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**UNITY THAT LED TO GULF WAR'S SUCCESS
IS NEEDED FOR PEACE, SAYS GEN. POWELL**
By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, March 19 (JTA) -- The defeat of Saddam Hussein's forces was as much a "watershed" in the Middle East as Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's decision to seek peace with Israel, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff declared Tuesday.

"We must all meet the challenge of peace with the same clarity and unity of purpose with which we met Saddam's aggression," Gen. Colin Powell told the closing luncheon of the 32nd annual policy conference of AIPAC, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee.

He said Israel and the Arab states must seek a "common solution" that will result in "peace and security for all the nations and peoples of the Middle East."

Powell's appearance was the emotional high of the three-day conference, attended by more than 2,000 people, including 800 college students, twice the number at last year's conference.

Conference participants greeted Powell with repeated ovations as they waved U.S. flags that had been provided at each seat. Many had tears in their eyes as they watched a 10-minute film, made by AIPAC's office in Israel, showing the Iraqi missile attacks on Israel and the arrival of U.S. Patriot anti-missile batteries and their crews to safeguard Israel against the attacks.

Powell praised Israel's restraint in not responding to the 39 Scud missiles launched against it, even though "Israel had every right to respond to these terrorist attacks."

"Israel faced the same threat as the other members of the coalition," and when it was attacked, "the United States stood by Israel," he said.

"Let there never be any question about our commitment to Israel," the general added.

He said that an Israel that is strong and secure is "an Israel that can participate in the peace process with confidence and security."

Arabs Should Make First Move

But two U.S. senators, who addressed the conference's annual banquet Monday night, said the Bush administration is going at peacemaking the wrong way and should be urging the Arab states, not Israel, to make the first move toward peace in the Middle East.

"This is not the time to call on Israel to trade land for peace," Sen. John Rockefeller (D-W.Va.) said to an ovation from the nearly 2,800 delegates and guests attending the AIPAC banquet.

"This is the time when the Arabs should first demonstrate peaceful purposes and take concrete peacemaking steps," he said.

President Bush has called on Israel to consider giving up land for peace as part of a two-track diplomatic approach, in which the Arab countries move toward recognizing Israel while Israel seeks a dialogue with the Palestinians.

Secretary of State James Baker said Sunday that both sides should move simultaneously, with neither having to go first.

But Sen. Phil Gramm (R-Texas) stressed to

the AIPAC dinner audience that the Arab states, especially Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, must end their state of belligerency with Israel.

Gramm also received an ovation when, observing that U.S. troops went to the Middle East to save those two countries, he said, "They owe us, and not the other way around."

"I do not believe it is asking too much to ask them to lay the cornerstone for lasting peace in the Middle East by recognizing the State of Israel," he said.

Rockefeller agreed, saying, "We did not send half a million American men and women to defend Saudi Arabia and to liberate Kuwait so those countries will continue to wage war against Israel."

But Rockefeller also stressed that Bush and Baker "must be more than a deal-maker" in trying to bring about Middle East peace. "They must be a friend" to Israel.

Pointing out that the administration is "constantly reaching out" to Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev despite his increasingly hard line, Rockefeller said, "Israel deserves no less than that."

Powell observed Tuesday that while the United States plans to strengthen its strategic alliance with Israel, it was allied democratically and morally with the Jewish state even before the strategic alliance existed.

Before leaving the conference, Powell sought to clear up reports that he speaks Yiddish as a result of growing up in a Jewish neighborhood of the Bronx and even used that language to talk to Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir.

"I do not speak Yiddish," Powell said. He then paused and added, "Well, maybe a bissel."

**U.S. PRESSES KUWAIT TO END BOYCOTT
OF FIRMS DOING BUSINESS WITH ISRAEL**
By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, March 19 (JTA) -- There is a growing feeling in Congress that one way Kuwait can show appreciation to the United States for its liberation is to end the Kuwaiti boycott of U.S. companies that do business with Israel.

A letter, signed by 90 out of 100 senators, urging the emir of Kuwait to lift this secondary boycott as he begins the rebuilding of his devastated country, was presented Saturday to Kuwait's crown prince, Sheik Saad Abdullah as-Salim as-Sabah, by Sen. Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.).

