

ISRAEL PICKS DELEGATES FOR MADRID, EXPRESSES CONCERN ABOUT PALESTINIAN By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Oct. 27 (JTA) -- As Israel's Cabinet gave its marching orders to the 14-member delegation that will represent the Jewish state at the peace conference in Madrid, Israeli officials continued to express annoyance about an irritant that could booby-trap the gathering.

They are angry about a statement made last week by one of the official Palestinian delegates, Saeb Erekat, who declared that he and his colleagues were chosen by and represent the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Israel absolutely refuses to negotiate with the PLO and has been assured by the United States that it will not have to.

In Washington, Secretary of State James Baker said Sunday, on the ABC News television program "This Week With David Brinkley," that he was "disturbed" by the remark, which was "outside the standards" set for the conference.

Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Arens, appearing on the same program, called Erekat's remarks an attempt by the PLO "to throw a monkey wrench" into the talks.

And Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, who appeared on Cable News Network's "Newsmakers Sunday" program, reiterated that if a Palestinian delegate comes with "instructions from the PLO, we will not sit with him."

But none of the three would say what would happen if Erekat shows up at the conference.

Haider Abdel-Shafi, who officially heads the Palestinian delegation, told the ABC program that Erekat's statement may have been "a little provocative." He said that neither he nor any other member of the delegation is a PLO official.

He added, however, that all Palestinians accept the PLO as their legitimate leaders.

Levy Angry And Resentful

Political pundits in Jerusalem predicted that Shamir would not be able to exercise a veto over any of the Palestinian delegates. In the crunch, he will have to submit to American pressure and not raise any problems with respect to Erekat, they said.

Shamir is heading the Israeli delegation to Madrid and has hand-picked its 14 members. While the team has turned out to be less hard-line than originally predicted, that has hardly mollified Foreign Minister David Levy, who is angry and resentful about the premier's move to bypass him.

Levy was the government's most enthusiastic conference advocate and the most optimistic that it would have a beneficial outcome for Israel. Having been arbitrarily deprived of any substantive role, the foreign minister announced he would not go to Madrid under any circumstances.

Levy spoke out unabashedly at Sunday's Cabinet meeting. "The prime minister neutralized me in a manner that does not meet with any norms of proper administration and common responsibility," he declared.

He charged that Shamir's personal nomination of the Israeli delegates and heads of the negotiating committees, which Levy first learned about from the radio news, amounted to "a

breakup in the hierarchy and the destruction of the Foreign Ministry."

Dismissing Shamir's belated selection of Levy supporters to be conference delegates, the foreign minister rejected urgings by colleagues, such as Economics and Planning Minister David Magen, to change his mind and go to Madrid.

Shamir, for his part, made no effort to persuade Levy.

List Of Israeli Delegates

Briefing the Cabinet on preparations for the talks, the premier reiterated that Israel wants the bilateral talks, which are supposed to start four days after the Madrid opening, to be held not in Spain but in a Middle East venue, preferably alternating between Israel and its Arab neighbors.

The Cabinet gave Shamir a ringing endorsement and exhorted the Israeli negotiating team not to give up an inch of territory to the Arabs.

In addition to Shamir, the members of the Israeli delegation are Deputy Foreign Minister Binyamin Netanyahu; Cabinet Secretary Elyakim Rubinstein, who will head negotiations with the Jordanian-Palestinian delegation; Eliahu Ben-Elissar, chairman of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee; Sara Doron, chairwoman of the Likud Knesset faction; Knesset member Uzi Landau; Dr. Yosef Ben-Aharon, director-general of the Prime Minister's Office, who will head negotiations with Syria.

Also Dr. Yosef Hadas, acting director general of the Foreign Ministry; Zalman Shoval, Israel's ambassador to the United States; reserve Col. Assad Assad, the prime minister's adviser on Druse affairs; Professor Shlomo Ben-Ami, Israel's ambassador to Spain, who is a member of the opposition Labor Party; Eitan Ben-Tzur, deputy director of the Foreign Ministry for North America; Salai Meridor, political adviser of Defense Minister Arens; and Brig. Gen. Yekutieli Mor, head of the research department at Israel Defense Force intelligence, who will represent the Defense Ministry at the talks.

