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RABIN SIGNALING ISRAEL IS READY TO GIVE UP TERRITORY ON THE GOLAN

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Sept. 10 (JTA) -- Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin has stepped up signals that Israel is ready for territorial compromise on the Golan Heights.

But he is insisting that Syria commit itself to a peace treaty with Israel before he agrees to discuss any withdrawal from the strategic plateau.

In an interview Thursday with Israel Radio, Rabin declared: "We have said that in exchange for a peace treaty that promises an end to war and opens the borders between Syria and Israel, diplomatic relations and normalization, that Israel is ready to implement" U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

"This imposes, of course, some sort of territorial compromise," he said.

Israeli negotiators returning to the peace talks in Washington next week reportedly have been instructed to tell the Syrians they are prepared to negotiate "everything" in exchange for a peace treaty.

Rabin is sticking to this new, more flexible position despite mounting criticism at home from even members of his own Labor Party.

Settlers in the Golan announced they would wage "war" against Rabin and stage mass demonstrations to rally opposition to any territorial concessions.

One protest was to be mounted at Ben-Gurion Airport as Israeli negotiators departed to resume the talks in Washington after a 10-day recess.

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres on Thursday praised the direction of Israel's negotiations with Damascus. Speaking during a visit to Paris, he said Israel must make sure its security needs are met, but it could not ignore the "at least stated" change in Syria's stand.

Peres characterized the recent exchange of signals between Damascus and Jerusalem as "the best ever in the history of the two countries."

Court Case Filed

Criticism of the moves toward an accommodation with Syria cut across party lines, with Labor Knesset member Avigdor Kahalani heading the parliamentary lobby against concessions on the strategic heights.

Likud's Ariel Sharon said Thursday that Israel Defense Force film crews have begun filming along Israel's demarcation lines with Syria as the first step toward withdrawal.

And the leader of a group called the Temple Mount Faithful has filed a petition in the High Court of Justice against Rabin and the Israeli negotiating team with Syria.

Gershon Solomon argues that Jerusalem's extension of Israeli law to the Golan Heights 11 years ago puts territorial concessions out of legal bounds.

Unconfirmed reports here say that when the peace talks resume next week, Israel will respond formally to a Syrian paper presented last week with a document calling on each side to recognize the other's security needs.

The reports say that Rabin told the Israeli

negotiating team that an "initial achievement" with Syria might be attained in six months.

He said failure to achieve a breakthrough in the first two weeks of negotiation "was no cause for despair," according to the reports.

The revised stance on Syria was reflected in remarks made Wednesday by the IDF chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Ehud Barak.

Syrian President Hafez Assad "understands that political dialogue is for the moment the only game in town," Barak told military correspondents in Tel Aviv. "He is now putting forth maximalist conditions and waiting for developments."

Barak said Israel can expect difficult negotiations as Syria continues to build up its military strength. But he said it is significant that Syria is conducting direct talks with Israel at all.

Similar views were voiced by the chairman of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, Ori Orr of Labor.

"I don't suspect Assad of having become a fervent lover of Zion, but at the same time Syria's president is more of a pragmatist than some others," he said Wednesday during a special Knesset session on policy toward Syria.

Assad "won't come to Jerusalem" as the late Egyptian President Anwar Sadat did, said Orr, "but Syria's behavior across the board shows that something has changed even in Syria."

**WINS BY HEZBOLLAH, AMAL IN LEBANON
BAD NEWS FOR ISRAELI PRESENCE THERE**
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Sept. 10 (JTA) -- The success of the pro-Iranian Hezbollah and the Syrian-backed Shi'ite Amal movement in Lebanese elections this week bodes poorly for the Israeli presence in southern Lebanon.

The situation in the region has been shaky, reflecting the old internecine fights that characterized much of Lebanon until Syrian control became a way of life for most of the country.

Whereas the rest of Lebanon is relatively calm, because of Syrian domination over local militias, southern Lebanon is still torn by tensions between Israel and its Christian loyalists and supporters of the Shi'ite Moslem militias.

