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**SHAMIR TRYING TO KEEP HIS PARTY
IN POWER AS TRANSITIONAL REGIME**

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Jan. 16 (JTA) -- With the fall of his coalition government all but inevitable, Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir is consulting with senior Likud figures on ways to keep the party in power as a transitional regime pending early elections.

Informed sources said that the prime minister will not be rushed into resigning before an election date is set. He plans to hold informal discussions on that subject, first with his coalition partners and then with the Labor opposition.

Elections are mandated by law no later than November. In view of the government crisis, political observers believe the parties will opt for a referendum in May or June.

The long-predicted fall of Shamir's Likud-led coalition seemed certain after Science and Energy Minister Yuval Ne'eman announced on television Wednesday night that he was pulling his right-wing Tehiya party out of the government, depriving Shamir of its three Knesset votes.

Rehavam Ze'evi, a minister without portfolio, is expected to defect with his two-member Moleket party's Knesset faction. The departure of both parties will deprive the government of its parliamentary majority, forcing Shamir to submit his resignation to President Chaim Herzog.

The dissenting ministers indicated they would resign formally at Sunday's Cabinet meeting. By law, their resignations become effective 48 hours later.

Concern About A Labor Move

The two parties, which oppose the Arab-Israeli peace talks in principle, had warned well in advance that they would leave Shamir's government if the bilateral negotiations in Washington touched on substantive matters, such as limited self-rule for the Palestinians.

Although Shamir insisted that did not occur this week, the two hard-liners were not convinced.

There was some uneasiness in Likud circles Thursday that if Shamir is forced to resign without the Knesset dissolved and an election date settled, Labor might try to set up an alternative government.

The law requires the president to consult with the various Knesset factions with a view to forming a new government if the prime minister resigns or if his government is defeated by a no-confidence vote in the Knesset.

But the consultations automatically cease as soon as the Knesset votes to dissolve itself. In that case, the existing government becomes a caretaker regime, remaining intact with all of its members.

Under Israeli law, ministers can neither resign from nor join a caretaker government. Ne'eman and Ze'evi would be "trapped."

Labor may try to bring down the Likud regime before the Knesset acts. It intends to introduce a no-confidence measure Monday, focusing on economic issues, especially rising unemployment, which it says was the "underlying reason" for the government's collapse.

NEWS ANALYSIS:**LITTLE HEADWAY MADE IN PEACE TALKS,
BUT THEIR CONTINUATION IS PROGRESS**

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Jan. 16 (JTA) -- After two rounds of Middle East peace talks in Washington, some commentators are expressing gloom that no solid agreements have been reached.

But this overlooks the real accomplishment so far: that the talks have taken place at all and are expected to continue in February.

Few would have believed a year ago, or even six months ago, that Israeli negotiators would be sitting across the table from Syrians, or even Palestinians, though Israelis have negotiated before with Lebanese and Jordanian officials.

As Yosef Ben-Aharon, head of the overall Israeli delegation, put it this week, after talks with the Syrians, "The very fact that we are talking with them" is "in itself an accomplishment."

This is apparently also how the State Department sees it. Richard Boucher, the department's deputy spokesman, said the United States has always believed that the only way to achieve peace in the Middle East "is for the parties to engage in direct discussions of their differences."

"That is what they are now doing, and we think that is a significant achievement."

The latest round of bilateral talks ended Thursday after the Israelis met with the joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation and then with just the Jordanian delegation before returning home.

Focus On Location Of Next Round

The discussion apparently centered on the time and venue of the next round of negotiations. Both sides agreed that the talks would continue in February, although Jordan said it would be in Washington, while the Israelis continue to insist that the talks be held in the Middle East.

One of the reasons Israel wants the talks out of Washington is that more could be accomplished without the media spotlight that the American capital guarantees, Zalman Shoval, Israel's ambassador to the United States, explained Wednesday.

The level of vilification, especially between Israel and the Palestinians, increased this week as both sides sought to show that they were continuing to talk despite outrages at home from the other side.

