

LEVY WELCOMES HUSSEIN STATEMENT OF READINESS TO MEET WITH ISRAELIS

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, June 2 (JTA) -- A statement by Jordan's King Hussein expressing readiness to meet with Israel's leaders was warmly welcomed here Sunday by Foreign Minister David Levy, who in turn invited the Jordanian monarch to Jerusalem, promising him "red carpet" treatment if he comes.

But other members of the Israeli Cabinet expressed doubts about the king's sincerity and about the usefulness of such a meeting.

Hussein's statement, made in an interview last Friday with the French weekly news magazine *Le Point*, marks the first time the king has publicly expressed his willingness to meet with Israeli leaders, though he is rumored to have held secret meetings with Israeli officials in the past.

He also said in the interview that he believes the Arab taboo against Israel is bound to disappear.

"Many Israelis live with the mentality of people besieged in a fortress," he said. "They don't realize what peace could bring to them. One could say the same about the Palestinians and the Arabs."

"Face-to-face encounters ought to allow us all to dispel our fears," he said.

Levy, the first Israeli minister to hail Hussein's offer, said the king's stated willingness to meet with Israeli leaders validates "our just demand for direct negotiations" with Arab nations.

The foreign minister, speaking to reporters following Sunday's weekly Cabinet session, said he would give the king the "red carpet and a band" upon his arrival.

Criticism From Ariel Sharon

Levy said Hussein's offer demonstrates that the Middle East peace process is not stuck, and that efforts should continue to create momentum. "This is a statement which indicates a direction which we must encourage," Levy said.

He also called it a position of "realism and courage." Levy suggested that any Arab leader who would follow Hussein would find in Israel a "ready partner for peace."

The foreign minister questioned the wisdom of claims by Israeli ministers that the political process is stymied.

Among those who registered cynicism were Housing Minister Ariel Sharon of Likud and Science and Energy Minister Yuval Ne'eman of Tehiya.

Ne'eman said Hussein did not have much to offer, as he had given up his claim to the West Bank in 1988.

Sharon went further, reiterating his belief that Jordan should be declared the Palestinian state, since a majority of the country's population is Palestinian.

He also demanded that Israel oppose a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation to the envisioned peace talks and said that the European Community should not be accorded any status in such negotiations.

His comments angered Levy, who quickly

denounced Sharon's statement that "Jordan is Palestine" as "not the position of the government," and said that "this should be made clear."

He asked why it is that whenever there seems to be progress in the peace process, some people try to sabotage it.

He received comfort from Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, who advised him not to pay attention to criticism. Shamir said anyone with reservations about the peace process can bring them up before the Cabinet.

King's Sincerity Questioned

But Shamir, while welcoming Hussein's statement, suggested a wait-and-see attitude.

Avi Pazner, Shamir's media adviser, said the premier is ready to meet with Hussein at any time and any place to advance the peace process. "Nothing is easier than to arrange a meeting between the two leaders," he said.

It is not clear here how serious Hussein's statement is, and whether he intends, in the near future, to launch a peace initiative in the manner of the late Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, who made a historic visit to Jerusalem in 1977.

Others have also questioned the timing of Hussein's statement.

A senior Israeli government official told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency here Sunday he believes Hussein is concerned about the warming of relations between the Palestine Liberation Organization and Syria, fearing that he could soon be left out of the peace process.

Others are of the belief that by making conciliatory statements, Hussein is only interested in rectifying the considerable damage he caused Jordan and his own image during the Persian Gulf crisis, when he threw his support behind Iraq's Saddam Hussein.

Political observers here think the king's remarks were made more for the ears of Washington than Jerusalem.

The Israeli daily *Yediot Achronot* on Sunday quoted "a Jordanian personality close to the king" as saying that the Hashemite monarch had told U.S. Secretary of State James Baker at their meeting in the Jordanian Red Sea port of Aqaba last month that he was ready to drive to a bridge spanning the Jordan River "to meet with Israeli leaders for the sake of peace."

