

**ISRAEL IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH U.S.
AS FORCES MOVE IN TO FREE KUWAIT**

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Feb. 24 (JTA) -- Israeli government leaders have been in close contact with the Pentagon and the U.S. State Department since the U.S.-led ground offensive against Iraqi forces in Kuwait began before dawn Sunday.

Foreign Minister David Levy said Secretary of State James Baker telephoned him with news that the ground assault had started.

Levy said he looked forward to working with Baker again soon for peace in the region.

Defense Minister Moshe Arens said he was in touch with the Pentagon. While the Israel Defense Force remains at a high state of alert, Arens does not expect Israel to be further involved in the conflict.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir cabled Washington his wishes for speedy success to American and "all coalition forces" engaged against Iraq. The statement was interesting insofar as several of the coalition members are Arab states formally at war with Israel.

Sunday's weekly Cabinet meeting was a short one, devoted almost entirely to reports on the war situation. The ministers were briefed by Arens; the IDF chief of staff, Gen. Dan Shomron; and the chief of military intelligence, Gen. Amnon Shahak-Lipkin.

Shamir seemed to be expressing the national sentiment when he told reporters later Sunday that the allies have undertaken "the eradication of Iraqi aggression, which poses a danger to the entire region."

**AS ISAAC STERN FIDDLES,
ANOTHER MISSILE FIZZLES**

By David Landau and Hugh Orgel

JERUSALEM, Feb. 24 (JTA) -- The only casualty of a lone Scud missile fired into Israel on Saturday night was Mozart's Third Violin Concerto.

It was being performed by American virtuoso Isaac Stern when an air raid alert interrupted a concert of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of Zubin Mehta.

Stern, who was winding up an unscheduled concert tour of Israel which he undertook as a gesture of solidarity with the Jewish state, left the stage briefly with the entire IPO company to get their gas masks.

But he returned alone a few moments later without a mask and took up fiddle and bow to give a solo rendition of a Bach Adagio not on the program while the alert continued. His performance captured the hearts of his listeners, who wore gas masks throughout the piece.

The concert was one of the first given since the Gulf war began. The orchestra, which began concertizing again last week under the baton of Mehta, has still not returned to its home base at Tel Aviv's Mann Auditorium.

Saturday night's audience at the Jerusalem Theater, which included Defense Minister Moshe Arens, had donned their masks on instructions from the theater manager when the alert sounded. The concertgoers breathed a collective sigh of

relief when Arens, who had left briefly to speak to his office by telephone, returned calmly to his seat.

Members of the audience, protected by their masks, listened raptly to one of the world's greatest violinists, who had sought out a concert here at this time out of feelings of kinship with Israel.

Stern ended the concert with an encore piece by Fritz Kreisler and was then rushed to Ben-Gurion Airport for his flight home to New York.

Saturday night's missile was the 37th fired at Israel since the Persian Gulf war began five weeks ago. The Israel Defense Force announced it had landed somewhere in central Israel, setting a brush fire. No one was injured and no serious damage was done.

Like all previous Scud missiles, it carried a conventional warhead.

Television viewers later saw a fire burning in an open field surrounded by fire engines and other emergency vehicles.

The Scud missile was launched about eight minutes before 7 p.m. local time, the missed deadline for Iraq's compliance with the U.S.-led ultimatum to start evacuating Kuwait.

The massive allied ground assault ensued shortly afterward.

As the Gulf war enters what many believe will be its final phase, Israelis remain glued to their radios. But otherwise, life has returned almost to normal.

Kindergarten and elementary school classes were held Sunday, after late-night consultations between the Education Ministry, the Prime Minister's Office and the civil defense authorities.

The IDF is keeping a close watch on developments in the Gulf region and in neighboring Jordan. But the level of alert is no higher than it was before the ground offensive, the IDF said.

**ARAB LEADERS WHO BACKED HUSSEIN
WILL GO DOWN WITH HIM, SAYS SAUDI**

By Tom Tugend

LOS ANGELES, Feb. 24 (JTA) -- Arab leaders who sided with Iraq will go under with Saddam Hussein, according to Saudi Arabia's ambassador to the United States.

