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ARAB DELEGATIONS AGREE TO RETURN TO WASHINGTON FOR TALKS WITH ISRAEL

By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, Jan. 7 (JTA) -- Satisfied with the strong U.N. condemnation of Israel for ordering 12 Palestinians deported, Arab delegates were expected to return to Washington as early as Thursday to resume their face-to-face talks with Israel.

The State Department announced Tuesday that Lebanon, Jordan and the Palestinians have all said they will return. Syria, however, has given no indication of its intentions, said department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler.

But Hasan Abdel Rahman, director of the Washington-based Palestine Affairs Center, a group affiliated with the League of Arab States, said a high-level Palestine Liberation Organization representative in Damascus is "coordinating with the government of Syria, and it is expected that all Arab delegations will be here in the next 48 hours."

Rahman said the Arab delegations were satisfied with the "strong language" in the unanimous resolution that the U.N. Security Council adopted Monday condemning Israel's plan to deport 12 Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Rahman praised the U.S. role in backing the resolution. He pointed out that the resolution phrase that the council "strongly condemns" Israel was "first used" last week by State Department deputy spokesman Richard Boucher.

The choosing of those words "means that the United States is really frustrated" with Israel, he said.

Rahman said the passage of the resolution was not a "payoff to anybody" but rather an indication that "international legality is taking its role once again."

Preparing For Moscow

The main dispute in the first round of direct peace talks here in December was between the Israelis and Palestinians, who could not agree on whether the Jordanians and Palestinians should be treated as one delegation or two.

The Palestinians, wanting greater legitimacy, have held out for having separate talks with the Israelis. They have proposed creating a number of subcommittees on which there would be at least one Jordanian official. Similarly, in the Jordanian talks with Israel, there would be at least one Palestinian on each subcommittee.

But Israel, citing the U.S.-Soviet guidelines for the talks, is insisting on negotiating with a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation. Yet Israel is willing to break the talks up into subcommittees based on issues rather than on nationality, as the Palestinians insist.

Last month, the heads of those three delegations spent days together on a sofa in a State Department corridor trying to resolve that dispute.

Diplomatic movement was also taking shape here Tuesday to prepare for the multilateral conference on Middle East regional issues, slated to take place in Moscow on Jan. 28 and 29.

Yosef Hadass, director general of the Israeli Foreign Ministry, discussed those preparations here Monday with State Department officials.

The U.S. government wants to establish two basic committees to those talks: one that would discuss issues such as refugees, water resources and the region's economy, and another that would discuss arms control, a State Department official said.

PLO Adviser Gets U.S. Visa

Israel Radio reported Tuesday that Hadass, who has been appointed head of the Israeli delegation to the multilateral talks, is trying to convince the U.S. and Soviet co-sponsors to establish more committees than that to discuss the issues in greater detail.

Meanwhile Tuesday, the State Department announced that it had granted a visa to Nabil Shaath, chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Palestine National Council, the PLO's so-called parliament in exile.

The visa is good for two weeks and contains no geographic restrictions, a State Department official said Tuesday.

Spokeswoman Tutwiler said Shaath was admitted to give a speech, apparently to the Arab American Institute's seventh annual Leadership Conference, which convenes in Washington from Jan. 16 to 19.

She said U.S. officials will refrain from talking with Shaath while he is in the capital.

Malcolm Hoenlein, executive director of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, said the visa decision does not portend a rapprochement between the United States and the PLO.

The United States broke off direct talks with the PLO in June 1990, after it refused to condemn an aborted terrorist attack perpetrated by a PLO faction on Tel Aviv beaches.

ISRAELI GOVERNMENT REACTS BITTERLY TO HARSH LANGUAGE OF U.N. RESOLUTION

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Jan. 7 (JTA) -- Government officials here have reacted bitterly to the U.N. Security Council's harsh condemnation of Israel for ordering the deportation of 12 Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

While few Israeli officials were surprised by the U.S. decision to support the council's action Monday evening, several were miffed that U.S. Ambassador Thomas Pickering reportedly played an active role in drafting the language of the resolution, said to be the harshest ever used against the Jewish state.

