

VOL. 68 - 73rd YEAR

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 6, 1990

NO. 228

BAKER REJECTS LINKAGE AND SAYS U.S. SHOULD AID ISRAEL'S DEFENSE

By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, Dec. 5 (JTA) -- The United States would assist Israel in the event of an Iraqi attack on the Jewish state, regardless of its impact on the Arab coalition against Iraq, Secretary of State James Baker said Wednesday.

Testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Baker said if such an attack occurred, "there would be an appropriate response by the United States and, in our view, the Arab coalition partners would understand that."

Sen. Charles Robb (D-Va.) had asked Baker what the United States would do if Iraqi President Saddam Hussein decided to attack Israel with Soviet-made Scud missiles as a way of destroying the anti-Iraq coalition.

An embassy spokesman for one of the Arab coalition partners declined to say if his country would stay in the coalition in the event of such an attack, calling the matter "hypothetical."

In his testimony, Baker also added a new twist to the notion that there should not be any linkage between an Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait and resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

"The argument is also made by Saddam Hussein that he is somehow the champion of the Palestinian cause," Baker said. "The point is he did not invade Kuwait to help the Palestinians."

"You don't enslave one people to free another, and the consequence of his actions have been extremely detrimental to the cause of the Palestinians," he said.

Dole Calls For Progress On Peace

Senate Minority Leader Robert Dole (R-Kan.) also rejected Hussein's attempt to link the Kuwaiti and Palestinian problems at this time. But he told the editorial board of the Kansas City Star that additional movement on the Arab-Israeli peace process "may have to happen" once the Kuwaiti problem is resolved.

Dole's comment, reported by the paper Wednesday, does not go far beyond one made by President Bush at an Oct. 1 news conference at the United Nations. When asked about such a linkage should Iraq withdraw from Kuwait, Bush told reporters, "Anything is possible."

But Dole also said that "sooner or later, we're going to have to have an international peace conference or some way to try to resolve it, to try to protect the right of Israel to live in peace."

Judy Hellman, associate executive director of the Jewish Community Relations Bureau in Kansas City, responded by saying, "It just doesn't help for our senator to be taking those positions, even down the line."

In the Kansas City Star story, Dole also took the opportunity to criticize Israel for its recent killing of Palestinians, an apparent reference to the Oct. 8 riots on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, in which 17 Arabs were killed.

Israelis "don't want any linkage between their dealings with the Palestinians and what's happening (in Kuwait). They say it's different. Well, if you kill somebody, I guess it's different, but you're still dead," he said.

ISRAEL VOWS TO TAKE 'HIGH PROFILE' IN GULF IF INTERESTS ARE THREATENED

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Dec. 5 (JTA) -- Israel is apparently ready to take the Persian Gulf crisis into its own hands if the United States works out a deal with Saddam Hussein that leaves him in power after an Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait.

Foreign Minister David Levy told the Knesset on Wednesday that Israel would take "the highest possible profile" if it found itself threatened by Iraqi military might after the Persian Gulf crisis was settled.

There would be "no compromising" in those circumstances, Levy said in reply to several agenda motions.

His statement was widely seen as indicating that Israel would be prepared to go to war with Iraq to protect its interests.

That appeared to confirm media reports that Levy had warned U.S. Ambassador William Brown on Monday that Israel would take military action against Iraq if the United States failed to do so.

Deputy Foreign Minister Binyamin Netanyahu played down the reports, which appeared in Ha'aretz and other daily newspapers, but without sources cited.

"I think we are merely restating common goals," Netanyahu said of Levy's conversation with the American envoy.

In his statement to Brown, which the Foreign Ministry published, Levy observed pointedly that Israel's "low profile" posture in the Gulf situation was predicated from the start on Washington's dual undertaking to roll back the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and ensure that Iraq does not pose a military threat to the region in the future.

Levy stressed Israel's continuing expectation that the United States would fulfill both of those objectives.

Concern About A U.S. Deal On Kuwait

He implied, however, that if its expectations were eroded, Israel would no longer feel itself committed to the "low profile" approach.

The United States requested such an approach so that it could win the support of Arab countries in its campaign against Iraqi aggression.