(JTA correspondent Michel Di Paz in Paris contributed to this report.)

TWO WEEKEND ATTEMPTS TO INFILTRATE FROM JORDAN UNDER IDF INVESTIGATION
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, June 2 (JTA) -- The Israel Defense Force has set up two investigatory panels to establish how armed infiltrators managed to steal across the Jordan River over the weekend, in two separate incidents, and penetrate some distance into Israeli territory without being noticed.

In the more serious of the incidents, which occurred before dawn Saturday, one terrorist was killed, but his companion managed to escape back across the border some 200 yards away.

The two had managed to creep unseen across the Jordan River near Mehola, not far from Beit

She'an, and had penetrated the perimeter fence around a military outpost there. But they did not get past the security trenches and enter bunkers at the installation.

Soldiers at the outpost spotted them and opened fire on the infiltrators, who were armed with Kalachnikov rifles and grenades. The pair began to withdraw back toward the river, but one was shot dead while the other escaped.

A soldier was lightly wounded by "friendly fire" in the exchange.

Maj. Gen. Danny Yatom, commander of the central sector, who visited the scene together with the IDF chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Ehud Barak, expressed regret that one of the infiltrators had managed to escape without being killed, telling his troops that no would-be infiltrator should be left alive.

He appointed a commission to look into the incident, saying that disciplinary action should be taken against any officers or soldiers found to have not carried out their duties properly.

In an earlier incident last Friday, a lone Jordanian soldier, dressed in civilian clothes and armed with two knives, crossed the Jordan River just north of its outflow into the Dead Sea, reaching the perimeter of the Water Sports Park at Kalis, on the northern shore of the lake.

When called upon to halt by an IDF soldier, the infiltrator pulled out a knife and tried to attack him, before he was overcome by the guard and a companion. A second knife was found hidden in his clothing.

The infiltrator told interrogators he had crossed the border by mistake.

**U.S. WILL STORE ARMS IN ISRAEL,
CHENEY ANNOUNCES AT END OF VISIT**
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, June 2 (JTA) -- Both Israeli and American officials have expressed satisfaction with U.S. Defense Secretary Dick Cheney's two-day visit here last week, which ended with an announcement that the United States will store some \$200 million of American weapons in Israel.

Other areas of military cooperation announced during Cheney's trip include U.S. decisions to finance 72 percent of the second-stage development costs of the Arrow anti-missile missile and to provide Israel with another 10 F-15 jet fighters.

Some \$100 million of weapons and ammunition, approved some years ago, is now being delivered to Israel for what is called "pre-positioning." Delivery, scheduled some time ago, was delayed because of the Persian Gulf War.

An additional \$100 million has been authorized by Congress, but details of its composition have yet to be worked out, according to Danny Naveh, spokesman for Defense Minister Moshe Arens.

The announcement of the F-15s and the Arrow financing struck some critics of administration policy as odd, coming as it did a day after President Bush unveiled a major new arms control initiative for the Middle East.

But Cheney, as well as officials at the White House and State Department in Washington, stressed there was no conflict between calling for massive arms control in the region while at the same time continuing to assist Israel in its "legitimate defense needs."

Observers here suggested that while both Cheney and Arens favor arms restrictions, in

theory at least, both are also responsible for the development of the weapons industries in their respective countries.

Any cutbacks in arms production and sales would have serious repercussions on their arms industries, which represent a significant force in the industrial sectors of both countries, providing jobs and income for thousands of workers.

Cheney also met with Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and Foreign Minister David Levy. In addition, he paid a visit to the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial and museum in Jerusalem.

Before leaving Israel, the defense secretary was given a birds-eye view of Israel by helicopter, intended to illustrate its small size and defensive vulnerability.

He flew low over Jerusalem's Old City, on a route parallel to the Jordan River, from which he could see the narrowness of the area between Jordan and the Mediterranean.