In the resolution, the U.N. body said it "strongly condemns the decision of Israel, the occupying power, to resume deportations of Palestinian civilians."

The deportations were ordered by Defense Minister Moshe Arens on Jan. 2, following the fatal shooting of an Israeli civilian, Doron Shushan, on New Year's Day. But the expulsions have not yet been carried out, in order to give the 12 Palestinians time to appeal before the Israeli military courts.

The 12 Palestinians have asked the High Court of Justice to order the military appeal

boards to hear their cases in public, rather than behind closed doors, as is the usual practice.

Meanwhile, Palestinian resentment over the deportation order was said to have fueled large-scale riots Tuesday in Gaza City, in which one Palestinian was shot dead and at least three others wounded.

The rioting was the worst in some time. Two border police officers were hurt, one sustaining light to medium wounds by flying rocks.

There was also a rowdy but non-violent demonstration against the deportation order Tuesday in East Jerusalem. Protesters applauded the U.N. Security Council resolution.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir again vigorously defended the deportation order Tuesday in a meeting with the visiting archbishop of Canterbury, who is the worldwide leader of the Anglican Church.

According to Shamir spokesman Ehud Gol, the prime minister told Archbishop George Carey that Israel abhors "expulsion and imprisonment measures, but, unfortunately, we are forced to deal with murder and terror, and it is our obligation to counter this wave with appropriate measures."

"At the same time," Shamir was quoted as telling the Anglican cleric, "our consistent policy is to continue the peace efforts."

It was the premier's second such conversation this week with a leading religious figure. On Sunday, he delivered a similar accounting to Cardinal John O'Connor, the Roman Catholic archbishop of New York.

Time Limit Idea Floated

Gol said part of Israel's disappointment over Monday's Security Council vote focused on the U.S. role. He said this would doubtless be articulated in ongoing diplomatic contacts.

The spokesman vowed that Israel's actions against Palestinian terror would continue despite the Security Council condemnation.

But the Israel Defense Force chief of staff suggested Tuesday that Israel might consider setting a time limit on deportation orders, allowing Palestinians to return to the administered territories eventually.

Lt. Gen. Ehud Barak told the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee that the core of world criticism of the Israeli deportation orders is that they are irrevocable and permanent.

He said that Israel might mitigate that condemnation by making those deported eligible to return to the territories after a suitable length of time in exile.

In a radio interview, Barak said that while a fixed-time deportation might be a less effective deterrent to violence than an open-ended one, that loss might be offset by the benefit to Israel in terms of warding off worldwide condemnation.

The chief of staff was careful to stress, however, that he was merely voicing a "thought," rather than an "operative proposal."

Nevertheless, he appeared to suggest that the Israeli government would do well to reassess its deportation policy.

Dovish Knesset members were unimpressed, suspecting that Barak's idea could be used to increase the number of deportations, since expulsions with time limits would be seen as a less severe form of punishment than open-ended ones.

Hawkish politicians were just as dubious, saying that what Israel needs is tougher security measures, not weaker ones.

ISRAELI POVERTY RATE SHOOTS UP, AFFECTING CHILDREN IN PARTICULAR
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Jan. 7 (JTA) -- Although final figures are not yet in for 1991, a report released this week shows that the number of poverty-stricken people in Israel is up considerably and is still climbing.

The number of Israelis living below the poverty line in 1990 reached 537,700, representing 16.9 percent of the population, according to the annual report of the National Insurance Institute, which was released Tuesday.

The figure was up from the 14.6 percent of the previous year and continued to increase through 1991.

The report's release caused quite a stir here and prompted independent Knesset member Charlie Biton, a former member of the Hadash Communist bloc, to introduce a motion of no confidence in the government. He urged all opposition parties to support it.

The report for fiscal 1990 showed a sharp rise in the number of impoverished children. Nearly a quarter of a million children, representing 22.3 percent of all Israeli children, were registered as impoverished, up from 18.6 percent in 1989.

