

BUSH AND GORBACHEV DIFFER ON TYING GULF CRISIS TO ARAB-ISRAELI DISPUTE

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Sept. 9 (JTA) -- President Bush and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev ended their one-day summit in Finland in disagreement about whether the Palestinian issue should be linked to the international effort to get Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait.

The United Nations resolutions imposing an economic blockade against Iraq "should be implemented on their face without trying to tie it in to some other unresolved dispute," Bush said Sunday during an internationally televised joint news conference with Gorbachev in Helsinki.

The U.S. president said that while he feels "strongly" that the Palestinian issue must be solved, it should not be linked to the Persian Gulf crisis. "Any effort to link them is an effort to dilute the resolutions of the United Nations," he said.

But Gorbachev replied that "there is a link here, because failure to find a solution in the Middle East at large also has a bearing on the conflict."

The Soviet leader said a solution for all Middle East problems is even more important than resolving the Gulf crisis. He said there is a need to "come up with decisions and to devise a system to devise guarantees that would ensure the interests of all peoples and the whole world community, because it is a matter of vital concern to all of us."

The Soviet Union had earlier supported Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's proposal that an international conference be convened to deal with the Palestinian issue as well as the Gulf crisis.

Bush said Sunday that the U.S. position has been that "under certain circumstances, consideration of a conference of that nature would be acceptable," but not one linking the Israeli-Arab conflict to the Gulf crisis.

Trying To Implement Resolution 242

The U.S. position has been that such a conference would be acceptable only if efforts to bring about direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians fell through. Israel has been adamantly opposed to such a conference.

When a Palestinian reporter asked Bush why he does not support U.N. resolutions aimed at bringing about an Israeli withdrawal from the territories with the same fervor that he supports resolutions against Iraq, the president replied that the United States has been "zealously trying to implement" U.N. Security Council Resolution 242, which he said calls for Israel's "withdrawal to secure and recognized boundaries."

The fact that this has not happened yet "does not mean that you sit idly by in the face of naked aggression against Kuwait," he said.

Gorbachev and Bush issued a statement expressing their support for the U.N. resolutions imposing economic sanctions and an embargo against Iraq. When U.S. Secretary of States James Baker visited Egypt last week, President Hosni Mubarak emphasized the need for a unified position on this by the two superpowers.

But while Bush left open the use of military

actions against Iraq, Gorbachev ruled out any military actions and said the solution can be found through political means.

However, the two leaders agreed to allow medicine and food to be sent to Iraq if the need arises, particularly to keep children from starving.

But Bush stressed that approval for food shipments would be made by the Security Council's sanctions committee and that the food would be distributed by international agencies, "to see that the food gets where it should go."

"I hope that nobody around the world interprets (that to mean) that now there should be wholesale food shipments to Iraq," Bush added.

Soviet Role In The Middle East

The two leaders also agreed that there should be security arrangement put in place once Iraq leaves Kuwait. But it was not clear what this would involve.

Gorbachev suggested that he would like to see an Arab force. Bush said U.S. forces would not remain in the Gulf one day longer than necessary.

Gorbachev related that Bush had told him it had been U.S. policy for years to keep the Soviet Union out of the Middle East affairs and that now the policy was changing.

"It is very important for us to cooperate here in the Middle East," Gorbachev said. "In today's world no single country, however powerful, will be able to provide the leadership which formerly individual countries tried to provide."

National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft explained Sunday that the United States is now willing to cooperate with the Soviets in the Middle East, not only because of the change in character of U.S.-Soviet relations but also because the Soviet Union is "playing a very responsible role in this crisis."

Appearing on the NBC News program "Meet the Press," Scowcroft said the U.S. policy now is to get Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait, to restore the legitimate government of Kuwait and obtain the release of American hostages in Iraq.

He said the present goal is not aimed at deposing Saddam Hussein or removing Iraq's capability to build chemical and nuclear weapons.

DEATH RATE AMONG ETHIOPIAN JEWS WAITING TO EMIGRATE IS DECLINING

By Allison Kaplan

NEW YORK, Sept. 9 (JTA) -- The death rate among Ethiopian Jews waiting for permission to emigrate is declining, apparently as a result of stepped-up medical assistance provided by the American Jewish community.

