

**75th ANNIVERSARY YEAR****THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 1992****VOL. 70, NO. 39****DEAL MAY SEE LOAN GUARANTEES APPROVED NOW, BUT ISSUED LATER****By Howard Rosenberg**

WASHINGTON, Feb. 26 (JTA) -- The Bush administration and key lawmakers are reportedly close to an agreement that would indefinitely extend the time frame under which Israel could consider conditions for receiving U.S. loan guarantees for \$10 billion.

"The president has signed off on the basic outline of this deal," said one pro-Israel lobbyist, who requested anonymity.

The agreement would not change the administration's stated conditions on Israeli government spending for West Bank settlements. But it would relieve Congress of being perceived in an election year as an obstacle to getting the loan guarantees issue resolved.

Under the accord, which is being crafted by Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.), chairman of the Senate Appropriations subcommittee on foreign operations, Congress would approve the loan guarantees now and leave it up to the administration to work out the terms for providing them.

In turn, the administration would agree not to block Congress from approving the necessary legislation by March 31.

That date is Congress' self-imposed deadline for adopting a foreign aid bill covering the last six months of the 1992 fiscal year.

Unless either the Leahy compromise or some other U.S.-Israeli deal is hammered out by March 31, Israel would likely have to wait until after the U.S. elections in November before Congress would approve the loan guarantees.

Two pro-Israel activists here said that Baker, at a lunch meeting Tuesday with Senate Republicans, said he was hopeful that a legislative agreement could be struck.

But at least one Jewish organizational leader expressed concern about the Leahy proposal.

Jess Hordes, Washington representative of the Anti-Defamation League, said that if the legislation "would cede full discretion to the administration to determine the terms and conditions" for the loans, it could be "adverse to Israel."

**'Demands That Israel Cannot Meet'**

Secretary of State James Baker made clear this week that Israel will not receive the guarantees unless it agrees to stop building in the territories.

Israel's choices, which Baker laid out Monday in an appearance before a House Appropriations subcommittee, are to stop settlement activity completely and receive guarantees for the full \$10 billion, or to stop only new construction and have that total reduced by the amount of money spent each year on completing construction already begun.

Pro-Israel lobbyists said the legislative maneuver would make it possible for the Israeli government to accede to the U.S. conditions some time after June 23, when the Jewish state elects a new government.

Given Israeli election dynamics, "a change in settlement policy is fairly likely," said one lobbyist, who said such a change could be made wheth-

er Yitzhak Shamir of Likud was re-elected prime minister or succeeded by Yitzhak Rabin of Labor.

Meanwhile, American Jewish organizational leaders are complaining openly about the Baker ultimatum.

Baker is "presenting demands that Israel cannot meet," the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations charged Wednesday in a statement.

Shoshana Cardin, who chairs the umbrella group of 48 organizations, said that the administration's attempt to link the Israeli request for loan guarantees with the political issue of settlements is a reversal of its previously stated "prudent position" against such linkage.

President Bush and Secretary Baker "repeatedly asserted their opposition to linkage. They did so publicly and in meetings with the Presidents Conference," Cardin said.

"The U.S. and Israel are in the midst of their respective democratic electoral processes, and all should be done to ensure that this humanitarian issue not be used for partisan purposes on any side," she said.

Cardin, who was in Israel on the conference's annual study mission, vowed that on her return to the United States, "we will make our position known once again to the public as well as to the president and secretary of state."

"We are more resolved than ever that the issue of loan guarantees be pursued," she said.

(JTA correspondent Michele Chabin in Jerusalem contributed to this report.)

**ISRAELIS SAY PALESTINIANS NOW USING INSULTS TO DERAIL THE MIDEAST TALKS****By David Friedman**

WASHINGTON, Feb. 26 (JTA) -- Now that the Israeli and Palestinian delegations to the Middle East peace talks here have stopped arguing over procedural matters, the Palestinians have turned to insults as a means of postponing negotiations, the Israeli delegation claims.

