorney, David Ofek, that he could appeal against the continued detention without having to present new evidence.

Popper underwent extensive psychiatric tests and on Monday was deemed fit to stand trial.

The state prosecution told the court that Popper had on three separate occasions confessed to the murders and attempted murders, and had cooperated with the police in a videotaped reconstruction of the shooting attack on the Arab laborers, who were awaiting work in Israel in a field on the outskirts of Rishon le-Zion.

The prosecution noted that the accused had been examined by five psychiatrists, all of whom had found him fit to stand trial. But his attorney told the court he would request further psychiatric examinations.

Popper was brought to the court under heavy police guard and protection. Unlike previous court appearances, when he had appeared at ease and smiling, this time he was tense and nervous.

SOCCER STARS URGE NO SHABBAT GAMES

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, June 19 (JTA) -- A group of famous soccer players from major teams say they will lobby the Knesset against Saturday games -- on religious and social grounds.

The players, who have the active and involved support of Tel Aviv Ashkenazic Chief Rabbi Yisrael Lau, himself an ardent soccer fan, say the Shabbat games are unfair both to observant sports followers and to observant fans.

Rabbi Lau, meeting with the soccer stars and the media in Tel Aviv, noted that thousands of kippah-wearing fans are to be seen at Israel's international matches, which are usually held midweek. Why should these people be deprived of local soccer? he asked.

Lau also said playing in the (Saturday) afternoon heat meant players could not give their best performance, which they could better achieve in the cool of a weekday evening.

Lau, in his previous position as chief rabbi of Netanya, had persuaded the local soccer club, Maccabi Netanya, to play on Fridays.

CATHOLIC AND JEWISH LEADERS URGE RETURN OF MORALITY TO THE SCHOOLS

By Elena Neuman

NEW YORK, June 19 (JTA) -- The National Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Synagogue Council of America have teamed up on a campaign to bring morality and ethics back into the American classroom.

In an unprecedented joint statement issued Tuesday in Baltimore, Catholic and Jewish religious leaders call for a national mobilization of teachers, parents, lay leaders and government officials to make morality and human values crucial elements of the American public school education.

"We are losing our children," the statement says, citing a host of problems plaguing today's youth, including drug addiction, depression, suicide, promiscuity, crime, AIDS, teen pregnancy and alcoholism.

"From our perspective as religious leaders, these maladies are only symptoms of a deeper and more basic problem: a lack of fundamental values," the statement says. "Yet we persist in cheating our children of this critically important education."

Values such as honesty, compassion, integrity, tolerance and loyalty are not being stressed in the public school system, says the statement, which is titled "A Lesson of Value."

The statement was developed over an 18-month period in the course of regular meetings between the Bishops Conference and the Synagogue Council, an umbrella group representing the rabbinic and congregational bodies of Reform, Conservative and Orthodox Judaism.

The document itself was drafted by Auxiliary Bishop William Newman of Baltimore and Rabbi Joel Zaiman, president of the Synagogue Council.

Wrong Values Being Taught

According to Zaiman, the reluctance of American educators to instill moral and ethical teachings into their courses stems from sensitivity to the issue of the separation of church and state.

"But we're not advocating sectarian values," he said in an interview. "America is built on shared values like patriotism, compassion, respect for persons and property, and the notion of individual freedom. These are values that all Americans share in common, and yet they're not being taught."

In fact, the statement says that by excluding such shared moral values from the curriculum, the educational system actually undermines them.

The problem, says Archbishop William Keeler of Baltimore, who co-chairs the ongoing dialogue between the Bishops Conference and the Synagogue Council, is that the wrong values are being taught.

"Values are being taught, but they are values not rooted in a more ancient tradition of individual human dignity and worth," he said in an interview.

To illustrate his point, Keeler cited the example of sex education classes. He complained that children are being taught about contraception and disease prevention, but not about the mutuality of a sexual relationship, marriage and love.