Taking off his diplomatic gloves, Prince Bandar ibn Sultan described Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasir Arafat as a "clown," King Hussein of Jordan as a "goner" and Yemen's President Ali Abdullah Saleh as "an illiterate man."

Signaling a radical change in Saudi Arabia's longtime policy of building an Arab consensus, the diplomat said that all of Saddam Hussein's supporters would share in his defeat or be stripped of all influence in the Middle East.

The one exception, Bandar said in a luncheon interview with the Washington bureau of the Los Angeles Times, was the Palestinian people. They, though not their leaders, would be forgiven, because "they are not against me," the prince said.

He excused their support of Iraq by saying, "they are just frustrated, and they want anything to happen that could move something." He added

that he was convinced the Palestinians are "sobering up."

Bandar also announced that his government will shortly publish details of its aid program to other Arab nations, revealing that pro-Iraqi leaders received, and apparently embezzled, millions of dollars before the outbreak of the Persian Gulf war.

The Saudi ambassador has played a key role in strategy meetings of the U.S.-led coalition since Iraq invaded Kuwait. He is well connected within the Saudi power structure as son of the defense minister, brother of the overall Saudi military commander and brother-in-law of the foreign minister.

King Hussein 'Sold Us Out'

He ridiculed in equal measure Arab leaders who failed to join the fight against Hussein and those American analysts who have predicted that Saddam Hussein will emerge as a hero whether he wins or loses the war.

"Arabists in the United States sell the Arabs short," the prince said. "They think either we don't have any brains or they think of us in a romantic sense -- white robes, white horses."

Reserving some of his bitterest scorn for King Hussein, Bandar predicted the end of the Jordanian monarch as a serious Arab leader.

"He earned our disrespect, and he earned Saddam Hussein's contempt," Bandar said. "He was our friend for 40 years, and he sold us out, just like this.

"He cheered Saddam Hussein for five months," the prince said. "In fact, (King) Hussein was more eloquent that Saddam in expressing his cause. And when the chips were down and we were hammering Saddam like hell, Hussein of Jordan said, 'But I'm neutral.'"

Bandar described most of Iraq's supporters in the Arab world as impoverished nations with rich and corrupt leaders. In publishing an account of its foreign aid program, the Saudi government will show the citizens of the recipient countries that they were made poor in part by their leaders, the Saudi envoy said.

CURFEW RESUMES IN TERRITORIES TO DETER PROTESTS TIED TO WAR By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Feb. 24 (JTA) -- The West Bank and Gaza Strip were put under tight curfew again Sunday as Israeli authorities acted to prevent possible pro-Iraqi demonstrations linked to the allied ground offensive in the Persian Gulf.

At the same time, police raided the East Jerusalem offices of Palestinian activist Faisal Hussein and seized large quantities of equipment.

The premises were sealed until next July. The latest curfew affects 1.5 million Palestinians, who had been confined to their homes since the war started.

Restrictions were relaxed somewhat last week but were tightened again as the Gulf war entered a new and possibly climactic stage.

Husseini, who is recognized as the most senior Palestinian nationalist leader in the administered territories, has long been a target of the Israeli authorities.

His main office, which housed the Center for Arab Studies, has been closed for two years. But he has continued to operate from his home on the Mount of Olives.

Husseini is well regarded in some circles

abroad for his advocacy of non-violent resistance to the Israeli presence in the territories. But many Israelis say he is a leader of the intifada.

On Sunday, the police said they ordered him to open his offices in the Wadi Joz and Shuafat neighborhoods of East Jerusalem. He refused, whereupon the police forced entry.

They said they found considerable equipment, including computer terminals and the Arab Studies Center archives.

Two gasoline bombs were thrown Sunday evening in East Jerusalem without causing casualties or damage. One was aimed at a border police patrol in Wadi Joz and the other at a Jewish home in the Old City.

1,400 ARABS HELD WITHOUT TRIAL, SAYS OUTGOING IDF LEGAL CHIEF By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Feb. 24 (JTA) -- Some 1,400 Palestinians are currently imprisoned without formal charges or trial, the Israel Defense Force's top legal officer disclosed upon his retirement Friday.

