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INFILTRATION BY TWO JORDANIAN GUNMEN RAISES CONCERN ABOUT CONTROL OF ARMY

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Aug. 19 (JTA) -- The infiltration of the West Bank on Sunday morning by two armed Jordanians wearing military uniforms has raised concern in Israel that King Hussein may be losing control of his army as he walks a tightrope in the Persian Gulf crisis.

The two gunmen exchanged fire with an Israel Defense Force patrol. One was killed and the other was captured. There were no Israeli casualties.

According to the IDF account, the confrontation occurred after a routine army patrol discovered tracks leading westward from the Jordan River and encountered two men wearing Jordanian army uniforms half a mile from the Damiya Bridge, about 12 miles north of Jericho.

The IDF said there have been three previous infiltration attempts by Jordanian soldiers this year in which the Jordanians opened fire on Israeli forces. The earlier incidents occurred in the Beit She'an Valley and in the southern Arava.

For the most part, the Jordanian military has taken pains to keep such incidents at a minimum, Israeli sources said. But this may be changing.

The Jordanian army has been put on a high state of alert while the king ponders whether to join in the Western blockade of Iraq.

In part, the Jordanians are believed to be girding themselves for possible Israeli military moves should Iraqi troops enter Jordan.

But for the moment, the alert seems to have been called to control a possible pro-Iraqi uprising by Palestinians, who comprise a majority of Jordan's population.

Gas Masks May Be Distributed Earlier

Palestinians are said now to make up about 60 percent of Jordan's armed forces, and Israeli observers believe King Hussein no longer commands their absolute loyalty.

They believe, in fact, that the latest infiltration attempt may have been influenced by Palestinian elements. Experts said the two who penetrated the border may have been religious fundamentalists acting on their own initiative, rather than that of the Jordanian army.

Palestinians in both Jordan and the West Bank have rallied strongly behind Iraqi President Saddam Hussein while King Hussein -- who is no relation -- is under heavy pressure from the United States to seal off his only seaport, Aqaba, to Iraqi commerce.

Israel has made clear that the intrusion of Iraqi troops into Jordanian territory, whether by invitation or aggression, would be regarded by Israel as an act of war, eliciting a response in kind.

Meanwhile, Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy said Sunday he thought the government should begin distributing gas masks and anti-chemical-warfare kits to the Israeli public immediately and not wait any longer.

Levy, who had just returned from a diplomatic mission to Europe, said that any justification for delaying the distribution last week were no longer valid in view of the latest developments in the Persian Gulf crisis.

Authorities had feared that distribution of the gas masks would create panic in Israel and could be interpreted in Iraq as a signal that Israel was preparing to attack.

But the massing of U.S. forces in Saudi Arabia facing the Iraqi army in Kuwait has raised fear that warfare could break out in the region.

While the government has still not decided whether to speed up the distribution, the feeling is that the original plan will be advanced. The original plan was to begin issuing gas masks near the end of the year, first in the Tel Aviv area and gradually over the rest of the country.

The plastics factory at Kibbutz Hazorea, meanwhile, has just received a $3 million order for protective anti-chemical-warfare clothing for the use of Western troops in Saudi Arabia.

NEWS ANALYSIS: PALESTINIANS' SUPPORT FOR HUSSEIN MAY SET BACK PEACEMAKING FOR YEARS

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Aug. 19 (JTA) -- Israel's political doves are bitterly disillusioned, thoroughly embarrassed and, in all probability, gravely weakened by the virtually unanimous support Palestinian leaders and masses alike have given Iraqi President Saddam Hussein in his confrontation with practically the entire civilized world.

The Labor Party, ambivalent for years over how to approach the Palestinian problem and split over whether to deal with the Palestine Liberation Organization, has maintained a stolid silence in the current crisis.

But some leaders of the smaller left-wing opposition factions have been less reticent.

Their remarks display the characteristic frustration and fierce anger felt by those who realize they have been betrayed by their own apparent misjudgment no less than by those they misjudged.