Questions about where southern Lebanon is headed were being asked intensely this week amid speculation over an eventual peace agreement between Israel and Syria. Residents of southern Lebanon have no doubt that such an agreement would include their region.

Yosef Hadass, head of the Israeli team negotiating with Lebanon, has stated at the peace talks in Washington that Israel recognizes the international boundaries between the two countries and that, in principle, it is ready to withdraw once necessary security arrangements have been completed.

For local residents, this signaled a fait accompli, leaving only the question of the timing of a withdrawal to be answered.

It is surprising how little attention was devoted in Israel to the Lebanese elections and their possible effect on Israel.

The deteriorating security situation in the region was the reason for Israel's most controversial war -- the one in Lebanon begun 10 years

ago. And the ensuing establishment of Israel's security zone in the south was a reflection of common interests between Israel and the local inhabitants at the time.

Such interests still exist, but they are much weaker than in the past. Gen. Antoine Lahad, commander of the Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army, failed to persuade residents to join the widespread Christian boycott of the elections.

Fear of the Shi'ite militants has become stronger than fear of the Israelis and their supporters -- stronger even than the economic benefits gained by Israel's presence in Lebanon.

The elections this week have brought that region closer to the rest of the country; its inhabitants are looking to Beirut for their future.

And Israelis are looking up to the Golan. The old saying that the fate of southern Lebanon will be determined in Damascus rather than Beirut seemed truer this week than ever.

PERES RECEIVES A WARM WELCOME FROM FRENCH OFFICIALS IN PARIS

By Michel Di Paz

PARIS, Sept. 10 (JTA) -- Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres this week received an exceptionally warm welcome in Paris, where he met with top French leaders.

French President Francois Mitterrand held a 3 1/2-hour meeting with the visiting foreign minister on Thursday, during which he indicated gratification at the changes represented by the new government in Jerusalem, Peres told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency afterward.

He said Mitterrand told him: "You are here as the representative of a friendly state and also as a personal friend."

The French president is due to make his second official visit to Israel by the end of this year, after becoming the first French head of state to visit Israel, in 1982.

The French wish to play a more active role in the Middle East peace process has found a response in Jerusalem, which, in a shift from the policy of the previous Likud administration, is seeking greater European participation in the Middle East multilateral negotiations.

Mitterrand and Peres agreed on a stepped-up role for France in the negotiations. France next month hosts the multilateral talks on economic development, which last convened in Brussels.

Peres raised with Mitterrand the idea of a bank for Middle East development, along the lines of the London-based bank set up to help countries in the former Communist bloc. A striking difference is that some countries in the Middle East are wealthy enough to contribute to such a banking facility.

Israel's foreign minister put forward the view that peace could not be dictated in an area torn by war for decades. Rather, it should follow the step-by-step pattern set by France and Germany after World War II.

As a first step, economic agreements would link countries formerly at war.

Mitterrand said that France and Germany would invest in development of transportation systems within Israel and then between Israel and those Arab states that would ultimately -- if the peace negotiations succeed -- make peace with Israel.

On a bilateral basis, France would help Israel in seeking to overcome its water shortage.

Mitterrand agreed also on the principle of a

joint French-Israeli industrial applied research and development project, with each country investing \$125 million to subsidize research.

Peres also met with Defense Minister Pierre Joxe. The two agreed to normalize relations between the defense establishments of their respective countries.

Peres became the first Israeli Cabinet minister in almost 25 years to be received by senior officials of UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, which was previously a haven for anti-Israel rhetoric.

He paid a call on the organization's secretary-general, Federico Mayor Zaragoza.

Mayor found interest in an idea put forward by Peres under which UNESCO would convene a conference of intellectuals and scholars from Israel, the Arab countries, Spain and other lands to shape a future of peace in the Middle East and a "new golden age" in the Mediterranean area.

VIOLENCE ERUPTS AT DEMONSTRATION FOR ETHIOPIAN RELIGIOUS LEADERS

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Sept. 10 (JTA) -- Police on Thursday forcefully dispersed hundreds of Ethiopian immigrants demonstrating in front of the Prime Minister's Office for the right of their religious leaders, called kessim, to be granted rabbinical powers.

