

VOL. 69 - 74th YEAR
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 16, 1991
NO. 11
**IDF IS WELL PREPARED FOR WAR
BUT EXPECTS MINIMAL CASUALTIES**
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Jan. 15 (JTA) -- The imminence of war was brought home to the Israeli public Monday night when the civil defense authorities instructed householders to immediately seal at least one room against poison gas attack, stock it with necessities and prepare for what hopefully would be a short stay.

The Israel Defense Force, however, is reassuring the public that if war comes it will be brief and cause minimal casualties.

A "very senior officer" was quoted Tuesday by Israel Radio as saying that never before has the IDF been so fully prepared for war and any casualties or damage caused by an Iraqi attack would be "very light."

Israel is under threat of an Iraqi missile attack even though it is not part of the U.S.-led forces poised to oust Iraq from Kuwait.

The IDF chief of staff, Gen. Dan Shomron, on Tuesday told the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee the IDF is fully prepared.

Sophisticated equipment and the most modern methodology of warfare, which was scheduled to be incorporated in the near future, is now fully integrated into the IDF and is operational and available for instant use, Shomron said.

Meanwhile, the Health Ministry has asked the American Red Magen David for Israel and Friends of the Magen David Adom worldwide for emergency funds to ensure that Israel's equivalent of the Red Cross is able to fulfill its responsibilities in case of a national emergency.

The ministry said \$2.5 million is needed immediately to put the MDA on a war alert. It emphasized the need to purchase blood packs used to collect blood from donors, chemical protective suits and closed breathing sets, the gas mask apparatus that encloses the entire face.

The MDA's ambulance fleet also needs upgrading to be capable of holding more than one bed per vehicle.

The Education Ministry as of Tuesday night had not ordered schools closed despite the impending emergency.

But tent cities where Israelis rendered homeless by soaring rents have lived in recent months are being evacuated because they cannot be protected against gas attacks. Those who have been living in tents are being accommodated in hotels long emptied of foreign tourists.

**400 STUDENTS FLY TO ISRAEL
ON EVE OF DEADLINE FOR WAR**
By Cathrine Gerson

LOD, Israel, Jan. 15 (JTA) -- A chartered El Al jumbo jet from New York, packed with nearly 400 Yeshiva University students and faculty determined to demonstrate solidarity with Israel on the eve of a possible war, landed at Ben-Gurion Airport on Tuesday night.

Their mission, officially dubbed "Operation Torah Shield," was to demonstrate unwavering support for Israel despite the U.S. State Department's advisory to avoid travel to the region.

There was chanting, singing and impromptu

dancing on the tarmac as Israeli well-wishers eagerly greeted the newcomers, who arrived only hours before the expiration of the U.N.-imposed deadline for Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait.

Their exuberance contrasted with the weariness and worried looks of foreign visitors camping for the night at the airport, who were there in faint hope of catching a flight out of Israel after most international airlines suspended service to and from Tel Aviv.

According to Rabbi Avraham Weiss, religious leader of the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale, an Orthodox congregation in New York, "this is the time to run to Israel, not from it."

His youthful co-religionists agreed heartily.

'I Care For Israel Very Much'

Tears brimming from her eyes, Gila Kaufman, a pre-law student at Touro College in New York, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, "This really warms my heart. I care for Israel very much, and Israel is in my heart at all times," she said.

Gila sported a sweatshirt with the legend, "America don't worry, Israel is behind you."

"Operation Torah Shield" did not benefit from advance planning. Organized only last week, word of the mission spread rapidly in New York and seats on the Boeing 747 filled quickly. Many potential travelers had to be turned away.

"I decided to join five minutes after I heard about the trip," said Rabbi David Getterman, a Y.U. graduate from Rhode Island. Getterman said he left behind his Israeli-born wife and their 8-year-old daughter, but that he had their blessings.

The trip was an unusual bargain. Student tickets for the 12,000-mile round-trip flight sold for \$50.

It was made possible by an anonymous philanthropist, an Orthodox Jew from Miami who donated \$250,000 to charter the aircraft. Yeshiva University took care of the logistics.

