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**ETHIOPIAN FOREIGN MINISTER SAYS
JEWS CAN CONTINUE TO EMIGRATE**

By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, July 26 (JTA) -- Ethiopia will continue to allow Jews to emigrate to Israel whether or not it receives weapons from Israel, Ethiopian Foreign Minister Tesfaye Dinka said at a news conference Thursday.

"I categorically reject any kind of linkage" between the receipt of cluster bombs or other weapons from Israel and the emigration flow, Tesfaye said, speaking at the National Press Club.

The flow of Ethiopian Jews to Israel "never included the question of military supplies," he said.

Tesfaye attributed recent reports of a drop in Jewish emigration to joint efforts by Ethiopia and Israel to stop non-Jews from fleeing to Israel, "which might have been interpreted by others as an attempt to reduce" the Jewish flow to Israel, he said.

Since last fall, when Ethiopia resumed full diplomatic relations with Israel after a 16-year lapse, Ethiopia has been allowing its estimated 15,000 Jews to emigrate to Israel at a rate of 500 a month, but that rate has slowed significantly in recent weeks.

The American Association for Ethiopian Jews reports a three-week lull in Jewish emigration that was revived this week, when eight families, or 35 people, were allowed to emigrate, said Robin Schwartz, the AAEJ spokeswoman.

Ethiopia is allowing the emigration to "facilitate the reunification of families," Tesfaye said. He said the separations occurred "without the knowledge of the government" in the mid-1980s, when Ethiopian Jews escaped to neighboring Sudan and then flew secretly to Israel.

Meetings At United Nations

Tesfaye has held meetings at the United Nations in New York and at the State Department here with Herman Cohen, assistant secretary of state for African Affairs, and Aaron Miller, a member of the department's policy planning staff.

He also met with members of Congress and was to meet late Thursday with Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger.

Tesfaye was here to discuss possible resolutions to the 25-year-old civil war in Ethiopia, which lately has seen rebel forces present the current government with its clearest threat to date.

Tesfaye said that in the "many months" that he has held his post, Ethiopia has not imported cluster bombs "from any source," including Israel.

But when asked later about a Jewish Telegraphic Agency report that former Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin recently disclosed that Israel sold cluster bombs to Ethiopia prior to 1979, Tesfaye did not categorically deny that report.

"I don't know what was happening in the 1970s," Tesfaye said.

The matter has been of particular concern lately during the escalation in the civil war. News reports have blamed cluster bombs dropped by government forces for inflicting massive casualties on the civilian population.

**HAVEL REBUKES WALDHEIM PUBLICLY
IN SPEECH AT SALZBURG FESTIVAL**

By David Kantor

BONN, July 26 (JTA) -- President Vaclav Havel of Czechoslovakia opened the Salzburg, Austria, music festival on Thursday with a public rebuke of Kurt Waldheim in his presence, saying "people who try to hide their true biography do a disservice to their people, their country and even to themselves."

Havel and President Richard von Weizsacker of West Germany were received by Waldheim at the opening ceremony and posed for pictures with him.

The address by Havel perhaps carried as much of a sting than had he heeded the outcry of Jewish activists and others to boycott a meeting with the controversial Austrian president.

Until the very last moment, Czech intellectuals, West Germans of all denominations and Jews tried to prevent the two presidents from attending the ceremony in Salzburg.

Several Jewish demonstrators, led by Rabbi Avraham Weiss of New York, stood outside the Mozartium concert hall in Salzburg shouting "shame for meeting Nazi Waldheim" and "history will not forget," as the presidents arrived.

Weiss and another demonstrator managed to enter the hall but were hauled out after creating a disturbance.

With Waldheim sitting expressionless in the front row, Havel told the gathering of 1,500 guests, "If a person is afraid to look his own past in the eye, he will also fear what lies ahead. People who falsify history don't rescue freedom, they jeopardize it."

Alluding To False Biography

His remarks were alluding to Waldheim's falsified autobiography, which concealed for nearly 40 years his military service in World War II with a Wehrmacht unit that committed atrocities against civilians and partisan fighters in the Balkans.