The demonstration was the culmination of a nearly two-week sit-in strike by the kessim at the Rose Garden, across the street from the Prime Minister's Office.

The demonstrators had blocked the road before the office.

Some 28 demonstrators were detained, then released following a brief interrogation. Nine demonstrators and three police officers were wounded in the clash and hospitalized.

Despite the clash, the Ethiopian olim's demands were met, as Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin will see them to discuss the problem on Sunday.

A meeting held Monday between representatives of the kessim and Israel's two chief rabbis ended without agreement over the kessim's authority to perform marriages. The Ethiopian leaders left Hechal Shlomo, the Central Rabbinate, slamming the door behind them.

The chief rabbinical council has consistently resisted giving the Ethiopian religious leaders the power to perform marriages or issue rabbinical orders.

According to Ashkenazic Chief Rabbi Avraham Shapira, the Ethiopian religious leaders are not sufficiently knowledgeable to perform such duties. At most, he said, they should be permitted to act as religious guides.

The kessim rejected an offer to settle for creation of a committee to review their status.

At week's end, another compromise proposal was in the offing, granting the kessim the power to register marriages and divorces as clerks, rather than religious leaders. However, the chief rabbinical council objected to that suggestion, on the grounds that the kessim cannot write in Hebrew.

According to sources at the Chief Rabbinate, leaflets were distributed this week at the immigrant absorption center in Beersheba warning that any Ethiopian who would cooperate with the Rabbinate would be excommunicated by the community.

CARMELITE NUNS TO LEAVE CONVENT, BUT HEAD WILL NOT GO TO NEW SITE

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK, Sept. 10 (JTA) -- The mother superior of the Carmelite convent at Auschwitz says she will not move into the new convent complex being built a short distance away from the site of the notorious Nazi death camp.

Sister Marie-Therese, apparently upset about the way she was treated during the course of the controversy around the Auschwitz convent, plans to move to another location instead.

The Vatican does not expect her reticence to be an obstacle to the rest of the nuns moving to their new quarters by the end of the year, according to communications it has had with the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations, or IJCIC, the group representing world Jewry in dialogue with other church bodies.

IJCIC Chairman Edgar Bronfman has discussed the matter with Cardinal Edward Cassidy, president of the Vatican Commission for Religious Relations With the Jews.

Cassidy told him that plans are going ahead as scheduled with the new convent, according to Elan Steinberg, executive director of the World Jewish Congress, of which Bronfman is president.

"There is no problem at this time," said Israel Singer, the WJC's secretary-general.

Assurances have also come from the head of the Polish Episcopate's Commission on Relations With the Jews, Bishop Henryk Muszynski.

The Catholic prelate told Rabbi Leon Klenicki, director of interfaith affairs for the Anti-Defamation League, that he was not surprised the Carmelite mother superior had refused to move.

According to Klenicki, who met with Muszynski during a visit to Poland last month, the bishop said "the sister or sisters can refuse to go to the new place," but all of the nuns will abandon the present premises.

Sister Marie-Therese is free to go wherever she wants, said the bishop.

"Other sisters will take her place and spiritual commitment in the new building outside the former concentration camp," he reportedly told the ADL rabbi.

CANADIAN PROSECUTORS DROP CASE AGAINST 3 KU KLUX KLAN MEMBERS

By Gil Kezwer

TORONTO, Sept. 10 (JTA) -- Canada's right-wing hate fringe is celebrating victory in a high-profile Winnipeg court case involving three members of the Ku Klux Klan.

Prosecutors on Tuesday decided to drop charges against William Marcus, 21; Theron Skryba, 25; and Joseph Lockhart, 28.

They were cleared of various charges, including advocating genocide, promoting hatred and violation of firearms laws, after an undercover police officer admitted her notes on the suspects were based on wiretap recordings, not memory.

The three Klan militants were arrested in December, at which time Winnipeg police called a news conference to display seized material. It included drawings of Adolf Hitler and Carney Milton Nerland, the Saskatchewan leader of the Church of Jesus Christ-Aryan Nations.