A total of 40 Ethiopian Jews died during the month of July. But that number fell to 28 in August and is expected to drop further, according to Michael Schneider, executive vice president of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee.

"In the 10-day period ending last Thursday, there were six deaths," Schneider said. "We would anticipate that it could be as low as 18 in September if the trend continues."

Recent reports in Israeli newspapers have cited far higher fatality figures, numbering in the hundreds. But the reports were based mainly on

eyewitness accounts from Israelis who recently visited Ethiopia.

Those reports have heightened anxiety in Israel and the American Jewish community over the fate of the 15,000 to 17,000 Jews now stranded in the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa. The Ethiopian Jews arrived there from their native Gondar province in the North, hoping to obtain permission to leave for Israel.

However, emigration has been slow and sporadic.

According to William Recant, executive director of the American Association for Ethiopian Jews, about 200 Ethiopian Jews left for Israel during August. During the first week of September, 63 came out, and 70 were expected to leave during the second week.

In attempts to assist those who remain behind, crowded in the unfamiliar environment of Addis Ababa, the Joint Distribution Committee has provided food, mattresses and blankets to the Ethiopian Jews. Through an Israeli non-profit organization, it has provided them with cash assistance as well.

Most important, the relief organization, which is funded largely by the United Jewish Appeal, has expanded and upgraded its medical clinic in Addis Ababa.

"In cooperation with the Ethiopian government and government hospitals, we now have trained about 75 Ethiopian Jews as outreach visitors to all the homes where Jews are living, to encourage them to come into our clinics for treatment," said Schneider of JDC.

Schneider, who recently returned from a visit to Addis Ababa, said he felt the outreach program had been a "contributing factor" to the reduced death rate.

Recant concurred, saying, "We have begun to witness a decrease in the death rate" among Ethiopian Jews. He credited relief efforts and improved medical care.

Schneider said that the roles of the JDC and the Israeli Embassy had been clearly defined in a meeting he had with Kassa Kebede, a top aide to Ethiopian leader Mengistu Haile Mariam: JDC is responsible for relief work only; the processing of Ethiopian Jews for immigration to Israel is handled by the Israeli government.

But Schneider said it had been agreed that JDC would be permitted to "coordinate and cooperate" with Israel, "in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and confusion."

It is the Israelis who appear to be the arbiters of "who is a Jew." Schneider said that in determining who is eligible for cash assistance, the relief organizations "leave the assessment as to who is Jewish" to the Israeli Embassy.

SHEKEL DEVALUED AGAIN SUNDAY NIGHT

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Sept. 9 (JTA) -- The Israeli shekel was devalued again Sunday night, although the exact rate of exchange remained to be determined Monday when international stock markets opened.

The devaluation comes despite a promise by Finance Minister Yitzhak Moda'i and Bank of Israel Governor Michael Bruno only 10 days ago that the most recent devaluation was to have been the last in the foreseeable future.

Moda'i and Bruno announced Sunday night that the shekel would be devalued up to 10 percent against foreign currencies.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES:

SCATTERED DEMONSTRATIONS ASIDE, PALESTINIAN UPRISING IS LOSING STEAM

By Gil Sedan

SHUFAT REFUGEE CAMP, Israel, Sept. 9 (JTA) -- Young residents of this large refugee camp inside Jerusalem's municipal boundaries on Sunday celebrated the beginning of the 34th month of the intifada with scenes reminiscent of the early days of the Palestinian uprising.

The road leading to the camp was covered with improvised barricades. Youths standing among the remains of old cars, barbed wire and other junkyard material waved the Palestinian flag and yelled slogans of support for Saddam Hussein and Yasir Arafat.

A small force of border policemen were on hand to scare the youths back into the camp. Only two shots of tear gas were fired to disperse them, a far cry from the violent early days of the intifada.

But the minor clash was enough to get some smiles out of local residents. "You see," said one resident, who had just come from Jerusalem, where he used the strike day to do some shopping, "it is not true what they say that the intifada is dead. It is reviving."

