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**U.S. CONSULTING WITH MIDEAST PARTIES
ABOUT WHERE TO RESUME BILATERAL TALKS**
By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, Nov. 5 (JTA) -- The United States will be negotiating with the various Middle East parties over the next two weeks to try to reach agreement on the location and timing of the next round of bilateral peace talks.

Secretary of State James Baker told reporters at a briefing here Tuesday that if there is no agreement on a site within two weeks, "we will feel free to submit proposals."

"We'll be talking with the parties to these talks to see if they can make progress in resolving the question of venue. I'm optimistic that there might be some chance for agreement between Israel, on the one hand, and at least one delegation," he said.

But he added that it will take at least two weeks for these consultations to take place.

Israel wants the separate bilateral talks with Syria, Lebanon and a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation, to rotate between Israeli and Arab cities. But the Arabs prefer a neutral destination, such as Madrid.

Baker said that the United States would be willing to "participate in the talks themselves," if the parties desire such involvement. "We would be pleased if they wanted us to submit ideas and suggestions," regardless of "whether we are in the room or not," he said.

The secretary also took an opportunity at his briefing here Tuesday to criticize Israel for reopening an abandoned kibbutz Monday on the Golan Heights.

Such actions do nothing to "help the negotiating process" between Arabs and Israelis, he said. "It's hard for us to see how inaugurating a new settlement now can help the negotiating process that we've just finished launching."

Sharon Condemns Madrid Talks

When asked by a reporter if Israel was trying to sabotage the peace process and specifically the historic Israeli-Syrian negotiations that began late Sunday, Baker refused to speculate on the motive.

"Steps or actions that are provocative, or unilateral steps that would be seen by one side or the other as provocative, whether they are provocative or not, are hardly likely, I think, to build the kind of climate that would serve the cause of peace," he said.

The settlement, at Kibbutz Kelah, was abandoned two years ago and taken over by Nahal, a branch of the Israel Defense Force. Recently the IDF returned the settlement to civilian control and found 22 families, all Soviet immigrants, willing to move into its buildings.

In Israel, Housing Minister Ariel Sharon used the occasion of the settlement dedication ceremony Monday to denounce the peace talks in Madrid as a "colossal political mistake."

Sharon was one of the three right-wing Cabinet members who opposed Israel's participation in the Madrid conference and the only Likud minister to vote against it. He maintained that Israel would regret its decision even though it scored some public relations points.

Although Israel's first-ever direct diplomatic contact with the Syrians in Madrid on Sunday night was described as frigid, it represented a historic breakthrough.

But according to Sharon, it was an abomination. He raged against the "dictatorial" regime of Syrian President Hafez Assad, which he called "as bad as that of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, if not worse."

He accused the Syrians of all manner of atrocities against Jews, including the alleged massacre of Israeli prisoners of war.

Asked by foreign reporters whether it was not provocative to dedicate a Jewish settlement on former Syrian soil just as peace talks were starting, Sharon replied that the Syrians were the provocateurs. He referred to Foreign Minister Farouk al-Sharaa's personal attack on Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir in Madrid last Friday.

Kelah will be settled initially by 22 new Soviet immigrant families, all members of the right-wing Betar movement. They are to form a nucleus of a new 300-home community.

(JTA correspondent Hugh Orgel in Tel Aviv contributed to this report.)

BEHIND THE HEADLINES:**MOST ISRAELIS NOW BACKING SHAMIR
BUT UNSURE WHERE TALKS WILL LEAD**
By Cathrine Gerson

TEL AVIV, Nov. 5 (JTA) -- A national consensus of sorts has developed in Israel over the last week in support of Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, whose popularity is riding higher than ever since he led the Israeli delegation at the opening round of the Middle East peace conference in Madrid.

Although Israelis on the left and the right have different reasons for backing the hard-line premier, there is little question that he now enjoys most of the population's support.

Although no poll has been taken for two weeks, Shamir would likely emerge with a 70 to 80 percent public approval rating, according to Professor Avraham Diskin, head of the Hebrew University's political science department and a professional pollster.