Israel's stated reason for wanting the talks to be held in the Middle East is that the members of its delegation all have government jobs that they must attend to and that the nearer they get to an agreement, the more direct consultations they must have with Jerusalem.

The Israelis also would like to see the meetings held in the countries involved because that would imply Arab recognition of Israel's legitimacy.

But the Israelis said this week that if the Arabs cannot bring themselves to come to Israel, then they could choose from a list of 10 other possible sites in the region. The Arabs said they wanted to continue meeting in Washington.

Israel also does not like Washington as a

site, because they feel it encourages the Arab tendency to ask the United States to settle any deadlocks by pressing Israel. The Palestinians, in particular, continually call for U.S. intervention.

But when the Israelis met Wednesday with Secretary of State James Baker, he assured them the United States would not interfere. The State Department has been telling all parties that the only way to reach an agreement is through bilateral negotiations.

Syrian Talks Still Deadlocked

Boucher expressed U.S. satisfaction Thursday that Israel and the Palestinians had settled their procedural differences. Last month, the Palestinians demanded that their delegation be split from the Jordanians for talks with Israel.

The dispute was finally settled when talks resumed Monday with a meeting between Israel and the joint delegation, followed by Israeli meetings with separate Palestinian and Jordanian delegations.

The talks with Jordan went well, as have talks with Lebanon. Most observers believe those two countries are eager to have a peace treaty with Israel and would do so once agreements are reached with Syria and the Palestinians.

The Jordanians could never come to an agreement unless the Palestinian issue were settled, since the majority of its population is made up of Palestinians. Lebanon is under Syrian military control.

The Syrians, meanwhile, have refused to negotiate anything but Israel's complete withdrawal from the Golan Heights. The Israelis have tried to raise such issues as Syrian support for terrorism and the plight of Syrian Jews, which the Syrians regard as an internal matter.

The Israelis also have expressed frustration that the Syrians refuse to give any signs that they accept Israel's legitimacy.

NEW U.N. CHIEF SPEAKS OF THE NEED TO ENSURE SAFETY OF PALESTINIANS **By Larry Yudelson**

UNITED NATIONS, Jan. 16 (JTA) -- Until the current Arab-Israeli peace talks reach a settlement, ways must be found to promote "the safety and protection of Palestinian civilians under occupation," U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said this week.

Boutros-Ghali told a U.N. panel Wednesday that there is broad international agreement that the Palestinian question should be settled on the basis of Israeli withdrawal from the territories, recognition of the right of all states in the region to live in peace, and "recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people."

These rights include "self-determination, with the question of Jerusalem in this regard being of essential importance," he told the U.N. Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

This was the secretary-general's first speech before a U.N. committee since succeeding Javier Perez de Cuellar on Jan. 1.

U.N. spokesman Francois Giuliani said no significance should be read into Boutros-Ghali speaking to this committee first. He pointed out that the various committees are just resuming their work after a New Year's break and that the secretary-general was away last week.

Both Israel and the United States boycott the committee on Palestine, which is seen simply

as a front for the Palestine Liberation Organization.

"We regret that the secretary-general found it suitable to address that committee," said Aron Jacob, political counselor to Israel's U.N. Mission. "It is appalling that the secretary-general should present such a one-sided point of view of the conflict."

At the same time, Jacob said he doubted there was anything new in the secretary's remarks.

"What he said is in line with the one-sided and biased resolutions adopted every year by the General Assembly and the Security Council," he said.

Likewise, Giuliani said that Boutros-Ghali was only reiterating longstanding U.N. positions and that Perez de Cuellar had similarly addressed the committee.

PRISONER SWAP BELIEVED IN THE WORKS **By Tamar Levy**

GENEVA, Jan. 16 (JTA) -- An exchange of prisoners between Israel and Shi'ite Moslem factions in Lebanon is expected soon.

The United Nations is reported to be close to arranging a swap of Israeli service personnel -- or their remains -- for Lebanese and other Arabs in Israeli jails.

They would include Sheik Abdel Karim Obeid, a former spiritual leader of the pro-Iranian Hezbollah, who was seized by Israeli commandos in southern Lebanon in 1989.