Marcus still must appear before a Canadian Human Rights Commission tribunal in December on a complaint that a telephone hot line he set up broadcast messages against Jews and Indians.

2 JEWS AMONG SCORES ARRESTED IN PROTEST AGAINST HAITI POLICY

By Cynthia Mann
States News Service

WASHINGTON, Sept. 10 (JTA) -- Two Jews associated with the American Jewish Committee were among scores of people arrested in front of the White House this week during a protest against the Bush administration's policy of repatriating Haitian refugees.

Arrested, fined and later released Wednesday were Hyman Bookbinder, AJCommittee's former Washington representative, and Judy Golub, the agency's legislative director.

Tens of thousands have fled Haiti for the United States since a military junta in September 1991 overthrew the democratically elected president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Nearly 30,000 refugees have been sent back to Haiti after being kept on a U.S. naval base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Last May, President Bush ordered that Haitians intercepted at sea be returned to Haiti without any effort to determine first whether they are eligible for political asylum.

They are supposed to apply for asylum at the U.S. Embassy in Haiti, a policy its critics say places their lives in danger from attacks by the military.

Jewish groups have protested the policy, recalling that refugees fleeing Nazi-controlled Europe were once turned away from U.S. shores.

"We feel very deeply that the Haitians are being treated unfairly in not being able to make simple claims for refugee status," said Gary Rubin, AJCommittee director of national affairs. "It's a violation of international law."

Wednesday's protesters, led by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the group Trans-Africa, claimed the administration is racist and called for legislation to grant the refugees temporary asylum.

ISRAELI ENVOY TO SOUTH AFRICA EXPRESSES SORROW OVER MASSACRE

By Suzanne Belling

JOHANNESBURG, Sept. 10 (JTA) -- Israel's departing ambassador to South Africa expressed sorrow over this week's massacre in the black "homeland" of Ciskei, saying he mourned the loss of "24 people who could have been part of the future of this country."

Zvi Gov-Ari, a Likud political appointee, spoke on the eve of his return to Israel, at a reception at the embassy in Pretoria attended by high-level officials of the government.

"It is my fervent request that all the sides in this conflicting situation refrain from using their people as pawns to advance political purposes," he said. "I implore those concerned to try and break the circle of bloodshed and change it to one of negotiation and peace."

Present at the reception were South Africa's foreign minister, Pik Botha; the minister of state affairs, Gerrit Viljoen; the minister of water affairs and forestry, Gen. Magnus Malan; and members of the diplomatic corps.

Also present was the all-black Johannesburg Adult Choir from Soweto, which Gov-Ari was responsible for sending to Israel to perform in a recent choral festival.

During his three-year stint, Gov-Ari forged links with many black and Afrikaner groups.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES:

WISCONSIN JEWS, LIKE MANY NATIONWIDE, FACING A TOUGH CHOICE IN SENATE RACE
 By Andrew Muchin and Leon Cohen
 The Wisconsin Jewish Chronicle

MILWAUKEE, Sept. 10 (JTA) -- An incumbent conservative champion of Israel or his liberal Jewish challenger?

That is the choice facing Wisconsin Jewish voters after landslide victories in Tuesday's Senate primary by Republican Sen. Robert Kastan and Democratic state Sen. Russell Feingold.

With poll results nearly complete, Kastan had 80 percent of the Republican vote, trouncing environmentalist Roger Faulkner.

Feingold, in a stunning upset, came from far behind in the polls to win 70 percent of the Democratic vote in a five-way race.

In other Senate races of importance to the Jewish community, one pro-Israel candidate was defeated and another was victorious in the Utah primaries; in Alaska, two pro-Israel candidates won the right to face each other in the fall; and in New Hampshire, a strong pro-Israel Democrat will face a Republican with a mixed record.

The Wisconsin race, however, highlights the kind of dilemma that will confront Jews in several major states in November, including California, Pennsylvania and quite possibly New York.

Many of these voters will be forced to choose between candidates who espouse their own liberal agenda on the domestic front and those who embrace a more conservative platform but have proven themselves as reliable friends of Israel in the Senate.

