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**MIDEAST TALKS TO RESUME APRIL 27,
WITH NEXT ROUND CLOSER TO HOME**

By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, March 30 (JTA) -- Arab-Israeli peace talks will likely resume here April 27, but the subsequent round must take place somewhere else, the United States and Russia announced Monday.

This is the first time the co-sponsors of the 6-month-old Arab-Israeli peace talks have specified when they wanted the negotiations to move closer to the Middle East, although they have supported the notion of doing so.

The United States and Russia sent out invitations over the weekend to Israel, the Palestinians, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. The co-sponsors also repeated their month-old request for each of the parties to submit a list of 10 acceptable alternative sites, which, to this date, only Israel has done.

Ruth Yaron, the Israeli Embassy spokeswoman, declined Monday to reveal those sites. But Israeli newspapers have reported that the list includes such neutral sites as Italy, Switzerland and Turkey.

Timoor Daghistani, a Jordanian Embassy spokesman, said his government and the other Arab parties will decide what locations to propose at a meeting Wednesday in Beirut.

Israel would prefer to have the talks take place in the region, but the Arab parties do not want to confer that measure of legitimacy on Israel.

The Arabs would prefer to continue to meet in Washington, but Israel has complained about the stress imposed on its negotiators when they are away from their normal jobs for weeks at a time.

Waiting 'To See What Arabs Will Do'

The United States will announce the site of the subsequent round of talks before April 27, "whether we have received the list or not," said State Department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler.

None of the parties has yet to say whether it will attend the next round of talks, which the State Department has conditioned on their reaching an agreement beforehand on where to hold the subsequent round.

Yaron said that since the United States has proposed settling in advance the locale of the next two rounds of talks, "we basically have given our consent" by having "complied with the American request."

Israel will now "wait to see what the Arabs will do," she said.

Daghistani said that "everybody's determined to continue. I don't think there's any reason to doubt that. It's just a question of where it's going to be held."

The Arab parties and Israel have met four times in the last six months, three times in Washington and once in Madrid, where the parties also participated in an opening peace conference.

The most recent round of talks concluded in early March, with the expectation that there would be a six-week break to accommodate the Moslem holy month of Ramadan and the Jewish holiday of Passover.

**JEWISH LEADERS RESPOND CAUTIOUSLY
TO BUSH LETTER ON TIES WITH ISRAEL**

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, March 30 (JTA) -- President Bush may not have been entirely successful in his latest attempt to reassure American Jews that his administration has not turned the United States away from its traditional support of Israel.

While welcoming much of what Bush said in a letter to leading Jewish Republican George Klein, Jewish organizational leaders said they would be looking for deeds to match the president's words.

They observed that Bush continues to maintain that his administration will not guarantee \$10 billion in loans sought by Israel until settlement activity ceases in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"Obviously as important as words are -- and they are very important coming from the president of the United States -- deeds are still more significant," said David Harris, executive vice president of the American Jewish Committee. "We will have to wait and see."

Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League, said that in his letter to Klein, Bush restated the basic U.S.-Israel bilateral relationship.

"There are still open questions and open sores," Foxman said. "I believe if there is a will, this administration can find a way, without giving away principles," to help Israel absorb thousands of Soviet immigrants.

"I am sure he (Bush) would like to have good relations in the community, particularly at election time," said Henry Siegman, executive director of the American Jewish Congress.

'Understands The Concern And Anguish'

Siegman said that in the letter to Klein, Bush did not show any change in his position on the loan guarantees. But "our disappointment over the administration's handling of the loan guarantees should not be allowed to distract from the very positive things the administration has done with respect to the peace process," he added.

However, Siegman said Bush should improve his communications with the leaders of the organized Jewish community, instead of addressing himself to Klein, who is chairman of the National Jewish Coalition, a group that seeks Jewish support for Republican candidates.

Harris pointed out, though, that the Bush administration has always tried to reach the Jewish community through Republican Jewish leaders.