(JTA correspondent David Friedman in Washington contributed to this report.)

U.S. SAYS IT WILL SERVE AS CATALYST, BUT ISRAEL EXPECTING MORE SYMPATHY By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Oct. 28 (JTA) -- President Bush and Secretary of State James Baker are emphasizing that the United States will not impose a solution on Israel and the Arabs at this week's Middle East peace conference in Madrid.

"We're trying to be a catalyst to bring people together and let them talk about their differences," Bush said at a White House news conference last Friday.

But Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Arens said Sunday that Israel expects the United States not to be evenhanded, but to support the Jewish state in the negotiations.

"I think that obviously there should be a situation where the United States has more sympathy for this little democracy than for some of these other dictators," Arens said on the ABC-TV program "This Week with David Brinkley."

Until now, though, the United States has not

been helpful, Arens charged. He decried the "continuous pronouncements from Washington that the negotiations have to be based on territories for peace, that there must be an end to the occupation, that settlements are an obstacle to peace."

Such statements are "interpreted in the Arab world as a U.S. position that all of the territories that the Arabs lost in the aggression against Israel will be retrieved and that the United States will help them retrieve them," he said.

"That, I think, is raising expectations that will not be helpful for the negotiations that are coming up in Madrid."

Bush refused Friday to comment on any specific issue that will come up at Madrid. "What I do not want to do is inadvertently complicate the process," he said.

The president said that the U.S. positions on U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 are clear and known. "But we are not having a conference about U.S. policy," he said.

Baker, who also appeared on the ABC program Sunday, said that the United States has been consistent in supporting a land-for-peace deal, calling Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip an obstacle to peace and rejecting a Palestinian state.

The United States made clear to all the parties involved that it would not change its positions in order to bring anyone to the negotiating table, Baker said.

"We have declined specific requests from almost every one of the parties to change that policy position," he said.

Push For A Settlement Freeze

The opening plenary of the conference, which begins Wednesday, will feature speeches by the two hosts, Bush and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, as well as by the various Middle East participants.

The plenary will be followed by separate bilateral negotiations Israel will hold with Syria, a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation and Lebanon.

There will also be multilateral negotiations on such issues as water resources, arms control, economic development and environmental concerns.

An early obstacle could arise if the Arabs demand an immediate freeze on Jewish settlement-building in the administered territories.

Shamir said Sunday that the question of settlements can only be resolved once the questions of territory and boundaries are resolved.

The Israeli premier said that while the Arabs have agreed to attend the conference, he is not sure they are ready to make peace with Israel.

But Arens said that the negotiations with the Jordanian-Palestinian delegation have "the greatest promise of bringing some agreement in the immediate future."

He said that is because they agreed to use the 1978 Camp David formula to discuss the conditions of Palestinian self-rule and not to discuss the final settlement on the territories until three years after autonomy is established.

Shamir said he hopes the conference will result in peace with the Arab countries or even peace with one Arab country. "I have no doubt it will come; the question is when," he said.

At his news conference Friday, Bush called the Madrid conference "historic."

"Sitting down together is the beginning of understanding," he said. "We cannot know the outcome, of course. It will take patience, determination."

UNREST ERUPTS IN WEST BANK TOWN AS ARABS PREPARE FOR PEACE TALKS By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Oct. 27 (JTA) -- Violence erupted in the West Bank on Sunday, as intifada activists sought to sabotage the Arab-Israeli peace conference due to open Wednesday in Madrid.

An Israel Defense Force soldier was seriously injured in Nablus, when a local youth dropped a heavy brick on him as his patrol passed through a narrow alley.

Another soldier wounded the assailant in the leg. He was apprehended later at a local hospital.

Palestinian leaders for the most part, however, were hailing the upcoming peace talks.

Activists backing the Palestine Liberation Organization's Al Fatah faction staged a pep rally in the Nablus casbah on Sunday in support of the peace conference, which has been endorsed by PLO chief Yasir Arafat.

The Arab world, meanwhile, engaged in intensive diplomatic activity over the weekend to hammer out a unified Arab position in Madrid.