"We now have a classic political match-up of two very different candidates, both of whom have support in the Jewish community," said Mordecai Lee, executive director of the Milwaukee Jewish Council and a former state senator.

Similar Story In California

According to Lee's analysis, "Kastan will be supported by various segments within the Jewish community, including Republicans, conservatives and those who put a candidate's position on Israel as their most important consideration.

"Feingold will be supported by various segments in the Jewish community, including Democrats, liberals and those who support a candidate based on a multitude of issues."

The same analysis could apply in California, where two liberal Democrats, Rep. Barbara Boxer and former San Francisco Mayor Dianne Feinstein, face conservative Republicans Bruce Herschensohn and Sen. John Seymour in the two Senate races this fall.

All four candidates are considered strongly pro-Israel and all except Seymour are Jewish.

The Pennsylvania Senate race pits Democratic upstart Lynn Yeakel against the Republican incumbent, Sen. Arlen Specter. The senator, a longtime supporter of Israel, who is Jewish, is being targeted this year by women's groups because of his aggressive questioning of Anita Hill during confirmation hearings for Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas.

In New York, conservative Republican Sen. Alfonse D'Amato, considered strongly pro-Israel, will face the winner of next Tuesday's Democratic primary. It pits three supporters of Israel against one another, two of whom are Jewish.

State Attorney General Robert Abrams, New York City Comptroller Elizabeth Holtzman and

former vice presidential candidate Geraldine Ferraro will square off against one another.

Wisconsin Jewish voters have already started taking sides for the November race, reflecting the different approaches to the choice they face.

Feingold will not get the vote, for example, of Milwaukee businessman Martin Stein, former national chairman of the United Jewish Appeal, who said he supported Feingold's runs for the state Senate.

Need To Support 'Our Friends'

Kastan and Sen. Daniel Inouye (D-Hawaii) "consistently have been the Senate's strongest, most pro-active, upfront supporters of the State of Israel -- the only democracy in the Middle East, the only trusted, true ally of the United States," Stein said.

The philanthropist said he didn't "question Feingold's commitment to these things. Unfortunately, Russ is a newcomer and Bob is a proven commodity.

"We as Jews and as Americans both need to be consistent, good supporters of our friends," Stein said.

Stein acknowledged that Kastan's opposition to abortion and support of prayer in public schools may hurt his backing among Jews, but said "there's a significant body of people for whom the issue of the American-Israel relationship is the most important issue."

He presented one other reason for Jews to consider Kastan over Feingold: "We can't make political decisions based on religious affiliations."

But religion is not the reason Milwaukee businessman Jerry Wallace, chairman of the Wisconsin chapter of the National Jewish Democratic Council, backs Feingold.

"We're not going to lose anything in support of Israel with Feingold and we'll gain a Senate vote that supports the agenda most members of the Jewish community will support," he said.

Kastan's support among Jews "has eroded dramatically," Wallace said. "We're not a one-issue community. We care about a whole range of issues that affect families and pocketbooks. Support of Israel is on our agenda, but it's not the only thing."

He praised Feingold's "strong record on First Amendment issues, freedom of speech and religion, the whole gamut of issues in the Bill of Rights. With Feingold in the Senate, you will have a member of the majority party and a friend of Israel," Wallace said.

Contests In Utah, Alaska, N.H.

Other primary results around the country this week will generally pit pro-Israel candidates against one another in November.

In Utah, however, pro-Israel candidate Joe Cannon was defeated in the Utah Senate Republican primary, while Rep. Wayne Owens won in the Democratic Senate primary. Owens stands out in the House as a vocal champion of Israel.

In Alaska, Tony Smith, a pro-Israel ally, won the Democratic Senate primary. In November, he will face Republican Sen. Frank Murkowski, considered reasonably friendly to pro-Israel interests.

In New Hampshire, Gov. Judd Gregg, who is deemed to have had a mixed record on Israel when he served in Congress, won the Republican Senate primary, while John Rauh, who is Jewish and pro-Israel, won the Democratic primary.

(Cynthia Mann of States News Service in Washington contributed to this report.)