Lieberman, one of the originators of the letter, was part of a delegation of 15 senators who visited Kuwait and Saudi Arabia over the weekend.

On his return Monday to Washington, Lieberman said the crown prince, who is Kuwait's prime minister, made no promises. But the senator said there were indications the boycott "would not be observed" in selecting companies for Kuwait's rebuilding.

The other originators of the letter, which urged the emir to use the reconstruction of Kuwait as a "historic opportunity to make an important move toward peace in the region," were Sens. Carl Levin (D-Mich.), Connie Mack (R-Fla.) and Bob Packwood (R-Ore.).

Levin told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency

that after reading an article about the boycott, Lieberman and he agreed the current situation provided a good chance to break it.

Kuwait has long been one of the strictest enforcers of the boycott. The letter does not ask Kuwait to end its direct economic boycott of Israel, although current resolutions in both houses of Congress demanding Arab countries to recognize Israel list that as one of the requirements.

'Real Leverage On Kuwait'

"We have got some real leverage on Kuwait," and the United States had a "unique" opportunity "to drive home a point that when they (Kuwait) warred on Israel they also warred on American companies," Levin said in a telephone interview.

"Since America came to their aid, they should not be waging war on American companies," he said. It would be "just outrageous" if they continued the boycott of U.S. companies "after U.S. troops have put their lives on the line to free Kuwait."

U.S. companies are expected to receive 70 percent of the contracts issued in the rebuilding of Kuwait. "America has earned the right to do business in Kuwait and in Israel," Lieberman said in a statement issued last Friday.

"We should not be forced to make a choice," he said. "Lifting this boycott on American companies can help further the cause of peace and stability in the region, as well as promote economic growth for all involved."

Since 1977, it has been illegal for U.S. companies to supply information to Arab countries in compliance with the economic boycott of Israel. Many companies have been fined for violating the law by the U.S. Commerce Department's Office of Anti-boycott Compliance.

Jess Hordes, Washington representative of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, said the Bush administration supports an end to the boycott as part of its two-track approach to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict.

"I believe it is on the menu of confidence-building measures" the administration is discussing with the Arab states now, Hordes said.

'Significant Source Of Friction'

If the Arabs are serious about improving relations, "this is one of the primary areas where the Arabs can make steps forward," Hordes said.

He said the Arabs might want to maintain the primary economic boycott against Israel until there are peace negotiations, but as an immediate step they should drop the secondary and tertiary boycotts.

The Senate letter to the emir says that the "boycott of Israel and of companies which trade with or invest in Israel is a significant impediment to the prospects for long-term peace and accommodation in the Middle East."

"We urge you to announce that Kuwait will no longer participate in the Arab boycott of Israel and that help from any American company in the reconstruction of your nation is welcome," the letter says.

A lifting of the secondary boycott, it says, "would constitute an important gesture toward peace in the region and would eliminate a significant source of friction between our two countries."

Members of the House of Representatives are also pressing Kuwait to drop its boycott against U.S. firms doing business with Israel.

GERMANY TAKING DIPLOMATIC STEPS TO FOSTER ATMOSPHERE FOR PEACE

By David Kantor

BONN, March 19 (JTA) -- Germany has undertaken a diplomatic initiative to create conditions conducive to a settlement of the Arab-Israeli dispute and the Palestinian problem, government sources indicated Tuesday.

The disclosure followed last week's visit here by Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy.

According to German sources, Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, who recently visited Moscow, tried to convince Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev not to delay the resumption of diplomatic relations with Israel, which the Soviets broke in 1967.

Genscher reportedly told the Soviet leader that a move toward normalizing relations with Israel would improve Jerusalem's flexibility in dealing with the Palestinians.

Germany is still technically committed to an international conference to resolve the Middle East conflict, a formula long favored by the European Community but opposed by Israel.

During Levy's visit, however, Bonn agreed direct contacts between Israel and the Arab states should precede the conference.