Harris and Foxman praised Klein for writing Bush on March 16 to express the concern of the Jewish community in the aftermath of Bush's refusal to reach a compromise with the Senate on the loan guarantees.

Foxman said the Klein letter was a strong and forthright articulation of the feelings in the Jewish community.

Calling Klein's letter courageous, Harris said only someone as trusted as Klein by the White House could say what he did and be listened to.

"The president's response reflected that he understands the concern and anguish coming from a known and trusted friend," Harris said.

The exchange of letters between Bush and

Klein was first reported Saturday by The New York Times. It was provided to the paper "by a former government official, who first obtained permission from the White House."

Klein, who stressed in his letter that he has always kept his talks with Bush confidential, released the two letters Monday. He refused any further comment except to say "I believe the content of the letters speaks for itself."

Settlements 'Leave Me Little Choice'

In his March 19 reply to Klein, Bush said he was also "anguished over the loan guarantee issue," but that "Israeli settlement activity leaves me little choice" but to reject it.

Reiterating that the United States considers the settlements an obstacle to peace, Bush said, "I do not exaggerate when I tell you that more than anything else Israel is saying or doing, settlements are undermining those forces in the Arab world that at long last are ready to reach out and live in peace."

In his letter, Klein, a Republican activist for some 20 years who considers himself a friend and supporter of Bush, wrote that he was "deeply disturbed" by such recent events as the U.S. policy opposing settlements in East Jerusalem, the "one-sided votes" condemning Israel in the United Nations and the loan guarantees refusal.

There is "a perceived major shift" in U.S. policy toward Israel, Klein wrote, adding that "I must question whether your commitment has changed in your strong support of Israel."

Bush replied that "our fundamental commitment to Israel is just that -- fundamental. Please know this, for it comes from the heart as well as the head."

Klein expressed concern that "the concept of linking our humanitarian aid to Israeli settlement policies could weaken our relationship and our commitment to Israel."

He added that he feels "personally misled in that key members of your administration have assured me on a number of occasions that there would not be linkage of our humanitarian aid to Israel."

Bush replied that the settlement issue has made the loan guarantees political. "Peace is also a humanitarian goal. The new immigrants and indeed all Israelis deserve and need peace -- real peace along the lines I described in Madrid -- if Israel and its people are to thrive," the president said.

'Will Do All That I Can'

Nothing should be allowed to jeopardize the prospects of the peace negotiations, which were "put together in very large part on Israel's terms," Bush said.

While maintaining that approval of the loan guarantees depends on Israeli actions, Bush stressed that "it is essential that this issue not be allowed to weaken, much less cast doubt upon, the core relationship between the United States and Israel."

"No one should permit disagreement over this or some other policy to affect the foundation of a relationship that has served both countries well for nearly half a century," the president said.

Bush promised that "I will do all that I can to see that the current strains do not grow worse but, to the contrary, are put behind us, so we can begin to restore with Israel the sort of relationship that you and I both seek."

SHAMIR URGES LEVY NOT TO QUIT, SAYING HE HAS 'NO CAUSE TO DO SO' **By David Landau**

JERUSALEM, March 30 (JTA) -- There is no valid reason for David Levy to resign as deputy premier and foreign minister, Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir said Monday.

The move is "entirely unnecessary, unnatural and should not be," he told reporters in Migdal Ha'emek. "He should not go ahead with the resignation. He has no cause to do so."

The comments were Shamir's first public reaction to Levy's announcement Sunday that he would quit the government, though not the Likud party.

Levy's declaration to several hundred supporters in Herzliya culminated weeks of negotiations with Shamir that apparently failed to resolve his grievances against the party leadership.

The prime minister nevertheless appears anxious to persuade Levy to change his mind.

But while he seems genuinely interested in retaining the Moroccan-born foreign minister in any new government he might form after the June 23 Knesset elections, Shamir clearly does not want a faction in Likud loyal to Levy.

That was evident from his remarks to reporters. The prime minister revealed that he had previously promised Levy that he would retain his present office under any future circumstances.