The Israelis were especially incensed Wednesday when the Palestinians took to resorting to what the Israelis called "verbal abuse," just as both sides had placed their autonomy proposals on the table.

Yossi Gal, the Israeli delegation's chief spokesman, expressed anger that an anonymous Palestinian had been quoted as saying the Israelis "deserve to have their necks broken" for having submitted their proposal for autonomy negotiations.

Gal said the Palestinians' "verbal abuse and incitement to violence" conform to a well-established pattern.

"The Palestinians are advised to stop using this type of language," Gal said, adding that Israel is very serious about advancing the peace process.

"Those who want to break our necks will find we are truly the stiff-necked people in our pursuit of peace," he said.

Gal also took umbrage at a statement made by another Palestinian that the Israeli proposal was an "insult to the intelligence."

Gal said Israel had presented the Palestinians with a 10-page proposal, listing various areas in

which the Palestinians could have self-government, ways that would allow Palestinian sovereignty over their daily lives.

The Palestinian delegation presented an autonomy proposal calling for complete Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and administrative, judicial and legislative authority.

Gal called this a plan for a Palestinian state, not for an interim period of autonomy.

For this reason, he emphasized, Israel will not discuss the Jewish settlements in the territories, as the Palestinians demand.

Gal pointed out that settlements are part of the territorial issue, which is to be discussed three to five years after an interim period of autonomy is in place.

#### No Headway With Syrian Or Lebanon

Things did not seem to be going too well in the other bilateral negotiations, either.

The Syrians continued to demand complete Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights as a precondition for negotiating anything else, said Yosef Ben-Aharon, head of the Israeli delegation.

Ben-Aharon said without this condition, the Syrians would not grant Israel legitimacy.

Israel's legitimacy "is not something for bargaining," Ben-Aharon said.

Rather, he said the negotiations must be about how to secure peace and security.

Similar territorial demands were made of Israel by the Lebanese delegation, which demanded Israel's withdrawal from its so-called security zone in southern Lebanon.

Yosef Hadass, co-chairman of the Israeli delegation talking with the Lebanese, said Lebanon refused an Israeli proposal to form two subcommittees to deal with specific issues leading to peace.

Meanwhile, in an effort to move the talks forward, Edward Djerejian, U.S. assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs, has been meeting separately with the members of the various delegations.

On Wednesday, Djerejian met with Faisal Hussein, the East Jerusalem activist who is an adviser to the Palestinian delegation, and Hanan Ashrawi, the Palestinians' spokeswoman. Djerejian met earlier this week with Syrian, Jordanian and Israeli negotiators.

#### **JEWISH GROUPS DISMAYED BY BOMBS LINKED TO CAUSE OF SYRIAN JEWRY**

By Larry Yudelson

NEW YORK, Feb. 26 (JTA) -- The planting of two pipe bombs here Wednesday, apparently to publicize the plight of Syrian Jews, has upset mainstream Jewish organizations that have been trying lately to raise the issue's public profile.

But at least one militant Jewish group is refusing to condemn the bombings, though it is also not taking credit.

One of the bombs exploded early Wednesday morning in front of a building housing the Syrian Mission to the United Nations, shattering windows and damaging the lobby doors.

A note reading "Free Syrian Jews" was found a few hours later alongside a similar device left in front of a Woolworth's store on Manhattan's Upper West Side, not far from the Lincoln Square Synagogue. That bomb did not explode.

"We hope this incident will serve as a warning and deterrent for Syria and Syrian terrorists that the long arm of Jewish vengeance can

reach them too," said a statement issued by the militant group Kahane Chai.

"There is a time for diplomacy and a time for violence and hard action against those who understand no other language," said Mike Guzofsky, a spokesman for the group, which was founded by the son of the late Rabbi Meir Kahane.

"But as a legal organization, we cannot and will not take responsibility for that action," he said.

Two other militant Jewish groups linked to violence in the past, Kach International and the Jewish Defense Organization, denied responsibility without qualification or hesitation.

