

VOL. 69 - 74th YEAR

THURSDAY, JANUARY 31, 1991

NO. 22

**U.S.-SOVIET STATEMENT ON MIDEAST
APPEARS NOT TO AUGUR POLICY SHIFT**

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Jan. 30 (JTA) -- A joint U.S.-Soviet pledge to vigorously "promote Arab-Israeli peace" in the aftermath of the Persian Gulf crisis initially raised concern that the Bush administration might be abandoning its steadfast opposition to linkage between the two conflicts.

But Israeli officials, American Jewish leaders and Middle East analysts now seem to be persuaded by the administration's contention that the joint statement issued Tuesday night by Secretary of State James Baker and Soviet Foreign Minister Alexander Bessmertnykh represents no change in U.S. policy.

The statement is being seen more as a means of keeping the Soviet Union behind the allied campaign against Iraq than designing a new path for the Middle East peace process.

In Jerusalem, Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir was initially reported to be irritated by the joint statement, which was issued at the end of talks at the State Department between Baker and his new Soviet counterpart.

But Shamir appeared to be annoyed more by the fact that Israel was not consulted in advance about a statement that "concerns us directly" than by its content.

Foreign Minister David Levy, on the other hand, said "there is nothing in the statement which needs to worry us."

And in New York, Shoshana Cardin, chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, said Wednesday that the communique represents "no change in American policy and breaks no new ground."

Cardin said she had been "told emphatically" by administration officials that "there would be no unilateral steps taken by the administration affecting Israel without prior consultation with Jerusalem."

Bush Not Informed Till Later

In fact, President Bush and his senior White House staff did not learn of the communique until after it was issued, just prior to the president's State of the Union address to Congress, according to White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater.

Fitzwater said Wednesday that it was nothing unusual for Baker to issue a statement after meeting a visiting foreign minister without consulting the White House.

State Department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler said Israeli Ambassador Zalman Shoval was read the statement over the telephone shortly after it was issued.

Fitzwater and Tutwiler stressed that there is nothing in the statement that has not been said before about seeking a Middle East peace settlement once the Gulf crisis is resolved.

"Our policy has not changed," Fitzwater said.

"We did not, in all candor, view this as a big deal," said Tutwiler.

The purpose of the statement was to show there is "no gap between the United States and the Soviet Union concerning the Gulf," she said.

The statement says it is a "high priority" of

the United States and the Soviet Union to bring peace and stability to the region once the Gulf war is over.

"Dealing with the causes of instability and the sources of conflict, including the Arab-Israeli conflict, will be especially important," the statement says.

"Indeed, both ministers agreed that without a meaningful peace process -- one which promotes a just peace, security and a real reconciliation for Israel, Arab states and Palestinians -- it will not be possible to deal with the sources of conflict and stability in the region.

"Both ministers, therefore, agreed that in the aftermath of the crisis in the Persian Gulf, mutual U.S.-Soviet efforts to promote Arab-Israeli peace and regional stability, in consultation with other parties in the region, will be greatly facilitated and enhanced.

"The two ministers are confident that the United States and the Soviet Union, as demonstrated in various other regional conflicts, can make a substantial contribution to the achievement of a comprehensive settlement in the Middle East."

No International Conference

Levy in Jerusalem noted that the statement did not mention an international peace conference, to which Israel remains adamantly opposed, and therefore represents no change.

A leading pro-Israel analyst in Washington agreed.

"The question for supporters of Israel is not whether there will be a peace process after the war -- there will be one," said Martin Indyk, executive director of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

"The question is whether this process can be constructed in such a way that it takes Israel's concerns into account."

Indyk said that by not mentioning an international conference and instead suggesting that the United States and the Soviet Union hold regional talks, a mechanism is being offered "that Israel and its supporters should feel more comfortable with."

He added that "the emphasis on a meaningful peace process that provides for real conciliation for Israel and the Arab states, as well as the Palestinians, is precisely the kind of language that should be welcomed by supporters of Israel."