An Austrian investigation concluded in 1988 that Waldheim concealed his service. It left open his role in reprisals against civilians and the deportation of Greek Jews.

In Washington, B'nai B'rith sent letters to Havel and Weizsacker expressing "profound disappointment" at their having greeted Waldheim.

"What is the message you are sending to the world, when you greet in a diplomatic forum a man who has practiced deceit and falsehood in covering up his odious Nazi past?" wrote Seymour Reich, B'nai B'rith president.

Havel, who received his invitation to Salzburg last year while still a dissident playwright in disgrace with the Communist regime, stressed on his arrival in Salzburg that the visit was purely "personal."

Von Weizsacker did not speak publicly at the ceremony.

Earlier in the week, West Germany's Jewish community protested strongly against his plans to attend. The President's Office in Bonn issued a statement saying he went to Salzburg at the special request of his friend and colleague, President Havel.

**GERMAN JEWISH COMMUNITIES TO MERGE
TO HELP FACILITATE REPARATIONS TALKS**
By David Kantor

BONN, July 26 (JTA) -- The Jewish communities of West and East Germany are planning to merge shortly in order to facilitate negotiations for reparations and the restoration of Jewish property, and to become a united community when the two Germanys become a single nation.

The East German community adopted a plan this week to establish two regional organizations, which will join the West German community as of Sept. 15, 1990.

The East German community's membership is put at 400, some 200 of whom live in East Berlin. About 30,000 Jews live in West Germany, 6,000 of them in West Berlin.

Heinz Galinski, chairman of the West German Jewish community, will be the spokesman for both organizations in the interim period until their merger is final.

The leadership bodies of East and West German Jews met for talks in Berlin as soon it became apparent that German unification was inevitable.

Siegmond Rotstein, the East German community chairman, and Peter Kirchner, chairman of the East Berlin community, made clear that they favored merger, though they left open the timing of the move.

Well-informed sources said both communities' negotiations with the East German government for reparations were slowed down because it was unclear which was competent in that matter.

East Germany appears willing to return Jewish real estate in East Berlin and elsewhere that was seized by the Nazis or later by the Communist regime.

The returned property is expected to be utilized and managed by the emerging united Jewish community of a single Germany.

Observers in Bonn say the eastern and western communities have a joint interest in presenting themselves as the only heirs to the former Jewish communities in the country.

There are other groups which might lay claim to Jewish properties.

One such is the Association of Friends of Adass Israel, a former Orthodox congregation in Berlin.

The association has been campaigning for the past year for recognition and financial support from the authorities in East and West Berlin.

Its activists claim there are many buildings in both sections of Berlin, but mainly in the East, which belonged to Adass Israel and should be returned to their legal heirs.

The association considers itself the congregation's sole survivor.

**POLICE RECOMMEND PRESSING CHARGES
AGAINST YAIR KLEIN FOR ARMS EXPORT**
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, July 26 (JTA) -- The police have recommended to the Jerusalem district prosecutor that charges be leveled against Lieut. Col. (Res.) Yair Klein for breaching regulations concerning the illegal export of military and security equipment and know-how.

Klein is charged with having established a training camp for security personnel on the Caribbean island of Antigua without having received official permission to make use of the

knowledge he gained in the Israel Defense Force.

The Israeli Defense Ministry has requested a police investigation into Klein's activities in Antigua.

Klein, who heads Hod Hahanit (Spearhead), a security consulting firm, was earlier accused of sending Israeli weapons to Colombia without official authorization. The weapons were discovered last year in the arsenal of slain Colombian drug lord Jose Rodriguez Gacha, after he was killed in a shootout with police in December 1989 -- six months after the arms were shipped to Antigua.

Klein was questioned at some length last year about charges that he personally supervised the training of assassination squads employed by the Colombian drug cartels.

He claimed that videotaped evidence which allegedly showed him training death squads actually showed him training farmers to protect themselves against cattle rustlers and guerrillas.

Colombia reportedly has an arrest warrant out for Klein.