The donor is known to be close to the American Friends of Ateret Cohanim Yeshiva, which officially organized the trip. The yeshiva is located in the Moslem Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem.

Ateret Cohanim is one of 15 yeshivot that will house the American visitors during their three-week stay in Israel.

'The Place We Should Be'

Many will be sleeping in beds recently vacated by Israel Defense Force reservists called to duty in the crisis, Joe Baum of Ateret Cohanim pointed out.

Ethan Cimant, a 19-year-old Y.U. sophomore from Washington, said he was nervous the week before boarding the plane, but "the second we landed and I set foot in Israel, I felt safe and I knew everything would be fine."

Cimant said his parents were supportive of his trip. But other youngsters refused to be interviewed, because their parents and friends at home had no idea they were in Israel.

"Israel is the place we should be at this time, and that is why we came," said a young woman, who would give only her first name, Talia.

Apparently other visitors agree with her sentiments, not all of them Jewish.

On Jan. 18, 120 Christians from the Soviet Union are due in Israel with the patriarch of Moscow to participate in a baptismal ceremony in the Jordan River.

Arrivals on Monday included 132 American Christian leaders, who will be attending a convention at the Holyland Hotel, as well as Nobel laureate Elie Wiesel and 20 travel agents from Germany.

Another 280 Christians from Finland were scheduled to arrive Wednesday.

An Israel Bonds conference is scheduled to open in Jerusalem on Jan. 21. Eighteen American Christian editors will arrive on Jan. 28 and 300 Jews from London are due at the end of the month.

The World Zionist Organization, meanwhile, has called on young Diaspora Jews "who feel that (the United Jewish Appeal slogan) 'We Are One' is much more than just an empty phrase" to come to Israel to volunteer.

The head of the WZO Youth and Hechalutz Department, Bill Levine, on Tuesday issued an appeal for volunteers for a new program called "Yahad" (Together).

Levine said that "if you are between the ages of 19 and 25 and have been in Israel on any one of the Youth and Hechalutz's long- or short-term programs, we want you to consider coming here again -- now."

"If you are prepared to give of yourself for one month or longer, volunteering on a kibbutz or working in an army warehouse, we want you here -- now," he said.

Volunteers will be asked to pay only for their round-trip air fare, with other expenses covered in Israel. Those interested should contact a WZO shaliach (emissary), any Zionist youth movement or the American Zionist Youth Foundation at (212) 752-0600.

(JTA correspondent Charles Hoffman in Jerusalem contributed to this report.)

U.S. JEWISH GROUPS ESTABLISHING GULF CRISIS INFORMATION NETWORKS By Debra Nussbaum Cohen and Aliza Marcus

NEW YORK, Jan. 15 (JTA) -- American Jewish organizations are establishing a series of communication networks to ensure that the latest information on developments in the Persian Gulf is continuously available to the Jewish community leaders.

They also want to make sure that local activities relating to the Gulf crisis, such as rallies or demonstrations, are coordinated nationally as tension builds in the Middle East.

The Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations is setting up a "crisis response center" to monitor developments in Washington, at the United Nations and in the Middle East itself.

"Silence in this case is our enemy," Shoshana Cardin, the new chairman of the conference, said at a news briefing Tuesday. "Sleep is not on our agenda."

In conjunction with the Council of Jewish Federations and the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council, the Conference of Presidents is establishing a toll-free hotline for federation executives to call for information on the Gulf. This will complement an already set-up phone line for Jewish organizational leaders.

The new hotline will be updated twice daily with the latest information on the Gulf crisis and

Israel. Phone lines are scheduled to be installed this week, but no phone number is yet available.

In addition, the CJF satellite network will be available to link national Jewish leaders in New York and federation leaders around the country with Israel, Marvin Lender, national chairman of the United Jewish Appeal, announced Tuesday.

Satellite Broadcasts On Short Notice

Lender spoke during a satellite broadcast Tuesday morning linking federation leaders from 70 communities across North America with UJA leaders and three Israeli officials: Eliahu Ben-Elissar, chairman of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee; Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek; and Simcha Dinitz, chairman of the Jewish Agency and World Zionist Organization Executives.

