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**OPPORTUNITIES FOR REAL PROGRESS
SEEN IN NEW ROUND OF PEACE TALKS**By Cynthia Mann
States News Service

WASHINGTON, Aug. 25 (JTA) -- Middle East negotiators resumed their peace talks at the State Department this week in an atmosphere all agreed was more open, cordial and cooperative than at the previous five rounds.

But it is clear the sessions are a minefield of explosive conflicts that will require painstaking maneuvering to defuse to the satisfaction of all the parties.

"The change in atmosphere is like day and night," said Keith Weissman, a scholar with the Center for Middle East Research in Washington. "Whether it will continue when the talks get down to brass tacks is unclear, but there is a potential for breakthroughs."

"We see opportunities for real progress," said Joe Snyder, a State Department spokesman. "But these negotiations involve complicated issues which can't be resolved overnight."

For Robert Satloff, analyst with the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, the most hopeful sign so far has been the Syrian response to the Israeli delegation.

He said the Syrians offered "warmer words" than have ever before been heard as their response to Israel's "reaffirmation of traditional Labor Party policy toward the Golan Heights."

But he said the "big issue is to what extent are the Palestinians ready and able to get into the same ballpark with Israel and respond creatively" to Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's detailed proposal for Palestinian autonomy.

In Jerusalem, Rabin himself cautioned Tuesday against expecting "miracles and shortcuts."

"There are a lot of problems to solve in every one of the three parts of the negotiations, and it will take time to solve them," he said, referring to the talks with Syria, Lebanon and the joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation.

Palestinians Acknowledge 'New Tone'

The Palestinians, who arrived late in Washington in protest over Israel's travel permit procedures, sounded an upbeat but cautious note Tuesday in their first public briefing.

Spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi acknowledged a "new tone" and a series of "positive symbolic gestures" on the part of the Israelis, and pledged the Palestinians would "do our utmost to make the talks succeed."

The Israeli government recently announced a host of confidence-building measures intended to "improve the atmosphere" for Arabs living in the territories, including the release of prisoners and the relaxation of travel restrictions.

At the same time, Ashrawi said the conciliatory gestures were simply efforts to right the wrongs of the Israeli occupation and must be looked at in that context.

She also warned that the issue of Jewish settlements and human rights abuses could be obstacles to progress in the talks and said that a loan guarantee deal between the United States and Israel has "introduced a new complication."

Ashrawi said the Palestinians would seek

assurances that "U.S. funds would not be used to subsidize illegal activities," referring to the construction of Jewish settlements in the territories.

"While everyone is applauding" the decision by the Rabin government to halt the construction of 5,000 units of housing in the territories, there are 11,000 units being completed, Ashrawi said. "These are 11,000 obstacles to peace," she said.

"Now is the time to be serious, careful and look at the small print," she said. "What is at stake is the future of the people of the region," she said.

Weissman of the Center for Middle East Research said the new and positive tone surrounding the talks can be attributed largely to the statement by Itamar Rabinovich, the new head of the Israeli negotiating team with Syria, that Israel would negotiate on the basis of U.N. Security Council Resolution 242.

The resolution calls on Israel to withdraw from land captured during the 1967 war in return for peace. But Israel's previous government did not recognize the applicability of the resolution to the Golan Heights.

The spokeswoman for the Syrian delegation, which has called for the return of the entire Golan Heights, said this week that the embrace of 242 offers a new "opening" for the talks.

She praised the new tone in the discussions, calling it "reasonable and constructive" and affirmed Syria's "genuine and profound seriousness" in the peace process.

No Need To 'Stick To Every Centimeter'

In Israel, Rabin appeared eager Tuesday to mollify right-wing critics concerned that the Labor government will support a complete withdrawal from the Golan, considered a highly strategic area.

The prime minister told the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee he seeks a peace agreement with Syria in which Israel would give up part of the Golan but not necessarily return to the 1967 border.

At the same time, he said there is no reason to "stick to every centimeter in the Golan."

Weissman said the Rabin government has tried hard to pave the way for true progress in the peace talks with gestures designed to lay a foundation of confidence.