It would be a measure of personal regard, Diskin pointed out, considering that the coalition government Shamir heads controls barely more than 50 percent of the Knesset.

According to political analysts, Shamir's popularity arises from the image in the eyes of his beholders.

The Israeli left praises him for agreeing to direct negotiations with Palestinian leaders, something they have been urging for years. But if they assume Shamir suddenly has turned dovish, it is wishful thinking, analysts say.

Those on the left ignore the fact that Shamir agreed to talks only if the Palestinians were blended into a Jordanian delegation and only if he could control to a great extent their choice of representatives.

The Israeli right, on the other hand, is delighted that Shamir remains unmovable on the issues of land for peace and a freeze of Jewish settlement-building in the administered territories.

"The moderate right supports him because he

has not agreed to anything," said one political analyst. "On the left, it is not so much support as a sigh of relief that he didn't do anything foolish over there" in Madrid.

Memories Of 'What It Was Like'

Many Israelis now feel there is no option but to talk to the Palestinians and to consider giving up at least part of the strategic Golan Heights, which probably is the main condition for any sort of peace with Syria.

"The question is, would they be satisfied with that?" Anat Levy, a 27-year-old graphic artist, wondered when questioned on the street.

"I know it's easy to talk about giving up the Golan Heights, but I don't really know what it was like to live here before we had them," the young woman said, smiling apologetically.

"I do know," interrupted an older man who would not give his name or age. "I remember what it was like doing miluim (army reserve duty) a few kilometers east of Netanya in 1965.

"I remember how the Syrians every day shelled kibbutzim north of the Golan," he said.

Nevertheless, this man, who once was a target of Syrian shells lobbed from the Golan Heights, was a strong supporter of the peace process.

"It is obvious that we can't continue this way," he said. "Something has to be done, and we have to reach agreements with our neighbors.

"But we have to be careful, very careful," he added.

Other citizens of Tel Aviv, questioned Monday as the first of the winter rains lashed the city, expressed similar views.

"I certainly want Israel out of the West Bank, but not from Jerusalem," said Lea Tomkin, a literature teacher in her early 50s.

"But while I don't want Israel to waste more time and money in the territories, I still can't decide how I feel about the possibility of an independent Palestinian state next door," she said.

Tomkin's ambiguous feelings seemed representative of how many Israelis are thinking. On one hand, they want a settlement with the Palestinians; on the other, they ask: "Can we trust them? Or are they going to want Haifa, Tel Aviv and Ashkelon next?"

NEWS ANALYSIS:

**PALESTINIANS EUPHORIC OVER MADRID
EVEN THOUGH THEY ACCOMPLISHED LITTLE**
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Nov. 5 (JTA) -- Although little substantive progress was made at the peace conference in Madrid, its powerful imagery had an electric effect on Palestinians in Jerusalem and the administered territories.

While Israelis puzzled over the meaning of the historic weekend and were only cautiously hopeful about its consequences, euphoria reigned among the Palestinians.

The contemplative mood in Zion Square, the center of Jewish western Jerusalem, contrasted sharply with the carnival atmosphere on Saladin Street, the main drag of the city's heavily Arab eastern section.

And in the refugee camps and villages of the West Bank, the hurled rocks of the intifada were replaced by olive branches, the universal symbol of peace.

Waving them in the faces of stunned Israeli soldiers and border police were many of the same

youths who only recently were engaged in pitched battles with the same soldiers and police.

They celebrated, despite the fact that the nitty-gritty negotiations have not yet started and despite the fact that the Israelis have not budged from their refusal to yield an inch of territory in exchange for peace.

The Palestinians seem to feel that history turned a corner in Madrid with favorable portents for them. They are celebrating the fact that for the first time in history, Palestinians had a recognized leadership which sat down as equals with ranking Israelis to talk about when and where they will discuss their political future.

In short, the Palestinians already smell independence in the air. And while they have a propensity to read much from very little, the fact is that they have won respectability in the international community, which less than a year ago made them pariahs for supporting Saddam Hussein.

The new atmosphere is making Israeli security forces nervous. There was fear by midweek that the numerous peace demonstrations could get out of hand and become an olive-branch intifada.

