

**BAKER MEETS WITH JEWISH LEADERS  
IN ATTEMPT TO THAW ICY RELATIONS****By Cynthia Mann  
States News Service**

WASHINGTON, June 2 (JTA) -- The Bush administration appears to be trying to make good on its recent pledge to "set things right" with the American Jewish community.

A dozen top Jewish organizational leaders met at the State Department this week with Secretary of State James Baker, the fourth such meeting in recent weeks.

The meeting Monday follows a near-explosion in U.S.-Israel relations over an apparent State Department misstep on the question of repatriating Palestinian refugees and the sovereignty of Jerusalem.

But the leaders, mainly members of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, refused to confirm this incident was the catalyst for the meeting, saying they discussed a broad range of issues affecting the ties between the two countries.

"We put certain issues of our concern on the table, and there were several of mutual concern," said Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League, who was one of the 12 at what he said was a "good meeting." Foreign aid was the only issue he would specify was discussed.

When pressed to describe the circumstances of the meeting, Foxman would only characterize it as "part of a more intensified effort at communication and reaching out."

Malcolm Hoenlein, executive director of the Conference of Presidents, also refused to comment on the substance of the meeting, saying only that it was intended to "clarify the issues."

He confirmed that the meeting helped strengthen the strained relationship between the administration and the Jewish community, but apologized that he could not elaborate, in deference to an agreement of confidentiality reached with the secretary.

**Silence From Jewish Leaders**

Participants were uncharacteristically silent about what transpired during the meeting, which in itself seems to point to the fragility of relations between the administration and the organized Jewish community.

Those relations have steadily frayed since September, when President Bush launched what the pro-Israel community felt was a frontal assault over its attempt to win \$10 billion in U.S.-guaranteed loans for Israel.

Ties between Jews and the White House unraveled further when Bush insisted on linking the loan guarantees to a freeze on the building of Jewish settlements in the administered territories.

Pro-Israel lawmakers on Capitol Hill responded by proclaiming publicly that the administration had sabotaged the longstanding bond between the two nations, and accusations surfaced that Baker had made an obscene comment about Jews, a charge he has denied.

Then three weeks ago, State Department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler dropped another bombshell when she was asked if the United

States supports U.N. Resolution 194. She said the United States still backs the 1948 resolution, which calls for the repatriation of Arabs to Israel and the internationalization of Jerusalem.

A crisis nearly erupted. But before it could, the State Department quickly retrenched, saying the issues in the resolution "can only be resolved through a process of direct negotiations among the parties themselves."

**Handwritten Notes From Bush**

Nevertheless, tensions have been running high enough to prompt President Bush to send handwritten notes to Foxman of ADL and American Jewish Congress President Robert Lifton. The notes told them he appreciated their efforts to defuse the hostile atmosphere choking the relationship.

In his note to Foxman, Bush pledged to "set things right" after Israel's elections in June. In the meantime, the State Department has orchestrated a series of recent meetings.

Lifton was at the first such meeting in early May, when he said he told Baker and the other officials present that the relationship had frayed. He said he told them "it was important that it not (continue) from the point of view of the Jewish community, the administration and particularly Israel."

"It was valuable to review what had happened and compare (Baker's) view and our view, and develop a common view of where to go from here to ameliorate the situation," Lifton said, adding that Baker thought that was "desirable."

Lifton said the secretary seemed genuinely bewildered over why things had deteriorated. "They'll cite, chapter and verse, their support for Israel," he said of the administration.

Lifton's explanation for the strain is White House insensitivity, highlighted by Bush remarks last September, coupled with some overreaction of the American Jewish community and the volatility caused by the election campaign in Israel.

Asked whether the administration was politically motivated to make amends, Foxman said, "In a political season, everything is political, even saying hello. But I think the administration is concerned about how the Jewish community feels. The meetings are part of that."