He called Israel's announcement of the release of 800 Palestinian prisoners a "calculated signal" to the Arabs, for whom the act represents a traditional gesture of good will.

"Once good will is established on some of the smaller issues," said Weissman, "it makes it easier to move forward" on more difficult ones.

Weissman said the matter of the Golan will be much easier to resolve than the mechanisms for Palestinian autonomy.

Indeed, Rabin, while traveling through the West Bank on Tuesday, told reporters that one of the stumbling blocks in the negotiations with the Palestinians will be the powers of the administrative council Israel has proposed.

The Palestinians have offered a plan instead for a legislative body, which the Israelis oppose, calling it an "organ of statehood."

Ashrawi said the Palestinians would like a

serious response to their proposal and a chance to respond to a formal proposal by the Israeli side.

It will be a challenge for the Palestinian delegation to "get the maximum from Israel with the minimum opposition" from its diverse and fractious constituency, said Robert Freedman, a professor of political science at Baltimore Hebrew University and a board member of Americans for Peace Now, a dovish group.

"If they can cohere, they have a real opportunity," he said.

(Contributing to this report was JTA correspondent Gil Sedan in Jerusalem.)

KNESSET INTERRUPTS RECESS TO DEBATE NEW POLICY ON SETTLEMENT IN JERUSALEM By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Aug. 25 (JTA) -- Knesset members interrupted their summer recess Tuesday for a special session on "the government's new restrictions on Jewish settlement in Jerusalem."

But all motions critical of the new government's policies were voted down.

The session was requested by opposition parties in the wake of a government halt in financial assistance to Jews seeking to purchase Arab property in East Jerusalem.

The Housing Ministry has also ordered a stop to government purchases of Arab houses and lots in East Jerusalem, and authorities are trying to determine the extent to which the previous Likud-led administration channeled government funds toward the purchase of real estate there.

Comparing the current government to past rulers, former Housing Minister Ariel Sharon asked rhetorically: "Who is it that opposes Jewish housing in Jerusalem? The degenerate Ottoman ruler? The suppressive British mandatory government? No, none of those, but the government of Israel, a Jewish government in Eretz Yisrael."

His successor at the Housing Ministry, Binyamin Ben-Eliezer, replied that the manner in which settlement had been carried out in the eastern part of the city under the Likud-led government had undermined Jerusalem's best interests.

JEWISH COMMUNITY MOBILIZING AID IN WAKE OF HURRICANE IN FLORIDA By Lainie Blum-Cogan

NEW YORK, Aug. 25 (JTA) -- The 700,000 Jewish residents of South Florida are mobilizing to pick up the pieces left in the wake of Hurricane Andrew, which passed through the area Monday morning.

Among the worst damage suffered by the Jewish communities of Dade, Broward and Palm Beach counties was the destruction of the Jewish old-age home in the southern Dade community of Homestead, according to Bertram Korn, executive editor of the Jewish Media Group, which publishes three area Jewish newspapers.

Though it is believed that residents of the retirement home were evacuated before the storm, information about possible casualties could not yet be confirmed.

Korn said it was only as of Tuesday afternoon that information was becoming available from the areas most heavily hit. Virtually all telephone communication has been cut.

Other Jewish institutions reporting damage included the Greater Miami Jewish Federation, whose annex building was hit by a felled tele-

vision tower; the South Dade Jewish Community Center, where trailers used as classrooms were demolished; and the home office of the Jewish Media Group and the Miami Jewish Tribune.

David Abramowitz, publisher of the Jewish Media Group, said he had unconfirmed reports of damage to Miami-area Jewish day schools, which had been scheduled to begin their fall terms later this week and may now have to open late.

Counted among the thousands of private homes wrecked by the hurricane is that of the Miami federation's executive director, Jacob Solomon, according to Dr. Stanley Spatz, president of the Jewish Federation of South Broward.

Spatz and others were at the South Broward Federation office much of the day on Tuesday orchestrating relief efforts in their own county and in neighboring Dade.

