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**\$2.3 BILLION EMERGENCY ARMS SALE
TO SAUDIS GETS LITTLE OPPOSITION**

By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, Aug. 29 (JTA) -- Even staunchly pro-Israel members of Congress are not opposing President Bush's decision to send Saudi Arabia a \$2.3 billion emergency shipment of weaponry, including F-15 fighter planes.

The package consists of 24 F-15C and F-15D jets, 150 M-60 tanks, 200 Stinger anti-aircraft missiles and 1,500 rounds of depleted uranium anti-tank munitions, State Department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler said Wednesday.

Unlike routine arms sales, which Congress may block up to 30 days after they are formally proposed, the emergency sale will go through automatically.

"The president exercised legitimate authority that's in the law to lift congressional notification procedures," said an aide to a pro-Israel lawmaker who often opposes arms sales to Arab countries.

"There's not much we can do," the aide said. "This stuff is being handed to Congress as a fait accompli."

The United States has previously sold an estimated \$50 billion in weaponry to the Saudis, with a small fraction of the sales provoking strong congressional opposition.

Tutwiler called the latest package "an initial response to Saudi needs," with all of the weaponry provided "on an immediate basis."

And the spokeswoman left the door open to additional sales. "Given the magnitude of the Iraqi threat, we believe that the Saudis have other critical needs. We are in the process of reviewing those needs now and will continue to consult with the Congress as we proceed," she said.

The most noteworthy thing about the \$2.3 billion package is that it does not include the more advanced E model of the F-15, which can be modified for a variety of operations, including destruction of enemy tanks on the ground.

Support For Israel's Security

Jewish leaders who met at the Pentagon last Friday with Defense Secretary Dick Cheney were told that none of the F-15Es would be sold to the kingdom in the "short term." Besides the F-15E, the leaders did not raise any other specific weapon that they would find objectionable.

The 24 F-15s are in addition to 12 the United States shipped to Saudi Arabia with U.S. troops earlier in the month, following Iraq's Aug. 2 annexation of Kuwait.

If all 36 those planes are left behind, they would increase the Saudi fleet of F-15s to 98, compared to 62 before the Iraqi invasion.

Twelve additional F-15s, made by the St. Louis-based McDonnell Douglas Corp., are scheduled for delivery by 1992, under a previously approved sale.

But pro-Israel circles on Capitol Hill say the current sale will not mark the end of their efforts to block future arms sales to the Saudi kingdom. "Not by a long shot," the congressional aide vowed.

Pro-Israel lawmakers will be especially

concerned about how the weapons will be positioned if and when the Gulf crisis ends.

The congressional aide said he was unaware of any "offsets" that would be offered to Israel to counter the Saudi sale.

But Tutwiler confirmed that Reginald Bartholomew, undersecretary of state for international security assistance, met recently with David Ivry, director general of Israel's Defense Ministry, for a "preliminary" discussion, to be followed by a more formal meeting on the Joint Security Assistance Planning Group.

At the meeting, "we took the opportunity to reaffirm the United States' commitment to Israel's security and well-being, and the strength of the U.S.-Israel relationship," Tutwiler said.

Both sides "agree on the importance of keeping the focus of the Gulf crisis on the core problem, Iraq's illegal invasion and occupation of a neighboring Arab state," she said.

**SHAMIR BROACHES BRINGING LABORITES
INTO GOVERNMENT DURING GULF CRISIS**

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Aug. 29 (JTA) -- Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir has broached the idea of bringing his longtime Labor Party rivals, Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Rabin, into the government if the crisis in the Persian Gulf takes a turn for the worse.

But Labor has quickly rejected the idea, demanding instead that the prime minister institute regular briefings with the two opposition leaders.

Shamir floated his suggestion Tuesday during a meeting of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, when some members proposed that the two Labor leaders, both former premiers and former defense ministers, be allowed to join the committee, which reviews national security matters.

Sarah Doron, chairwoman of the Likud Knesset faction, remarked that Labor should have arranged to have its two leaders added to the committee before the Gulf crisis erupted during the Knesset's summer recess.

Haim Corfu of Likud, chairman of the Knesset House Committee, said it was his committee's role to make any such changes. He suggested this might be possible even during the recess, if two Labor members of the panel volunteered to step aside so their leaders could sit in on the proceedings.