Among families, 14.3 percent were under the poverty line in 1990, up from 12.8 percent in the previous year.

Yossi Tamir, the Insurance Institute's deputy director general for research and planning, told reporters that although the institute had not yet analyzed the data for 1991, the poverty situation probably deteriorated still further last year.

According to an international survey conducted last year that compared poverty levels in the United States, Canada, Sweden, Germany, England and Israel in 1986-87, only the United States had a higher percentage rate of population under the poverty line than Israel.

MEETING BETWEEN SHAMIR AND PERES HEIGHTENS TALK OF EARLY ELECTIONS
By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Jan. 7 (JTA) -- A rare private meeting between Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and Labor Party leader Shimon Peres has sparked renewed speculation about the prospects of early elections in Israel.

Shamir said that Peres had sought the Monday discussion, which dealt with "parliamentary matters on which we are not necessarily divided."

The initial interpretation was that the two leaders had discussed raising the minimum electoral support a party must receive to win its first Knesset seat. This would naturally cut down on the number of tiny parties, forcing them to amalgamate before the election.

The threshold now stands at 1.5 percent of the votes cast, after being raised recently from the traditional 1 percent cutoff in place through the 1988 elections.

But the Labor-linked newspaper Davar reported Tuesday in a banner headline that the two major parties were already discreetly negotiating a date for early elections.

Likud reportedly prefers a date in the late spring, while Labor -- which has scheduled its first-ever primaries for February and April -- does not want general elections before summer.

CATHOLICS ISSUE SCATHING REPORT ON HELP CLERGY GAVE WAR CRIMINAL
By Michel Di Paz

PARIS, Jan. 7 (JTA) -- The French Catholic Church has issued a scathing report documenting the help that Catholic clergy gave to a prominent French Nazi war collaborator.

The report on the aid given Paul Touvier is the result of an inquiry by the French Catholic Church and corroborates accusations that have been leveled by Nazi-hunters and Jewish groups.

According to the report, published this week, it is clear that a very large array of French clergy, from monks to archbishops, literally went out of their way to hide Touvier and help him in other ways, said noted French historian Rene Remond, who chaired the panel.

But the church, as such, was not involved in the coverup, Remond found.

The inquiry was commissioned last year by Cardinal Albert Decourtray, archbishop of Lyon and then head of the French Catholic Church.

During World War II, Touvier headed the Vichy Milice, or Militia, in Lyon.

According to the report, he was especially helped by members of what is known as the traditionalist wing of the church, which rejects the Second Vatican Council and Catholic-Jewish rapprochement.

The report underscored the help given Touvier by two high clergy: Cardinal Jean Villot, who was Vatican secretary of state and former archbishop of Lyon, and Villot's secretary, Monsignor Charles Duquaire.

Villot died in 1979; Duquaire died in 1987.

According to the report, Touvier became Duquaire's obsession.

Remond, in trying to grasp the clergy's attitude, wrote, "Some of his defenders hailed in (Touvier) the victim of a plot of the everlasting enemies of true faith: Freemasons, Jews, communists, democrats, all those Touvier had sworn to combat and to render harmless."

Twice Condemned To Death

Touvier, who is now 76, was known for his brutality. He was twice condemned to death in absentia for crimes against humanity.

He was arrested in 1947 but escaped, and police never apprehended him until May 1989, when he was found in a Catholic priory in Nice.

It was reported that Touvier and his wife hid out in various convents until 1971 or 1972, when he was secretly granted an official pardon for his wartime crimes by the late French President Georges Pompidou. The statute of limitations on war crimes had come into effect, but that was before the French judicial system recognized crimes against humanity.

The pardon was later rescinded, however, and Touvier once again went into hiding.

Last July, Touvier was released from jail on $10,000 bail after a closed-door court hearing. No reason was given for approval of his bail request.

As a condition, however, his passport was confiscated and he was barred from talking with the news media. He must report to the police once weekly.