**U.S. ANNOUNCES BIG SAUDI ARMS SALE  
DAYS AFTER ARMS CONTROL CONFERENCE****By Cynthia Mann  
States News Service**

WASHINGTON, June 2 (JTA) -- Only days after it hosted an international arms control conference here, the Bush administration notified Congress on Tuesday that it plans to sell Saudi Arabia \$1.88 billion in arms and military support.

The Pentagon claims the proposed military package, which includes helicopters, missiles, rockets and small vehicles, is essentially defensive and would serve U.S. national security by shoring up an ally.

But the proposed sale appears to confirm the assessment by some analysts that the U.S. government is not serious about curbing arms to the region and is conducting business as usual. Some say that while this particular package may not be

objectionable, they are concerned about the cumulative impact.

The administration has delayed responding to the Saudis' request for 72 advanced F-15 jets, after being warned by members of Congress it would face stiff opposition.

Congress has 30 days to block the current sale; otherwise it will go through automatically.

A senior staffer for the House Foreign Affairs Committee, which has jurisdiction over foreign arms sales, said he expected the committee would see the details of the sale for the first time on Wednesday. Until then, he said it would be impossible to determine whether the sale was troubling.

"If it's fulfilling previous obligations, it's no problem," said the staffer, who asked not to be identified. "If it's an introduction of 10,000 new gizmos, or a significant upgrade, it might be a problem."

The administration's announcement came just a few days after the world's five largest arms exporters to the Middle East convened here last week to discuss limiting arms sales to the region.

By all accounts, they made little progress.

Many arms experts blame U.S. officials for not assigning the talks a higher foreign policy priority. Some argue the talks represent a squandered opportunity to foster stability in the volatile region and thereby strengthen the ongoing Arab-Israeli peace talks.

A 'Minimalist Agenda'

The talks involved officials from the United States, Britain, France, Russia and China, which account for as much as 90 percent of the arms exports to the Middle East. They met May 28-29 at the State Department to try to hone an agreement to control the export of conventional arms.

The proposal was initiated by President Bush a year ago in the wake of the allied victory in the Persian Gulf.

But beyond the refinement of details on an already-agreed-to proposal to ban the transfer of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and technology, little new was accomplished.

Most significantly, China balked at a proposal requiring advance notification on weapons sales, the underpinning of the initiative.

The State Department had little to say about the meetings, in effect assigning it a low profile. Spokeswoman Phyllis Young said there has been "significant progress" in the last year, while "much remains to be done. These are difficult issues that never have been dealt with meaningfully in the past," she observed.

Analysts say they are not optimistic there will be any breakthroughs soon. Some said the talks are a meaningless exercise because they are not aimed at a reduction in arms. And they placed the blame with U.S. administration officials, who they say are paying lip service to the problem.

In fact, arms reduction to the region has never been a stated objective of the talks. The guidelines agreed to by the "big five" during talks in London last fall simply said they would avoid transfers of arms that would increase tension and instability in the region and that would not be used for legitimate defense and security needs.

For Lise Hartman, staff director of the House Foreign Affairs subcommittee on international operations, that means the talks are assigned a "minimalist agenda."

"Meanwhile the massive inflow of dangerous

advanced conventional armaments in the region continues," she said. "That's the farce.

"The dirty little secret of the U.S. and other arms-exporting countries is the talks are intended to deflect attention from the real issue," which is "the huge volume of sales," Hartman said.

'Designed To Sidestep Certain Questions'

The United States is the leader in arms sales to the region. Since Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, the United States has sold more than \$15 billion in weapons to Middle Eastern nations, according to Lee Feinstein, assistant director of research at the Arms Control Association.

"The administration has said it wants to reduce the arms flow," said Feinstein, "but if it wanted to make it a foreign policy priority, no doubt the others would take it seriously" and "there would be real progress."

Alan Platt is a consultant on international and security affairs who testified last week in House hearings on a Middle East arms control report he authored for the Henry L. Stimson Center, a Washington arms control think tank.