The maximum penalty in Israel for breaching arms export controls is three years' imprisonment.

**ISRAEL VIEWS IRAQ-KUWAIT STANDOFF
WITH VIGILANCE BUT NO PANIC**
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, July 26 (JTA) -- Israel, keeping a close watch on the dispute between Iraq and Kuwait, has opted for vigilance without panic, Foreign Minister David Levy told the Knesset on Wednesday, as the chances of a military showdown in the Persian Gulf seemed to recede.

Meanwhile, on Tuesday, former Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin contradicted an observation by his successor, Defense Minister Moshe Arens, that war between Israel and Iraq was closer than ever before.

In a radio interview, Rabin concurred that an Iraqi threat existed, but said the danger was not immediate.

Iraq's President Saddam Hussein is well aware that Israel is militarily the strongest state in the region and could deliver a "crushing blow" should Iraq attack it with aircraft or missiles, Rabin said.

The countries have no common border.

But Rabin stressed that the Iraqi threat must not be taken lightly and all necessary preparations should be made, even though chances of war with Iraq are not high in the short term.

Political and military developments in the region are interconnected, he said.

If there is no progress toward peace, Rabin said, Egypt will be weakened, making it easier for Iraq to create a hostile front against Israel "in the medium- to long-term period."

Likud Knesset member Yehoshua Saguy, a former chief of military intelligence, said the real issue was Saddam Hussein's attempt to establish himself as the leader of the Arab world.

He said Hussein was trying to assert his leadership by attempting to drag Syria and Jordan into a cycle of war.

Egypt, meanwhile, has emerged as the peace-maker in the Gulf crisis.

President Hosni Mubarak's top diplomatic trouble-shooter, Osama el-Baz, arrived in Kuwait on Thursday after an unannounced visit to Baghdad. He will try to work out terms for a meeting in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, of oil, finance and diplomatic experts from both countries.

AJCOMMITTEE ROPER POLL SHOWS AMERICANS DO SUPPORT ISRAEL

By Elena Neuman

NEW YORK, July 26 (JTA) -- A Roper poll conducted for the American Jewish Committee reveals that Americans feel more sympathetic toward Israel in the Middle East conflict, and less sympathetic toward the Arab cause than they did a year ago.

The findings of the poll, released Thursday, are significant in that a CBS-New York Times poll released just two weeks ago on the same subject found support for Israel among the American public declining and sympathy for the Palestinian cause to be on the rise.

The results of that poll received front page coverage in the New York Times and drew the attention of American Jewish leaders and Middle East experts alike.

"There are differences between the two polls," said David Singer, director of the department of research and publications at the AJCommittee.

"The strength of the Roper poll, however, is that it is trying to determine a trend line over time. We've used identical questions and survey methodology over four years, and interpreted the data in terms of yearly shifts."

The New York Times/CBS telephone poll, on the other hand, compared its new figures to earlier Roper reports, which had asked dissimilar questions and used face-to-face interviews rather than a random phone sampling.

At first glance, the findings of the two polls appear to be comparable. In some categories, the results seemed more positive for Israel, in others, negative.

Policy Too Harsh

For example, on the question of whether Israel's response to the intifada has been too harsh, 29 percent in the Roper poll felt Israeli policy in the administered territories was too harsh, as opposed to 35 percent in the New York Times/CBS poll.

Twenty-seven percent in both polls said that Israel's reaction was "just about right."

But on the question of whether Israel is a reliable ally of the United States, the New York Times/CBS poll revealed more positive feelings toward Israel, with 45 percent answering yes and 40 percent no. The Roper statistics were 40 percent and 38 percent.

"I don't think if you lay the polls next to each other, they're really so different," said Singer, who feels that the New York Times/CBS poll results were more favorable to Israel than The New York Times article's headline indicated.

Regardless of the inconsistencies and the small percentage point differences, AJCommittee has interpreted the findings of the Roper poll as boding well for Israel and American attitudes toward the Jewish state.