Responding to the report, Jean Kahn, head of CRIF, the representative body of French Jewry, said he was not surprised by the findings.

"We can only regret the attitude of some circles of the Catholic Church," he said. "We learned with bitterness that even some of those who helped Jews during World War II later helped criminals to escape justice.

"This attitude shows an unacceptable concept of justice and pardon."

A court is to decide within a month whether Touvier will stand trial for his crimes.

Two other French war criminals yet to be tried are Rene Bousquet, who was in charge of the Vichy police, and Maurice Papon, who ordered the deportation of the Jews of Bordeaux.

METZGER BEGINS SERVING JAIL TERM, HIS FIRST EVER IN A HISTORY OF HATE
By Tom Tugend

LOS ANGELES, Jan. 7 (JTA) -- White supremacist leader Tom Metzger began serving a six-month jail term Monday for his part in a cross-burning eight years ago.

The sentence is Metzger's first ever despite decades of anti-Semitic and anti-black activities.

The founder of the White Aryan Resistance and former grand dragon of the California Ku Klux Klan was taken into custody by Los Angeles County marshals after he was unable to raise $100,000 bail.

A judgment of $9 million was rendered in 1990 against Metzger, his son John and WAR, in a civil suit brought for inciting Skinheads to attack and kill an Ethiopian man in Portland, Ore.

The California judge, J.D. Smith, refused to release Metzger on his own recognizance, pending appeal. He sharply reprimanded him for using the trial as a platform for his racist views.

"What galls the court most is (that) Mr. Metzger continues to tell the world" his conviction was based on his philosophy, said Smith.

"That's not true," he said. "This was a simple trial."

Even as he was led away, Metzger was trumpeting his beliefs.

"I'm prepared to go to jail. I've got a lot of friends in jail already," he boasted.

He added that "it doesn't do much good to kill the messenger because the word is out. White people are pissed off all over the world."

Metzger, 53, was among 15 hooded and robed men arrested eight years ago during a ceremony in which the participants shouted racist slogans, gave Nazi salutes and burned three towering crosses in a canyon overlooking the Los Angeles suburb of Lake View Terrace.

Prosecutors charged that the ceremony was intended to provoke violent clashes, unite several white racist groups and intimidate black and other residents of the racially mixed community.

After an 11-week trial, the jury convicted Metzger on one misdemeanor count of unlawful assembly. Besides the jail sentence, the judge imposed a $200 fine and ordered the veteran racist to perform 200 hours of community service working with minorities or in a hospital.

Metzger will be held in a one-man cell in an isolated area of the jail to protect him from other inmates. For his additional safety, he will be escorted by two sheriff's deputies each time he leaves his cell, according to defense attorney Kevin Avery.

Prosecutor Joan Phillips said the conviction and jailing of Metzger sent a strong message that cross-burning and other racist behavior will not be tolerated in Los Angeles County.

"We like to think that the prosecution impeded the Klan's activity here in California," Phillips said.

JEWISH DEMOCRATS GATHER IN DENVER TO ORGANIZE FOR 1992 ELECTION DRIVE
By Chris Leppek
Intermountain Jewish News

DENVER, Jan. 7 (JTA) -- Denver was the launching site this week for the first salvo of what Jewish Democrats predict will be a well-fought and exciting political battle for the November national elections.

In its first attempt nationwide to set up a regional grassroots organization, the National Jewish Democratic Council held a reception Sunday night at the Governor's Mansion here and managed to attract more than 200 area Jews eager to lend their support, time, energy or money to Democratic candidates.

That is more than twice the number of politically active Jews the council had expected for the event, the first in a series of such gatherings slated for Jewish communities around the country.

"It's a good omen," an obviously enthused Steve Gutow, the group's executive director, said in an interview. "In fact, it's a very good omen."

"We're now beginning the real program of the organization," Gutow told the participants later. "All of the eyes of the National Jewish Democratic Council are on you, and let me tell you Denver, you look very, very good."