Shamir said the desire for unity in the face of crisis is natural and understandable. He observed that, at his own request, Defense Minister Moshe Arens had recently consulted with Rabin on the Gulf situation.

The premier said he would not rule out persuading Peres and Rabin to join the committee in the future. "Everything depends on international and domestic developments," he said.

Shamir recalled that prior to the Six-Day War, two Likud leaders -- the faction was then known as Gahal -- were co-opted to join the Labor government. One of them was Menachem Begin; the other was Yosef Sapir of Gahal's Liberal Party faction.

Shamir acknowledged that the Labor Party of

today might not be prepared to accept that sort of arrangement.

Indeed, the Labor Party secretary-general, Micha Harish, said Tuesday night that if the situation deteriorated and an emergency developed, Labor would want major changes and a "war Cabinet." Bringing the two Labor leaders into the existing government would not be sufficient, he said.

Harish was sharply critical of Shamir's behavior during the crisis, contending that his failure to brief opposition leaders regularly was unprecedented in Israel's history.

He said that all Labor prime ministers, and Begin of Likud as well, had in similar situations ensured that opposition leaders were kept fully informed of unfolding developments.

In general, Labor has supported the government's low-profile policy during the Gulf crisis, although Peres has several times criticized ministers for "talking too much."

GULF CRISIS MAY BENEFIT ISRAEL, STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL SAYS By Marvin Migdol

DALLAS, Aug. 29 (JTA) -- The Persian Gulf crisis could result in positive changes and ultimately greater peace and prosperity for Israel and its Arab neighbors, a State Department official told B'nai B'rith leaders here this week.

Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's blatant disregard for human rights and his reign of terror in Iraq and Kuwait will end in victory for the international community and United States, Aaron David Miller, a member of the department's policy planning staff, said during B'nai B'rith International's 35th biennial convention here Tuesday.

"No one should doubt the United States' staying power" in Saudi Arabia, said Miller, a pinch-hitter for Assistant Secretary of State John Kelly, who was unable to attend because of the Gulf crisis.

"It is absolutely imperative that Iraq not be allowed to prevail in this crisis," Miller said.

He said a possible outcome of the confrontation with Iraq "could be Israel living in a less dangerous neighborhood."

The guest speaker assured nearly 1,000 members of the world's largest Jewish organization that Israel's security and its recognition by all Middle East countries remain an important part of the Bush administration's policies.

The danger of Saddam Hussein was brought home to convention delegates earlier in the week by Moshe Arad, Israel's outgoing ambassador to Washington.

"We meet at an ominous moment in history," he said in an address to the convention Sunday night. "There is global consensus that he is a menace to the peace, stability and security not only of that region, but of the entire democratic and industrialized world."

In Israel, he said, "we take the Iraqi threat very seriously, and we are prepared to respond to any act of aggression against us, to defend ourselves effectively," he said.

"The Iraqi crisis ought to tell the people of the United States something about who America's friends are in the region," Arad said.

That lesson is not lost on the Bush administration, Miller indicated in his speech. "We support Israel because it is right," he said. And we support Israel because it is in the United States' national interest."

The B'nai B'rith convention featured a number of other prominent speakers, including the nation's first black governor, L. Douglas Wilder of Virginia, and Simcha Dinitz, chairman of the Jewish Agency Executive.

In a hotly contested race that came to a vote on the plenary floor Wednesday, the convention elected Kent Schiner of Baltimore to replace Seymour Reich as B'nai B'rith president. Schiner defeated Richard Heideman of Washington.

SOUTH AFRICAN JEWS BRISTLE AT MANDELA STAND ON ZIONISM

JOHANNESBURG, Aug. 29 (JTA) -- A leader of the South African Jewish community has spoken out forcefully against statements on Zionism made this week in Oslo, Norway, by African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela.

Mandela, who was attending a conference there on "The Anatomy of Hate," was asked by Nobel laureate Elie Wiesel to clarify his views on the 1975 U.N. resolution denigrating Zionism as a form of racism.