"We've been checking within our own community by phone to get in touch with residents who might be isolated or know someone who is," Spatz said in a telephone interview. "Most people seem to be OK."

"Second, we're trying to take care of the needs of Dade County," he added. In touch with the Red Cross and United Way, Spatz and his team are focusing on pyramid telephone calling to try to get supplies, including food, mattresses, toiletries and batteries from area residents.

"We're already getting a lot of cooperation," Spatz said. "People rise to the occasion."

Congregations Pitching In

Congregations from Broward and Palm Beach counties, which consider themselves lucky to have been spared the worst of Andrew's wrath, are working together to deliver assistance to the South Miami area.

"Right now, we're trying to figure out how to reach them," said Elizabeth Krispin of Temple B'nai Torah in Boca Raton.

She and members of other local synagogues attended an emergency meeting Tuesday in Sunrise to organize efforts to gather food, bottled water and other supplies, as well as to drive to the South Miami area in search of people in need.

Krispin said that Jews in Broward and Palm Beach counties are offering shelter to some of the 50,000 people who were left homeless in the aftermath of the hurricane.

B'nai B'rith is organizing additional relief efforts, coordinated by Eric Smitt of Indianialente, a member of the group's Community Volunteer Services Commissioner.

They are preparing to drive supplies of bottled water, canned goods and blankets down the Florida coast to the stricken areas. With phone lines down, Smitt is in radio contact with B'nai B'rith leaders in the Miami area.

Dr. Warren Gray, chairman of the commission, is directing international fund-raising efforts to support the relief work.

State officials have put the hurricane death toll at 14 people, but the number is certain to rise as the debris is cleared away. Damage is estimated at \$15 billion to \$20 billion.

The worst hurricane to strike Florida in more than half a century was relatively kind to the coastal areas of South Florida, which were not as heavily hit as was expected.

This, however, was not surprising to Rabbi Menachem Schneerson, leader of the worldwide movement of Lubavitcher Hasidim, who assured his followers the day before the hurricane that there was no reason to evacuate the coastal areas.

GERMANY SEEKS NEW U.N. STANDING, REVERSING ROLE SINCE END OF WAR

By David Kantor

BONN, Aug. 24 (JTA) -- Germany, looking toward a larger role on the world stage, is seeking a permanent seat on the U.N. Security Council and the inclusion of German troops in U.N. peacekeeping missions.

This marks a reversal from the low international profile the country has held since it was partitioned at the end of World War II.

German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel announced Sunday that the government would seek parliamentary support for a constitutional amendment that would enable German participation in U.N. missions.

The opposition Social Democratic Party said it would agree to the measure as long as it was under U.N. auspices.

Kinkel also signaled Germany's wish for a permanent seat on the U.N. Security Council.

The moves reflect modification of a German posture that recognized the legacy of its Nazi past as well as the deep feelings of Jews and others sensitive to any sign of renewed German militarism.

Germany is now seeking a role proportionate to the country's considerable economic strength.

The foreign minister told a newspaper interviewer this week that the current composition of the Security Council represents the power balance that existed at the end of World War II and not today's political realities.

But in order to join the Security Council as a permanent member, Germany would have to win the unanimous backing of the five current permanent members, any one of which could veto the move.

The five are the United States, Britain, Russia, France and China.

Kinkel said he had raised the issue in talks with his European counterparts.

GERMAN NEO-NAZI VIOLENCE ESCALATES WITH FIREBOMBING OF REFUGEE HOSTEL

By David Kantor

BONN, Aug. 25 (JTA) -- Neo-Nazi violence that began last weekend in the northern German city of Rostock has escalated, culminating in the firebombing Monday night of a hostel for refugees seeking asylum.

About 1,000 right-wing extremists, including many youths, fought police in pitched battle in what was the third consecutive night of neo-Nazi violence.

The firebombing was the culmination of days of strong-arm efforts by the neo-Nazis to penetrate the hostel, despite all police efforts to turn the attackers back.

Earlier on Monday, authorities had removed some 300 asylum-seekers from the hostel, which had been the scene of ongoing neo-Nazi attacks.