"We would like to see the components of great civic virtues specifically folded into the teaching process," he said.

To accomplish this, the Synagogue Council's

Interreligious Affairs Committee and the Bishops Conference's Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs have proposed a number of recommendations:

- * the establishment of state committees to create new morality-conscious curricula;
- * the convening of conferences of teachers, administrators, parents and students at the state and local levels;
- * the creation of educational programming in the media to complement school curricula; and
- * the underwriting of special school programs by foundations.

Regular Meetings Planned

The two groups also hope to formalize their partnership with the establishment of a joint commission that would meet regularly to evaluate matters in Congress and the courts that relate to the promotion of values in America.

"If this effort gets buried, it's because no one will take up our call. If it can be demonstrated that there is no risk to the school bodies and the notion of church and state, then I think it can be implemented," Zaiman said.

Both Zaiman and Keeler agree that "A Lesson of Value" is not the answer to all of the various social ills facing American youth, but they say it is a step in the right direction.

"We don't say this solves everything. But what we do say is that a child with a poor self-image who doesn't have a sense of deeper values is going to be more likely to tumble into drugs," said Keeler.

But others will have to join in, Zaiman said. "It has to be a broad effort." The statement is calling on all faith groups to help create enough pressure to put the issue on the national agenda.

ENGLISH CITY BANS DISTRIBUTION OF POSTER FOR 'MERCHANT OF VENICE' London Jewish Chronicle

LONDON, June 19 (JTA) -- The City Council of the northern English city of Leeds has banned distribution of a controversial poster for the Shakespearean play "The Merchant of Venice" that local Jewish leaders call anti-Semitic.

The poster, which had been used to promote a production of the play at the Leeds Civic Theater, features a pair of jackboots in the shape of a swastika marching across a yellow Star of David.

Richard Manning, the Jewish representative to the City Council, complained that the sight of hundreds of swastikas displayed throughout the city was both "provocative" and "offensive" to Jews.

Local authorities responded by ordering the poster withdrawn from shop windows in the city.

An alternative poster was distributed, but the London-based Phoenix Contemporary Theater Co., which is staging the play, claims both the City Council and the Jewish representative overreacted.

The current production of the play has been updated to take place in Mussolini's Italy, and its director, Gerrard Riedy, claims the poster was justifiably relevant to the period.

"We have been touring for months and never received any complaints before," Riedy said.

But he added that "there is no way that we intended to cause offense. After all, the play is about anti-Semitism -- it is not an anti-Semitic play."

BEHIND THE HEADLINES: CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS IN CANADA HOLDS HIGH STAKES FOR QUEBEC JEWS

By Bram D. Eisenthal

MONTREAL, June 19 (JTA) -- The current constitutional crisis gripping Canada has created widespread uncertainty about the prospects for continued union of the country's English- and French-speaking populations.

For the Jewish community in the province of Quebec, the stakes are especially high, since anti-Semitism appears to be growing in proportion to linguistic and cultural tensions here.

Uncertainty about Quebec's future -- and that of the entire country -- was heightened this week as it became increasingly doubtful that all 10 of Canada's provinces would ratify the Meech Lake accord by the June 23 deadline.

The accord is a package of constitutional amendments that redefine the confederation of Canadian provinces by giving Quebec special status. It is named for the government retreat in Ontario where the pact was signed in June 1987 by Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and the premiers of the 10 Canadian provinces.

The agreement was designed to bring French Quebec into the constitutional fold, after its refusal to participate in the 1982 repatriation of the Canadian constitution. At that time, Quebec was led by the separatist Parti Quebecois, which had little interest in Canadian federalism.

The landslide victory of Quebec Liberal Party leader Robert Bourassa in 1986 seemed to change that. The Mulroney-led Conservative government sought the shift as an opportunity to write history by uniting a country seriously divided by language barriers.

After the accord was signed in June 1987, all that was necessary was the ratification of the deal by the individual provincial legislatures by the June 23, 1990 deadline. An easy enough task, or so it was thought at the time.