The Palestinian delegation, which will negotiate with Israel under a Jordanian umbrella, met in Cairo on Sunday with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and then returned to Amman for further consultations with their Jordanian partners.

The delegation went to the Jordanian capital on Friday, traveling in a festive procession from East Jerusalem to the Allenby Bridge with an Israeli police escort.

The Arab states reportedly have pledged to make no separate peace with Israel. Farouk Kaddoumi, head of the PLO's political department, declared in Paris on Sunday that the Arabs have agreed that the bilateral phase of the talks will not begin "until Israel stops building settlements" in the administered territories.

He said that was agreed on last week by the foreign ministers of Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt. But none of the Arab countries has alluded to such a condition.

Last-minute talks were held Sunday in Ismailia, Egypt, between Mubarak and Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk al-Sharaa, who gave Mubarak a letter from President Hafez Assad.

Mubarak and Assad said over the weekend they did not intend to go to Madrid for the conference opening, although Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir is leading his delegation there.

ISRAELIS HEAVILY FAVOR PEACE TALKS By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Oct. 27 (JTA) -- Israelis overwhelmingly support their country's decision to participate in the Madrid peace conference, according to the latest public opinion polls.

The two latest surveys, published Friday in leading Israeli dailies, show heavy majorities favor Israel's participation in the talks, and significant numbers expect them to yield positive results.

But the figures differ in the two polls.

On the question of Israel meeting with its Arab neighbors and the Palestinians, a poll conducted by the Telesaker organization, published in Ma'ariv, got a 73.5 percent favorable response.

Only 14.6 percent opposed Israel attending the conference and 11.6 percent had no opinion.

A Dahaf poll, published in Yediot Achronot, showed even stronger sentiment in favor of the peace conference. Israelis support it by a huge majority of 91 to 7 percent, that poll said.

ISRAEL'S MOSCOW EMBASSY REOPENS AFTER 24 YEARS

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Oct. 27 (JTA) -- Soviet Jews awaiting visas were among the some 100 guests and staff present last Thursday when the Israeli flag was once more hoisted above the building which had been and is now once again Israel's Embassy in Moscow.

With the building restored to its former prestige, Israel's national anthem, "Hatikvah," was sung and the champagne flowed.

Leading the festivities was Arye Levin, who held ambassador's rank but could function only on the consular level until Moscow resumed full diplomatic relations with Israel on Oct. 18.

"It's a great day" in Soviet-Israeli relations, said Levin, who predicted "more great days are ahead of us."

Levin placed a new bronze plaque, reading "Embassy of Israel" in Hebrew and Cyrillic letters, at the building's entrance. The plaque was being "returned to its proper place," he said.

Levin told reporters later that he thought the Soviet Union could play a constructive role at the Middle East peace conference opening Wednesday in Madrid under joint U.S.-Soviet auspices.

He suggested that the Soviets might use their influence to moderate the positions of Syria and other Arab countries.

The embassy was closed in June 1967, after the Soviet Union severed all ties with Israel on the final day of the Six-Day War. It remained vacant for more than 20 years while Israeli interests in the Soviet Union were represented by the Dutch Embassy.

In 1988, Israel and the Soviet Union exchanged interest sections after low-level Soviet diplomats had opened an office in Tel Aviv, ostensibly to check Soviet properties in Jerusalem.

Months later, a small Israeli mission set up shop at the old embassy building in Moscow. But it was not elevated to embassy status until Soviet Foreign Minister Boris Pankin came to Jerusalem and signed the agreement re-establishing normal relations between his country and Israel.

SOVIET JEWS FROM ISRAEL ARRIVING IN THE NETHERLANDS, SEEKING ASYLUM

By Henriette Boas

AMSTERDAM, Oct. 27 (JTA) -- Soviet Jews coming here from Israel are the latest group clamoring for political asylum in the Netherlands.

But Dutch authorities say they have virtually no chance of getting it. Moreover, the government believes these Soviet Jews may be victims of fraud.

Although at least 24,000 foreigners, mainly from Eastern Europe, have applied for asylum in Holland so far this year, the appearance of Soviet Jews from Israel is a new phenomenon.