But Indyk stressed that "what is needed now is close consultations between the United States and Israel on what kind of peace process might be pursued in the aftermath of this war."

He said it is "essential" that the United States and Israel agree on the process.

The joint statement appears to have been pursued more by the Soviet Union than by the United States. Baker did not accompany Bessmertnykh down to the State Department lobby when the Soviet minister read part of it in Russian.

The Soviets are apparently worried they are losing prestige in the Middle East. Before leaving Moscow, Bessmertnykh expressed Soviet concern that the U.S.-led bombardment of Iraq was killing too many civilians and destroying Iraq's infrastructure.

In his State of the Union address, Bush said

that while Iraq's capacity to wage war is being destroyed, "we do not seek the destruction of Iraq, its culture or its people."

The joint statement said "a cessation of hostilities would be possible if Iraq would make an unequivocal commitment to withdraw from Kuwait."

But it said this commitment "must be backed by immediate, concrete steps leading to full compliance with the (U.N.) Security Council resolutions."

Both Fitzwater and Tutwiler stressed that this represents no change from the U.S. position that Iraq must withdraw without any conditions.

In his State of the Union address, Bush mentioned Israel briefly when he said Saddam Hussein's tactics will not gain him anything.

"If he thinks that by targeting innocent civilians in Israel and Saudi Arabia that he will gain an advantage, he is dead wrong," the president said.

In the official Democratic response, Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell (D-Maine) said that while other U.S. allies are not doing enough, "one nation, Israel, has done much by its brave refusal to be provoked. This crisis gives us powerful new proof of the importance of Israel's friendship."

(JTA correspondent David Landau in Jerusalem contributed to this report.)

ISRAEL ASKS U.N. FOR REPARATIONS FOR DAMAGE CAUSED BY IRAQI ATTACKS By Aliza Marcus

UNITED NATIONS, Jan. 30 (JTA) -- Israel has submitted a request to the Security Council for reparations for damage sustained in the recent Iraqi missile attacks, which have left some 4,000 residential units uninhabitable.

In a letter sent Monday to U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar, Israel's ambassador here, Yoram Aridor, also said the Jewish state reserves the right to strike back at Iraq in self-defense and could call at a later date for a Security Council meeting on the missile attacks.

The letter detailed Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's longstanding threats to destroy Israel and listed the Scud missile attacks against Israel that occurred since the start of the fighting in the Persian Gulf.

In Israel, which is not a combatant in the war, four civilians died in missile attacks, 196 people were wounded and extensive property damage was sustained, the letter said, though an Israel Defense Force official put the casualty count Wednesday at two dead and 273 injured.

"Israel calls on all the members of the international community to condemn these deliberate attacks by Iraq on Israel's population and the resulting loss of life and suffering involved, and demands that such attacks cease immediately," Aridor said.

The primary purpose of the letter is to officially inform the United Nations of damages sustained in the event that a defeated Iraq has to make financial settlements for damages its military caused, U.N. officials explained.

U.N. officials said this was the first letter submitted requesting reparations for damages directly resulting from an Iraqi armed attack.

Numerous requests were made by area countries prior to Jan. 15 for financial assistance, but these requests detailed economic losses incurred in upholding the economic embargo against Iraq.

FEAR OF MISSILES AT NIGHT ALTERS ISRAELI LIFESTYLE DURING DAYTIME By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Jan. 30 (JTA) -- Iraqi missile attacks have wrought profound changes in the daily lives of Israelis.

Most workplaces close before sundown to allow their employees time to get home before dark. Orthodox women have been given permission by the rabbinical authorities to go to the mikveh (ritual bath) in daylight.

Many businesses have returned to a six-day work week, although a five-day week has been the norm in recent years. The purpose is to make up for the hours lost in the afternoon because employees leave early to try to beat the traffic jams home.

Inasmuch as the Scud missiles generally strike at night, the Israel Defense Force advised the public Wednesday to confine activities to daylight and stay indoors at night.