"If Zionism means the right of the Jewish state to retain the territories, which they have conquered from others, to refuse to deal with the acknowledged leaders of the Palestinians, in particular with the PLO; if the Jewish state has decided not to allow the Arabs in the conquered territories to exercise the right of self-determination; if protest demonstrations by the youth of the Arabs are met with brutal oppression, then of course we condemn Zionism in the strongest terms," he said at a news conference outside the conference ballroom.

He then added, "If Zionism, as I believe, means the struggle by the Jewish people for their national home, for their own state within secure borders, then Zionism is a very commendable movement, which we all would like to support."

His statements got a chilly reaction from an Israeli government official present at the conference. "I expected an unequivocal repudiation" of the Zionism resolution from Mandela, Health Minister Ehud Olmert was quoted as saying.

Here in Johannesburg, Solly Sacks, national chairman of the South African Zionist Federation, told reporters that the entire South African Jewish community was "distressed" by Mandela's comments, which he called "totally off the mark."

"Israel is the most colorblind society in the world, made up of Jews from every corner of the world," he said. Zionism, he said, is not a racist movement but the national liberation movement of the Jewish people.

The Oslo conference, which began Sunday and ended Wednesday with the release of a declaration against hatred, was sponsored by the Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity and the Norwegian Nobel Committee.

The Persian Gulf crisis was a recurring theme of the conference, even though it had been planned long before the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

Yelena Bonner, a veteran of the Helsinki human rights monitoring group in Moscow and widow of Nobel Peace Prize winner Andrei Sakharov, said the focus on the crisis in the Persian Gulf had waylaid the conference from its original goal: to dissect hate and examine ways of addressing the problem.

She spoke about the need to discuss racism, anti-Semitism, nationalist dissension and economic upheaval in the Soviet Union. "A lot of the talk here is just meaningless platitudes," she said.

RULING REQUIRING ORTHODOX INMATES TO SHAVE BEARDS COMES AS NO SURPRISE

By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, Aug. 29 (JTA) -- U.S. Jewish groups have expressed little surprise with a federal appeals court ruling last week allowing the Arizona prison system to require all inmates, including observant Jews, to shave their beards.

Two Jewish inmates, Kenneth Friedman and Arnold Naftiel, challenged the prison system's policy, contending it violated their constitutional right to free exercise of religion.

Mark Stern, legal director of the American Jewish Congress, called the 3-0 decision by the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco "fairly predictable."

But unlike the appeals court, Stern said he is "not convinced of the necessity to bar Orthodox inmates from wearing beards for prison security."

Prison officials had argued that the beards could be used to hide drugs and other contraband, and that the added facial hair created problems with identifying prisoners.

In another display of deference to authority, the Supreme Court a few years ago upheld the military's decision to ban Jewish soldiers from wearing yarmulkas.

That ban, however, was lifted, following congressional legislation that led then Defense Secretary Frank Carlucci to issue a directive permitting soldiers to wear yarmulkas and other religious garb, as long as they were "neat and conservative."

Stern argued that the Supreme Court, not the appeals court, is "at fault" for the beard decision by virtue of its landmark decision this spring in *Employment Division vs. Smith*, which upheld Oregon's law barring Indians from using the drug peyote in religious rituals.

The decision said states no longer had to prove a "compelling state interest" when enacting laws that would appear to infringe on religious liberty.

Jews No Longer Relying On Courts

Rather than placing their faith in the courts, Jewish groups are hoping that Congress will approve bills recently introduced by Rep. Stephen Solarz (D-N.Y.) and Sen. Joe Biden (D-Del.), which would circumvent the court's peyote decision by restoring the "compelling interest" test.

Samuel Rabinove, legal director of the American Jewish Committee, said his organization met with Attorney General Dick Thornburgh on July 31 and urged the Bush administration to support the proposed legislation.

Rabinove also expressed disappointment, but not surprise, with the beard ruling, and said that if the case ever came before the Supreme Court, "We would give very serious consideration to entering it."

David Zwiebel, director of governmental affairs at Agudath Israel of America, said he had not yet seen the text of the ruling, but said he was "troubled" by reports about it.

He called it "illustrative of the types of situations where the Supreme Court's ruling in the peyote case could have some very practical implications for a community."

Zwiebel and Rabinove both said they would prefer not to see any more religious liberties cases come before the Supreme Court, given its current composition.