Levy's demarche appeared to have been closely coordinated with Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, who is to meet with President Bush in Washington next Tuesday.

It reflects a profound fear in government circles here of a weakening of U.S. resolve and the prospect of a "linkage" between the Kuwait issue and the Israeli-Palestinian dispute.

Israel's apprehension was heightened by Bush's announcement last Friday that he would send Secretary of State James Baker to Baghdad to talk with Hussein and would invite Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz to Washington for talks.

The Bush administration insisted its purpose was not to negotiate with the Iraqi leader but to make sure he got the message of last week's U.N. Security Council resolution authorizing the use of force if Iraqi troops are not out of Kuwait by Jan. 15.

But Israeli officials fear a deal over Kuwait that would leave the Iraqi military machine intact.

ISRAEL IS CONSIDERING NEW MEASURES IN FACE OF ESCALATING ARAB VIOLENCE

By Hugh Orgel and David Landau

TEL AVIV, Dec. 5 (JTA) -- Israel is considering a tougher response to the recent wave of violent crimes by Palestinians against Jews.

It includes the wider use of deportation as a deterrent and punishment, more spot checks and body searches of Arabs entering Israel proper from the administered territories, sealing off the territories and arming civilians.

More than 20 Israelis have been stabbed by Arab assailants in the last two months, five of them fatally. Seven of the Arab attackers have been killed.

Security authorities are concerned Palestinians may now be resorting to even deadlier forms of violence.

Three shooting incidents against Israelis in the administered territories Wednesday appeared to signal an escalation of the intifada, or Palestinian uprising.

The incidents followed the circulation of a leaflet issued by the "intifada high command," exhorting Palestinians to use "all available means" in the uprising.

Authorities interpret this as a call for the use of firearms in Israel and the territories.

Until now, the mainstream Al Fatah wing of the Palestine Liberation Organization has opposed the use of firearms in the intifada because Israel could muster much greater firepower in response.

But Al Fatah may be changing its mind under pressure from two extremist Moslem fundamentalist groups: Hamas and the Islamic Jihad.

Arens Promises More Deportations

The recent upsurge of violence can be traced to vengeance for the bloody Oct. 8 riots on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, in which 17 Arab rioters were killed by Israeli border police.

Defense officials have come under intense pressure from elements in the right-wing parties to respond to the violence by deporting Palestinians responsible.

Defense Minister Moshe Arens told the Knesset this week that he favored expulsions and would order them more frequently in the future.

"Deportation is considered an effective and applicable means, particularly for inciters who create a fertile environment for violent acts," the defense minister said.

He spoke in response to an agenda motion by Knesset member Yitzhak Levy of the National Religious Party.

Arens said he has not resorted to deportations since taking office last summer, because the lengthy procedure involved reduces its punitive impact while sympathy for the deportee is often generated abroad.

If it were possible to deport terrorists within one to two weeks of their offense, there would be a point in using deportation as a punishment, a senior defense official was quoted as saying Tuesday.

But if the situation remains the same, "there is no point in raising the deportation issue," the official said.

A suspected terrorist ordered deported can appeal to a military panel and has final recourse to the High Court of Justice.

While neither a military tribunal nor the High Court has ever reversed a deportation order, the appeals process remains slow and cumbersome.

The defense establishment has been reviewing means to shorten the procedure, the Israeli daily Ha'aretz reported Tuesday.

Israel has deported 61 Palestinians since the intifada, or Palestinian uprising, began on Dec. 9, 1987. The most recent deportations were in August 1989, when five Palestinians were expelled.

More Guns And Roadblocks

The United States and the United Nations have condemned deportation as a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, which protects civilians in areas under military occupation.

Israel, which is a signatory to the convention, maintains that it bars mass deportations but does not preclude smaller-scale expulsions intended to maintain law and order.

Meanwhile, the Israel Defense Force and the police are considering ways to deal with the growing menace from guns as well as knives.

The police have ordered all their personnel, including office workers, to carry weapons at all times. They have increased the deployment of plainclothes operatives in areas frequented by Arabs from the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Roadblocks have been set up on highways leading into metropolitan areas. Occupants of vehicles bearing the blue license plates of the territories are regularly subjected to body searches for concealed weapons.