According to Lender, the teleconference was arranged in about 24 hours and will be used again if Israel becomes directly involved in Persian Gulf developments.

NJCRC has stepped up its community relations efforts since the Aug. 2 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, according to Kenneth Bandler, the agency's director of public information.

NJCRC is the coordinating body for 13 national agencies and more than 100 community relations councils. It has provided local agencies with regularly updated advice on handling national and international issues, responding to media queries and interpreting Bush administration policy.

NJCRC has also been considering instituting its own information line to provide callers with updated reports about Gulf developments.

RED CROSS ADDING PERSONNEL IN ANTICIPATION OF A GULF WAR By Tamar Levy

GENEVA, Jan. 15 (JTA) -- In anticipation of hostilities in the Persian Gulf, the Geneva-based International Committee for the Red Cross has enlarged its delegations throughout the Middle East and has additional personnel on standby.

The organization is also making preparations to care for civilian refugees and is reminding all potential combatants of their obligations under the Geneva Conventions and international humanitarian law.

The ICRC is working in close cooperation with the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies. The Red Crescent is the equivalent of the Red Cross in Moslem countries.

The ICRC has never recognized its Israeli counterpart, the Magen David Adom. But a spokesman, Gabriel de Monmollin, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency on Monday that the Red Cross is also working in close contact with the MDA.

It has 77 delegates deployed in the region, ready for emergencies in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Syria, Israel and the Israeli-administered territories.

Plans have been made to deploy nine mobile medical teams in the event of a conflict.

Fifty additional delegates are standing by, and another 50 can be mobilized rapidly.

Medical and other relief supplies have been stockpiled in the Middle East and Europe. Two ICRC transport aircraft are ready for takeoff.

The ICRC plans to set up reception camps with a combined capacity for 300,000 to accommodate war refugees. It is already running three camps in Jordan with a capacity of 40,000.

NEWS ANALYSIS:**PLO MAY HAVE SUFFERED FATAL BLOW WITH ASSASSINATION OF TWO LEADERS**

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Jan. 15 (JTA) -- Whoever was responsible for the assassination in Tunis on Monday night of two top leaders of the Palestine Liberation Organization may have struck a fatal blow at the PLO mainstream and set the stage for radicalization of the Palestinian nationalist movement, experts here believe.

Defense Minister Moshe Arens promptly denied any Israeli involvement in the act. But Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip appeared convinced it was the work of the Mossad, Israel's secret service.

Curfews were clamped on many parts of the territories to pre-empt violent reactions.

The victims were Salah Khalaf, the PLO's No. 2 leader, and Hail Abdul Hamid, the PLO security chief.

Khalaf, popularly known as Abu Iyad, was, after Yasir Arafat, second in command of Al Fatah, the PLO's largest faction. Abdul Hamid, known popularly as Abu Hol, commanded Fatah's western front.

Also slain was Fakhri al-Omari, a chief aide to Khalaf.

The three were gunned down by Hamza Abu Zeid, who had been Abdul Hamid's bodyguard. Abu Zeid was later arrested.

Some sources in Tunisia attributed the slayings to the Libyan-backed Abu Nidal terrorist group, which they said had succeeded in infiltrating Fatah.

Abu Nidal, who opposes Arafat's leadership, was expelled from the PLO in 1974. Believed to have masterminded the October 1985 hijacking of the Achille Lauro cruise ship, he tops Washington's list of wanted terrorists.

Shots Aimed At Baghdad

But Palestinians here clearly were not buying the Abu Nidal theory. They recall the April 1988 assassination in Tunis of Khalil al-Wazir, known as Abu Jihad, who was then the PLO's No. 2 man. His killing was widely attributed to Israeli commandos, a charge Israeli officials would neither confirm nor deny.

Ehud Ya'ari, a knowledgeable Middle East commentator for Israel Television, said Tuesday night that the shots fired in Tunis were aimed at Baghdad.

He presumably was referring to the PLO's support of Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein in the Persian Gulf crisis.