That implied a promise that Levy would be deputy premier and foreign minister whether Likud heads a new coalition after the elections or shares power with Labor in a unity government.

It also implied that Levy, not Defense Minister Moshe Arens, would retain the No. 2 spot in the Likud hierarchy, even though he was dropped to fourth place -- behind Arens and Housing Minister Ariel Sharon -- when the Likud Central Committee selected the party's election slate March 1 and 2.

A Week To Reconsider

Political observers are now speculating about whether Levy will go through with his resignation threat.

Under Israeli law, a resigning minister must submit a formal letter to the prime minister during a Cabinet session, after which 48 hours must elapse before the resignation takes effect.

The Cabinet meets again next Sunday, allowing a week for Levy to back down or for Shamir to come to terms with him.

Some political pundits predict that Shamir will have to soften his stance toward Levy as the week wears on to avoid a full-scale split.

The prime minister must reason that if Levy, borne by the momentum of his own rhetoric, goes ahead with his resignation Sunday, the next step could be his secession from the party and creation of a new list.

Even if a separate Levy list took only two or three Knesset seats from Likud, that could lose the election for Likud.

It is therefore possible that if Levy resigns Sunday and subsequently breaks with Likud, Shamir might try to entice him back during April and early May, before the final election lists are sealed and submitted to the Central Election Committee.

According to this scenario, if he feels Likud's prospects are seriously threatened by Levy's secession, Shamir might accede to some of his demands.

FOR FIRST TIME IN 16 YEARS, LAND DAY PASSES PEACEFULLY

By Gil Sedan

RAMIYA, Israel, March 30 (JTA) -- Historians may mark Land Day 1992 as a turning point in the delicate relations between Israel and its minority of 750,000 Arab citizens.

Monday was the 16th anniversary of mass protests against the Israeli army's confiscation of Arab lands in Galilee, which came to be known as Land Day.

The first occurred on March 30, 1976, when six Arabs were shot to death by Israeli security forces. Ever since, Land Day has been an occasion of general strikes and turmoil in Arab villages and towns in Israel, where bitter protests against the government often ended with rioting.

But this year, for the first time, Land Day was marked by peace and harmony.

Credit goes to the National Steering Committee of Arab Mayors, Arab Knesset members and other public figures who decided to turn the day of protest into a national holiday for Israel's Arab citizens.

"This will be a day of rest and not of strikes," Mohammed Zeidan, spokesman for the Mayors Committee, had proclaimed last week.

His prediction proved true beyond anyone's expectations.

One possible reason is that the Moslem festival of Id el-Fitr, marking the end of the month-long fast of Ramadan, was about to commence.

Nazareth, the largest Arab city in Israel, was humming with activity Monday. Tourists flowed in and out of the markets, and the shops were filled with holiday shoppers.

The scene was a far cry from the tension and strikes that kept stores shuttered and businesses locked on past Land Days, which accomplished little.

"We are sick and tired of the frequent strikes," said Bashir Bishara, owner of a cloth shop in the market. "The strikes led us nowhere. We want coexistence rather than friction."

According to Bishara, Land Day with a smiling face will get the Arabs much further than angry protests.

A Few Moderate Demonstrations

His next-door neighbor, Salim Zuabi, said the Land Day strikes of the past frightened off Jewish customers for months afterward.

Arab villagers did observe a general strike Monday, but it blended with the holiday atmosphere.

Modest demonstrations demanding equal rights for Arabs took place in the villages. Moslem activists organized a tree-planting ceremony in the Galilee village of Turan.

Here in Ramiya, a village near the Jewish development town of Carmiel, a crowd demanded that the government reverse its plans to transfer residents to another Arab village nearby.

The transfer is to make room for a new neighborhood in Carmiel that will house the large number of immigrants the town has absorbed.

"Let them bring in the new immigrants," said Aida Sawaid, a 20-year-old student. "We will live along with them," she said.

There was no single, clear reason for the dramatic change in the character of Land Day.