The tour also took him over the old "Green Line" at the foot of the Golan Heights and then to a lookout post near Kibbutz Manara, where he could see Israel's borders with Jordan, Syria and Lebanon.

**E.C. EARMARKS \$12 MILLION IN AID
FOR PALESTINIANS IN TERRITORIES**
By Yossi Lempkowicz

BRUSSELS, June 2 (JTA) -- The European Commission, the executive body of the European Community, has announced a new \$12 million financial aid program to improve economic and social conditions for Palestinian Arabs in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The grants will be aimed at financing programs on credit in order to increase the Palestinians' level of self-help, including local employment and income from agriculture, industry and the service industries.

Funding also will be geared to the improved functioning of local Palestinian institutions, with particular attention given to health, sanitation and education.

The money is the latest in a series of increasingly large grants and aid programs approved by the E.C. to help the Palestinians improve their standard of living and enable ongoing health care in the territories.

The project was launched in 1987, when the E.C. inaugurated a program of direct aid to the Palestinians in the territories. This year, in addition to the newly allocated funds, the Palestinians will receive emergency food assistance of some \$9.5 million and \$7.2 million in economic assistance following the Persian Gulf War.

Last December, the E.C. announced it would provide some \$6 million to eight private hospitals in East Jerusalem and the Israeli-administered territories, which were deprived of usual avenues of assistance, particularly Kuwait, because of the Gulf crisis.

The E.C. then planned up to \$17 million in general assistance to the territories by 1992.

The announcement of further economic aid to the Palestinians was made just prior to Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy's upcoming visit to Paris.

Levy is due there Wednesday for talks with the three leading E.C. foreign ministers about possible E.C. participation in a proposed Middle East peace conference.

The meeting will be the second between Levy and the Europeans in less than three weeks.

PRESSURE GROWING ON CAPITOL HILL FOR CRACKDOWN ON SECONDARY BOYCOTT

By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, June 2 (JTA) -- Sixty-six members of the House of Representatives have urged Commerce Secretary Robert Mosbacher to prod Saudi Arabia and Kuwait into at least partially ending their economic boycott of Israel.

In a letter sent May 24, the members of Congress ask Mosbacher to seek an end to the "secondary boycott," which prohibits the purchase of products from companies that do business with Israel.

They argue that "the very least that could be expected" of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia in the aftermath of the Persian Gulf War is "a renunciation of this boycott."

The letter was co-sponsored by Reps. Anthony Beilenson and Howard Berman, both California Jewish Democrats.

Saudi Arabia has shown no signs since the war of easing the boycott.

But Kuwait has imposed "no restrictions on products entering the country" since the war's end, said Raced al-Rifai, spokesman at the Kuwaiti Embassy here.

He said that policy went into effect because of a "dire" need to help Kuwait rebuild as quickly as possible.

For Kuwait, the secondary boycott has "always been very difficult to gauge," he said, referring to differences among the 21 Arab League members in observing that aspect of the boycott.

After Israel was founded in 1948, the Arab League instituted the direct or primary boycott of Israeli-based companies. A few years later, in the early 1950s, the Arab League called on its members to observe the secondary boycott.

But Rifai said that Kuwait continues to "boycott companies with direct ties with Israeli capital."

2 Bills Introduced

Sen. Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.) told reporters late last month that Kuwait's suspension of the secondary boycott is a positive step. But Lieberman criticized the Kuwaiti government's "timidity" in not publicly renouncing it.

Rifai responded by saying that his government has not decided to forego the secondary boycott permanently. He said that policy, like many others, continues to be under "serious review."

Lieberman introduced a bill last month that requires U.S. Trade Representative Carla Hills or her designee to try to end boycott compliance among U.S. trading partners during upcoming meetings of GATT, the 99-nation General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, and the 24-nation Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Lieberman's bill has 13 other co-sponsors. Rep. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) is planning to introduce an identical version in the House.

The bill, which is called the Pro-Competitiveness and Anti-Boycott Act of 1991, is being touted as a measure to protect U.S. companies from the effects of the boycott.