PROGRESS REPORTED IN CASES OF LONGTIME SOVIET REFUSENIKS

By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, Aug. 29 (JTA) -- Longtime refuseniks whose names have graced the pages of Jewish newspapers and been the subject of State Department talks with Soviet officials are seeing major changes in their lives as glasnost and perestroika continue to alter the face of Soviet Jewry.

Irina Voronkevich, a 78-year-old retired biologist refused permission to emigrate since March 1981 because of her access two decades earlier to "state secrets," has received a travel visa allowing her to visit her family in Israel, the National Conference on Soviet Jewry reports.

Though not the coveted emigration visa, Voronkevich's travel pass has been a long-sought goal, too, allowing her to be reunited with her son, Igor Uspensky; daughter-in-law, Inna Ioffe Uspensky; and grandchildren.

Voronkevich, who is not Jewish, will be accompanied on her travels with her grandson Ilya Uspensky. Another grandson, Slava Uspensky, an Orthodox Jew, arrived in Israel last fall.

Boris Kelman, a refusenik for 12 years, left Leningrad in early August and has settled in Palo Alto, Calif., some 25 miles south of San Francisco, where he will be working on a special project for the Bay Area Council for Soviet Jews.

Another arrival is Oxana Kotlyar, wife of longtime refusenik Mark Kotlyar, with whom she was reunited Tuesday in Los Angeles.

Vladimir Tsvikin, a longtime refusenik from Leningrad, arrived in Stamford, Conn., last week, and was reunited with his wife and daughter.

SHEKEL TAKES A LITTLE DIP, IN PREPARATION FOR PLUNGE

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Aug. 29 (JTA) -- The Israeli shekel was devalued Tuesday by about 0.8 percent, as the Bank of Israel adjusted to an unusually high demand for foreign currency, sparked by rumors that a larger devaluation was imminent.

Official demand for U.S. dollars outstripped supply by \$73 million Tuesday, forcing Israel's central bank to make a "rate adjustment" Wednesday that brought the official exchange rate to 2.015 shekels to the dollar.

Few economic analysts put much stock in Finance Minister Yitzhak Moda'i's claim that Tuesday's adjustment was the final monetary move contemplated. In fact, the Bank of Israel is widely expected to devalue the shekel another 7 to 12 percent shortly.

One analyst was quoted by Israel Radio as saying, "The finance minister is one of the few officials allowed to lie in public, to cover up his real thoughts and plans."

Moda'i held lengthy meetings Tuesday with his senior advisers on the economic plan he is to present to the government. Its goal appears to be a quick increase in government revenues to offset deficit spending in the wake of the massive Soviet immigration and events in the Persian Gulf.

The measures contemplated are said to include the rumored devaluation, a reduction in the minimum wage, cuts in subsidies on basic items, an increase in the Value-Added Tax from 16 to 17 percent, higher cigarette taxes, higher luxury taxes, accelerated sale of government-owned companies and cuts in employer taxes.

**JEWISH POPULATION IN U.S. STEADY,
BUT TRADITIONAL AREAS SEE DECLINE**

By Allison Kaplan

NEW YORK, Aug. 29 (JTA) -- Longtime geographic centers of American Jewish life, such as Miami, are witnessing declines in their Jewish populations, while non-traditional areas for Jews, such as Dallas-Fort Worth, are experiencing exceptional growth, a new survey by the American Jewish Committee reveals.

Jewish populations continue to grow in resort communities, such as Palm Springs and Murietta Hot Springs, Calif.; Port Charlotte-Punta Gorda, Fla.; and the Pocono Mountain area of Pennsylvania.

But Jewish communities in the older, medium- and small-sized cities in the Northeast and Midwest -- including Evansville, Ind.; Wheeling, W.Va.; Bayonne, N.J.; Auburn, N.Y.; and Wilkes-Barre, Pa. -- are seeing a decline in their Jewish populations, reflecting a national trend.

The survey, titled "Jewish Population in the United States, 1989," has just been published in AJCommittee's 1990 American Jewish Year Book. It specifically measures changes in Jewish population between 1988 and 1989, but is designed to reflect overall trends in Jewish population.