Reports that an accord may be near were strengthened last week when Giandomenico Picco, a representative of the U.N. secretary-general who helped secure the release of the remaining U.S. and British hostages in Lebanon last year, met here with representatives of the International Red Cross.

They discussed the logistics of the impending prisoner exchange, according to the Swiss daily *Journal de Geneve*.

The Hezbollah, or Party of God, says it has the remains of two Israel Defense Force soldiers: Rachamim Alsheikh and Yossi Fink, who were killed in Lebanon five years ago.

But it denies knowing the whereabouts of Capt. Ron Arad, an Israeli air force navigator shot down over Lebanon in 1986, who is the only missing Israeli presumed to be alive.

BONN INVESTIGATING SALES TO IRAQ **By David Kantor**

BONN, Jan. 16 (JTA) -- Germany's Foreign Ministry disclosed Wednesday that criminal investigations have been opened in response to allegations that German companies supplied Iraq with equipment to produce enriched uranium, a component of nuclear weapons.

The ministry did not name the companies under scrutiny, but sources outside the ministry said they included some "giants" with excellent connections in Bonn.

The material for the criminal probe came partly from the United Nations, said government sources, adding that the government would cooperate fully with the United Nations in further efforts to gather information about Iraq's nuclear capability.

The German industrialists association declined to comment on allegations against any of its members, except to note that no company has yet been convicted of illegally exporting to Iraq.

**BEHIND THE HEADLINES:
ISRAELIS REMEMBER THE GULF WAR
MORE WITH NOSTALGIA THAN TRAUMA**
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Jan. 16 (JTA) -- As its first anniversary approached this week, Israelis were looking back at the Persian Gulf War as if it were a really good horror movie: full of startling and terrifying scenes, but in the end harmless and worth returning to from time to time.

It is more with nostalgia than with emotional trauma that the public is recalling the war, in which Israel was the only non-belligerent target of Iraqi missile attacks.

The war began on Jan. 17, 1991, when the United States led a 28-nation coalition into battle to oust the Iraqi invaders from Kuwait. Only hours later, the first Iraqi Scud missiles crashed into Tel Aviv and Haifa.

A total of 39 missiles landed on Israeli territory during the six weeks of fighting. They did considerable property damage but inflicted few casualties.

They were far less devastating in that respect than the Nazi "buzz bombs" and V-2 rockets that hit London in 1944, which were technologically a half-century behind the Scuds.

And the dreaded chemical warfare attacks never materialized.

For those reasons, perhaps, most Israelis can shrug off the Gulf war. Some even recall it wistfully as a time of national togetherness. And for many youngsters, it is a fondly remembered time of no school.

Israel Television devoted Saturday night to an hour-long program memorializing the war, but in a satirical vein.

The joke was a neurotic Israeli who refuses to leave his gas-proof sealed room for fear that the Scuds are still falling. The idea, of course, was lifted from apocryphal tales of Japanese soldiers still hiding in the jungles of the South Pacific, unaware that World War II is over.

On Sunday night, another hour was devoted to the interesting but largely irrelevant question of whether women sacrificed more than men during the war. The program also asked whether it was really necessary to close the schools and shops, thereby imposing partial paralysis on the economy.

Worst Fears Not Realized

For 16-year-old Hanna Lander, the Gulf war anniversary will be an occasion for high jinks. She and her classmates plan to seal off their high school classroom and lock their teacher out.

Psychologists could attribute the blasé reaction of Israelis a year later to a relief syndrome. Events were not as horrible as feared.

But at the time, no one could foresee that.

When the first Scuds landed, they brought warfare to the front door of the civilian population for the first time since Israel fought for its independence in 1948. People feared their cities would be bombed to ruins, their children poisoned by lethal gas.

In actuality, only two people died as the result of a missile hit.

A few small children were suffocated because their parents mishandled the gas-proof nylon kits issued them. And a few elderly people had heart attacks brought on by the excitement of air raid sirens and dramatic announcements on television.