But in fact, the intifada is ailing, judging by the overall scene in the administered territories Sunday. The streets were empty and while all stores were closed in observance of the strike, many schools in the West Bank remained open.

Outwardly, there are still manifestations of Palestinian nationalist strength. But many Palestinians admit privately that the intifada seems to be over, at least for the time being.

"The people are tired, and there is no one to wake them up," said one Palestinian journalist.

But preoccupation of the local population with the Persian Gulf crisis seems to be even a bigger factor. People are well aware that as long as the crisis remains unresolved, there is little chance for the local crisis to capture headlines.

Fines Rather Than Jail Terms

Another reason for the slow pace of the intifada is the army's new policy, under Defense Minister Moshe Arens, of reducing points of frictions with the local population.

The army received strict orders to refrain almost categorically from using firearms against the local population. In the entire month of August, only one Palestinian was shot dead in a clash with the security forces, compared to almost daily casualties in the past.

The latest move toward liberalization initiated by Arens is a guideline issued to the military prosecutors to request fines, rather than imprisonment, for Palestinian stone-throwers who have caused no physical or property damage.

That is a clear departure from the iron fist policy of former Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

A senior security source explained that the shift is a logical consequence of the reduction of violence. "Don't forget that we adopted stricter measures as a reaction to growing violence, and not as a trigger to the violence," he said.

Jewish settlers in the territories were alarmed by the change. "Instead of using the momentum of success and doing away with the stone-throwing phenomenon altogether, they reward stone-throwers with a soft hand," said Yisrael Harel, chairman of the Council of Jewish Settlements in Judea and Samaria.

CANADIAN JUDGE BARS PUBLICATION OF BOOK BY FORMER MOSSAD AGENT

TORONTO, Sept. 9 (JTA) -- Acting on a petition from the Israeli government, a Canadian judge has barred publication of a "tell-all" book written by a former agent of the Mossad, Israel's foreign intelligence agency.

The former agent, Victor Ostrovski, 40, a dual Canadian-Israeli citizen, has meanwhile gone into hiding. By his own account, two high-ranking members of the Mossad visited him at his Ottawa home last week and told him that publication of the book would put him "in all kinds of danger."

Among the allegations in the book is that the Mossad knew in advance that Lebanese terrorists were going to bomb the barracks of the U.S. Marines in Beirut in October 1983. The attack claimed 239 lives.

Ostrovski's book, "By Way of Deception: A Devastating Insider's Portrait of the Mossad," was to be published in early October. The publishers were informed Friday that the Israeli government had obtained a Canadian court order to prevent this from happening.

A spokesman for the Israeli Embassy in Ottawa denied knowing anything about either Ostrovski or the book. But reports from Jerusalem appear to confirm that the government asked for the publication to be held up, pending a hearing on Sept. 17.

Nelson Doucet, vice president of Stoddart Publishing Co. Ltd. in Toronto, told the Globe and Mail that he considers it incredible that a Canadian judge could stop publication without knowing the contents of the book.

The company has not decided whether to fight the order in court.

Doucet gave reporters copies of two letters sent to his company by Toronto lawyer Joel Goldenberg on behalf of the Israeli government.

Says Israel Didn't Warn U.S. Of Attack

One letter, dated Sept. 6, said Ostrovski had signed written agreements that he would not disclose any information about the Mossad when he quit his job with the service.

The letter said Ostrovski "undoubtedly came into information which could have dire consequences to many people, and presumably many countries, if it were to become public."

The book claims the Mossad did not warn the United States of the impending terrorist attack on the Marine barracks, in order to sour U.S.-Arab relations.

The attack was followed by a brief period of tension when the United States rejected Israeli offers to give medical help to wounded Marines.

The book also reportedly claims Israeli agents have spied extensively on the United States.

Other tidbits are said to include allegations that the Mossad recruited an Iraqi scientist to obtain the plans for the Osirak nuclear plant near Baghdad, which Israel bombed in June 1981, and that Mossad illegally used hundreds of Canadian passports to move its agents around the world.