Platt said then that the five-nation talks were at a "critical juncture" and could play "an important role in fostering greater stability in the region, thereby strengthening the peace talks that are now under way."

He urged the administration to give the talks the "highest priority." He warned that unless there was more urgency attached to them, there would be a return to "business as usual."

This week Platt said the fact that the negotiations are in the hands of middle-level officials will ensure that little progress is made.

Feinstein charged the administration is sponsoring the talks "in the hopes that just having them will quiet its critics."

But he said they remain useful as a framework for a more ambitious agenda. He said continued focus on the talks might force the players to "reckon" with the issues and make substantive progress.

"While the talks may have been designed to sidestep certain questions, sometimes negotiations have a momentum of their own," he said.

**IDF OFFICER ASKS TO BE RELIEVED FOLLOWING DEATHS OF TWO SOLDIERS**  
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, June 2 (JTA) -- The commanding officer of an elite Israel Defense Force unit has accepted personal responsibility for the deaths of two of his men in a training exercise and has asked to be relieved of his command.

But the officer, who was not identified, is being widely praised by his colleagues, who are surprised by his action.

The officer took the unusual step of asking to be relieved of his command after two soldiers succumbed to heat stroke during a map-reading exercise in the southern Negev last week.

His superior accepted the request. No decision has been made as to his future military service.

It was apparent from hindsight that the exercise should have been called off because of the intense heat -- 108 degrees Fahrenheit -- and low humidity. The chief of staff accepted the findings of an inquiry board that the local commander should be disciplined for allowing it to continue.

## SUPREME COURT REFUSES TO HEAR CASE BROUGHT BY HOLOCAUST REVISIONIST

By Cynthia Mann  
States News Service

WASHINGTON, June 2 (JTA) -- The Supreme Court this week refused to hear a case brought by the late David McCalden, a Holocaust revisionist who claimed that two Jewish groups had violated his civil rights.

The American Jewish Committee and the Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies expressed disappointment that the high court did not dismiss McCalden's charges. They will now have to argue the case in federal district court in California.

McCalden, who died in 1991, claimed that the Jewish groups threatened violence prior to his scheduled appearance at a California Library Association conference in Los Angeles in 1984, and that those threats resulted in his being barred from the conference. His widow is carrying his case forward.

The Jewish groups deny having ever threatened violence. They say they sounded warnings about McCalden's views and his planned appearance and that his suit violates their rights to free speech.

The groups had appealed a decision by the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals refusing to dismiss McCalden's suit.

Representatives of the two agencies said this week they were disappointed at the Supreme Court decision, but were confident they ultimately would prevail based on the merits of the case.

"The Simon Wiesenthal Center is disappointed," said Rabbi Abraham Cooper, the center's associate director, "but we have every confidence that our actions in this case will be fully vindicated by the judicial system."

Richard Foltin, the AJCommittee's director of governmental affairs, also expressed regret at the court's decision, saying there were "substantial and weighty issues of free speech" at stake, "apart from our specific institutional concerns."

## DEMJanjuk COUNSEL RESTS CASE, URGING COURT TO VOID CONVICTION

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, June 2 (JTA) -- The defense counsel for John Demjanjuk rested his case Tuesday before the High Court of Justice by urging it "to completely and absolutely acquit" the accused war criminal who is appealing his 1988 conviction and death sentence.

Israeli attorney Yoram Sheftel argued that evidence recently acquired from the files of the former Soviet Union prove that the 72-year-old Ukrainian-born Demjanjuk is not the sadistic guard known as "Ivan the Terrible," who tortured Jews and operated the gas chambers at Treblinka.

But the chief prosecutor, Michael Shaked, cited Soviet documents identifying Demjanjuk as having served as well at the Sobibor camp in Poland and the Flossenburg camp in Germany.

One such document depicts Ivan Demjanjuk as No. 30 on a list, dated March 26, 1943, of Soviet POWs recruited to serve at Sobibor.