Lt. Gen. Ehud Barak, the Israel Defense Force chief of staff, said Tuesday, during a tour of Hebron, that the army would not allow "any sort of demonstrations."

A Drop In Rock-Throwing Attacks

The chief of staff reported that there has been a drop in the number of stonings in the territories since the Madrid conference, but he said it is too early to tell whether the change is permanent.

"I have no doubt that extremist elements will try to escalate the level of violence," he said.

In fact, the Palestinian camp is far from united, with many activists still holding to maximalist positions and crying for the continuation of armed struggle.

Just two days before the Madrid conference opened, two Israelis were killed and five wounded in a West Bank bus ambush.

Murders inside the Palestinian community continue, some of them using a nationalist "cover" to cloak criminal intent.

Despite the meeting of Israelis and Palestinians in Madrid, the Palestinian rejectionist camp is vocal and influential, especially the fundamentalist Hamas movement and other radical groups.

Nevertheless, Yasir Arafat's mainstream bloc in the Palestine Liberation Organization seems to have gained from the Madrid conference, which it supported.

Arafat supporters won substantial victories in the Gaza Strip Chambers of Commerce elections this week.

But the smiles and handshakes that marked the first Israeli-Palestinian bilateral talks in Madrid on Sunday did not change the everyday situation in the territories.

Heavily armed IDF forces still control the territories and patrol its streets. Olive branches cannot erase the animosities engendered by the intifada.

Just as it took years for the IDF to curb the rock-throwing, it will take time to learn how to deal with the olive branch revolution.

Israelis fear they will not have much time since their ally, the United States, is expected to push and prod them toward the next round of bilateral negotiations, which, this time, will have to yield some substance.

ALIYAH STILL DECLINING, BUT EXPECTED TO RISE SHORTLY

By Yehonathan Tommer

JERUSALEM, Nov. 5 (JTA) -- Despite a recent downturn in aliyah, the Soviet Union is continuing to pump thousands of immigrants into Israel, and officials of the Jewish Agency for Israel expect the numbers to increase in the coming months.

According to figures released this week by Israel's Absorption Ministry, 10,584 new olim arrived in October, including 9,845 from the Soviet Union and its former Baltic republics.

In New York, the National Conference on Soviet Jewry said that an additional 8,861 Soviet Jews were granted Israeli entry visas in October.

And the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society reported that another 3,891 Soviet Jews entered the United States in October under the American government's refugee program, a slight dip from last month's high of 4,163.

NCSJ's Soviet Jewry Research Bureau noted that the October Soviet aliyah figure represents a slight decrease from September, when 9,877 Soviet Jews arrived in Israel.

Soviet immigration here has been declining since June, when it surpassed 20,000. Nevertheless, the cumulative figure for the year to date stands at 125,402, up from 1990's corresponding figure for the period of 121,503, the National Conference said.

According to figures released last week by the Central Bureau of Statistics, Soviet immigration during the third quarter of the calendar year totaled 30,250, down from 54,250 in the second quarter. Immigration officials blamed reports of high unemployment in Israel for the sharp drop.

Nevertheless, Israel's monthly immigration now averages 10,000. By the end of December, the figure for the year is estimated between 170,000 and 180,000 newcomers.

A Steady Exodus

But starting early next year, a slight but progressively upward trend can be expected, according to Dr. Baruch Gur, director of the Jewish Agency's Soviet Union and Eastern European operations.

Since the abortive Communist putsch in August, the Jewish Agency has seen an 11 percent increase in the number of requests for Jewish emigration papers, Soviet exit visas and passports, Gur told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

There is a steady exodus from the Soviet Union's Moslem republics. More than 94 percent of the Jewish population there wants out, and their destination is Israel, he said. There also has been steady Jewish emigration from the Ukraine and Byelorussia in the past six months, he added.

Another factor likely to contribute to an upward trend in Soviet aliyah is the inauguration this month of direct El Al and Aeroflot flights from Moscow, Leningrad and Kishinev to Tel Aviv, the first of which was to arrive Tuesday.

"Today, 70 percent of all Soviet immigrants reach Israel via Eastern European land routes. But this percentage is expected to drop dramatically as the number of olim reaching transit destinations at Budapest and Warsaw declines," said Gur.