Ostrovski, a Canadian native who has been working as a graphic artist, told reporters Friday that he had served in the Mossad from 1984 to 1986 and that he was previously an officer in the Israeli navy.

The Globe and Mail quoted him as saying he wrote the book out of "anger, rage, disappointment, love of Israel, belief in justice." He also

said he believes publishing the book could save lives.

Ostrovski, a father of two, said the Mossad agents who visited him last week said they would repay him for any costs he had incurred writing the book, as long as he agreed not to publish it.

He said he fled his home after their Sept. 5 visit, spent the night at the airport waiting for a flight to Toronto and has been lying low ever since. He said he fears Mossad agents will kidnap him and take him to Israel.

POLICE INTERROGATE SEVEN AIDES TO EMBATTLED INTERIOR MINISTER

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Sept. 9 (JTA) -- Seven personal aides to embattled Interior Minister Arye Deri were interrogated by police Sunday about Deri's alleged improper disbursement of government funds.

One of them, Deri's private secretary, was told Friday to report for questioning Sunday at the Jaffa police station. But the other six were hauled out of their beds Sunday in surprise predawn arrests.

The secretary, Yaffa Cohen, who is the daughter of former Sephardic Chief Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, was released by mid-afternoon and returned to Jerusalem. The other six were set free Sunday evening.

Among those questioned Sunday was Deri's closest aide and spokesman, Zvi Jacobson. The aides refused to talk to the press after their interrogation.

Deri himself was grilled for nearly four hours last week by five police interrogators in his office in Jerusalem. There was no word on whether he would be questioned again.

According to observers, Sunday's police action was intended as a high-profile demonstration of the force's determination to proceed with the investigation of Deri, despite a vigorous campaign by the 31-year-old minister and his supporters in the ultra-Orthodox Shas party to impugn the investigation.

Deri and his supporters have repeatedly charged that the police are working in cahoots with the crime reporter for the daily newspaper Yediot Achronot, Mordechai Gilat, who broke the Deri story in June.

The chief of police, Ya'acov Ternner, denies any collusion and argues that information coming from a journalist is as valid as information from any other source, once it is verified.

Wiretap Suspects In Custody

There was no word from police Sunday night whether the interrogation of Deri's aides had dealt with the related but separate matter of a wiretap that was found at Gilat's home.

Several copies of a tape of a conversation between Gilat and Ternner have been made. There are people who apparently have heard it but will not admit to it. And no one has confessed to placing the wiretap, making the tapes or getting rid of them. One copy was found in a Tel Aviv cafe after a tip from an unknown party.

Several persons are in custody in connection with the wiretap and other suspected bugs. Among the suspects is an aide to another member of Deri's Shas party, Knesset member Arieh Gamiel.

Police sources have unofficially said they ope to prove a direct link between Deri himself and the wiretaps.

ADL OBJECTS TO STAMP ISSUED BY U.N. AS NAZI-STYLE ANTI-SEMITIC CARICATURE

By Jonathan Mark
The New York Jewish Week

NEW YORK, Sept. 9 (JTA) -- A United Nations postage stamp depicting a trio of black-coated, bearded thieves with pointy noses, carrying bags of loot away from a burning building, has been assailed by the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith for its resemblance to anti-Semitic caricatures popularized during the Nazi-era.

The stamp, one of a series of six intended to recognize the U.N.'s program of crime prevention, was issued in Geneva last month and is to be issued here on Thursday.

In the last week, an anonymous mailing was apparently sent to thousands of Jews and Jewish organizations in the United States and Europe. The mailing contained a flier urging recipients to "alarm your community" about what was called "a Nazi-like caricature of Jews as thieves."

The flier portrayed a blowup of the stamp that appeared to give the thieves even pointier noses, darker beards and more sinister eyes than were on the actual stamp.

ADL officials asked for a recall of the stamp last week at a meeting with U.N. Postal Administration chief Anthony Fouracre.

Justin Finger, ADL associate national director, told Fouracre that "we have no evidence that these (thieves) were intended by the artist to be Jews, nor do we impugn the motives of your office. Nevertheless, the troubling resemblance to historic anti-Semitic material has struck a chord throughout the international Jewish community."