Yossi Sarid of the Citizens Rights Movement, a tireless advocate of dialogue with Palestinian leaders, including associates of the PLO, seemed to be washing his hands of them in articles over the weekend in Ha'aretz and Yediot Achronot.

"Sheyechapsu oti" (They can look for me), he wrote of Faisal Husseini, the prominent East Jerusalem Palestinian leader, PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat and Abd-el Wahab Darousha, one of the handful of Arab Knesset members with whom Sarid's party made common cause on certain issues.

All had praised Saddam Hussein, much to Sarid's disgust.

"The lack of common understanding is so deep that I do not think I shall be sharing a platform with them again in the near future," he wrote.

His CRM colleague, Dedi Zucker, was somewhat less categorical. Harboring a long-term "broigez" would be childish, he observed, using the Yiddish word for grudge. He said he would advocate continuing the dialogue with the Palestinians.

But the consensus on the left of the political spectrum for the time being is that Israeli-

Palestinian peacemaking and dialogue has been set back, possibly for years, by the Palestinian community's enthusiastic rallying for the Iraqi leader, both in Israel and in the administered territories.

Elazar Granot, the widely respected leader of Mapam, the United Workers Party of Israel, said, "The PLO has cast a giant question mark over the prospect of its ever representing the Palestinian people in the future."

He said the PLO would either have to change its policy or the Palestinians would have to change their leadership.

'Hypocrisy, Lying And Political Idiocy'

Amnon Rubinstein, leader of the Center-Shinui Movement and a minister in the former Likud-Labor unity government, called the Palestinian position "replete with hypocrisy, lying and political idiocy," because "it drastically decreases the chances of a political dialogue beginning.

"It is evil, too, because they are supporting a brutal, unscrupulous tyrant," Rubinstein added.

He said he thought the PLO would at least be divided over Iraq, considering that the organization has invested so much energy convincing Western and Israeli opinion of its moderation.

The former minister conceded that the peace movement has been gravely damaged, while the far right wing in Israel has been massively strengthened.

The last remaining hope of the dovish camp seems to be what its rivals on the right fear most: If the United States, with cooperation from several Arab states, succeeds in besting Hussein, Washington will press hard for a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

But the leftists concede that the Palestinians under their present leaders are not a realistic peace partner for Israel.

ISRAELI LEADER ASSAILS MEDIA COVERAGE AND WARNS AGAINST ANTI-ARAB VIOLENCE
By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Aug. 19 (JTA) -- President Chaim Herzog holds the "inherent superficiality" of the modern electronic media largely responsible for distorting the world's perception of events in the Middle East.

The world community has "over-focused" on the Arab-Israeli conflict to the virtual exclusion of the myriad other problems of the region, including Iraq's preparations for aggression against Kuwait, he said in his monthly radio "fireside chat" to the nation.

But the Israeli chief of state, who has a penchant for candid discussions of controversial subjects, also exhorted Israelis in the tones of a biblical prophet.

He warned them not to dare "to forget that we are a nation whose Torah, whose culture and whose traditions sanctify social justice, the attitude of man to man, the attitude to the stranger."

He was referring to Jewish mob violence against Arabs in Jerusalem and environs which raged for three days after the brutally maimed bodies of two Jewish teen-agers, Ronen Karamani and Lior Tubal, were discovered just outside the city on Aug 6. They presumably were murdered by Arab terrorists.

Two Arabs were killed in the ensuing rioting, and scores were injured.

"Over the centuries, Jews suffered from discrimination and persecution," Herzog reminded his radio audience. "Jews were burned at the stake, murdered, slaughtered, hounded, not because of any specific guilt but because of blind hatred," he said.

"It is totally unacceptable that our society will condone similar behavior toward another people who live as a minority in our midst," Herzog said. "If we accept this situation, we lose the moral basis on which our society must base itself."

TURNOUT AT RALLY FOR HOMELESS LOW, BUT CAUSE IS HIGH ON ISRAEL'S AGENDA
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Aug. 19 (JTA) -- A protest rally for people rendered homeless by soaring rents drew a disappointing turnout Saturday night in Tel Aviv's Malchei Yisrael Square.