They have begun arriving lately in groups of about 20 a week. They fly from Israel to Budapest and travel by bus from Hungary to Echt, a Dutch village near the Belgian border where aliens can apply for asylum.

The authorities here believe there is an organization making enormous, possibly illegal profits helping Soviet Jews leave Israel.

One recent emigre said he had to pay \$1,000 to an agent in Israel, in addition to air fare, for help leaving the country. When he landed in Brussels, he was met by another man who de-

manded \$1,000 to drive him, his wife and son to the Dutch border, less than an hour's trip.

Some of the Soviet Jews interviewed on Dutch television complain bitterly of discrimination in Israel for being "Russians," whereas in the Soviet Union they were discriminated against as Jews.

Several have non-Jewish wives. Under Orthodox rabbinical law, which governs such matters in Israel, their children are not Jews unless they undergo conversion. Some of these parents claim their children were discriminated against and were not even admitted to school.

Still, these Soviet Jews stand no chance of receiving political asylum in Holland because they come from Israel, which is not considered a country of political repression.

Soviet Jews coming here directly from the Soviet Union stand a better chance of being admitted to Holland permanently.

ISRAEL LOSES BID FOR UNESCO BOARD BUT INCREASES POPULARITY IN GROUP

By Michel Di Paz

PARIS, Oct. 27 (JTA) -- Israel lost its latest bid for membership on the Executive Board of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization here Saturday, but nevertheless got more favorable votes than it had in years.

Israel "lost honorably," said Eliezer Palmor, its newly appointed ambassador to UNESCO. "This election was a test case," he told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

"We lacked the time to prepare the groundwork as it should have been, but the fact that we obtained 43 votes out of 150 is a very pleasant surprise. We lost honorably," the envoy said.

According to diplomatic sources here, several European countries joined the Arab states and their allies in opposing Israel. France, Denmark and Portugal were among them, the sources said.

The Executive Board is a 51-member panel that prepares the program to be submitted to UNESCO's General Conference and supervises its execution.

The last time Israel had a seat on the board was in 1971, when it was represented by Ambassador Moshe Avidor.

The Paris-based UNESCO has been a notoriously anti-Israel, anti-Western forum in past years. The United States, which accounts for 25 percent of its budget, walked out in protest in 1984 but has since returned.

Palmor believes the attitude toward Israel has changed in recent months. Even the Moslem countries refrain from repeatedly attacking Israel, he said. "The only exception is Iran."

BOMB DESTROYS TEL AVIV APARTMENTS

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Oct. 27 (JTA) -- A pipe bomb destroyed two apartments in a Tel Aviv slum Sunday morning but caused no casualties.

The explosion occurred in a three-story residential building in the Kiryat Shapira neighborhood in the southern environs of the city.

Several Arabs employed in the area were detained for questioning but police announced no arrests. The explosive device was concealed in a fuse box. The two ground-floor apartments wrecked by the blast and fire were unoccupied.

Other residents of the building were evacuated safely while firemen extinguished the blaze.

JEWISH GROUPS GIVE MIXED REVIEWS TO COMPROMISE ON CIVIL RIGHTS BILL

By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, Oct. 27 (JTA) -- Jewish groups are accepting as a fait accompli a compromise civil rights bill hammered out by the White House and congressional leaders in the wee hours of last Friday morning.

The accord is seen as ending months of standoff between the two branches of government on how to legislatively reverse recent Supreme Court rulings considered by Democrats and many Republicans as restricting the rights of women and minorities to seek redress for discrimination.

"It is going to hit a lick against discrimination in the workplace, and I couldn't be more happy," President Bush said Friday.

But some in the Jewish community did not share his enthusiasm.

Sammie Moshenberg, Washington representative of the National Council of Jewish Women, said she is "extremely disappointed." She said Bush missed a "unique opportunity to provide women with equal remedies."

The NCJW is not opposing the compromise, "but we're certainly not supporting it," said Moshenberg.

Other groups, such as the American Jewish Congress, said that while the compromise is "far from perfect," it represents "a considerable advance over existing law and should serve as a substantial deterrent" to job discrimination.