Perhaps it was the upcoming Moslem feast; perhaps internal friction in the Arab political community; perhaps simply a growing awareness

that putting on a happy face would pay off better than angry demonstrations.

The most surprising scene this Land Day was the presence of Dr. Alexander Blei, the prime minister's adviser for Arab affairs, in the heart of Sakhnin, just as a noisy, colorful parade marched through the Arab village.

It was as if the establishment wanted to take part in the day's events.

Somewhat embarrassed, Blei said he did not come to participate in Land Day. "I came to visit," he said, "and this day is as good as any other."

ABIE NATHAN, RELEASED FROM JAIL, RETURNS TO SOCIETY WITH EAGERNESS

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, March 30 (JTA) -- Israeli peace activist Abie Nathan said on his release from prison Monday that he would abstain from breaking the law forbidding contact with the Palestine Liberation Organization until the June 23 elections.

He said he was hopeful the new Knesset would repeal the law, making it possible for Israelis to meet "legally and officially" with PLO leaders.

Until then, he would pursue his peace objectives "by methods within the law," he said as he left Ma'asiyahu prison near Ramla.

President Chaim Herzog reduced Nathan's 18-month sentence to the six months already served after the activist promised he would abide by the law he has long disregarded in the name of peace.

Asked if he regretted his past violations, Nathan replied, "No comment."

He said he had appealed to Herzog because he wanted to be "outside and free" before the elections, "to be able to help my friends who are also opposed" to what he has called "a foolish political" law.

Nathan went to jail last November for meeting PLO chief Yasir Arafat a second time. He had spent three months in prison in 1990 and got an 18-month suspended sentence for their first meeting.

He insists that the law barring such contacts is counterproductive, because Israel can achieve peace only by talking to its enemies.

But this time, jail seems to have been an ordeal for Nathan, who has passed his 65th birthday. "It's very hard to take. It's not easy suddenly to be behind bars when you reach pensionable age," the activist admitted on a new interview program broadcast on educational television and army radio.

He observed in the same vein that "about 80 percent of those there (in prison) are from a completely different world," adding that "it will be a pleasure to sleep in a double bed again, instead of a prison cot."

Nathan said that after a few days' rest from the rigors of confinement, he would resume his normal active life.

He said he planned another visit to the Auschwitz death camp site in Poland, where he goes every few years "to strengthen my feelings as a Jew."

He also said he hoped to hold an exhibition of the sculpting he did in prison.

Nathan said he had made three friends in prison who are serving life terms for murder. He now plans to help them appeal to the president for clemency.

HERZOG, VISITING MADRID, SALUTES SPAIN AND ISRAEL'S COMMON CULTURE

By Judith Lew

MADRID, March 30 (JTA) -- Israeli President Chaim Herzog described his official visit here on the eve of the 500th anniversary of the expulsion of Spain's Jews as a dream.

"I wonder if all those great immortals--Maimonides, Ibn Gvirol, Nachmanides, Shmuel Hanagid, Yehuda Levy to name a few -- ever dreamt for one moment that the president of an independent State of Israel would stand here, in the royal palace of the Kingdom of Spain and recall their great and significant traditions and contributions to our common culture," he said at a dinner hosted by King Juan Carlos and Queen Sofia.

Herzog arrived Monday, in the midst of a barrage of publicity marking Sepharad '92, the commemoration of the expulsion of Spain's Jews.

"We are experiencing a new era of tolerance, and re-encounter between Spain and the Jews," Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez said after meeting with Herzog.

Though diplomatic relations with Israel were established in 1986, it was only last December that Gonzalez first visited Israel.

King Juan Carlos -- who by Spanish tradition is also king of Jerusalem -- has expressed his desire to visit Israel but has not set a date.

At a news conference, Herzog said he hoped the king would establish a visiting date before his own visit here ends Wednesday.

"Surely it is fitting," he told the king during dinner, "that the king of Jerusalem should visit our capital city which, in four years' time, will celebrate the 3,000th anniversary of its establishment by King David as the capital city of the Jewish people."