The contrast was sharp between the deep

apprehension of the wartime nights, when the Scuds fell, and the war's anti-climactic aftermath, which found Israel only slightly bruised.

The relief was indeed like awaking from a nightmare and realizing it was only a dream.

Of course, that did not apply to families who were bombed out of house and home, and who had to spend the ensuing months in hotel rooms. It may not apply to children who saw their homes destroyed.

For some, the traumatic consequences may become manifest only later in life.

Guy Sa'ar, 18, of Jerusalem lost his appetite on the first day of the war. He resumed normal eating habits only a full week later.

But his younger brother, Yuval, took the war much more lightly.

"I was scared during the air raids, but I never really believed that a missile would hit us," he said. "I knew it would not, because we live in Jerusalem."

The capital was not hit by Scuds, apparently because Saddam Hussein feared his missiles might fall on Arab population centers. As a result, many Tel Aviv residents fled the coastal metropolis for shelter in the Holy City -- and were mocked by Jerusalemites for doing so.

(The denizens of Tel Aviv recently got their sweet revenge, when scores of Jerusalemites, who found themselves without electricity during the cold nights of the record snowstorm, flocked to the relative balmy climes of Tel Aviv.)

War Celebrities Long Forgotten

Israelis in general make no effort to obliterate the memories of a year ago.

A new shopping mall in Haifa displays the remnant of a Scud missile that hit the site on the first night of the war. It is a sort of monument to Saddam Hussein's failed attempt to goad Israel into the fight.

The war created its own vocabulary. Many Israelis still identify themselves as residents of "Region A," a recollection of the army's division of the country into regions in order to aim specific civil defense instructions at different population areas.

It also created instant celebrities. One of them was Nahman Shai, the avuncular Israel Defense Force colonel whose soothing TV commentaries after each missile attack did much to set the nation's mind at ease.

Shai's moment of fame is long over. His face has disappeared from Israeli TV screens, much as that of U.S. Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf Jr., supreme commander of the Gulf war coalition, has vanished from American TV screens.

Surprisingly, there is no national debate over the lessons of the war, such as troubling reports that most of the masks given civilians were defective and whether Israel should have retaliated against Iraq regardless of the wishes of the United States.

Politicians still speak of such matters. But the general public is no longer interested. Its concerns are about unemployment, aliyah, the peace process and the unknown pitfalls that lie in its path.

For most Israelis, the Gulf war is yesterday's news.

REMINDER: Because of Martin Luther King Day, the JTA Daily News Bulletin will not be published on Monday, Jan. 20.

JEWS CONCERNED BY THREAT TO ATTACK JEWISH SITES IN PRAGUE, BRATISLAVA**By Josef Klansky**

PRAGUE, Jan. 16 (JTA) -- An anonymous threat to attack Jewish targets in Prague and Bratislava with stolen weapons is being taken seriously by Jewish community leaders, who have asked for police protection.

"We could not ignore the threat that stolen arms will be used to attack Jewish targets and we are in contact with the respective authorities," Jiri Danicek, acting vice president of the Federation of Jewish Communities in the Czech Republic, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency here.

He was referring to an anonymous telephone call Monday to the office of the Czechoslovak News Agency in Brno, Moravia.

The caller said that 70 submachine guns and 12 pistols stolen three weeks ago from the police academy in Holesov, southern Moravia, would be used to attack synagogues and other Jewish institutions in Prague, capital of the Czech republic, and Bratislava, capital of Slovakia.

He said the attacks would occur Friday, Jan. 17, unless a series of demands is met.

The caller, who spoke fluent Czech and claimed to speak on behalf of the "Marxist People's Front for the Liberation of Palestine," referred to the Dec. 23 car-bomb attack in Budapest on a busload of Israeli-bound Jewish immigrants from what was then the Soviet Union.

He demanded that Czechoslovakia break diplomatic ties with Israel, halt direct flights to Israel and end transit privileges for former Soviet Jews bound for Israel.

The police disclosed that they had received a similar message on Jan. 11. They also confirmed that arms stolen from the police academy have not been recovered.