"We find most heartening that most Americans remain steadfast in their regard for Israel," said Ira Silverman, executive vice president of the organization. "While not all of the findings are positive, we are encouraged by the general picture of support that is strong and durable."

According to the AJCommittee poll, sympathy with Israel in the Middle East conflict stood at 39 percent, while sympathy with the Arab nations was at 9 percent. In an April 1989 Roper poll, the figures were 36 percent and 13 percent.

Regarding the Palestinians, the figures were only slightly different: 34 percent and 15 percent, respectively. In April 1989, the comparable figures were 34 percent and 14 percent.

"Despite another year of great attention to the intifada, the fact is that there has been no shift of any significance on the question of American sympathy lying with Israel," said David Harris, director of the American Jewish Committee's Office of Government and International Affairs, based in Washington.

Harris had voiced concern with the findings of the New York Times/CBS poll two weeks ago. While saying that the results were not uniformly negative, he felt that they were generally one further indication of "a continued slow decline in support for Israel."

ISRAEL REJECTS U.S. REQUEST TO LOWER IMPORT DUTIES ON PREFAB HOUSES

By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, July 26 (JTA) -- Israel has rejected a U.S. request to lower import duties on urgently needed prefabricated homes being sent to Israel for Soviet immigrants.

At the biannual U.S.-Israeli trade talks in Jerusalem last week, Bush administration officials asked Israel to eliminate its 10- to 12-percent import duties on the prefab homes.

But Israel refused, on the basis that "trade has always been based on reciprocity and the concessions should be reciprocal," said an Israeli Embassy official.

Instead, Israel proposed that the United States reciprocate by dropping a customs user fee on all Israeli imports, which amounts to one-sixth of one percent of the product's value. The Israeli official said the U.S. user fee violates the 1967 General Agreements on Tariffs and Trade, a treaty that set rules for world trade.

The United States rejected Israel's proposal on the basis that there "should be a unilateral elimination" by Israel of its housing tariffs, said a U.S. trade official.

"What we want is very reasonable, given the support that we have given Israel over the years," the official argued, alluding to the recent \$400 million in housing loan guarantees for Israel, which were agreed to by Congress in the spring to build new housing for Soviet emigres.

But while Israel "appreciates" all of the various measures of U.S. support, it opposes unilateral trade concessions because "otherwise we have no basis for any trade negotiation," the Israeli official explained.

The official also rejected a recent appeal by Rep. Lawrence Smith (D-Fla.), a staunchly pro-Israel lawmaker, who personally asked Israeli leaders to buy U.S.-made prefabricated homes as a way to show "return gratitude."

The biannual trade talks are held to monitor the 1985 U.S.-Israeli Free Trade Area agreement under which both countries are to phase out all tariffs on non-defense goods by Jan. 1, 1995.

The last of these will be lifted on products considered by either country to be most potentially competitive with domestically made counterparts. They include the U.S.-manufactured prefabricated homes.

Israel expects to import more than \$100 million worth of homes from the United States, according to the Israeli official, who predicted that the duty would not deter U.S. builders from selling the homes to Israel.

NEWS ANALYSIS:

PERES' POLITICAL FUTURE IS UNCLEAR, DESPITE HIS STUNNING DEFEAT OF RABIN
By David Landau

JERUSALEM, July 26 (JTA) -- The political pundits who said Shimon Peres was "finished" had red faces Sunday after he decisively quashed a challenge by former Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin for leadership of the Labor Party.

Contrary to their predictions, the incumbent party chairman won a 54 percent vote of confidence in Labor's Central Committee and will serve out the term to which he was re-elected in 1988.

Rabin, who was demanding that the party hold elections for chairman immediately, seems to have a less certain future.

But the embarrassed experts also foresaw a period of internal strife and unrest within the Labor Party in the months ahead, and that prognostication may still turn out to be correct.

Rabin, who humbly resigned himself to a subordinate position after the Central Committee's decision Sunday night, declared Monday that he would "continue to seek the leadership of the party."

Peres, who sounded magnanimous in victory, said Rabin would continue to be part of Labor's top echelon. But he said nothing about his rival continuing to occupy the No. 2 spot in the party's hierarchy.