Dispute Over New Statue

Juan Carlos, in his reply, reminded Herzog of the warm feeling Spaniards have toward Sephardim. When his son, Felipe, presented an award from the foundation that bears his name to the Sephardic community in 1990, "there was a moment charged with deep emotion," the king said.

"The words spoken by the heir to the Crown of Spain, and those by the person who received it (the Haham Salomon Gaon) on behalf of the communities, placed the seal on a spiritual embrace whose extraordinary feeling and significance for both parties were clearly felt," he added.

Herzog's trip has not been trouble-free. Tensions among Spanish Jewish groups have placed the president of Israel in the uncomfortable position of having to choose between events organized by two rival Sepharad '92 committees, the national and the international.

The international organization, which once was headed by local businessman Mauricio Hatchwell and the former Israeli ambassador to Spain, Shlomo Ben-Ami -- both of whom have since resigned -- plans to unveil a controversial statue by the renowned Basque artist Eduardo Chillida. The statue, called the "Monument to Tolerance," portrays a man turning his back on the former Inquisition headquarters in Seville.

But members of the national committee object to the statue, saying Jews should not put up statues of tolerance when it was the Spaniards who expelled them, not the other way around.

Herzog, who will visit the statue in Seville, said that these wrinkles are normal and that they are in the process of being ironed out.

MAYORS FROM ABROAD COME TO JERUSALEM TO SEE HOW ONE CITY HANDLES PROBLEMS

By Michele Chabin

JERUSALEM, March 30 (JTA) -- With the words "Please continue to eat. I can shout above you all," Teddy Kollek welcomed 40 mayors Sunday night to the 12th Jerusalem Conference of Mayors, which kicked off with a buffet dinner.

With a laugh and a nod to the Jerusalem mayor, the participants, who hail from 23 nations, continued their meal. As one put it, "Tonight we'll eat; tomorrow we'll get down to business."

The business that has brought these officials to Israel for a week of seminars, discussions and sightseeing is the opportunity to exchange ideas and information with their counterparts from other cities.

The conference, sponsored by the American Jewish Congress, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the Hanns-Seidel Foundation and the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, ends Saturday.

"For us this is an important event," Kollek told the gathering, which included local political and religious dignitaries.

With typical understatement, he added, "We will try to show you the problems of a very mixed society and how we have solved a small problem or two, here and there."

In a working session with the mayors at City Hall on Monday, Kollek pointed out the differences that exist among the city's diverse ethnic groups and the ways he and other city officials have tried to bridge the gap.

"First of all, we don't want to take away from the cultural autonomy of various groups," he said. "The Armenians have lived in Jerusalem for 1,500 years, and we have no intention of turning them into Israelis."

"There are Jews from Yemen, Kurdistan, Morocco," he said. "People are encouraged to keep the traditions they brought with them."

'We're All In The Same Boat'

Mayor Barbara Krantz Crews of Galveston, Texas, said that "Kollek's experiences ring true with me. I live in a city with many different cultures: one-third black, one-third Hispanic, one-third white. We must learn to live together."

Crews, visiting Israel for the second time, is one of four Jewish mayors at the conference.

Jimmy Kemp, the mayor of Meridian, Miss., also took Kollek's words to heart. In the past, Meridian has had its share of violence between black and white residents. But today, he said, "we have found a way to get along."

"In fact, the Jewish community was instrumental in introducing integration to our schools and institutions," said Kemp. "I think we've realized that we're all in the same boat, and we have to paddle it together if we want to get the job done."

Kemp, who calls himself "a good Southern Baptist," said that visiting Israel has been a longtime dream. "We all understand the plight of Israel, and what the Israelis have done and are trying to do," he said. "This is a great opportunity to see it all and to be around the folks."

Ernest Mzandu, the mayor of Lilongwe, Malawi, said, "Since our independence in 1964, Malawi and Israel have been friends, even when other African countries broke ties with Israel. Being a developing country, I hope to learn from my interaction with other mayors about how they manage their cities and solve their problems."