The view here is that whoever was responsible for the killings sent a message that those who employ international terrorism should take into account the fact that the other side can use it too.

But who the "other side" is in this instance is not clear.

Khalaf's death leaves Arafat with only two still alive of the five men with whom he founded Fatah more than 30 years ago.

In the case of Khalaf, he lost his chief ideologist and closest friend.

As one commentator observed, had a Palestinian state existed, the assassinations would have eliminated its defense minister and chief of staff in one blow.

Salah Khalaf, 57, was born in Jaffa. He was not a member of the PLO's 15-member executive

committee but was considered the organization's main ideologist and strategist.

He was the key person behind the idea of a secular state in Palestine, in which Jews and Arabs would live together. That idea replaced the original PLO ideology, which saw no place for Jews in Palestine.

In recent years, Khalaf encouraged meetings between Palestinian leaders and representatives of the Israeli left.

Bloody Past But Conciliatory Stance

As such, he was the key figure behind the initiative two years ago to declare an independent Palestinian state, which implied recognition of the State of Israel.

Khalaf had a PLO career that ranged from most bloody to conciliatory, even a voice of moderation.

He was a founder and leader of the terrorist Black September organization, which was responsible for the massacre of 11 Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics of 1972.

But he was also the man who made a videotaped address to Israelis calling for peace.

In August 1988, he said he was ready to start discussions with Israel, which the PLO "naturally" recognized. In an interview with a French newspaper, he called for mutual recognition between Arab and Jewish states called for by a new Palestinian provisional government that would be "wholly different from the actual PLO's national covenant."

In February 1989, in an address which was smuggled into Israel and presented at a Middle East peace symposium, Khalaf called for direct talks with the Israelis, with a goal of signing a peace agreement and then taking it to an international conference.

In June 1989, it was disclosed that the U.S. ambassador to Tunisia, Robert Pelletreau, had met at least twice with Khalaf. The talks took place outside the formal dialogue authorized by Washington and were looked upon with disfavor by both Israeli government officials and some Jewish members of Congress.

But Khalaf's statements in the address to the February 1989 symposium appeared to be conciliatory and were praised by Israeli doves.

"I look forward to a future in which our meeting will be face to face and we can discuss the future of our two peoples as well as of real peace," he told startled Jews and Arabs at the symposium, which was organized by the International Center for Peace in the Middle East.

'No Peace Without Two States'

"In the past," he said, "we believed that this land is ours alone, and we did not believe in the idea of coexistence between two states."

"Everything that has happened to the Palestinian and Israeli people -- the blood which has been spilled, the victims, the maimed -- has moved us to react to the call of every Palestinian and Israeli child, so that we can take a serious step toward peace," he said.

"Just as you have some extremists, we also have many such people," he said. But "we have concluded that we cannot destroy the Israeli people," he said.

"There can be no peace without two states which will co-exist side by side," said Khalaf, "and which will be able to say to the entire world: the war in the Middle East has ended, and the tragedy is over."

NEWS ANALYSIS:**SOVIET CRACKDOWN IN BALTIC LANDS DOES NOT PORTEND WELL FOR THE JEWS**

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK, Jan. 15 (JTA) -- The Soviet military crackdown in Lithuania on Sunday morning and other attempts this week to suppress the independence movements in the Baltic republics are indications of a changing climate in the Soviet Union that could threaten both the Jews who are trying to leave the country and those who plan to stay.

Experts here say it is too soon to assess the full impact of these developments, which appear to confirm the growing strength of conservative elements within the Soviet government.

"There's no way of knowing what's going to happen, but clearly, storm clouds are on the horizon," said Martin Wenick, executive director of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry.

"The ascending powers -- the security forces, the military, KGB and the party bureaucrats -- have traditionally been those most hostile to improved rights for Jews," he said.

But the appointment of Aleksander Bessmertnykh to replace Eduard Shevardnadze as Soviet foreign minister is not expected to create major policy changes. Shevardnadze resigned Dec. 20, saying he feared the nation was moving toward "dictatorship."

Bessmertnykh has been the Soviet ambassador to the United States since last spring. Though said to be a liberal, he is also a member of the Communist Party's orthodox Central Committee.