Sources here said Bonn is also exerting its influence with the Arab countries to convince them to open a dialogue with Israel. The Germans are telling Arab states that bilateral talks would make it easier for the Likud government to make any concessions on the key Palestinian issue.

SYRIA AND USSR ABOUT TO SIGN ARMS DEAL RUMORED AT \$2 BILLION

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, March 19 (JTA) -- Syria is about to sign a \$2 billion arms deal with the Soviet Union, financed by the oil-rich Persian Gulf states, Ha'aretz reported Tuesday.

According to the newspaper, the Syrian shopping list contains advanced fighter-bombers, including additional MIG-29 and Sukhoi-24 aircraft; advanced ground-to-air missiles, ballistic missiles, which would be in addition to the North Korean Scuds recently supplied Syria; and advanced-model Soviet T-72 tanks and various other types of armored vehicles.

If consummated, the deal would be one of Syria's biggest arms purchases in recent years.

According to Ha'aretz, the types of missiles the Soviets would sell Syria is not clear. Under an arms pact concluded between Moscow and Washington, the superpowers are to refrain from selling medium-range missiles.

ISRAELI JETS HIT BASE IN LEBANON

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, March 19 (JTA) -- The Israeli air force Tuesday launched its sixth attack this year against terrorist bases in southern Lebanon. The jets, which hit a Palestinian group's training center near Sidon, returned safely to their bases, a military spokesman announced.

Lebanese sources identified the target as a training center of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command, headed by Ahmed Jabril.

Reports from Beirut said 16 people, including children, were wounded in the nearby Mieh Mieh refugee camp on the edge of Sidon.

SHAMIR BACKS JEWISH AGENCY PROGRAM TO GIVE OLIM LOANS INSTEAD OF GRANTS

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, March 19 (JTA) -- Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir threw his weight behind the Jewish Agency's controversial immigrant loan program at a meeting here Tuesday with Diaspora Jewish leaders, ensuring its place in the overall absorption policy for Soviet olim.

The Jewish Agency for Israel, which gets most of its money from Diaspora donations, came under fire from senior government officials and aliyah activists last month, when it decided to convert its share of the financial aid given arriving Soviet immigrants from outright grants to low-interest loans.

The agency cited a \$113 million shortfall in its budget for the nine months between April and December 1991.

Simcha Dinitz, chairman of the Jewish Agency Executive, said Tuesday that the agreement reached with Shamir and Finance Minister Yitzhak Moda'i would enable the immediate implementation of the loan program.

Jewish Agency Treasurer Meir Sheerit said each immigrant would be entitled to a \$1,000 loan repayable over a period of 10 years, starting in the fourth year after receipt of the loan.

The loan would be part of the "absorption basket" of cash and services that Soviet immigrant families receive from the Treasury to help pay for housing and other costs during their first year in the country.

The size of the absorption grant has been cut over the last year as the flood of new immigrants drained Treasury coffers. Last week, Moda'i restored some of the cuts, bringing the subsidy back to its previous level of \$7,600 for a family of three, \$2,600 of which will now be a loan.

The sum is still considerably below the \$9,600 grant originally handed families of three.

'Unbelievable Challenge' Facing Israel

Shamir praised the loan program, which is retroactive to March 1, as "an important contribution to the settlement of olim in Israel."

He said an "unbelievable challenge" faces Israel and the Jewish people, and he urged world Jewry to participate in it.

The Jewish leaders presented the prime minister with an ambitious aliyah financial aid package amounting to \$2.5 billion for the 1 million immigrants expected to arrive by the end of 1993.

It is, however, only part of the \$4.25 billion the Jewish Agency plans to spend absorbing immigrants over the next four years. About \$900 million of the sum will be given as easy-term loans, provided by Israeli banks and guaranteed by Jewish federations in the United States.

In addition to Dinitz and Sheerit, participants in the meeting with Shamir included Mendel Kaplan, chairman of the Jewish Agency Board of Governors; Marvin Lender, national chairman of the United Jewish Appeal, the principal overseas fund-raising agency in the United States; and Charles Goodman, chairman of the Council of Jewish Federations, the association of Jewish community federations in the United States and Canada.