Brig. Gen. Amnon Strashnov, the outgoing IDF judge advocate general, told a television interviewer that 75,000 residents of the administered territories had been arrested since the intifada began more than three years.

He would not say how many are presently in military prisons. But he did disclose that of the total arrests, 45,000 suspects were put on trial and 14,000 placed under administrative detention, a measure retained from the British Mandate.

Strashnov, who is leaving military service, said he welcomed the defeat of a controversial proposal by right-wing Knesset members to pardon soldiers convicted of using excessive force against Palestinian civilians in the early days of the intifada.

Strashnov will be replaced by his aide, Col. Ilan Schiff, who will be promoted to brigadier general.

The IDF also announced the promotion of Col. Micha Tamir to brigadier general. Tamir has been appointed commander of the IDF's liaison unit in Lebanon. He replaces Brig. Gen. Ze'ev Zaccaria, who will return to his academic studies.

SOLDIER KILLED BY INFILTRATOR By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Feb. 24 (JTA) -- A soldier of the Israel Defense Force was killed and another wounded in a clash with an armed infiltrator from Jordan south of Beit She'an late Saturday.

The soldier, a Bedouin army tracker, was identified as Sgt. Maj. Muhammed Shibli of Arab e-Shibli village in Lower Galilee.

The infiltrator, killed in an exchange of fire with an IDF patrol, wore civilian clothes and carried a Kalachnikov assault rifle and a Koran. He crossed the Jordan River near Moshav Mehola and hid in ambush.

The incident was discussed at Sunday's Cabinet meeting. It was the third infiltration from Jordan since the Persian Gulf war started Jan. 17 and the first since then to claim the life of a soldier. Two Israeli soldiers were killed in clashes with infiltrators from Jordan last year.

Foreign Minister David Levy, who has a home in Beit She'an, said he had driven past the scene of the ambush on his way to Jerusalem less than 15 minutes before the shootout.

GERMANS GAVE MAIKOVSKIS A VISA, WAR CRIMINAL'S LAWYER TESTIFIES

By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, Feb. 24 (JTA) -- German consular officials here provided a visa in 1987 to Boleslavs Maikovskis, a Nazi war criminal, allowing him to escape deportation to the Soviet Union, where he had been sentenced to death, according to sworn testimony given by Maikovskis' former attorney, the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith has learned.

Ivars Berzins, testifying recently at the Maikovskis trial now under way in Germany, said that in 1987 he met with the German consul general in New York and "put the cards on the table" that Maikovskis stood to be deported to the Soviet Union.

Berzins said the consul general contacted the German Foreign Ministry in Bonn, and the consul then helped get Maikovskis a visa to Germany "for humanitarian reasons."

New York City Comptroller Elizabeth Holtzman, who as a U.S. congresswoman authored the bill that allows the United States to deport Nazi war criminals, said, "The allegations made by Boleslavs Maikovskis' attorney, if true, raise serious questions about whether the German government has been involved in protecting Nazi war criminals."

Maikovskis, who lived in Mineola, N.Y., was ruled deportable in 1984 for having lied about his wartime activities as a Nazi police chief in Latvia when he entered the United States from Germany in 1951.

The Soviet Union, which sentenced him in absentia to death in 1965 for massacring civilians in Latvia during the war, had for years unsuccessfully sought his extradition from the United States. No extradition treaty exists between the two countries.

The Office of Special Investigations of the U.S. Justice Department had tried to have him deported to Germany, but German officials originally refused to accept him because the crimes had not been committed on German soil.

ADL Demands An Explanation

Maikovskis' disappearance was discovered in October 1988, a full year after he left the United States for West Germany to settle in Munster, a city where many Latvians live. He traveled on a Latvian passport with a German visa.

After much publicity and agitation by ADL and Jewish activists and Holocaust survivors, German authorities arrested Maikovskis and charged him with war crimes.

The trial, which started in January 1990, is being held every Monday and Thursday in Munster. Already, Germany has spent millions of dollars to prosecute the 87-year-old Maikovskis, including interviewing witnesses in Latvia and the United States, according to Elliott Welles of ADL's Nazi Task Force.