Police estimated the crowd at about 1,000, far from the many thousands anticipated by the rally's organizers.

Some had been camping out all week in makeshift tents in front of the Tel Aviv City Hall. They were joined by homeless Israelis who have erected tent camps around the country -- both as places of refuge and as expressions of protest.

If lacking in numbers, the demonstrators nevertheless addressed one of the most serious and divisive social issues confronting Israel.

Representatives of the homeless demanded immediate housing for couples forced from their apartments because landlords are demanding rent hikes of 50 percent or more.

Landlords can get the higher rents from new immigrants, who receive generous subsidies from the government and Jewish Agency to cover their first year's housing costs.

Speakers at the rally stressed the related social problem of rising unemployment, which now exceeds 10 percent. They urged the government to find jobs for workers laid off because of the economic recession.

Another target of the protesters was the higher prices of basic goods and services since the government slashed price subsidies as a budget-cutting measure.

IDF KILLS TWO GUNMEN IN SOUTH LEBANON
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Aug. 19 (JTA) -- Two heavily armed infiltrators were killed by an Israel Defense Force patrol Friday in southern Lebanon.

The clash occurred in the A-Tabieh area, within the border security zone patrolled by Israel. There were no Israeli casualties.

The infiltrators were described as being in their early 20s. They wore civilian clothing, but were carrying LAW anti-tank missile-launchers, Kalachnikov assault rifles, battle pouches and other military equipment.

Their deaths brought to 37 the number of armed infiltrators killed inside the security zone since the beginning of the year by either the IDF or its allied South Lebanon Army.

The Lebanese Communist Party claimed responsibility for the latest infiltration attempt. An announcement in Beirut said its two men planned to attack IDF and SLA targets.

The Communist Party has become increasingly active lately, taking credit for recent land mine and roadside bomb attacks in the same area of the security zone.

AGENCIES ASSISTING JEWISH REFUGEES IN ADDIS ABABA CAUGHT IN A DILEMMA
By Allison Kaplan

NEW YORK, Aug. 19 (JTA) -- Jewish agencies seeking to care for the 15,000 Ethiopian Jews now housed in that country's capital city of Addis Ababa are facing a difficult dilemma.

They must try to sustain the population in relatively good health and humane conditions until they can be brought to Israel. But at the same time, they cannot make the Jews appear to be overprivileged in a country where thousands are ravaged daily by hunger, disease and civil war.

"You cannot make the Jews conspicuous by making them so much better off than everyone else. This would make them targets for jealousy, resentment and even muggings," said Barbara Ribakove Gordon, executive director of the North American Conference on Ethiopian Jewry.

Yet Gordon, who has just returned from a weeklong stay in Addis Ababa, said it would be impossible for world Jewry to let hunger and disease take their toll on the Ethiopian Jews as they wait for passage to Israel.

"Somehow, we have to strike a balance," she said.

Gordon painted a bleak and disturbing portrait of life for the Ethiopian Jews now living in Addis Ababa, waiting to rejoin their families and the rest of their community in Israel.

Gordon, along with Michael Schneider, executive vice president of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, and Arnon Mantwer, director general of the Immigration and Absorption Department of the Jewish Agency for Israel, have all visited Addis Ababa over the past month.

Gordon said that the various parties have developed "plans of action," dividing up responsibilities to provide for the care and maintenance of the Ethiopians during their stay in the capital.

"The complications and difficulties cannot be imagined," she said.

No Clothing Other Than Rags

Progress has being made in improving their lot. Blankets provided by JDC have been distributed to the Jews. Until then, most were sleeping on the rock-and-mud floors of their shanties in "the worst slums" of the city, Gordon said.

The North American Conference, she said, would try to supplement JDC efforts by providing additional medical supplies, as well as clothing.

"The people have no clothing other than the rags they were wearing when they arrived in Addis," she said.

The trip was Gordon's eighth visit to Ethiopia. She said that in the slums of the capital she met Ethiopian Jews whom she had known previously in their villages in the Gondar region. Their living conditions back then were primitive, but far more orderly and sanitary than their current status as squatters in Addis Ababa.