CJF is holding a special General Assembly of member federations in Washington on April 16 to discuss its participation in the loan program.

JEWISH GROUPS TESTIFY AGAINST JUDGE INVOLVED WITH CLUB SUSPECTED OF BIAS

By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, March 19 (JTA) -- Three major Jewish defense agencies testified before the Senate on Tuesday against a federal appeals court nominee who until last week was a member of private country club in Florida that allegedly discriminates against blacks, Jews and other minorities.

The groups also opposed the nomination of U.S. District Court Judge Kenneth Ryskamp because of what the American Jewish Committee called the "gross insensitivity to civil rights concerns" reflected in his court rulings to date.

Ryskamp, whom President Bush has nominated to serve on the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta, defended his judicial record during a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing that began Tuesday morning and extended into the evening.

He also maintained that the Riviera Country Club in Coral Gables, Fla., which he joined in 1968 and quit March 13, has Jewish and Hispanic members, and has never received any membership applications from blacks.

Ryskamp said the club is not prejudiced. He dismissed a series of Miami newspaper reports critical of the club's membership policy as based on erroneous information.

But Samuel Rabinove, legal director of AJCommittee, said the club has been "notorious in the Miami area for its exclusion of African Americans and Jews."

And the American Jewish Congress quoted the club's late president, Marion McCune, as boasting to a golf partner that he had "managed to keep the goddamn Jews out of this club."

'Blind Spot' On Civil Rights

In testimony to the Senate panel, Arthur Teitelbaum, Southern area director of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, said, "Judge Ryskamp's membership for over 20 years in a restrictive club reveals an insensitivity toward the civil rights and liberties of minorities."

"Judges on the federal bench must be free from any possibility or appearance of partiality," especially when it comes to issues of discrimination, Teitelbaum said.

AJCongress reached its decision to oppose the nomination based both on Ryskamp's country club membership and his record in civil rights cases while on the U.S. District Court in Miami.

Mark Freedman, executive director of the group's Southeast region, said he was struck by the number of civil rights cases in which Ryskamp's rulings were reversed by the higher appellate court.

But some Judiciary Committee members maintained that judges are often overruled at a higher level. Ryskamp said each reversal was based on honest differences between him and judges above him on the U.S. Court of Appeals.

Rabinove of AJCommittee testified, though, that Ryskamp "seems to have a blind spot when it comes to civil rights suits," though he did not question the judge's "fundamental decency."

Sen. Joseph Biden (D-Del.), the Senate Judiciary Committee chairman, said Ryskamp had issued some "erroneous rulings" and that he had concerns about his sensitivity to minorities. But he told the nominee, "That doesn't mean you won't be confirmed."

CANADIAN COURT VOIDS CONVICTION OF HOLOCAUST REVISIONIST TEACHER

By Gary Pogrow

VANCOUVER, British Columbia, March 19 (JTA) -- Opinion is divided in Jewish and legal circles over a new trial for Jim Keegstra, the former mayor and high school teacher in Eckville, Alberta, who was fined \$50,000 for preaching hatred of Jews.

Last week, Keegstra's 1985 conviction was overturned on a technicality for the second time by the Alberta Court of Appeal in Calgary, and Justices Roger Kerans and Howard Irving ruled that "a new trial must be ordered."

"At this point, we are encouraging the Crown to appeal this decision to the Supreme Court," said Drew Stoffenberg, director of the Calgary chapter of the Canadian Jewish Congress.

Alberta Legislator Sheldon Chumir believes, however, that "if we are faced with going to another trial, my feeling is that we should leave the matter sit. It would be counterproductive."

"Why give him (Keegstra) the publicity? Why create a martyr?" Chumir asked.

Keegstra, who taught high school in rural Eckville for 12 years and was also mayor there, was charged under Canada's anti-hate laws with preaching to his classes that the Holocaust is a lie and that Jews are the root of all evil.

He was convicted in 1985 by the Court of Queen's Bench in Red Deer, Alberta, of wilfully promoting hatred against an identifiable group.

But the conviction was overturned on appeal in 1988 on grounds that the anti-hate statutes were unconstitutional.