Seymour Reich, chairman of the National Task Force on Syrian Jewry, said in a written statement that "the resort to violence is abhorrent and deserves the cause of Syrian Jewry."

The statement was released as well on behalf of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, the Council for the Rescue of Syrian Jews, the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council and the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York.

The National Task Force, a project of the Conference of Presidents, was recently organized to fight for the release of the 4,000 Jews living in Syria, who are barred from emigrating and face numerous other restrictions.

Gilbert Kahn, executive director of the Council for the Rescue of Syrian Jews, said the issue already has a heightened public profile.

He pointed out that on Monday, Rep. Bill Green (R-N.Y.) pressed Secretary of State James Baker on the right of Syrian Jews to emigrate, and specifically on the fate of Eli and Salim Swed, two brothers imprisoned in a Syrian jail for over five years.

Kahn reported that on Tuesday, Baker confirmed that the Bush administration is pursuing the matter with Damascus.

#### **ZE'EVY CAUSES UPROAR BY CLAIMING KILLERS OF SOLDIERS WERE ARRESTED** By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Feb. 26 (JTA) -- The Knesset was thrown into confusion Wednesday when a member asserted that the killers of three Israel Defense Force recruits at a training camp Feb. 15 have been apprehended.

No announcement has been made by any official source and the manhunt is presumably still under way.

The claim was made by Rehavam Ze'evi of the far-right Moledet party, who insisted it was true despite a subsequent denial by Deputy Defense Minister Ovadia Eli.

Eli, in fact, seemed startled by Ze'evi's allegation, which came at the end of a long speech he delivered about Sheik Abbas Musawi, the Hezbollah leader gunned down by Israeli attack helicopters in Lebanon on Feb. 16.

The deputy minister hurriedly consulted with colleagues and was seen exchanging whispers with Ze'evi before he took the podium to say that "unfortunately, the murderers of the soldiers have not yet been seized."

He promised they would be, "sooner or later."

The Defense Ministry and the police subsequently issued denials of Ze'evi's claim. Israel Radio quoted a senior police official saying Ze'evi spoke "out of an unrestrained desire for publicity."

## IT'S CONFIRMED: STORMS IN ISRAEL THIS WINTER WERE WORST OF CENTURY

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Feb. 26 (JTA) -- For the thousands of Israelis who endured the gamut of woes from annoying inconvenience to loss of property, injury and death, it may have been small consolation to learn that the succession of fierce storms which has hit their country -- and much of the Middle East -- this winter is a meteorological phenomenon unprecedented in the 20th century.

In another era, the populace may have cringed before the "wrath of God." Now they are blaming bureaucrats, planners and contractors for building an infrastructure that proved unable to cope with extreme conditions.

The ferocious storms first struck Israel in December and have continued, with brief periods of respite, ever since.

The latest, which brought record snowfalls and flooding, roared over the country Monday afternoon and continued Tuesday.

In volume of rain, snow and hail, low temperatures and high winds, its like has not been experienced since the Ottoman Turks began keeping meteorological records for the province of Palestine in the 1880s.

Although the storm was expected to diminish gradually by the end of the week, weather forecasters were predicting that another of similar intensity could be expected around Sunday.

As they braced for it, Israelis scrutinized their system of roads, bridges, flood barriers and power grids built at great expense over the years, only to collapse in large part under abnormal conditions that the experts failed to allow for.

An example is the Ayalon Freeway, a recently opened limited access superhighway that bisects Tel Aviv along both banks of the Ayalon River.

Its designers came under fierce attack from hundreds of motorists stranded there in a driving rain this week when the highway flooded, stalling their cars.

### Recreiminations Over Blackouts

Normally, the Ayalon is more wadi -- dry gulch -- than river. The engineers admitted that when they built the brand new highway, they estimated that the Ayalon might overflow once in 40 years.

"In anticipation of so rare an occurrence, it was not considered worthwhile to spend extra millions of dollars to build higher flood barriers along the river banks," an engineer said.