Metal detectors are being used in spot checks for knives.

Bus drivers on interurban routes are expected to be issued handguns. The bus driver in Sunday's attack was armed.

Police officials generally prefer limited access to gun permits. But the Interior Ministry has indicated it will institute a more liberal policy toward civilians without criminal records who apply for gun licenses.

There are contradictory schools of thought about sealing off the territories from Israel proper.

That measure, employed for several days after the Temple Mount riots, kept about 110,000 Palestinian day workers away from their jobs in Israel. It is said to be favored by Arens.

Two More Attacks On Buses

But the Shin Bet, Israel's internal security agency, is opposed on grounds that the widespread unemployment would create an explosive situation in the territories and swell the ranks of intifada activists.

The most serious of the three shooting incidents Wednesday occurred in the Sheik Radwan district of the West Bank city of Ramallah, where a border policeman was fired on as his patrol confronted a group of masked youths. He was reported to be badly injured.

Later in the day, three passengers were slightly wounded when an unidentified gunman opened fire on a bus near the village of Ein Sinya, just north of Ramallah. Not far away, in the town of El-Bireh, a Jewish driver reported being shot at, though the bullets did not hit his car.

Another attack was reported Wednesday night in Jerusalem, where an Egged passenger bus was hit by Molotov cocktails in the Wadi Joz district. The bus was damaged, but there were no injuries.

Police are braced for even more violence this weekend, when Palestinians mark the third anniversary of the intifada.

NEW VATICAN THINKING MUST BE CONVEYED TO LAITY, SAYS RABBI

By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME, Dec. 5 (JTA) -- An American Jewish religious leader hailed a "new spirit" of openness in Catholic-Jewish relations but bluntly told senior Vatican leaders Wednesday that Jews are wary of the church's new way of thinking.

Rabbi Jack Bemporad, chairman of inter-religious affairs for the Synagogue Council of America, said that until the "creative and outstanding work" of Pope John Paul II and other Vatican leaders had an impact on the grass-roots level of parish priests and laity, the task of reducing anti-Semitism and racism, particularly in Eastern Europe, would not be achieved.

He also urged the Vatican to recognize Israel.

Bemporad, one of the leaders of a 30-member international Jewish delegation scheduled to have an audience with the pope on Thursday, spoke during a public meeting with Cardinal Franz Koenig of Austria on "Perspectives and Orientation for the Future of Catholic-Jewish Relations."

Jewish leaders expressed the hope that the pope would issue a personal reaffirmation of a Vatican position declaring anti-Semitism a "sin against God and Christian teachings." That position was included in the final document issued after a high-level Catholic-Jewish meeting in Prague three months ago.

Wednesday's session was part of a two-day conference involving members of the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews and IJCIC, the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations.

The conference was called to mark the 25th anniversary of "Nostra Aetate," the landmark decree issued by the Second Vatican Council, which opened the way to Catholic-Jewish dialogue.

'A New Spirit Has Emerged'

At closed-door meetings earlier in the day, Jewish and Catholic leaders evaluated the quarter century since "Nostra Aetate" and discussed how to carry on following the joint Catholic-Jewish document issued Sept. 6 in Prague.

In that document, Archbishop Edward Cassidy, president of the Vatican commission, called on Catholics to repent for past sins committed against Jews.

The document also called for closer Catholic-Jewish cooperation in combatting anti-Semitism, particularly in the emerging democracies of Eastern Europe.

Speakers at the closed-door session Wednesday included Archbishop Cassidy and his predecessor as Vatican commission president, Cardinal Johannes Willebrands; Seymour Reich, chairman of IJCIC; Dr. Gerhart Riegner, co-chairman of the World Jewish Congress Board of Governors; Dr. Sergio Minerbi of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem; and Bishop Pietro Rossano, a member of the Vatican commission.

Bemporad's talk during the public session touched on many points raised earlier in the day.

"If one were to try to recapture the pre-Vatican II days, one would recognize that what existed between Christians and Jews was a state of suspicion and apprehension," he said.