A second document, dated Oct. 1, 1943, lists Demjanjuk as No. 53 on the roster of guards at Flossenburg. In both documents he has the same identity number -- 1323 -- and the same birth date, April 3, 1920.

But Sheftel urged the court to ignore that

evidence because Demjanjuk was extradited, indicted and tried for alleged war crimes only at Treblinka, a place he insists he never was. Sheftel charged that the prosecution introduced it only to "save face."

The defense lawyer drew a sharp reprimand from the five-judge bench when he claimed Tuesday that his client was convicted and sentenced to hang only because the special court that tried him here four years ago was flawed.

"Lawyer Sheftel should not appoint himself judge of the Israeli judicial system," said Justice Meir Shamgar, president of the High Court of Justice.

"Be more modest," he cautioned.

Demjanjuk's defense from the outset has been based on the notion of mistaken identity. Sheftel claimed that his new evidence, including statements taken nearly 40 years ago from former concentration camp guards subsequently executed in the Soviet Union, proved that the dreaded "Ivan" was a guard named Ivan Marchenko.

Marchenko, who may now be deceased, bore a superficial resemblance to Demjanjuk but was 10 years older and the married father of three at a time when Demjanjuk was single.

According to Sheftel, the Soviet government and the U.S. government, which extradited Demjanjuk to Israel in 1986, long had this information but concealed it.

The bald-and-burly Demjanjuk, who has been in an Israeli prison for the past eight years, appeared fit and cheerful when he was brought to court Tuesday. He had been despondent Monday when he arrived in a wheelchair because of a claimed back injury.

## CARLOS, THE WANTED TERRORIST, SENTENCED IN ABSENTIA TO LIFE

By Michel Di Paz

PARIS, June 2 (JTA) -- "Carlos," the shadowy international terrorist of the 1970s who became a prototype for characters in countless movie and television thrillers, was sentenced in absentia to life imprisonment Monday by the Paris criminal court.

The sentence was imposed for his murders of two French policemen and a police informer in 1975, when he was under investigation for two attacks on the El Al counter at Orly Airport outside Paris.

The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine claimed credit and Carlos, a free-lance killer, may have been in their employ.

Carlos was an alias, one of many it is believed, of Illich Ramirez Sanchez, son of a wealthy Venezuelan lawyer. He was reportedly trained by the KGB and sent for further training to Palestinian terrorist camps in Lebanon.

Many bloody escapades were attributed to him, and Carlos once topped the wanted list of international terrorists. But he "retired" and subsequently married a German woman, herself described as a notorious terrorist. They had one child.

He was reportedly sheltered in East Germany until the Communist regime of Erich Honecker collapsed in 1990. He is now said to be drifting between Syria and Libya, countries that are said to have refused repeated requests for his extradition from various European powers.

Should he be returned to France, Carlos would have to be given another trial under French law.

## LABOR AND LIKUD STRIKE A DEAL TO KEEP DINITZ AS HEAD OF WZO

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, June 2 (JTA) -- In the midst of a mudslinging election campaign, Labor and Likud have agreed to join forces -- not for a government but for the World Zionist Organization.

The agreement calls for Labor's Simcha Dinitz to be re-elected chairman of the WZO and Jewish Agency executives at the World Zionist Congress next month while a Likud figure would stay on as treasurer.

Informed sources told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that the deal was hammered out at a series of unpublicized meetings between Dinitz and Police Minister Ronni Milo, representing Likud.

The sources said the new WZO Executive would be a wall-to-wall coalition like the present one with the participation of the Confederation of General Zionists, led by Hadassah; the Conservative Zionist movement, Mercaz; and Mizrahi, the religious Zionist movement.

But the Association of Reform Zionists of America would be left out, a tactic aimed at crushing the insurgency of Rabbi Richard Hirsch, head of the World Union for Progressive Judaism, who is challenging Dinitz for WZO chairman.

Hirsch is running on a platform that demands democratic elections throughout the Zionist movement and a thorough shakeup of the WZO-Jewish Agency structure. He told JTA he was not aware of a Labor-Likud deal.