The 57-year-old career diplomat is expected to serve as an administrator of Kremlin policy, rather than an architect of change, say analysts.

His appointment is "Gorbachev's effort to reassure the United States and the West that he seeks to maintain continuity," said Wenick.

New Foreign Minister Has Less Clout

But the new foreign minister lacks the personal relationship with Gorbachev and political clout enjoyed by his predecessor, Wenick said.

With the rising power of conservative forces, the Foreign Ministry under Bessmertnykh "is likely to have diminished influence on the formation and conduct of Soviet foreign policy," he said.

According to Pamela Cohen, president of the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews, Bessmertnykh's promotion is in line with other recent Gorbachev appointments.

"Every appointment that Gorbachev has made indicates he is looking for people who will be very loyal to him and implement his policies," she said.

"Bessmertnykh is not associated with the right wing," she said, "but he is not seen in the Soviet Union as an intellectual or luminary. I don't think we should be comforted by this appointment."

By contrast, B'nai B'rith International welcomed the appointment. According to the organization's president, Kent Schiner, B'nai B'rith has been "most impressed with his warmth, his candor and his sincere regard for the process of democratization and guarantees of human rights, civil liberties and religious freedom."

The disturbances in the republics, meanwhile, have had little impact yet on the rate of Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union. About 500 Soviet Jews are now arriving in Israel each day, and about 20,000 are expected to arrive during

January, according to officials of the Jewish Agency for Israel.

The Kremlin's move to an increasingly reactionary political position may increase demand among Soviet Jews for exit visas.

'Little Confidence In The Future'

Despite pledges from Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, Soviet Jews are not sure how much longer they will be able to emigrate.

Soviet Jews never trusted the Soviet Union's process of democratization, which had been applauded by the United States and other Western powers, observed David Harris, executive vice president of the American Jewish Committee.

"For the last 18 months, they have been voting with their feet. They've been telling us that they have little confidence in the future and in the process of liberalization," he said.

"They were telling us that even glasnost and perestroika would prove transitory, that the country's basic instincts were conservative and anti-democratic. Events in Lithuania only help make the point," said Harris.

The military crackdown on the Lithuanian capital of Vilnius left 14 people dead, including two people crushed under tanks, and at least 164 wounded in the early morning hours of Sunday.

Emanuelius Zingeris, leader of the Lithuanian Jewish community, fled Vilnius on Saturday just hours ahead of the tanks and is now in Stockholm, where he is on a hunger strike, which he will continue until the crisis recedes, reported Dan Mariaschin, director of international affairs for B'nai B'rith International.

Zingeris, also known as Zinger, is the head of the democratically elected Lithuanian parliament's foreign affairs committee. He is one of the five officials named by Lithuanian President Vytautas Landsbergis to form a government in exile.

According to Mariaschin, Zingeris met with the U.S. ambassador in Stockholm and gave him a letter from the Lithuanian president asking for American help.

Zingeris is also a member of the presidium of the Vaad, the national confederation of Jewish organizations in the Soviet Union.

The Vaad's second annual convention is scheduled to take place Jan. 21-25 in Moscow, and over 1,000 Soviet Jewish activists, and 100 leaders from around the world, are expected to attend.

It is not known whether Zingeris will be able to attend the conference or if he will be able to return to Vilnius.

'Education Tax' Proposed In Russia

Troubling developments in other republics include a raid on police buildings by Soviet troops in Riga, the capital of Latvia, and the closing of the sole Jewish paper there earlier this month, when the military shut down all of the free press.

In Russia, largest of the Soviet republics, an "education tax" of some 3,000 rubles has reportedly been included in a proposed budget presented to the Russian parliament.

This tax, if approved, would be demanded of anyone emigrating from Russia, ostensibly to "pay back" the government for the education that the individual had received.

A similar tax, of up to the equivalent of \$45,000, was imposed nationally in 1972, according to Lynn Singer, executive director of the Long Island Committee for Soviet Jewry. That tax was quickly rescinded after international powers lobbied Leonid Brezhnev, then the Soviet leader.