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**ISRAELI AND U.S. OFFICIALS DENY
PLANS FOR A RABIN-ASSAD SUMMIT**

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Sept. 21 (JTA) -- Israel and the United States have both denied a spate of media reports that efforts are under way to organize an Israeli-Syrian summit meeting.

But key officials of both countries say that as the Middle East peace process advances, it may be desirable and even necessary to arrange a face-to-face meeting between Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Syrian President Hafez Assad.

The reports of a possible summit and the subsequent denials came as the Middle East peace talks continued at the State Department in Washington for the fourth and final week of their present round.

The Syrians and Israelis agreed after the morning negotiating session that the talks had gotten back on track after turning sour last week, though neither party would say progress had been made.

Itamar Rabinovich, who heads the Israeli team negotiating with Syria, said he would not rule out meeting his objective of drafting a joint statement of principles by Thursday, when the round is scheduled to end.

There has been no final decision on when the talks will reconvene. The Israelis announced they would like to resume the talks Oct. 21. The Syrians and the Palestinians said they were open to a quick resumption but did not commit themselves to dates.

Rumors that the United States and Egypt are trying to arrange a summit meeting between Rabin and Assad have surfaced in media reports emanating from Washington and various Arab capitals in recent days.

Speculation about such a meeting was heightened by news that Osama el-Baz, the top political adviser to Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, was due to arrive here soon for consultations on the state of the peace process.

Syrian Demands Unrealistic

Analysts here have suggested the Bush administration might be trying to arrange such a summit to give the president's re-election campaign a boost before the November elections.

They say a historic meeting of Israel and Syria's top leaders, brokered by the United States, would powerfully improve Bush's standing, especially among Jewish voters.

Israeli Deputy Defense Minister Mordechai Gur said reports of an imminent Rabin-Assad summit were imaginary. But he said he hoped the day would come when the two leaders could meet together.

The U.S. ambassador to Israel, William Harrop, also threw cold water on the reports.

Addressing the United Jewish Appeal's annual President's Mission to Israel, Harrop faulted Syria for demanding an Israeli commitment to withdraw from the Golan Heights before setting out its own position on the nature of the peace.

Syria's demand is unrealistic, the U.S. envoy said. "It is absolutely impossible for any leader of a democracy like Israel," where the public has

"legitimate security concerns," to announce: "We're going to withdraw altogether from the Golan Heights. Now let's find out what we're going to get for it."

It will take "some time" to ascertain Syria's position on the nature of the peace it is willing to establish, Harrop said. But he said he is looking forward to a settlement that will address the security concerns of both countries.

Meanwhile, Rabin reiterated Monday that Israel will agree to territorial compromise only in exchange for a full peace treaty with Syria.

The prime minister spoke briefly at a special Knesset session as 1,500 demonstrators outside shouted slogans against withdrawal from the strategic plateau in the north.

No Reason 'To Get Excited'

The session was called during the parliamentary recess at the request of the opposition parties, which told Rabin he lacked a mandate to make concessions on the Golan.

Indicating his belief that negotiating positions are not set in stone, Rabin said there was no reason "to get excited" over demands by Damascus for total withdrawal without full peace. He reiterated his conviction that "something" will be achieved in the negotiations within nine to 12 months.

Rabin talked to his critics about "outdated political conceptions." He reminded them that the Israeli people had given his party a mandate for action on peace, "and that's what we shall do."

He also reminded the Likud that it, too, adopted the position that Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 are the basis for the current peace process. The resolutions call for the exchange of land for peace.

Speakers for the opposition charged the prime minister with misleading the people.

Likud Knesset member Uzi Landau said Rabin promised during the election campaign that he would make no territorial compromises on the Golan Heights. Landau warned that his policies could lead to "a historic serious split among Israelis."

Likud Knesset member Ariel Sharon charged that Assad is offering not "a peace of the brave," but rather "a peace of the scared." He accused Rabin of "gambling with the fate of the nation."