"Soviet immigration to Israel, therefore, may steadily increase as Soviet domestic, economic and political instability grows, and if Israel is able to provide increasing numbers of jobs for its unemployed newcomers," he said.

TRIAL OF ALLEGED KAHANE ASSASSIN OPENS WITH VIOLENCE AND LEGAL MANEUVERING

By Larry Yudelson

NEW YORK, Nov. 5 (JTA) -- One year after the assassination of Rabbi Meir Kahane, the trial of his accused killer opened Monday with the combination of street-level violence and legal maneuvering that the former Knesset member used to publicize his controversial ideas.

Outside the Manhattan courtroom, a clash between Kahane followers and Arab demonstrators ended with one Arab protester charged with riot, assault and weapon possession after he struck a police officer with a placard.

Inside the building, lawyers for defendant El Sayyid Nosair outlined their client's defense as the jury selection began. They said Nosair, who has been identified by over a dozen eyewitnesses, was the innocent victim of a conspiracy to assassinate Kahane.

But an article in last week's Village Voice linked Egyptian-born Nosair to both Al Jihad, the Egyptian group behind the assassination of Anwar Sadat, and notorious Palestinian terrorist Abu Nidal.

Nosair's lawyers denied the Voice charges, which were attributed to sources in the Mossad, the U.S. Justice Department and Egyptian intelligence.

According to Voice writer Robert I. Friedman, contributors to Nosair's defense fund include an Egyptian American who spent two years in federal prison for attempting to smuggle 150 pounds of plastic explosives to the PLO for use in Israel, and another Egyptian involved in weapons smuggling to Afghan rebels.

As the trial opened, Justice Alvin Schlesinger denied a defense motion to exhume Kahane's body from its grave in Israel for a more thorough autopsy.

He also denied a request that potential jurors fill out a detailed questionnaire on their religious beliefs. But he left open the question of whether the defense can orally question jurors on that topic.

'Our Constant Vigilance'

Nosair is being charged with second-degree murder, attempted murder and assault. He was apprehended after a gun battle with an off-duty postal inspector, who was wounded in the exchange.

To Kahane's followers, the defense team represents both of Kahane's major enemies, against which he saw himself struggling to warn the Jewish people: Moslem anti-Semitism and self-hating Jewish liberals.

Michael Warren, a Black Muslim, has previously defended Louis Farrakhan's Nation of Islam. William M. Kunstler, who is Jewish, has made a high-profile career defending radicals.

"If it weren't for our constant vigilance, Kunstler might be able to get Nosair off on a technicality," boasted Ben Lemkin, a spokesman for Kahane Chai, meaning "Kahane lives." The group is headed by Kahane's 25-year-old son, Binyamin Ze'ev.

The younger Kahane was arrested last month during after an altercation at a news conference sponsored by the Nosair defense team.

Last week, Binyamin Kahane was expelled from Spain, after he and several of his followers blocked Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's car in Madrid, in protest against the peace talks.

**JEWISH ORGANIZATION DECRY
CUNY DECISION ON JEFFRIES**

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK, Nov. 5 (JTA) -- Jewish organizations have decried the City University of New York's decision not to dismiss Professor Leonard Jeffries Jr. as chairman of the black studies department at City College, calling it a "fundamental error" that, in the words of one organization, implies "validation of Jeffries' anti-Semitic and racist views."

The City University's board of trustees voted Oct. 28 to reappoint Jeffries as chairman for a probationary period of one academic year, rather than either dismiss him outright or extend his chairmanship by the customary three-year term.

In July, the trustees will vote again whether to keep Jeffries on as chairman.

City College President Dr. Bernard Harleston said Monday, in an interview with The New York Times, that he decided, despite being offended by Jeffries' remarks, not to push for Jeffries' dismissal because it would "deepen the sense of crisis on campus" and produce "conflict."

But an official of the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York took issue with that reasoning.

The fact that "a racist can help to create tension and then use it to intimidate a major public institution proves that there is something drastically wrong with the process," said Kenneth Bialkin, NYJCRC's president, in a statement.