Transport Minister Moshe Katsav proposed that daylight-saving time be instituted in mid-winter for the duration of the emergency. By moving the clock ahead, an hour of daylight would be gained for work. If Katsav's idea is endorsed by the government, dusk would fall at 6:30 p.m. instead of 5:30.

Normally, Israel goes on summer time in late spring and stays on it for about 160 days.

The emergency has changed the routine of strictly observant women. Several rabbis have ruled that they may go to the mikveh on or after the eighth day following the end of their menstrual period. Normally, they go on the night of the seventh day.

KATYUSHAS FIRED IN LEBANON AGAIN By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Jan. 30 (JTA) -- Katyusha rockets were fired into the southern Lebanon security zone for the second successive night Tuesday.

They struck in the Marjayoun area, just north of the Israeli border town of Metulla, but caused no casualties and little damage, according to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon.

The nine-mile-deep security zone was hit by the most intense rocket bombardment in years Monday night, for which the Palestine Liberation Organization claimed credit.

PLO sources in Lebanon said the attack was ordered by Yasir Arafat to open a "second front" in support of Saddam Hussein of Iraq. But the PLO leadership in Tunis later denied that claim.

The second wave of Katyushas was launched after the Israel Defense Force and its allied South Lebanon Army mounted a heavy artillery barrage in retaliation for Monday's rocket attack.

Beirut newspapers reported that the shells struck 16 villages from where the mobile Katyusha rockets had been fired, wounding 16 people.

IDF KILLS INFILTRATOR FROM JORDAN

TEL AVIV, Jan. 30 (JTA) -- One infiltrator from Jordan was killed and another wounded in an exchange of fire with an Israel Defense Force unit in the Jordan Valley on Wednesday morning.

Both intruders wore Jordanian army uniforms. The wounded man escaped, the IDF said.

The encounter took place at dawn near the Israeli settlement of Argaman, several miles from the Jordan River. There were no Israeli casualties.

DETENTION OF SARI NUSSEIBEH CATCHES DIPLOMATS BY SURPRISE

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Jan. 30 (JTA) -- The arrest of Dr. Sari Nusseibeh, a leading Palestinian nationalist and one of the most prominent Arab public figures in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, has taken the diplomatic community here by surprise.

But the Israeli authorities may feel confident there will be no repercussions from Washington, considering the new closeness that has developed between the United States and Israel since the Persian Gulf war began.

Nusseibeh, 41, was arrested Tuesday night and placed under administrative detention by order of Defense Minister Moshe Arens. He may be held in custody for up to six months without being charged or brought to trial.

A communique issued by the Defense Ministry claimed Nusseibeh had been supplying the Iraqis with intelligence as to the exact location where Scud missiles fired at Israel landed.

The Israeli military maintains that such information could be of immense value to the Iraqis, who target the Scud launchers.

But the authorities did not expand further on the substance of the allegations against Nusseibeh, citing security reasons. Security was also their explanation for not pressing charges against him in court.

Nusseibeh has the legal right to appeal his detention to the High Court of Justice. But past experience has shown that Israeli jurists rarely intervene against the military's use of administrative detention, a punitive measure retained from the emergency regulations in effect during the final years of the British Mandate in Palestine.

Nusseibeh is a lecturer in philosophy at Bir Zeit University in the West Bank, which has been closed since the intifada began more than three years ago. Educated at Oxford, he is the son of a former Jordanian defense minister.

Held Talks With Likud Politicians

Observers consider him a leading ideologue of the Palestinian national movement in the administered territories, but not an organizer of active operations.

His role made possible his meetings with Likud activists before the intifada in an effort to reach a common ground with Israeli decision-makers. He was known to believe that the Palestinians could achieve more from the right-wing Likud than in alliance with the Israeli left.

The talks failed, however, because the Likud mainstream balked when the discussions became public knowledge and because of pressures exerted by Palestinian extremists.

Nusseibeh was beaten up at Bir Zeit, apparently to punish him for talking to the Israelis.

The Likud people involved included Ehud Olmert, now minister of health, and Moshe Amirav, now a Jerusalem city councilman of the Center-Shinui Movement.