"Since Vatican II, a new spirit has emerged" and "startling changes have taken place," he said. These augur "a new, significant and symmetrical dialogue" between Catholics and Jews.

"The promulgation of 'Nostra Aetate' instituted a radical change in Catholic teaching," which has "brought about a revolution in Catholic thinking," he said.

Nevertheless, given the long negative history of the church against Jews and Judaism in the nearly 2,000 years before "Nostra Aetate," it is "not surprising that the Jew feels a little bit wary of the significant changes that have taken place within the church," Bemporad said.

Jewish Wounds Ruptured Anew

"The most horrendous destruction of Jews in history took place in predominantly Christian Europe," he said. "Is there any wonder that it will take a long time for the Jewish community to genuinely trust the changes that have so radically changed the church?"

He said that when the pope, who otherwise has shown "deep concern" on Jewish issues, embraces Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasser Arafat or meets with ex-Nazis such as Austrian President Kurt Waldheim -- or when the Holocaust is "de-Judaized" by the erection of a Carmelite convent on the site of the former Auschwitz camp -- "Jewish wounds that have yet to heal rupture anew."

Bemporad stressed that education of the Catholic and Jewish laity is needed to create better understanding.

"Dialogue cannot be restricted to elites or to the top echelons of our respective organizations, but must be brought down to the grass-roots level," he said.

He called on the Vatican and IJCIC to set up a communications committee to "guarantee the promulgation of the Prague statement for Catholics and Jews on the local level throughout the world."

There is a particular need, he said, for the sentiments expressed in the Prague statement "to be translated into action" in the newly democratic states of Eastern and Central Europe, the main killing grounds of the Holocaust, where reports of anti-Semitism are disturbingly on the rise.

He said Jews must also educate themselves about the changes in Catholic thinking. "Many Jews, like many Catholics, are not aware of the momentous changes in Catholic thinking about Jews and Judaism that have issued from the highest levels of the church since the Second Vatican Council," he said.

A Call For Recognition Of Israel

"We have to set up a commission to make sure that every parish, every synagogue and every community will be able to understand the new teaching of Vatican II and its guidelines, as well as the Prague statement," he said.

"In doing so, every community throughout the world will be filled with this new spirit of reconciliation, spirit of love and spirit of hope."

Bemporad said that a reversal of the Vatican's continued refusal to recognize Israel would do a great deal to promote religious dialogue and understanding between the two faiths.

"You clearly state no theological objections to Israel existing and that the Jewish state has a right to exist," he told the Catholic leaders, adding: "Why not go all the way and establish relations?"

"Such recognition does not imply an agreement with a nation's policies, but places the relationship on the same equal level that the Catholic Church has with world Jewry," he said.

ANTI-SEMITISM IN SLOVAKIAN TOWN FORCES CHANGE OF MEMORIAL SITE

By Ruth E. Gruber

PRESOV, Czechoslovakia (JTA) -- A wave of anti-Semitic cemetery vandalism and theft in this town in eastern Slovakia has forced the surviving Jewish community to change the location of a planned memorial to the 6,000 local Jews who perished in the Holocaust.

The present Jewish inhabitants, mostly elderly, are trying to raise \$15,000 for the memorial.

Originally, they had intended to erect the memorial in the cemetery of the Neolog movement (a Central European version of Conservative Judaism) one of the two Jewish cemeteries in town.

Now community leaders say that if the money is raised, the monument will be placed in the protected downtown courtyard of the Jewish communal offices.

"There has been a lot of vandalism in both the Orthodox and Neolog cemeteries," said Desider Landa, secretary of the Jewish community in Presov, which has about 60 members.

He said about 90 percent of the tombstones in the Orthodox cemetery and 30 percent in the Neolog have been damaged, toppled or stolen.

Landa blamed "very bad youths" in the vicinity. "They believe that Jews had gold, so they dig up the graves, but of course there is no gold," he said.

"They also steal the black marble headstones for their value," Landa explained. In one village near Presov, every black marble headstone has disappeared.

Landa said the latest tombstone theft in Presov occurred last month. "That is why we want the monument here, in the courtyard, because it is closed at night."