Earlier this month, ADL's national director, Abraham Foxman, sent off an angry letter to German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, saying, "Since no trial was planned in Germany at the time, this visa was apparently not with the intention of calling him to account for his crimes, but rather to enable him to escape being brought to justice."

Added Foxman, "We believe the conduct of the German government in this matter demands an explanation, and those responsible should be severely reprimanded."

Berzins, who practices law on Long Island, confirmed his court testimony to the Jewish Telegraphic Agency and added he could not recall the name of the German official he dealt with in the consulate here.

"When I spoke with the gentleman at the German Consulate, I told him that Maikovskis had a death sentence against him in the Soviet Union and a trial was held. And I told him he was deportable and he has no more appeals left, and as far as I know, he stands a strong chance of being shot" in the Soviet Union explained Berzins.

Officials at the German Consulate here said they had no information on the case. But the acting director of the German Consulate, Axel John, said, "We don't give visas here."

Menachem Rosensaft, founder of the International Network of Children of Jewish Holocaust Survivors, said that if Berzins' statements are true, "I would be shocked."

"But the tactics of some of the counsels for some of the Nazi war criminals," he said, "are such over the years that I don't want to malign the Germans, as it were, or attack them without having full confirmation."

"The fact that Maikovskis is on trial is a positive development," he said. "The fact that he wasn't deported to the Soviet Union is unfortunate, but on balance, it is better that he is in Germany on trial than sitting in Long Island and enjoying old age," said Rosensaft.

SENATOR SAYS SOVIET JEWRY GROUPS SHOULD FOCUS ON EMIGRATION LAWS

By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, Feb. 24 (JTA) -- Soviet Jewry groups should place more emphasis on lobbying for new Soviet laws that guarantee free emigration and less on resolving individual refusenik cases, Sen. Bob Graham (D-Fla.) said last week.

"Today the challenge is to be able to move beyond the gratification of the individual cases towards the institutionalization within the Soviet Union of laws and procedures that will guarantee, on an across-the-board basis, the opportunity for free emigration," he told the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews on Feb. 19, after receiving one of its biannual Henry Jackson Leadership Awards.

The Jackson Award is named for the late Democratic senator from Washington state, known affectionately as "Scoop," who co-sponsored the 1974 Jackson-Vanik Amendment barring U.S. trade benefits to the Soviets until they permit a sustained high level of Soviet Jewish emigration.

The Union of Councils praised Graham for helping to thwart attempts made last fall to grant the Soviets most-favored-nation trade status, which would have lowered U.S. duties on Soviet imported goods to the levels charged most other U.S. trading partners.

Instead, President Bush awarded the Soviets a lesser benefit, namely U.S. government food aid, in announcing Dec. 12 that he was issuing a Jackson-Vanik waiver through July.

A second Jackson Award went to Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass.), who told the Union of Councils, "We all have to be honest and say there have been more Jews allowed to leave the Soviet Union this past year than we had thought we were going to see, many of us, in our lifetime."

"Organizations like this one are entitled to the credit in part," he said, "for having put this so high on the international agenda."

CANADIAN NAVY EXCLUDES JEWS FROM DUTIES INVOLVING ARABS

By Gary Pogrow

VANCOUVER, British Columbia, Feb. 24 (JTA) -- The case of a Jewish naval reservist who charged discrimination for being denied a posting to the Persian Gulf because of his religion has forced the Canadian navy to acknowledge that it excludes Jews from duties overseas that require contacts with Arabs.

Lt. Andrew Liebmann, who applied for the position of executive assistant to the commodore of Canadian naval forces in the Gulf, has filed a "redress of grievances," the formal process of complaint within the Canadian Armed Forces.

"If that doesn't work, I will go to court through the Charter of Rights," said Liebmann, who lives in Vancouver.

He said he was told by Lt. Commander Dave Gardem at Navy Headquarters in Halifax, Nova Scotia, that his application for the post announced vacant had been accepted but that "I was not going because I am Jewish."