Treatment Of Minorities A Concern

But several provinces balked at the idea that the agreement would guarantee Quebec's status as a "distinct society," allowing its predominantly French-speaking citizens rights and privileges not enjoyed by Canadians elsewhere.

Believing that a politically independent Quebec would bode ill for the rest of Canada, the parliaments of Manitoba, New Brunswick and Newfoundland refused to ratify the deal.

Of much concern to Canadians was Quebec's treatment of its minorities, specifically the Anglophones, who had watched their language rights whittled away since the stunning 1976 election of the Parti Quebecois, or PQ.

Canadian Jews have been active during the past decade in the fight for minority rights in Quebec.

Eric Maldoff, past president of English rights lobby group Alliance Quebec, is Jewish. Another Montreal Jew, Robert Libman, has been very outspoken in championing minority rights. To further this cause, he founded the Equality Party, which won four seats in the Quebec parliamentary elections last year.

This prominence has made Jews easy targets for racist elements in the Quebec separatist movement. The past year has seen several key incidents where Jews have been singled out simply for being Jews.

When Libman appeared on a radio talk show,

a caller told him that if he didn't like what was going on in Quebec, he should "move to Israel."

The Montreal Suburban weekly newspaper received racist telephone calls after publishing columns by a Jewish writer calling for less repressive legislation and warning of its similarities to laws the Nazis enacted in Germany. The paper is owned by Israelis Amos and Avi Sochaczewski.

A French-Canadian Ku Klux Klan

French-Canadian entrepreneur Pierre Peladeau, who is publisher of the French daily tabloid Journal de Montreal, told his editorial staff to write less of Quebec's Jews, as they took up "too much space" in his publication.

He refused to issue a public apology, despite pressure from members of the Francophone community, Jewish advertisers and even British publishing magnate Robert Maxwell, himself a Jew and one of Peladeau's business partners.

Perhaps the worst incident occurred in April, when Montreal's main Jewish cemetery was desecrated by vandals. Swastikas and other racist graffiti were sprayed on some gravestones, and others were overturned and broken. Local Skinhead youths were suspected as the perpetrators, although none has yet been apprehended.

Several weeks later, the French-Canadian version of the white supremacist Ku Klux Klan was unveiled in Quebec, adding to the community's concern that racism was rearing its ugly head once again.

The Canadian Jewish Congress, the representative body of Canadian Jewish organizations, has serious concerns about the viability of the Meech Lake accord. Two years ago, CJC submitted a brief to the government expressing those concerns, one of which was the relationship between the Quebec "distinct society" clause and its judicial and legislative interpretation.

Earlier this month, Mulroney and the 10 provincial premiers gathered in Ottawa for 11th-hour meetings to try to save the deal. CJC's national officers held meetings of their own there June 3, under the guidance of Michael Crelinden, director of CJC's Quebec region.

CJC Supports Accord

The Jewish delegation sent a telegram to the Prime Minister's Office stating that it would support the accord "in the interests of Canadian unity." But it expressed hope for "further discussions" on the accord's judicial and legislative ramifications.

The weeklong prime ministers session ended with all parties signing another agreement to work at passing the accord. Manitoba and New Brunswick were now on line, but Newfoundland Premier Clyde Wells found parts of it hard to swallow and implied that he would let Newfoundlanders decide the fate of Canada.

Then on June 16, a new wrench was thrown into the proceedings. Manitoba's native peoples, as Indian and aboriginal groups are called here, decided they would try to kill the accord. They felt aboriginal rights should be guaranteed as much as the rights of Francophones in Quebec.

Newfoundland's premier stated that if Manitoba's Indians kill the accord, he will probably cancel plans to hold a free vote on the deal in his legislature.

Canadians this week were sitting on pin-cushions as the fate of their country hung in abeyance. For the Jews of Quebec, doubt about their individual futures was every bit as pressing.