The survey found that the total Jewish population in the United States in 1989 was approximately 5,941,000, a figure nearly identical to that of the previous year's figure of 5,935,000. The figure represents 2.5 percent of the overall U.S. population.

The study found that the Jewish population of Greater Miami-Dade County area, long considered a Jewish stronghold, decreased by 5 percent, representing a loss of 12,000 people.

"The Jewish population here is in decline as a result of it being inordinately elderly, and the fact that it is not being replaced by what was historically an annual immigration taking its place," said Myron Brodie, executive director of the Greater Miami Jewish Federation.

New retirees are now settling further north in Florida, in Broward and Palm Beach counties, Brodie said, adding that demographers predict that the Jewish population of Miami will slide until the mid-1990s and then stabilize.

Brodie said that despite the drop in overall numbers, there is a strong core of younger Jewish Miami residents.

Young People Flocking To Dallas

In Dallas meanwhile, the Jewish population grew by nearly 39 percent, from 24,500 to 34,000, while Fort Worth grew by 900 to total 5,000.

Newcomers to the Jewish community are "young people mainly from the Midwest and Northeast," said Bruce Schlosberg, executive director of the Jewish Federation of Fort Worth and Tarrant County.

While the oil economy is down, Dallas-Fort Worth is experiencing a boom because a number of major companies, including Exxon and American Airlines, recently moved their headquarters to the area, Schlosberg said, and medical facilities have also been expanding in the area.

While some of the Jewish newcomers are affiliating with Jewish institutions, he said, most are not. "It is our challenge, like any other Jewish community, to try and bring these people in," Schlosberg said.

Among those areas specifically cited as exhibiting the most significant growth in absolute

numbers were the Norfolk-Virginia Beach, Va., area, up 3,000 to an estimated total of 18,000; Atlanta, up 4,000 to 60,000; Raleigh, N.C., up 1,125 to 2,500; and Savannah Ga., up 250 to 2,750.

One of the authors of the American Jewish Year Book article, Dr. Barry Kosmin of the North American Data Bank, warned that counting Jewish population "is not an exact science," which can be influenced heavily by collection procedures.

"In most cases where a figure differs from that shown last year, the increase or decrease did not come about in one year but occurred over a period of time," Kosmin said.

Impact Of Soviets Unclear

The study does not take into account the recent influx of Soviet Jewish emigrants, because it measures changes in Jewish population surveys between 1988 and 1989, just prior to when the large-scale Soviet immigration truly began.

Jeffrey Scheckner, who co-authored the article, said that "everyone is questioning to what degree the Soviet Jewish population" will affect the overall numbers. He said he was expecting many Jewish communities to do new population surveys in the coming years to measure the impact of the Soviet Jews.

New York state had both the highest number of Jews, 1,844,000, and the highest percentage of Jews overall, 10.3.

California had the next highest number, 909,000, followed by Florida, with 585,300; New Jersey, with 411,000; and Pennsylvania, with 345,800.

After New York, the highest percentage of Jews was found in New Jersey, where they made up 5.4 percent of the total population. In Florida, they were 4.9 percent of the population, and in Massachusetts, they were 4.7 percent.

Scheckner said that communities tabulate the number of Jews in a variety of ways, usually using combined methodologies including lists from federations and synagogues, checking Jewish names in phone books and random telephone surveys. He said that growing intermarriages have made the task more difficult.

"It's difficult to determine who really counts," he said. "How do you count a non-Jewish spouse who lives in a household that celebrates Chanukah and buys kosher meat?"

The article published in the yearbook, he said, counts only Jews, not non-Jews living in Jewish households.

But he said that many communities have begun tabulating two separate lists -- one of Jews and one of those living in Jewish homes with some connection to Jewish life.

ISRAEL, SOVIETS TO SHARE MEDICAL INFO

TEL AVIV, Aug. 29 (JTA) -- Labor organizations in Kiev have signed an agreement with Histadrut's Kupat Holim sick fund to share information on the treatment of victims of the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster, according to the Israeli daily Ha'aretz.

Israeli expertise will be provided for use in a mother-child care center near Kiev which is treating Chernobyl victims.

The JTA Daily News Bulletin will not be published on Monday, Sept. 3, because of the Labor Day holiday in the United States.