Finger, referring to the stamp's burning building, added that "there is also a tradition of stereotyping Jews as arsonists."

Fagin-Like Characters

Fouracre said that his graphics department did an analysis of the anonymous flier and determined that "it was heavily adulterated to change the integrity and quality of the artwork from a playful, Rousseau-like rendering to something more sinister and foreboding, and that was never the intention of the artist."

The stamp series, designed by Josef Ryzec of Czechoslovakia, was said by the United Nations to display "a folkloric style that has overtones of slightly sinister humor."

But a French-language newspaper in Geneva said that the thieves evoked the "Oliver Twist" character of Fagin, a mean-spirited Jew who turns homeless orphans into pickpockets and con artists.

ADL described the thieves as "bearing a disturbing and uncomfortable resemblance to caricatures of religiously garbed Jews."

Yet others say the stamp's depiction is considerably different from stereotypes of religious Jews. For example, one of the thieves on the stamp has red hair and a red beard, colors not associated with European Jewish racial images. Because the flier was printed only in black, the color of the red beard was not apparent.

On the actual stamp, the thieves are wearing striped pants, black frock coats and stovepipe top hats, attire that is also not particularly associated with those Hasidic Jews whose attire was caricatured by the Nazis.

All the stamps in the series, not just the one in question, depict pre-20th-century attire, when such pants, hats and coats were the style of the day.

Fouracre, a native of England, said anti-Semitism in any form is "totally repugnant," and he "seriously considered not releasing the stamp," as a courtesy to Jewish sensitivities.

But he said that since some 100,000 of the stamps have already been released in Europe, to bar their release in New York would simply make the stamps already in the public domain an instant collector's item, creating more publicity and value for the stamp than anyone wanted.

CATHOLIC ROLE IN ANTI-SEMITISM IS TOPIC AT CONCLAVE IN ARGENTINA

BUENOS AIRES, Sept. 9 (JTA) -- Like their counterparts who met in Prague, Catholic and Jewish leaders convened here last week to discuss interfaith relations and the Catholic Church's historic role in fostering anti-Semitism.

And as at the higher-echelon meeting in Czechoslovakia, Catholic clerics admitted that the church had a past history that ultimately enabled the Holocaust to take place.

The meeting was convened in order to analyze a 1988 Vatican document on racism. This document had, for the first time in Vatican history, identified anti-Zionism as being for the most part a manifestation of anti-Semitism.

The meeting, sponsored jointly by the Latin American Jewish Congress, Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith and the Latin American Council of Bishops, brought together academics, religious leaders and lay leaders.

The Catholics came from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Uruguay. The Jewish delegation included representatives from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, the United States and Uruguay.

Speaking from a Jewish standpoint, Daniel Fainstein, dean of the Latin American Rabbinical Seminary here, discussed the social, cultural and psychological elements of anti-Semitism throughout history.

Professor Antonio Rebbien of the University of Valparaiso, Chile, said the Catholic Church has undergone a transformation regarding its attitude toward racism and anti-Semitism in the 25 years since the Second Vatican Council of 1965.

The delegates adopted an outline for the study and implementation of the recommendations in the 1988 Vatican document. They also discussed ways and means for improving the common struggle against prejudice.

Letter From Protestant Council

Msgr. Willem Ellis, bishop of Curacao and head of the Ecumenism Department of the Council of Bishops, who led the Catholic delegation, ended the conference saying that friendship among believers of all major religions is the cornerstone for combatting racism and discrimination.

In Geneva, meanwhile, the general secretary of the mainly Protestant World Council of Churches, Emilio Castro, has sent a letter to European members of the council, warning of the "alarming evidence in Europe of dangerous manifestations of xenophobia and anti-Semitism."

These are "no longer isolated or marginal phenomena, but are present and manifest in many European societies," he wrote. Citing the desecration of cemeteries in France and threats of violence leveled at Soviet Jews, Castro said, "Five decades after the Shoah, anti-Semitism is once again on the fringes of political life."

(JTA correspondent Tamar Levy in Geneva contributed to this report.)