More than 100,000 Jews lived in Slovakia before the war. Today, only about 3,000 Jews live in this republic. Of some 750 Jewish cemeteries, no more than a few dozen are maintained.

Sharp Rise In Anti-Semitic Incidents

Observers point out that much of the cemetery vandalism in Presov stems from criminal rather than anti-Semitic motives.

But there has been a sharp rise of anti-Semitic attacks in Slovakia as a whole, coinciding with resurgent nationalism, Jewish leaders say.

The most serious incident occurred a few weeks ago, when the Jewish cemetery in Nitra in central Slovakia was defaced with swastikas and anti-Jewish slogans.

The local monument to Presov's Holocaust victims was envisaged more than 40 years ago in the aftermath of World War II. But Jewish emigration and the establishment of Communist rule in Czechoslovakia postponed construction.

Now the problem is money. While the town has pledged a contribution, most of the funds will have to be raised privately. Last year the community sent out an emotionally worded appeal to former Presov Jews living abroad.

The letter quoted the proposed inscription on the monument. It reads:

"Dear descendants: Tell your children and the children of their children that this memorial tablet is a symbol for you to remember and never to forget our poor and unhappy co-believers and their families, chased to death through concentration camps by fascist murderers, who performed this work of destruction and disaster only because the persecuted belonged to the Israeli people."

LUCY DAWIDOWICZ DEAD AT 76; FAMED HOLOCAUST HISTORIAN

By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, Dec. 5 (JTA) -- Lucy Dawidowicz, one of the premier historians of the Holocaust, died in her New York apartment Tuesday night of liver cancer. She was 76 years old.

"I really believe her loss is immeasurable," said Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel, who knew Dawidowicz for 30 years. "She was among the first to teach the history of that tragedy with passion, lucidity and objectivity. Her contribution to the cause of remembrance is incomparable."

"Anyone who from now on will try to acquire knowledge or understanding in that field will remember her with profound affection and admiration."

In the preface to her best-known work, "The War Against the Jews, 1933-1945," a classic text of the Holocaust, Dawidowicz wrote, "The Final Solution transcended the bounds of modern historical experience. Never before in modern history had one people made the killing of another the fulfillment of an ideology."

Author Irving Howe, in a New York Times review on April 20, 1975, called it "a major work of synthesis, providing for the first time a full account of the Holocaust not merely as it completed the Nazi vision but as it affected the Jews of Eastern Europe."

A personal memoir published last year, "From that Place and Time, A Memoir 1938-1947," won the National Jewish Book Award for 1990 in the autobiography/memoir category.

Personal Account Of Pre-War Europe

The book was a personal account of pre-Holocaust Europe. From August 1938 to August 1939, Dawidowicz did postgraduate research in Vilna, Lithuania, at the headquarters of the YIVO Institute for Yiddish Research.

"I was one of the last people to see Vilna before the Nazis destroyed the city forever," she said in a May 1989 interview with Publishers Weekly. "I felt that I had an obligation to put down in words what I had seen and experienced. In doing so, I was able to come to terms with my own life, to exorcise the ghosts of the past."

Dawidowicz, born Lucy Schildkret in New York on June 16, 1915, was a lifelong Yiddishist. A product of the Sholem Aleichem Institute schools, she was a graduate of Hunter College and received her master's degree from Columbia University.

Dawidowicz's parents, Polish immigrants who met in America, raised her in the Bronx and Queens in a non-observant Jewish household, where participation in Jewish holidays was "largely culinary," she told Publishers Weekly.

While admitting that "the first synagogue I ever set foot in was in Vilna," Dawidowicz later in life became an observant Jew, keeping a kosher home and attending an Orthodox shul.

Dawidowicz was also the author of "The Golden Tradition: Jewish Life and Thought in Eastern Europe"; "Politics in a Pluralist Democracy," an analysis of ethnic voting in the 1960 presidential election; co-editor of "For Max Weinreich on his 70th Birthday: Studies in Jewish Languages, Literature and Society"; "The Holocaust Reader"; "The Jewish Presence," a collection of essays; "On Equal Terms," a history of America's Jews; and "The Holocaust and The Historians."