Capt. John Blakeley of the Office of National Defense agreed that Liebmann's application had been favorably processed.

"At first glance, his application seemed to satisfy all the necessary qualifications, so that Maritime Command forwarded it to National Defense headquarters in Ottawa," Blakeley said.

"While the application was here in Ottawa, some concern was raised by authorities about whether the fact that Liebmann's religious faith -- Judaism -- would create problems to his personal safety and impede his ability to fulfill the job, which called for meetings with Arab Moslem dignitaries from the host nations.

"This concern was based on the policy regarding peacekeeping operations."

Blakeley acknowledged that Canadian forces participating in U.N. peacekeeping operations in the Middle East, such as on the Golan Heights, exclude soldiers who are Jewish.

"We are not looking at whether somebody is going to be discriminated against in our free country of Canada," Blakeley said, "but whether in fact they will be put into more personal danger than they need be, or whether they might jeopardize the operation by being incapable of carrying out the peacekeeping mandate," he explained.

In any event, the position was erroneously listed as vacant because of a misunderstanding, the Armed Forces Office said.

But Liebmann is not satisfied with the replies.

"I don't suspect that it's racism, but it is discrimination," he said. "I think the person who made the decision doesn't realize that you don't have to be racist to be guilty of discrimination."

JAPAN MAKES A GESTURE TO ISRAEL

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Feb. 24 (JTA) -- Japan has sent a message of sympathy to Israeli victims of Iraqi missile attacks and has promised to improve its relations with Israel once the war in the Persian Gulf has ended.

The message was delivered here Sunday by Japanese Deputy Foreign Minister Hisashi Owada, who is on a brief official visit, a rare occurrence given the cool relations between the two countries.

The visit comes at a time when officials

here feel slighted by Tokyo's failure to include Israel on a list of countries affected by the war to which it plans to offer substantial financial aid.

The Japanese official explained the aid was for developing countries and that Israel is regarded as a developed country and therefore not entitled to it.

Foreign Minister David Levy told his guest that Israel expects an end to Japanese compliance, on both the governmental and private levels, with the Arab economic boycott against Israel.

GREEN LEADER FORCED TO RESIGN BECAUSE OF CRITICISM OF ISRAEL

By David Kantor

BONN, Feb. 24 (JTA) -- A leader of Germany's Green Party said he was forced to resign because he criticized Israel.

Hans-Christian Strobele, who was the party's chief spokesman, told a Berlin radio interviewer Friday that because of strong internal reactions he could no longer credibly represent Green policies to the public.

A newspaper interview had quoted Strobele as saying Scud missile attacks on Israel are "the logical, nearly unavoidable consequences of Israel's policies" in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, whose administration is "in principle the same unlawful act as the occupation of Kuwait" by Iraq.

The interview was published Feb. 20 while Strobele was visiting Israel as a member of a Green delegation.

As a result, the German delegation cut its visit short and canceled a news conference after receiving threats that it would be disrupted by force.

A spokeswoman for the Greens told Israeli army radio that the party opposed the force of arms in principle but was not hostile toward Israel. She admitted that Strobele's remarks gave the opposite impression and said he had to be talked to.

The German Embassy in Tel Aviv refused to comment on the affair on the grounds that it was not involved in arranging the Greens' visit.

The Green Party, a coalition of environmentalists and pacifists, has frequently criticized Israeli policies but also contains a pro-Israel faction.

The party was ousted from the Bundestag in the national elections last December but is still represented in several state legislatures.

(JTA Jerusalem correspondent Gil Sedan contributed to this report.)

FAITHS PRAY TOGETHER FOR PEACE

By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME, Feb. 24 (JTA) -- Jews, Moslems and Christians joined in prayer last week for peace in the Middle East.

About 400 people attending a Feb. 20 ecumenical service here organized by a Catholic group heard readings from the Torah, the New Testament and the Koran.

Rabbi Alberto Abramo Piattelli of Rome, who shared the pulpit with a priest and an imam, recited the 86th Psalm in Hebrew.

The worshipers meditated in silence, and at the end of the service, each was given an olive branch, the universal symbol of peace.