Yediot Achronot, Israel's largest daily, said Monday that "Peres intends to distance Rabin from the No. 2 slot." Indeed, his denials of such intentions seemed less than convincing.

In any event, Peres' victory is of specifically limited duration. A majority of the 3,363-member Central Committee called for new leadership elections to be held a year before the term of the current Knesset expires in 1992.

Peres Could Run Again

That means Peres' tenure would be up in 1991 -- or sooner if the Likud coalition government falls and early elections are called.

By next year, a number of young second-rank party officials may well throw their hats into the ring to challenge the incumbent leadership.

The prospect of the younger generation breaking through after nearly 20 years of Peres-Rabin hegemony over the party seems increasingly likely, especially after Peres beat off Rabin's challenge.

His impassioned speech to the Central Committee, before it voted Sunday, was in part a plea for new blood to invigorate the party. He pledged to encourage fledgling leaders to grow in stature.

By Monday, Peres' tone had changed slightly. He said he would step aside if, as Knesset elections drew near, he decided there was a younger leader of stature emerging who could better lead the party to victory over Likud than himself.

Labor insiders who know Peres well said it was far from certain he would reach such a conclusion when the time came.

Moreover, if Rabin makes good on his promise to seek the leadership again, Peres could be counted on to run against him, the insiders said.

Nevertheless, some Laborites who stood loyally behind Peres on Sunday did so in part because they felt a victory for him would improve the prospects of a generational change of leadership before the next showdown with Likud at the ballot box.

Many Central Committee members balked at the idea of Rabin getting elected and staying in office until 1996, even though he, too, promised to step aside if someone more likely to achieve victory at the polls emerged.

So far, several young Laborites have declared their intention to seek the party leadership the next time it votes. Among them are the popular Knesset members Ora Namir and Moshe Shahal, who seem to have established a political alliance for the time being at least.

Shahal is a former energy minister. His refusal to back Rabin was an important element in Peres' victory.

Namir, too, resisted Rabin's overtures and cast a blank ballot to protest what she said was a personal fight bereft of ideological significance.

Other younger Laborites who may seek leadership are Mordechai Gur, a former Cabinet minister, and Haim Ramon, chairman of the party's Knesset faction.

NEWLY UNVEILED HELICOPTER CRASHES IN SECOND TEST FLIGHT By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, July 26 (JTA) -- It looked like a Rube Goldberg contraption of boxes, pipes and wires topped by two rotor blades, and it may have turned out to be one.

The prototype of the new Hellfire unmanned helicopter crashed Thursday during its second test flight at Israel Aircraft Industry's Mata plant, near Jerusalem, where it was built.

The machine was hovering at a low altitude when a fault developed in one of its systems, said IAI engineers, and it fell to the rocky terrain, damaging the rotor blades.

Such accidents happen and lessons are learned from them, the designer said.

The Hellfire was unveiled for the media earlier this week when it passed its first flight test, hovering for about two-and-a-half minutes.

Mata's plant manager, Amnon Yishai, pronounced it "an independent bird." It was designed to take off and land from the Israeli navy's fast missile boats at sea.

In its final form, the drone helicopter is expected to greatly increase the navy's range of surveillance. Eventually, it is hoped to replace the larger French-built Dolphin manned helicopters now in use.

GAZA COURT SENTENCES MURDERER By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, July 26 (JTA) -- A military court in Gaza has sentenced Hamdi Abdullah Khalil, a murderer of Palestinians who allegedly collaborated with Israeli authorities, to seven concurrent life sentences plus 30 years.

Khalil, 34, was recruited to the Al-Fatah terrorist organization three years ago, and established a murder squad whose goals were to execute collaborators with the authorities, drug dealers and prostitutes.

With funds received from Fatah, Khalil purchased three pistols, which he passed to other terrorists. They used the weapons to murder three Gaza residents and attempt to kill four others.

Khalil was arrested in September of last year. His house was demolished by the military authorities. He did not express regret over his deeds, and stated that it was mandatory to execute collaborators.