Nusseibeh proposed, among other things, that Palestinians living in East Jerusalem should vote in the Jerusalem municipal elections in order to exercise greater political influence. East Jerusalem Palestinians are eligible to vote, but most boycott the elections.

Nusseibeh also argued that if the Palestinians were to take Israeli citizenship they could soon wield major influence in the Knesset.

His arrest took the political community by

surprise because it was commonly believed that men like Nusseibeh would not be touched by Israeli authorities because of their prestige abroad.

Visiting American and European politicians and diplomats have long made it a point to contact one or both men to hear the Palestinian side of the dispute with Israel.

Right-wing Israeli politicians, who have long urged Nusseibeh's arrest and deportation, were clearly pleased by the defense minister's move.

They have long claimed Nusseibeh is the paymaster of the Palestine Liberation Organization, who distributes funds to intifada activists and writes the leaflets for the intifada's so-called Unified Command.

Dovish politicians, on the other hand, said his arrest was intended to cow the Palestinians.

RUMOR ABU NIDAL IS IN BRUSSELS MAY SHED LIGHT ON JEW'S MURDER

By Yossi Lempkowicz

BRUSSELS, Jan. 30 (JTA) -- Is the notorious Palestinian terrorist Abu Nidal a patient at Brussels' Erasmus Hospital? And if so, is his presence there related to the still unsolved murder of Dr. Joseph Wybran, former head of the Belgian Jewish community?

Both are possible, according to Lazard Perez, who succeeded Wybran as president of the Coordinating Committee of Belgian Jewish Organizations, the umbrella body of Belgian Jewry.

"At the present stage, we have no precise information, but the presence of Abu Nidal in the Erasmus Hospital is one assumption among others," Perez told the European Jewish Press Agency here Wednesday.

He was commenting on a report in the weekly *Le Vif-L'Express* claiming that "European intelligence services" received reports that Abu Nidal, head of the Fatah Revolutionary Council, has been hospitalized several times at Erasmus Hospital, under a false name, for a heart ailment.

According to the weekly, intelligence specialists are convinced that the information is accurate. An Erasmus Hospital official was quoted as saying he could not rule it out.

The publication quoted the same intelligence sources as saying that Wybran may have been murdered because he recognized Abu Nidal at the hospital.

The Jewish community leader, who headed the hospital's immunology and hematology department, was found shot to death in the hospital's parking lot on Oct. 3, 1989. The case is unsolved.

Asked to comment on the likelihood of such a link, Perez remarked "Everything is possible."

"Everyone knows that Abu Nidal doesn't move around without bodyguards, that he has no scruples and that he doesn't hesitate to solve problems by killing," he observed.

He said Belgian Jewish officials "are in constant contact with the interior minister" on the subject.

The rumored confinement of Abu Nidal in a Brussels hospital followed the embarrassing revelation a week ago that his cohort, Walid Khaled, was visiting the Belgian capital on a tourist visa issued by the Foreign Ministry.

The disclosure that on the eve of the Persian Gulf war, a known terrorist had freedom of the city where the European Community is headquartered caused two government ministers to resign and put the political future of Foreign Minister Mark Eyskens in jeopardy.

HUNDREDS OF EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANS TURN OUT TO SHOW SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL

By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, Jan. 30 (JTA) -- Evangelical Christians, Jews and "Messianic Jews" prayed together Wednesday at the 10th annual National Christian Prayer Breakfast for Israel, which for the first time took place during a major crisis.

"Disruptions of families, threats to loved ones and the constant preoccupation and concern with war -- these things help us to understand, or at least to begin to understand, the sacrifices that have been made in Israel," former Attorney General Edwin Meese told the 600 participants in the breakfast, sponsored by the Tennessee-based Religious Roundtable.

This year's breakfast featured an attempt at building a new Evangelical Christian group to support Israel politically and economically, called Watchmen on the Walls.

The name is taken from Isaiah 62:6, which reads: "I have set watchmen on thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night."

About 125 of those present attended a Religious Roundtable forum afterward addressed by representatives of Jewish groups, including Americans for a Safe Israel and CAMERA, the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America.