Another bill introduced recently would bar U.S. arms sales to any Arab country that continues to observe the boycott. It was introduced by Rep. Bill Green (R-N.Y.) and Sen. Brock Adams (D-Wash.).

DERI REFUSES TO TALK TO MEDIA FOLLOWING POLICE INTERROGATION

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, June 2 (JTA) -- Arye Deri, the embattled Israeli interior minister under investigation for financial improprieties, refused to talk to reporters following several hours of interrogation Sunday at national police headquarters here.

The lengthy questioning by senior officers of the Serious Crimes Division of the police followed a recommendation last week by State Attorney Dorit Beinisch that charges be brought against Deri for alleged improper channeling of government funds through local authorities to religious institutions connected with Deri's Shas party.

But informed sources said Sunday's interrogation focused not on those allegations but on charges connected with Deri's personal finances.

Sources said this would be the last step before the police, followed by the state attorney, decide whether there is sufficient evidence in the area of Deri's private finances to bring charges against the 32-year-old minister.

Deri looked pale and drawn as he told reporters prior to the interrogation that he was suffering from the flu and running a fever. He said he had decided to appear nevertheless, "so that people don't say I'm dodging."

JEWS FIND GERMANY A TAXING PLACE, BUT NUMBERS COULD EXCEED 40,000

By David Kantor

BONN, June 2 (JTA) -- Activists in the Jewish community of Germany say it is possible there are more than 40,000 Jews living in Germany, some 5,000 in excess of the official tally, and that the community is well on its way to increasing its membership to 50,000.

The activists feel that perhaps some 5,000 Jews in Germany go uncounted because of failure to register as such.

The German government collects taxes for recognized religious communities. The authorities transfer to the churches 10 percent of the income tax revenues collected from the churches' members.

Individuals who fail to register as members of a religious community save 10 percent on their income taxes.

"Actually, we have very few cases of people who go to the authorities and tell them that they are withdrawing," a Jewish community official said. "But we know of many Jewish newcomers who simply do not register as Jews when they settle in the country."

"Yet they come to synagogues and participate in many other ways in community activities," the official said.

The Jewish community is now embarking on an effort to convince all Jews in the country to register as members. This would broaden the financial basis of the group, as well as provide more accurate statistics on how many Jews have chosen Germany as their country of residence.

To achieve that goal, Jewish communities throughout the country have begun to match their membership lists with lists of registered Jews, as provided by the income tax authorities.

Individuals who are not registered with the authorities and therefore do not pay religious tax are being reminded that the revenue from this source is the most important single source of income for community activities.

**POPE TO MEET WITH JEWS
DURING VISIT TO POLAND**

By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME, June 2 (JTA) -- Pope John Paul II will meet with representatives of Poland's decimated Jewish community during his current visit to his homeland, and experts believe he will issue a strong condemnation of anti-Semitism at that time.

The pontiff's anticipated statement may not differ from earlier Vatican statements condemning anti-Semitism, experts said. But the fact that the Polish pope will be talking to Polish Jews in the Polish capital of Warsaw will lend more weight to a statement by him.

The pope arrived in Poland on Saturday for his fourth visit to the country since being elected to the papacy. The meeting with the Jews, which is expected to last a half-hour to 45 minutes, will be the first event of the final day of his trip, June 9.

An American Catholic professor who specializes in Vatican foreign policy said a papal statement made in Poland decrying anti-Semitism is important.

David Alvarez, a professor at St. Mary's College in California, said, "The fact that he appears in a country that idolizes him and speaks bluntly on anti-Semitism is very important. I will be disappointed if he doesn't."

Alvarez, speaking of the highest echelons of the church hierarchy, said that "privately, the word has been spread that the church won't tolerate (anti-Semitism) any more.

"But the trickle-down effect takes time," he added.

Alvarez said the Poles "will be impressed that their pope is meeting with the Jews, and is giving them what I hope will be the message that anti-Semitism is wrong and won't be tolerated by the church."