The bill allows women and ethnic minorities to seek compensation for job discrimination, a right now restricted to victims of racial prejudice. But the bill puts a limit on the amount that could be received by women and others, while there is no limit for victims of racial discrimination.

Jews who claim to be victims of religious discrimination can receive unlimited damages under past federal court rulings, said Michael Lieberman, Washington counsel of the Anti-Defamation League. He explained that U.S. courts have considered Jews in that situation to be like a racial minority group.

Orthodox Groups Satisfied

While Bush has opposed unlimited damages as being anti-business, members of Congress had recently stepped up efforts to set no such limits, especially after hearing the allegations of sexual harassment by Anita Hill against Clarence Thomas, who has since been confirmed as an associate justice of the Supreme Court.

Bush had vowed to veto a Democratic version of the civil rights bill, as he did last year. But Sen. John Danforth (R-Mo.) proposed a compromise that won wide support in the Senate on both sides of the aisle.

The administration initially opposed the compromise but ultimately accepted it last Friday after modifications.

The compromise would cap punitive and compensatory damages for sex discrimination at a maximum of \$300,000 for companies with 500 or more employees.

While NCJW is opposed to such a cap on damages, Agudath Israel of America is not and generally likes the bill, said David Zwiebel, who is director of government affairs for the group.

But Zwiebel said he is "uncomfortable and nervous" about the compromise bill's test for proving discrimination, even if such discrimination is unintentional. That test could still result in

employees being hired or promoted for affirmative action reasons.

Merit should be the "only relevant criteria" in such decisions, Zwiebel argued.

The Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America said it expects to support the compromise measure. If the compromise is "somewhere between Danforth and the presidential version, I don't see any problem," said William Rapfogel, director of the Orthodox Union's Institute for Public Affairs.

Rapfogel said his group last week had been strongly considering backing Danforth's bill before it was modified by the White House.

In recent weeks, Bush had criticized the Danforth version as a "quota bill" while center and left-of-center members of Congress accused the president of playing political hardball on the issue of race.

Jess Hordes, ADL's Washington representative, agreed with Bush that the compromise has "adequate safeguards" to ensure that there will be "no quotas enshrined" in the bill. "This has been accomplished," said Hordes.

Rapfogel said the fact that a compromise on the issue was struck helps clear the congressional agenda to consider other issues of interest to the Orthodox Union, such as strengthening U.S. laws forbidding compliance with the Arab League boycott of Israel.

The Orthodox Union also wants to see Congress legislatively circumvent a 1990 Supreme Court ruling perceived as making it easier for government to justify laws that incidentally infringe on religious liberties.

Moshenberg said the NCJW will now focus on getting the House to approve, with a veto-proof margin, the Family and Medical Leave Act, a landmark bill that would require firms with 50 or more employees to provide 12 weeks of unpaid leave per year for pregnant workers or for those experiencing a family crisis.

The Senate voted 65-32 a few weeks ago to adopt the bill, which Bush has also threatened to veto for being anti-business.

CROATIAN JEW URGES AUSTRALIANS TO BACK REPUBLIC'S INDEPENDENCE

By Jeremy Jones

SYDNEY, Australia, Oct. 27 (JTA) -- A Croatian Jewish patriot trying to enlist Australian Jewry's support of his country's struggle for independence was hard pressed to convince Jewish leaders here recently that the breakaway republic bears no vestiges of its Nazi past.

Mijahlo Montiljo, deputy foreign minister of the Croatian republic, tried to refute charges that the Croatian leadership is fascist or anti-Semitic.

Meeting with the Executive Council of Australian Jewry here earlier this month, he acknowledged that Ante Pavelic, leader of the wartime Nazi puppet state of Croatia, was "a war criminal," as bad for Jews as Adolf Hitler.

Montiljo insisted, however, that the new Croatian leadership had no ideological links to Pavelic's anti-Semitic Ustashi party.

Montiljo said President Franjo Tudjman has gone out of his way to promote and protect Croatian Jewry.

But Leslie Caplan, president of the Executive Council, said Australian Jewry needs confidence-building measures. "We cannot ignore outstanding problems with the leadership of the Australian Croatian community," he said.