The case remained in limbo until three months ago, when Canada's Supreme Court decided 4-3 that the law was in fact constitutional. The high court referred Keegstra's other motions of appeal back to the Alberta court.

Thought This Was 'Behind Us'

The Alberta court ruled March 13 that Keegstra should have been allowed to challenge the impartiality of the jurors in his 1985 trial and, having not been, "the conviction must be quashed and a new trial ordered."

"We thought this whole thing was behind us," commented Stoffenberg of the CJC.

He stressed, however, that in overturning the conviction, the Alberta court was "only speaking about the technicalities and legal procedures. The substantive part of the trial, his preaching hate, was ruled constitutional."

Keegstra was originally charged on the complaints of parents in Eckville, a hamlet of about 900 where no Jews lived. Keegstra was dismissed from his teaching job at the end of 1982.

But in 1983, the Eckville City Council voted not to ask for his resignation as mayor, although there were requests for that from the Chamber of Commerce and Canadian Legion. He lost a subsequent bid for re-election.

Keegstra still lives in Eckville, where he now works as an automobile mechanic.

According to a British Columbia Television telephone interview, Keegstra still holds to his Jewish conspiracy theory.

But in Chumir's opinion, he is "totally discredited, so going for a new trial will look like Jews are after a pound of flesh."

Chumir said he was much more concerned with the violence-prone Skinheads and Aryan Nation groups.

U.S. RABBI RALLIES FOR POLLARD OUTSIDE U.S. CONSULATE IN ISRAEL

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, March 19 (JTA) -- Rabbi Avraham Weiss, a pro-Israel activist from New York, led a group of about 80 demonstrators Tuesday outside the U.S. Consulate here, demanding the release of convicted spy Jonathan Pollard.

Pollard, a former civilian employee of the U.S. Navy, is serving a life sentence in a U.S. maximum security federal prison for providing classified information to Israel, for which he accepted payment.

Weiss, claiming Pollard was "America's only political prisoner," symbolically locked himself in a makeshift cage outside the consulate.

Consul General Philip Wilcox declined to see Weiss.

The rabbi, who is religious leader at the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale, an Orthodox synagogue in the Bronx, was infuriated when he saw local Palestinian nationalists Faisal Husseini and Hanna Siniara leaving the consulate compound where, presumably, they had met with U.S. officials.

Weiss afterward wrote to the consul general, protesting that the U.S. envoy preferred to confer with "cheerleaders for violence" -- his characterization of the Palestinians -- rather than with himself, an American citizen.

Weiss said he was considering filing an appeal on behalf of Pollard with Amnesty International, a London-based private agency that champions the cause of political prisoners all over the world.

Demonstrating with Weiss were two Knesset members, Geula Cohen of the Tehiya party and Edna Solodar of Labor.

FEAR OF MATZAH SHORTAGE IN UKRAINE LEAVES NCSJ SCRAMBLING TO FILL NEED

By Aliza Marcus

NEW YORK, March 19 (JTA) -- An unexpected matzah shortage in the Soviet Ukraine has left the National Conference on Soviet Jewry scrambling to raise money and find matzah for an emergency shipment by week's end.

An American Hasidic rabbi working in the Kiev synagogue called the group at 3 a.m. Monday, saying there was going to be an acute shortage of matzah, said Martin Wenick, executive director.

The rabbi, Yaakov Bleich, said the shortage was due to a surge in demand, a poor wheat harvest and the closing of a matzah factory in Kishinev, Moldavia. He requested that 25 to 30 tons be flown to the Soviet Union.

"The surge in demand probably results from the new Jewish awareness taking place in the Soviet Union," said Wenick.

In anticipation of Passover, which begins the evening of March 29, a number of American Jewish groups have donated matzah and flour to help Soviet Jews fulfill the mitzvah of eating only unleavened bread on the holiday, which celebrates the Jewish flight out of Egypt.

While Wenick said his group would be unable to ship as much matzah as requested, it did arrange to buy five tons of matzah and was trying to get cargo space on a Pan American flight.

The group is hoping to receive donations to help defray the costs of the matzah and its shipment. Costs are expected to total around \$20,000.