But "if they want to do it, let them do it. I am not giving up," he said.

Hirsch said he was convinced that many members of Labor and the confederation would vote for him when secret ballots are cast at the Zionist Congress in July, regardless of their parties' positions or back-room deals.

But WZO insiders said the behind-the-scenes politicking destroyed whatever faint prospects Hirsch's candidacy may have had.

## ISRAEL AND TURKEY SIGN AGREEMENT TO INCREASE TURKS GOING TO ISRAEL

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, June 2 (JTA) -- Israel and Turkey have signed a tourism agreement aimed primarily at increasing the number of Turkish tourists coming to Israel.

It is now far fewer than the 200,000 Israelis who vacation annually in Turkey.

The ceremonial signing ceremony here this week was attended by the Turkish minister of tourism, Abdel Kader Atesh, the first Cabinet member from Ankara to visit Israel in 28 years.

The other signatories were Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy and Tourism Minister Gideon Patt. The agreement provides for attractive tour packages for Turkish visitors.

Atesh observed that Israelis could drive from their homes to resorts in southern Turkey in four or five hours, once peace comes to the Middle East. The drive would be for the most part through Syrian territory.

Stressing his government's efforts to ensure the security of Israeli visitors, the minister claimed, "It's safer to visit Turkey than to visit the United States."

Israeli officials said Atesh's visit had significance beyond tourism. It followed by two

months the upgrading of diplomatic relations between the two countries to the full ambassadorial level.

Israelis expressed hope that it presaged exchanges of visits between their respective prime ministers and presidents.

Turkey, a non-Arab Moslem country, has always maintained low-key relations with Israel, never before on the ambassadorial level. They deteriorated in the 1980s when Ankara reduced the level of diplomatic representation to third secretaries.

But the Turkish government, anxious to participate in the Middle East peace process, was willing to normalize diplomatic ties with Israel as a condition for doing so.

Turkey offered to host the multilateral working group on water resources. But the idea was scotched by Syria's boycott of the entire multilateral series last month.

The water talks were held in Vienna, with Turkey participating. Israeli observers believe Turkey will expand its role in regional diplomacy.

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL DIG YIELDS PROOF OF AN EARLY JOINT DISTRIBUTION

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, June 2 (JTA) -- An archaeological dig at Beit Shemesh yielded evidence that hashish was used for medicinal purposes in antiquity and cast light on obstetrical practices in the 4th century C.E.

The therapeutic use of the narcotic derived from hemp is known from historical sources. But this is the first time it has been confirmed by archaeological evidence, according to anthropologist Joel Ziss of the Israel Antiquities Authority.

The evidence was examined by Professor Rafal Meshulam of the Hebrew University's Pharmacy School. He found a chemical constituent present only in hashish in a small mound of burned grasses and fruit that had been deposited on the abdomen of a 14-year-old girl in the ninth month of pregnancy.

The girl measured only 4-feet 7-inches tall. The remains of a 9-month-old fetus were found in her womb. The corpse was found with those of 40 other people in what was a family tomb.

"Presumably, the hashish was burned so she could inhale it to ease the pain," Meshulam said. "They then placed the burnt material on her abdomen. I presume they thought this would help."

The professor added that the fetus could have been delivered only by Caesarian section.

Hashish, also known as cannabis sativa, was first mentioned as an effective drug in Egypt about 1550 BCE and has had an ignoble history.

It has been smoked, chewed or drunk for its narcotic effects and in the Middle Ages was administered to give courage to hired killers. The word assassin in fact is derived from hashish and first applied to a secret society whose members were chosen to murder the enemies of Shi'ite Moslem leaders.

According to the Antiquities Department, the narcotic was also used in Europe as late as the 19th century to intensify uterine contractions and reduce labor pains.

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The JTA Daily News Bulletin will not be published Monday, June 8, which is Shavuot.

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