Also under attack are the builders of the alternate road that snakes up the slopes of Mount Carmel to syphon traffic bound for the Upper Carmel suburbs away from the congested Tel Aviv-Haifa coastal highway.

The just-completed road partially collapsed during this week's storm.

The roofs of large buildings collapsed under the weight of snow in many towns and villages in northern Israel and the Golan Heights.

In Jerusalem, where trees uprooted by hurricane-force winds knocked down power lines causing prolonged blackouts, the municipality and the Israel Electric Corp. were locked in debate over who was responsible for not pruning or felling old trees.

It turns out the residents of arboreal neighborhoods were responsible. Contractors who came to cut down potentially dangerous trees were sent

away by householders who wanted to preserve the greenery.

This week, they found themselves without light or power for heating and cooking. The Electric Corp. made amends by firing its spokesman for alleged failure to give correct information to the public.

### Millions Of Dollars Of Damage

So far, nobody has put a price tag on what is being called here "the mother of all storms," as if only Saddam Hussein-style hyperbole could do it justice.

Unofficially, property losses are estimated in the hundreds of millions of dollars.

Hundreds of head of cattle and millions of chickens were destroyed, as were hundreds of tons of bred fish.

Flower-growers estimate their entire season's export crop was destroyed in one night when greenhouses were blown away or shattered by hail.

Citrus farmers say hailstorms wiped out entire groves of orange and grapefruit.

No price tag can be put on the work days lost because snow immobilized the Golan Heights, large parts of Galilee, the West Bank and Jerusalem.

Schoolchildren missed a week of lessons because they were either snowbound or could not study in freezing classrooms.

Considering the ferocity and duration of the storm, deaths and injuries were low.

## GORBACHEV WILL VISIT ISRAEL TO RECEIVE AWARD FOR PEACE

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Feb. 26 (JTA) -- Mikhail Gorbachev, the last president of the now-defunct Soviet Union, will make his first visit to Israel in June, to accept a peace award presented by the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology in Haifa.

Gorbachev, who will receive the prestigious Harvey Award, has been cited for his role in "reducing regional tensions in the framework of his overall world view."

He was informed of his selection last month by Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy, who was in Moscow for the multilateral conference on Middle East regional issues.

In a letter to Technion President Ze'ev Tadmor, Gorbachev said he is "deeply grateful" for the honor, which he regards as "a manifestation of good will and as support of my activities."

"I also see in it a reflection of the new relations between the USSR, Russia and Israel, which I am convinced are of high significance for peace, security and cooperation in the Middle East," Gorbachev wrote.

The \$35,000 award was established in 1972 by the late Leo Harvey of Los Angeles to recognize major contributions to human progress in science and technology. It has been expanded to recognize contributions to the advancement of peace.

The prize committee, consisting of senior Technion faculty and members of Israel's Academy of Science, decided this year to establish the new category to recognize Gorbachev's "substantial contributions to peace in our region."

The award also cites Gorbachev for opening the gates to free emigration of Soviet Jews and for "ending the era of persecution of Jewish culture."

**BEHIND THE HEADLINES:  
HOW FAR TO PURSUE 'JUSTICE AGENDA'  
AT CENTER OF NJCRAC POLICY DEBATE**  
By Larry Yudelson

PORTLAND, Ore. (JTA) -- What is the U.S. Jewish community's view on a middle-class tax cut? Should the Jewish community separate its concern for the Jewish poor from the general fight against poverty? Should it worry about what goes into elementary school textbooks?

These were among the questions debated here last week as the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council took up proposed amendments to its Joint Program Plan for Jewish Community Relations.

That plan sets forth the organized Jewish community's positions on a range of social and political issues. Many of the domestic positions reflect what NJCRAC Executive Vice Chair Lawrence Rubin called a "justice agenda."

Rubin effectively summed up the domestic concerns of the Program Plan when he called on the nation's political leaders to focus on "the fundamental right of all Americans to affordable housing, protection against homelessness and hunger, quality health care, opportunities for jobs at fair wages, quality integrated education, protection from crime, drugs and domestic violence."