The decision to permit Jeffries to continue as chairman of the black studies department "sends the ugly message that it is acceptable academic behavior to distort history and promote racism and anti-Semitism to further a perverse agenda," said Pam Shafier, chair of ADL's New York regional board, in a statement.

'A Fundamental Error'

City University's trustees "made a fundamental error," said Alfred Moses, president of the American Jewish Committee, in a statement. "It said that the preaching of hatred should not disqualify the bestowing of honors, that political expediency is more important than a strong stand against bigotry," he said.

He also urged the trustees to reconsider their decision. "The fight against anti-Semitism and all forms of bigotry on campus requires the leadership to act and speak decisively," he said.

The area division of B'nai Brith pledged to monitor Jeffries on and off campus until his chairmanship is reconsidered by the university.

"We feel it imperative that Professor Jeffries be tracked at every opportunity both in the classroom and in his public appearances to be able to confront him, if still necessary, in eight months with hard evidence of his racism and bigotry," announced Harold Shulman, president of District One B'nai Brith, in a statement.

Jeffries sparked outrage and racial tension between blacks and Jews in New York after speaking at a state-sponsored cultural conference in Albany last July. In his speech, which was laced with anti-Semitism, he accused "Russian Jewry" of conspiring with the Mafia to "put together a system of destruction of black people."

He also described Diane Ravitch, an assistant United States Secretary of Education, as a "sophisticated Texas Jew," and on another occasion described a colleague at the college as the "head Jew."

**MEDIA TYCOON ROBERT MAXWELL
FOUND DEAD IN ATLANTIC OCEAN**

By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, Nov. 5 (JTA) -- Media tycoon Robert Maxwell was found dead Tuesday night, when his body was recovered in the Atlantic Ocean, off Spain's Canary Islands.

Maxwell, the flashy press baron whose passion was acquiring newspapers around the world, had been cruising on his yacht, the Lady Ghislaine, following a round of business meetings.

His death followed allegations in the news media in recent weeks that he had ties to the Mossad, Israel's foreign intelligence service.

Maxwell was party to a libel suit filed two weeks ago against American author Seymour Hersh, whose new book, "The Samson Option," claims an editor of one of Maxwell's papers spied for Israel and helped arrange the sale of Israeli arms to Iran and other countries.

The editor, Nicholas Davies, was fired last week as foreign editor of The Daily Mirror, a leading British tabloid, after photographs surfaced placing him in Ohio where, Hersh alleged, he had been on an arms-buying trip.

Hersh told British Television that he had more information about Maxwell.

Maxwell, a British subject, was a Czechoslovak Jew born Jan Lodvik Hoch in 1923 in a small village in Slovakia. During the war, he served in the French underground and British army, changing his name several times.

Maxwell's mother died in Auschwitz. His father was arrested by the Germans and was never heard from again.

Maxwell himself was awarded a British medal for valor during World War II.

After the war, Maxwell founded Pergamon Press, a scientific publishing house. He went on to build a newspaper company listed among the world's top 10 communications businesses. In 1984, he bought Mirror Group Newspapers, in Britain.

His Maxwell Communications Corp., which owns the U.S. publisher Macmillan and the Berlitz language schools, was reportedly heavily in debt.

Prominent In Jewish Causes

Earlier this year, Maxwell rescued the New York tabloid Daily News from certain death. In August, he gained total control of Ma'ariv, Israel's second-largest circulation daily.

This past March, he launched a Russian-language paper in Israel, Vremya.

Maxwell was prominent in many Jewish causes. He was honorary president of State of Israel Bonds Organization for the United Kingdom and was seen frequently at dinners for various Jewish groups.

He had been scheduled to address the Anglo-Israel Association in London on Monday. But the group's organizers were told a half hour before the event that he had been taken ill.

However, Rabbi Faivish Vogel, director of Lubavitch in Britain, spoke with Maxwell on Monday by telephone. Maxwell "sounded as direct and robust and healthy as in any of the conversations I've had with him," Vogel told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

Although he was a member of the Labor Party in Britain and once served as a Labor member of Parliament, he formed close ties to Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir of Likud.

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