The Jews fled to the capital from their native Gondar after the area was racked by fighting between rebel forces and government troops.

"It all happened very quickly," Gordon said. "One day we had 3,000 people in Addis, the next day we had 9,000 and then we had 13,000."

The Jews arrived in the city starving and suffering from various diseases. A recent story in the Jerusalem Post said community leaders in Addis Ababa has reported 60 deaths in the Jewish community, mostly among infants and children.

The Israeli government and the American Jewish relief agencies are working to combat the sicknesses by inoculating as much of the population as possible and by increasing the medical staff at the clinics set up to care for the Ethiopian Jews.

"We are dealing with malnourished people who have tuberculosis, malaria, and they need a great deal of medical care to restore them to health," Gordon said. "With additional doctors, nurses and medical supplies, I have real hope that we are going to make a major difference."

POSTAL SERVICE BARRED FROM DENYING OVERTIME RIGHTS TO SABBATH OBSERVERS
By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, Aug. 19 (JTA) -- The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has ruled that the U.S. Postal Service unfairly treated a Hasidic Jew by refusing him overtime opportunities because he did not want to work on the Sabbath or Jewish holidays.

The Postal Service, in refusing overtime to Jenoe Rottenberg of Brooklyn's Williamsburg neighborhood, argued that its collective bargaining agreement required those seeking such work to be available whenever called.

But the EEOC rejected the service's claim that the agreement overrode language in the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972 requiring an employer to provide "reasonable accommodation" to religious observances "unless an undue hardship would result."

Dennis Rapps, executive director of COLPA, the National Jewish Commission on Law and Public Affairs, which handled the case, said that five other Jews in the Postal Service contacted COLPA to complain about the overtime regulations.

While those five will benefit in the future, they will not be able to acquire more than one month's overtime back pay because they never formally complained about the practice.

The commission decision, which follows an initial decision in Rottenberg's favor this past January, requires him to be allowed to place his name on the overtime list and be paid back pay and interest for missed overtime opportunities.

Such pay, retroactive to May 29, 1987, when Rottenberg filed the discrimination complaint, amounts to "thousands of dollars," Rapps said.

Rapps said the Postal Service case was unusual since it is one of the few government agencies that operates 24 hours a day and therefore provides many overtime opportunities.

Legislative Remedy Sought

On another front, COLPA is trying to gain legislative approval in New York state of a law requiring employers to allow employees the right to make up work lost for religious observance.

The legislation is needed to effectively reverse the Supreme Court's 1986 ruling in Ansonia Board of Education vs. Philbrook, in which it ruled against a high school teacher who wanted six days off each year for religious holidays.

The teacher, an adherent to the Worldwide Church of God, was allowed three paid days off and took the other three days without pay.

Rapps said such a bill has been introduced a few times in the New York State Assembly in recent years, most recently by Assemblyman Sheldon Silver, a Manhattan Democrat.

Rep. Stephen Solarz (D-N.Y.) has introduced a related bill in the U.S. House of Representatives.

FOR CHILDREN OF CHERNOBYL, NEW LIVES AT THE NEW YEAR
By Cathrine Gerson

KFAR CHABAD, Israel (JTA) -- The grocery in the small village was crowded Friday afternoon shortly before Shabbat. Among black-clad Hasidim waiting to be served stood four small boys trying to decide which flavor of ice cream to buy.

They chose banana, and one youngster, pale and blue-eyed with long white legs sticking out of his shorts, asked for four banana ice creams.

He spoke in a heavily Russian-accented Hebrew, pronouncing each word carefully but seemingly with confidence.

It was only later, outside the shop, that it became clear that he did not know enough Hebrew to answer simple questions. He had memorized the words to buy ice cream.

The boys, who look healthy, are among 196 children from the Chernobyl area of the Soviet Union brought to Israel in early August for treatment of radiation exposure from the April 1986 nuclear accident.