The actual Program Plan is drawn up in a yearlong process where consensus is the watchword. Only objections to proposed positions or suggestions to change the wording come up for a vote at the annual plenum, which convened here last week.

Attending the plenum were delegates from NJCRAC's constituent agencies, which include over 100 community relations councils and 13 national Jewish organizations.

U.S. tax policy came up during discussion of a proposed statement on poverty.

The statement included a line urging that savings in U.S. defense spending resulting from the end of the Cold War "not be used to finance tax cuts."

**Singling Out The Jewish Poor**

This ran into opposition from the Community Relations Committee of the Jewish Federation of Greater Houston, which argued that NJCRAC should not take a position on tax policy.

As a compromise, the plenum amended the statement's goals section to urge that "a portion of the savings" in U.S. defense spending be used to finance initiatives to reduce poverty "and other critical needs."

Another amendment on poverty was offered by the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America.

It called on NJCRAC constituent agencies to "educate the Jewish community to our traditional religious mandate to utilize communal funds to assist the poor of all races and religions, while giving appropriate attention to the problems of Jewish poverty and homelessness."

Lynn Lyss, a vice chair of NJCRAC, objected to mentioning the Jewish poor specifically. "We have never singled out one group when it came to the poor," she said.

The amendment passed anyway.

Other proposals debated and approved at the plenum included a call for monitoring efforts to rewrite textbooks to reflect the experiences of "various ethnic, racial and gender groups"; a statement opposing the exclusion of immigrants to

the United States who are infected with the virus that causes AIDS; and a call on the United States to stop its policy of repatriating Haitian refugees.

Even where there is no debate, the NJCRAC process makes room for dissent. In the final Program Plan, which will not be published until August, the Orthodox Union will express dissent from the thrust of the policy on public school education, which emphasizes opposition to state funding of private and parochial education.

**Greater Social Justice Challenges**

While a two-hour debate on Israeli settlement policies attracted the most attention of any event at the plenum, discussion of domestic concerns also constituted a large proportion of the plenum's schedule.

In a valedictory address titled "Coming Home," NJCRAC's outgoing chair, Arden Shenker, contrasted the good news the Jewish community has received on the international front -- such as the free emigration of Soviet Jews, the ingathering of Ethiopian Jews and the repeal of the U.N. resolution condemning Zionism as racism -- with what has happened on the domestic front.

"Today, it is clear that the challenges of the social justice agenda have expanded," he said.

The golden era of that agenda was recalled by the Rev. Amos Brown, who heads San Francisco's Third Baptist Church.

Brown launched his address with a history of black-Jewish cooperation, from the founding of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People through the civil rights movement in the 1960s and finally to the continuing clashes in the past decades.

One reason the dissonance returns, he suggested, is "the appearance that the sons and daughters of Israel have outdistanced the sons and daughters of Africa."

He observed that black demagogues, such as Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan, have been able to take advantage "of the hurt and oppression of the 90 percent of the black people living in inner city ghettos with his vitriolic, negative rhetoric."

The true root of the problem, he said, is the failure of the two groups to properly communicate. They need to work together, he said, quoting the saying that "you never see a mule pulling and kicking at the same time."

**Black-Jewish Tensions 'Will Remain'**

He cited as an example of joint efforts a program in San Francisco, conducted by his church and Temple Emanu-El, that provides after-school educational programs for inner city youth.

But the underlying tension between blacks and Jews will remain, he said, "until we make sure every able-bodied person who wants a job in this country can get one."

The challenge was greeted with applause.

In another session, delegates were warned that the same legal arguments being used against affirmative action programs also threaten Jewish rights.

"The mind-set associated with the hardest resistance to affirmative action is associated with opposition to accommodating religious diversity," said Dr. Paul Burstein, professor of sociology at the University of Washington.

He said that requiring businesses to accommodate the observance of Jewish holidays is viewed in those circles as granting favors to members of the minority religion.