They believe the theft was committed by persons familiar with the academy.

The anonymous caller claimed the weapons were obtained with the help of Marxist former police officers who once worked at the academy.

The Palestine Liberation Organization's representative in Prague, Samih Abdul Fattah, denied the PLO was involved in the arms threat and accused the Israeli secret service of fabricating the anonymous telephone threats.

NEW EVIDENCE AGAINST DEMJANJUK**By Gil Sedan**

JERUSALEM, Jan. 16 (JTA) -- The state prosecutor weighed in Wednesday with new evidence purportedly proving that Ukrainian-born John Demjanjuk was indeed the mass murderer and Treblinka death camp guard known to inmates as "Ivan the Terrible."

The evidence, much of it culled from the archives of the former Soviet Union, was offered to refute the defense contention that the 71-year-old former automobile worker from Cleveland was a victim of mistaken identity.

Prosecutor Michael Shaked produced a list of Flossenburg concentration camp guards with Demjanjuk's name on it and a serial number -- 1393 -- corresponding to one on an identity card from Soviet archives that the defense contends is a KGB forgery.

Sheftel charged last month that the Israeli authorities and the U.S. Department of Justice conspired to suppress evidence that Demjanjuk and "Ivan" were not the same person.

POLL FINDS THAT A THIRD OF GERMANS BLAME JEWS FOR THEIR OWN PERSECUTION**By David Kantor**

BONN, Jan. 16 (JTA) -- A half-century after the Nazis embarked on the "Final Solution," 32 percent of Germans believe that Jews themselves are at least partly to blame for being persecuted and hated by others.

That is one of the findings of a public opinion poll published Monday by the Hamburg-based weekly *Der Spiegel*.

Of the 3,000 respondents, 36 percent thought Jews have too much influence in the world.

Asked about their sympathies for Jews, 38 percent indicated neither positive nor negative feelings. Poll analyst Klaus-Peter Schoeppner suggested that "among those (polled) are some who shied away from revealing their negative views."

The poll was conducted as a run-up to the 50th anniversary of the Wannsee Conference, the gathering of top Nazis at a villa in a Berlin suburb on Jan. 20, 1942, which set the Holocaust into motion.

A parallel poll was conducted among 1,000 Israelis. Its results indicate that Germans are not well liked in the Jewish state.

A majority felt a full reconciliation with Germany is impossible and that Germans are as obnoxious as Palestinians.

Among the German respondents, 76 percent said Israel is like any other state to them; 62 percent believed it is time to put the Nazi past behind them; and more than 40 percent said Germans no longer have special obligations to Jews.

HOLOCAUST REVISIONIST DENIES CHANGING MIND ON GAS CHAMBERS**By Julian Kossoff****London Jewish Chronicle**

LONDON, Jan. 16 (JTA) -- Holocaust revisionist David Irving, hotly denying that he has "recanted" his claim that the gas chambers never existed, warned Jews they face a new wave of anti-Semitism within 18 months because they have duped people with their "gas chamber legend."

Irving also predicted the destruction of Israel within 10 years, in an interview with the *Jewish Chronicle* this week.

"The Jews are very foolish not to abandon the gas chamber theory right now, while they have time," Irving told the *Chronicle* while taking telephone orders for his book denying the Holocaust ever occurred.

But Irving objected vigorously to recent news reports that he might reconsider his claim that Adolf Hitler knew nothing of gas chambers and never ordered the mass destruction of Jews.

Such reports appeared after Irving, with considerable fanfare, last month produced what he claimed were the unpublished memoirs of war criminal Adolf Eichmann, organizer of the Holocaust, who was hanged in Israel in 1962.

In them, Eichmann says he was told by his superior, Reinhard Heydrich, that the fuhrer had indeed ordered the liquidation of the Jews.

Irving said he submitted the manuscript to the German Federal Archives in Koblenz for authentication.

Tilmann Koobs, a spokesman for the archives, acknowledged receiving 300 to 600 pages and said it would check Irving's text for authenticity against known details of Eichmann's life.