The refugees included about 200 Romanian gypsies and 115 Vietnamese. There were some reports that some Vietnamese were still inside when the building was firebombed.

Street battles between the right-wing extremists and more than 1,000 police had gone on since Saturday, continuing into the morning hours after days of seemingly non-stop assault.

The authorities said they were obliged to take action because of concern for the foreigners' lives.

The escalation of attacks has alarmed all of Germany's political parties and renewed debate over this country's attitude toward non-Germans.

Television stations here ran long clips showing local townspeople hailing the young extremists in their battles with the police as they attempted to penetrate the hostel.

Attackers and local residents alike chanted such slogans as "Germany for the Germans" and "Foreigners out."

The violence has elicited charges that the federal government is doing nothing to contain the unrest.

Chancellor Helmut Kohl, in his first public statement on the Rostock violence, said Tuesday that attacks on foreigners would be "confronted with the utmost legal firmness and strictness."

He told German television that it was most important that "we jointly, all democratic parties, make it clear to the world that xenophobia is totally unacceptable" and "a disgrace for our country."

Many of the inhabitants of Rostock defended their behavior, saying, for example, that the refugees should go back to their countries and that taxpayers' money should be spent on needy Germans.

About 150 policemen were injured in the three days and nights of unrest in the northern harbor town, which is situated in the area of former East Germany.

WHITE SUPREMACIST PREACHER IS ORDERED EXTRADITED TO U.S.

By Gary Pogrow

VANCOUVER, British Columbia, Aug. 25 (JTA) -- An American fugitive preacher who was captured in Canada after fleeing his conviction in Arizona on firearms charges has been ordered extradited to the United States.

The Rev. Al Waddell, 51, who is alleged to be a member of the violent white supremacist group Posse Comitatus, faces up to 65 years in prison for making and selling silencers, having an unregistered machine gun and giving false information at his trial.

He also faces a maximum of five years for escaping. He has been a fugitive since 1985.

Justice Thomas Braidwood of the British Columbia Supreme Court ordered Waddell extradited on only two of the seven charges.

Canada's extradition law provides that a fugitive may only be extradited for offenses that are crimes in Canada.

Five of the seven firearms offenses against Waddell are not. The justice ruled that only the submachine gun offense and the making of false statement are crimes in Canada.

While a silencer is considered a prohibited weapon in Canada, it must be assembled.

The Canadian extradition ruling means Arizona may only sentence Waddell for those two offenses.

The weapons listed in the charges against Waddell include a Colt AR-15 machine gun, a .22-caliber Ruger rifle and a number of silencers for .22-caliber, 9mm, .45-caliber and .380-caliber firearms.

Waddell, who intends to appeal the extradition order, denied being a member of the Posse Comitatus.

He told the justice, "I am diametrically opposed to violence. It is against my Christian beliefs."

DEMJANJUK SEEKS TO RETURN TO U.S. IF CONVICTION IN ISRAEL IS VOIDED

By Jamie Kahn

The American Israelite

CINCINNATI, Aug. 25 (JTA) -- Lawyers for convicted Nazi war criminal John Demjanjuk have asked the federal appeals court here to allow him to return to the United States if his conviction is overturned by Israel's High Court of Justice.

The request was made Aug. 20 after the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 6th Circuit ordered a special investigation into Justice Department conduct during his extradition procedures.

It was the latest move in an increasingly complex case taking place in U.S. and Israeli courtrooms. Demjanjuk repeatedly has claimed he is a victim of mistaken identity, and recent documents seem to advance that contention.

In 1986, Demjanjuk was extradited to Israel, where he was sentenced to death for committing war crimes as the so-called "Ivan the Terrible," a Treblinka death camp guard who tortured and mutilated prisoners as they were marched to the gas chambers.

His American lawyers, citing more recently released information, claim the Justice Department withheld evidence that a man identified as Ivan Marchenko, and not Demjanjuk, was the actual "Ivan the Terrible."

The uncertainty created by the more recent information, made available from documents from the former Soviet Union, has also affected his conviction by an Israeli court, and particularly the death penalty he was given.