The grocery they patronized is in Kfar Chabad, a Hasidic settlement near Tel Aviv founded in 1948 by 50 Lubavitch families from Russia. It now numbers close to 600 families, and over 8,000 children live there.

More than 5,000 of them were not born in the village but were "collected" by Chabad activists from broken homes all over Israel.

"When it first became known that we were bringing some 200 children from Chernobyl here, many asked us why we are doing this," Yossie Raichik, associate director of the Chabad Youth Organization in Israel, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

His organization already had its hands full feeding, clothing, educating thousands of children with many problems, Raichik explained. Now it was adding Soviet children with unknown medical problems.

'The Rebbe Requests, And We Act'

But "the rebbe requests, and we act," Raichik said, explaining that the decision to bring the Chernobyl children to Kfar Chabad came from the Lubavitcher rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson in New York, where he presides over the worldwide Chabad movement.

Many Jewish parents within 100 miles of Chernobyl turned to Chabad, one of the more established Jewish movements in the Soviet Union, for help in getting their children away after noticing physical changes in their condition.

Diane Rabinovitch, a long-legged, blond 15-year-old from the Byelorussian town of Gomel, who is part of the group, said she feels better after only two weeks in Israel.

"There, in Russia, I had a lot of headaches, all the time. I was much more tired than I am here.

"The only thing that hasn't changed is that I still don't see so good, but perhaps even that will change," she said.

Rabinovitch and her friend Diane Tolkachova, also from Gomel, said they don't mind having to study in what should have been their summer vacation.

"We like learning Hebrew, Jewish history and preparing for life in Israel," they said, emphasizing that the radiation is not the only reason they are happy to be in Israel.

"This is our motherland," Rabinovitch said, adding she always had a feeling the Soviet Union was not.

The girls say they used to celebrate Chanukah, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur with their parents, and although they like learning about the religion, they don't want to stay at Kfar Chabad when their parents eventually join them.

"It's nice for now, and everyone has been very, very nice to us, but we are not really Jewish," they said, quickly adding they meant not religious.

Even Smallest Ones Know They're Sick

Dr. Ze'ev Weshler, head of the radiology department at Hadassah University Hospital, says removing the children from the area is crucial.

"There is a time limit of between four and five years when treating children who have been exposed to high levels of radiation, and after that the damages are irreversible," he explained.

Weshler, taking time off from his job in Jerusalem, said it was urgent to begin examining blood samples to find the extent of the damage.

Nevertheless, he decided to let the children acclimatize before commencing the checkups.

"Even the smallest ones know that they are sick, but they don't understand the extent of the danger," Weshler said. "We have already uprooted them from their families, and you have to give them time to get used to their new life."

Five-year-old Rita is here with her 9-year-old brother and an older cousin but rarely gets to see them, because at Kfar Chabad boys and girls live in separated areas.

"My mommy told me I was going away because of radiation and not to be sick," the little girl said through an interpreter.

She said she knew that radiation is "when people are sick, and soon everyone will be sick and everything there will be dead and become a desert."

The girls, dressed identically in long denim skirts supplied by the Chabad movement, all seem to understand, in their own way, what had happened and why they are now in Israel.

Five-year old Stella explained that "there was a big accident at home and that is why people are coming here."

The current group of 196 is the first that Chabad plans to bring from the Soviet Union.

By unofficial estimate, the group, ranging from 5 to 15 years old, is the first of 3,000 Jewish children from the Chernobyl area whom the movement plans to bring to Israel.

Parents To Come Later

According to a Chabad report, the "Children of Chernobyl" program costs about $16,500 annually per child.

This does not include capital outlay to set up a dental clinic, outpatient clinic or medical examinations by specialists.

The program hopes to reunite parents with their children as soon as possible, but because the children are more susceptible to radiation, they are being brought out first.

"We are aware of the size of the program and are of course hoping and praying that the medical treatment needed by the children won't be too big. Not only because of the costs, but especially because of the children," Raichik said.

"They have gone through enough already, being separated from and now waiting for their parents to join them, and we don't want them to suffer any more."