Initiatives Against Anti-Semitism

The Polish Catholic Church and the Polish state have implemented a number of initiatives recently to root out lingering anti-Semitism in Poland, a country of fewer than 10,000 Jews, down from a pre-Holocaust population of some 3.5 million.

Polish President Lech Walesa, whose election campaign last year was tinged with anti-Semitism, made a state visit to Israel in May, during which he asked forgiveness for past Polish anti-Semitism and pledged peace and friendship with Israel.

A prominent Polish intellectual with wide political and church contacts said, "I think Walesa's visit to Israel had historical importance."

"Maybe you can say these are (just) words," said the prominent figure. "But the fact that they were words pronounced by Walesa, who has enormous prestige, means a blow to anti-Semitic feelings in Poland."

A Council for Polish-Jewish dialogue has been created in Poland under Walesa's auspices.

"The council includes a number of prominent intellectuals and several church leaders," said Stanislaw Krajewski, a leader of the Polish Jewish community and Warsaw representative of the American Jewish Congress.

"The council is aimed at bringing together Poles and Jews, at fighting anti-Semitism and intolerance, at working against the debasement of the dignity of the two nations, at overcoming stereotypes," he said.

**HAVEL PAYS TRIBUTE TO BRITISH MAN
WHO SAVED THE LIVES OF CZECH JEWS**

By Josef Klansky

PRAGUE, June 2 (JTA) -- Czechoslovak President Vaclav Havel has personally thanked an elderly British man who during World War II saved the lives of 664 Czech children, most of them Jews, by arranging their escape to Britain.

The playwright-turned-president received 82-year-old Nicholas Winton of Maidenhead, England, at Hradcany Castle on May 30. He thanked Winton, who, as an official of the London Stock Exchange in 1939, provided fabricated documents and arranged the departure of four trainloads of children, all at a risk to his own security.

The children's lives were in danger because of their Jewish origin or because of their parents' anti-Nazi activities.

Winton, who is not Jewish, was instrumental in finding homes in Britain for all the children.

Winton was the guest of the Prague independent daily newspaper Lidove Noviny and the Federation of Jewish Communities of the Czech and Slovak Republics. He arrived May 24 and was greeted at the Prague airport by about 20 people who were in the lifesaving transport 52 years ago.

Speaking at a dinner given at the Prague Jewish Town Hall in Winton's honor, Israeli Ambassador Yoel Sher compared Winton's trainloads of endangered children to the Israeli aircraft that had just evacuated Ethiopian Jews from Addis Ababa.

Winton said he is still haunted by the nightmare of lists and photos of children whose departure in two more trains had been prepared for September 1939. Their journey to freedom was prevented by the outbreak of war. Most of them perished in the Nazi death camps during the war.

On the same day as he received Winton at Hradcany Castle, Havel also received French Jewish filmmaker Claude Lanzmann, director of the film "Shoah," which is now being screened in a Prague movie theater for the first time.

COURT ACQUITS LE PEN OF DEFACTION

By Michel Di Paz

PARIS, June 2 (JTA) -- A Paris court has acquitted Jean-Marie Le Pen, leader of the extreme right-wing National Front, of charges of racial defamation brought against him for a newspaper interview he gave in 1989.

The Paris Court of Justice ruled last Friday that the charges against Le Pen had been inconsistent and that his remarks were "not defamatory."

However, the judge acknowledged that Le Pen's declaration that "Freemasonry and international Judaism are opposed to the national interests of France" was "particularly offensive to international Jewish organizations."

The court ruled that Le Pen's statement was "the reflection of a personal political conviction. It is not for this court to decide its accuracy."

The interview appeared in the French daily Present, a publication close to Le Pen's party. The charges against Le Pen were leveled by the French Ministry of Justice, which was joined by four anti-racist and human rights organizations.

This lawsuit against Le Pen followed two others filed against him for offensive remarks he made against Jews. In March, he was fined twice for statements in which he slurred victims of the Holocaust.