In a hearing in Jerusalem in June, the Israeli High Court expressed concern about the evidence used in his case. That court is slated to rule on his conviction soon.

His American lawyers filed papers with the appeals court saying he could be endangered if Israel were to deport him to a third country.

Case Now Shifts To Nashville

Last week, the U.S. appeals court appointed federal Judge Thomas Wiseman, Jr. of Nashville, Tenn., to oversee a fact-finding investigation into whether the Justice Department withheld information in the Demjanjuk case.

The appeals court also stated that government counsel had admitted in court that "mistakes were made" in its disclosure of evidence.

Justice Department lawyers deny this and have filed a motion asking the appeals court to correct what they charge is a misstatement.

Justice Department attorney Patty Merkamp Stemler said that at the time of Demjanjuk's extradition proceedings, "the government did not have in its possession any statements or documents" indicating that an Ivan Marchenko was "Ivan the Terrible."

She conceded the government had made a mistake, but it was only that of not adding the name of a Treblinka survivor to the list of people unable to identify Demjanjuk by photograph.

Survivor Sol Lackman, "had never been near the gas chambers" and thus "did not mention Marchenko in his 1980 interview with government investigators, nor did he state that Demjanjuk was not 'Ivan the Terrible,'" Stemler said.

Judge Wiseman will meet with attorneys on Sept. 4 in Nashville to decide procedural matters, such as which witnesses to call and a venue for further hearings, in order to determine whether the government committed fraud.

JEWISH PROFESSOR'S SHOOTING SPREE ROCKS MONTREAL JEWISH COMMUNITY

By Bram D. Eisenthal

MONTREAL, Aug. 25 (JTA) -- A Soviet Jewish emigre's shooting spree Monday at Concordia University has rocked the community and raised questions about whether the tragedy might have been prevented.

The incident occurred Monday, when the emigre, an associate professor of mechanical engineering at Concordia who had just been denied tenure, angrily opened fire on his colleagues, killing two faculty members and wounding three others.

Valery Fabrikant, 52, a specialist in "elasticity theory" who came to Canada from Moscow 14 years ago, was arraigned in a Montreal courtroom Tuesday afternoon.

Following the shootings, he surrendered to police, but not before seizing two hostages, resulting in a tense 30-minute standoff. Both hostages were unharmed.

Fabrikant entered the university's mechanical engineering department in the late afternoon, several hours after learning he had been denied tenure, apparently intent on settling scores with those he held responsible.

He allegedly shot dead Michael Hogben, an associate professor of chemistry and biochemistry, and Matthew Douglas, a professor of civil engineering.

The wounded included Jann Saber, a Jewish associate professor of mechanical engineering who only recently had offered to help communal officials find jobs in the field of mechanical engineering for newly arrived Russian Jews.

Saber, whose wife, Sara, is a former regional director of the B'nai Brith Youth Organization, was shot in back of the head and side and was reported in critical condition.

Also wounded were Phoivos Ziogas, chairman of the electrical and computer engineering department, and Elizabeth Horwood, secretary to the department chairman.

Severe Psychological Problems

Fabrikant had apparently been experiencing severe psychological problems for some time.

"Everyone speculated as to whether (these problems) would cross the line to violence," said Stephen Scheinberg, a Concordia history professor who chaired a university senate committee that last November heard grievances brought by Fabrikant against Concordia.

"All of us practiced denial, trying to believe it would not," he said.

Scheinberg, who is chairman of B'nai Brith Canada's League for Human Rights, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that Fabrikant was at one time a prisoner in a Siberian labor camp.

He said he was not sure of the extent of Fabrikant's involvement in the Jewish community but said he believed he was "more Russian than Jewish."

The handwriting had evidently been on the wall for some time, and observers said the shootings might have been prevented had Fabrikant's actions been taken more seriously.

About three weeks ago, Fabrikant asked department secretary Harwood to sign a character reference to be appended to his application for a handgun.

She refused but a neighbor at his Cote St. Luc apartment building complied.