Gutow and the council's lay leadership, including national executive committee member Robert Loup of Denver, were taking a close look at the Denver affair, considered a bellwether for the council's national election-year strategy.

Representatives of local Democratic incumbents and some of the nation's top Democratic presidential campaigns were interested, too.

The campaigns of Bob Kerrey, Bill Clinton, Tom Harkin and Jerry Brown all sent representatives to press the flesh, explain positions and sign up early campaign workers and supporters.

What they all saw was not only a larger-than-expected turnout, but a group of Jewish Democrats representing a wide spectrum in terms of age, marital status, profession and income level.

'A Piece Of The Action'

Many of those in attendance were people not usually seen at Jewish communal activities, the implication being that there may be a previously unseen cadre of Jewish support for Democratic Party politics.

All of which is encouraging to the Democratic council, a group set up in December 1990, not necessarily to bring Jews back to the Democratic Party, but to bring them into the party's internal apparatus and campaign organizations.

The council's founders -- leading Jewish activists like Loup, Stuart Eizenstat, Morton Mandel and Hyman Bookbinder -- recognized that this is where party platforms and campaign positions are forged.

They worried that state and national party conventions were beginning to show signs of lagging Jewish participation in the 1980s, resulting in positions that were not always beneficial to Jewish or Israeli interests.

"If we're a part of the Democratic Party," Gutow told the Intermountain Jewish News last July, "we'll have every right to talk policy. We've got to be a piece of the action."

That theme was echoed at this week's meeting by the introductory speakers, including Loup, who warned that Jewish concerns are already beginning to be "ignored or misunderstood" by the Democratic Party.

"Grassroots is the key to what we must do," Loup said. "We must make our voices heard. We must make the party stronger."

Sen. Timothy Wirth (D-Colo.) took direct aim at the current Republican administration, saying that Americans are in danger of losing many of the educational and professional opportunities that the country should provide them.

'Toughest Challenge There Is'

Wirth urged the assembled Democrats to carry the party's message to voters, to the media and to influential individuals.

"It doesn't happen if you stay home," he said. "It doesn't happen because people feel smug about where they are. It doesn't happen because people have a lot of money. It happens because of hard work. Politics is hard work. It's the toughest challenge there is."

Colorado Gov. Roy Romer also took the opportunity to lob a few shells at the opposition, describing the GOP's economic and social policies as based on post-World War II models and therefore hopelessly outdated.

The governor's shopping list of national woes being neglected by the Bush administration included education, health care, government bureaucracy, child care, crime and the breakdown of the family unit.

"What we need is a call to action," Romer said. "We're not going to get to where we want to go with the present positions, and the reason we can't there from here is that the world has changed."

But the gathering was more than an airing of political polemics. Once state Democratic Party Chairman Howard Gelt took the podium, the meeting quickly became a working session.

Gelt, a member of the Jewish community, offered quick primers in the state's delegate, caucus and convention systems. He told participants how to get involved in national and local campaigns and stressed the importance of Colorado's first-ever presidential primary on March 3.

He also provided some old-fashioned political inspiration, telling the assembled activists-to-be that 1992 could be a very exciting year for the Democratic Party, one in which the party just might put its man back in the White House.

The busy sound of many pencils filling in blanks on volunteer pledge cards suggested that Gelt was not the only one who believed it.

ZIONISM TV SERIES TO AIR IN RUSSIA
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Jan. 7 (JTA) -- Sections of Israel Television's 19-part "Pillar of Fire" series on the history of Zionism will be screened on Russian television this month, Israel Broadcasting Authority director general Arye Mekel disclosed Monday.

The $1 million series, produced by Israel Television's Yigael Lossin in 1980, and followed by a companion book, will need no special preparation before it is screened by the newly incorporated Russian Television Service. The problem of Russian subtitles has already been overcome by Israel Television, which reran the series here last year for Russian-speaking immigrants.

The "Pillar of Fire" book was translated into English at the end of 1983, and the series itself was subsequently translated and screened in an abridged version by Britain's TV Channel 4.