They also heard from Raphael Farber, Israel's tourism commissioner for North America.

After that, 160 boarded buses to the Israeli Embassy, where they were given Israeli-grown olive and palm branches to mark the Tu B'Shevat holiday, which fell on Wednesday. Many of them waved miniature U.S. and Israeli flags and joined in singing the Hebrew melodies "Hinei Ma Tov" and "Bashanah Haba'ah."

There is "an everlasting covenant that God has made with the people of Israel," Sen. Don Nickles (R-Okla.) told the breakfast guests earlier. "And he also said that he would bless those who blessed the nation of Israel and he would curse those who cursed" it.

'Modern-Day Apostles'

Dr. Elwood McQuaid, director of the Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry in Bellmawr, N.J., received rounds of applause when he said, "We come here with one purpose in mind: to express our unqualified love for the Jewish people" and a "resounding affirmation of our belief in the right of the Jewish people under international law, but supremely under the mandate of the word of God, to live in peace in Eretz Yisrael."

Irvin Borowsky, Jewish founder and president of the Philadelphia-based American Interfaith Institute, thanked the guests for being "modern-day apostles who bring hope and love to the descendants of the ancient Hebrews, who are today protecting the holy shrines, the roots, the very heritage of Abraham and Jesus."

Other Jews on the dais included Thomas Dine, executive director of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee. Sitting seven seats to Dine's right was Barry Rubin, president of the Lederer Foundation, a Baltimore-based group of "Messianic Jews," those who believe in Jesus while continuing to practice Judaism.

One table at the breakfast was sponsored by Sid Roth, president of Messianic Vision, a nationally syndicated religious radio broadcast.

Roth attacked "secular Jews" in a brief

interview, contrasting them to Orthodox and Messianic Jews. "I am an American, but I am a Jew too," Roth said.

Zalman Shoval, Israel's ambassador to the United States, thanked the crowd for the "pleasure and privilege" of being invited.

BUSH URGES ANTI-BIAS LAWS THAT DO NOT LEAD TO QUOTAS

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Jan. 30 (JTA) -- President Bush, asserting that every individual has a responsibility to combat bigotry, said Tuesday night that he would support legislation to strengthen laws against discrimination.

But the president was vague in his State of the Union address about what type of legislation he wants and whether he would again veto the civil rights bill being pressed by the Democratic majority in Congress and supported by most Jewish organizations.

"Every one of us has a responsibility to speak out against racism, bigotry and hatred," Bush said. "We will continue our vigorous enforcement of existing statutes, and I will once again press the Congress to strengthen the laws against employment discrimination without resorting to the use of unfair preferences."

Bush vetoed a major civil rights bill last year because he said it would lead to hiring quotas. The legislation sought to circumvent recent Supreme Court rulings making it harder for victims of employment discrimination to win legal relief.

Most Jewish organizations supported the legislation and denied that it would result in quotas. Jewish organizations, while supporting affirmative action, have opposed quotas, because they were used against Jews to keep them out of schools and employment.

Only Agudath Israel of America supported Bush's contention that the legislation would lead employers to institute de facto quotas to avoid costly law suits.

Elimination Of PACs Proposed

Supporters of the civil rights bill introduced in the new Congress are stressing additional protection for women rather than the benefits for victims of racial discrimination.

The bill would allow women to seek financial damages for job discrimination. It would also for the first time allow damages for religious discrimination. Up to now only victims of racial or ethnic discrimination could sue.

Bush also called for the elimination of political action committees in order "to put the national interest above the special interest."

Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell (D-Maine), delivering the Democratic response to Bush's speech, said that not only should PACs be eliminated but there also should be a cap on political spending. The Republicans, who generally raise more money than Democrats, have opposed any such limit.

There are a number of pro-Israel political action committees, and Jewish voters are among the largest contributors to political candidates.

While Bush did not directly call for limits on the length of service for members of Congress, he pointed out that "one of the reasons there is so much support for term limitations is that the American people are increasingly concerned about big-money influence in politics."