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

BEHIND THE HEADLINES:

**IN GOLAN, MOSHAVNIKS DREAD OUTCOME
OF THE PEACE NEGOTIATIONS WITH SYRIA**
By Michele Chabin

MOSHAV YONATAN, Israel, Sept. 21 (JTA) -- It is grape-harvesting season in the Golan Heights, and the members of Moshav Yonatan, located just 2½ miles from the Syrian border, barely have time for a moment's rest.

Yet when they do finally step down from their giant grape-pickers, their minds turn to the peace talks in Washington, where teams of negotiators are discussing their future.

"Sure I'm concerned," said moshav member Benny Lieberman. "I've made my home here. I

earn my living by harvesting these grapes, which are turned into the best wine in the whole country. What will happen if the government decides to give up this land?"

Lieberman is not alone in his fears. Since August, when Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin agreed to discuss territorial compromise with Syria, many of the area's 12,000 Jewish residents have been dreading the outcome.

While the "Golan Question" may take years to resolve, those who live here are not taking any chances. Concerned that the government will return part or all of the Golan to Syria within the foreseeable future, the settlers have turned their concern into political action.

Following a series of local demonstrations during the past month, they took their cause to the government on Monday.

A protest rally, which took place in the rose-filled park opposite the Knesset, was the culmination of a three-day march by dozens of residents. Hundreds of other protesters hired buses for the 2½-hour trip to Jerusalem.

Carrying placards that read "Today the Golan, tomorrow the Galil," and "Israel must retain sovereignty over the Heights," the protesters expressed the hope that they could influence their elected officials.

'Can't Just Sign Away Our Future'

"We decided to come today because the Knesset is inside debating the Golan," said Udi Margalit, head of the Golan Settlement Committee. "We are confident that the Knesset members will realize that the Golan is not an obstacle to peace, but an obstacle to war."

He expressed bitterness over Rabin's decision to include the area in peace discussions. "Before the elections, Rabin came to the Golan and told us that the territory is needed for security reasons. More than 50 percent of us voted for him, and some are starting to regret it."

The demonstrations, Margalit said, "were just the beginning. We intend to take every means that this democracy allows to fight for our struggle. We must influence our (Knesset members), talk to the media, contact people in the U.S. It isn't going to be easy, but we're prepared for a fight."

"The government can't just sign away our future," said Nachum Seltzer, a farmer from Moshav Avnei Eitan. At the rally with his wife and three children, who were skipping school for the day, Seltzer also expressed dismay over what he terms the prime minister's "turnaround" on the Golan issue.

"In June, just a few days before the elections, we were celebrating the 25th anniversary of Israeli sovereignty over the Golan. Rabin came up and promised that he would help us to improve housing, industry, jobs. Now he's talking about giving the Golan back.

"I don't think Rabin is a traitor," he added, "but I still don't understand what he's trying to accomplish. The Golan was annexed way back in 1980, so this is a 180-degree turnaround. You have to remember that the government sent us here to begin with."

While he is concerned about the future, Seltzer is also hopeful.

"I'm convinced that most Israelis feel that the area is vital to the country's security interests. They will support us," he said. "I think we have a good chance to keep the Golan. If I didn't believe that, I wouldn't be here."

TERRORISTS ATTEMPT ANOTHER STABBING By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Sept. 21 (JTA) -- Three days after the brutal stabbing of an Israeli soldier in the Gaza Strip, Palestinian terrorists attempted Monday to kill another soldier, but failed.

The attacker, 25, a resident of the Rimal neighborhood in Gaza, approached the soldier with a knife and tried to stab him. However, other soldiers spotted the attacker, fired at him and wounded him in the hand. He was hospitalized in Ashkelon.

Earlier Monday, an explosive charge went off near an army post by the Bureij refugee camp, close to the place where soldier Alon Karavani was kidnapped last Friday, stabbed and left badly wounded in an olive grove. No one was hurt in the explosion.

In the West Bank, an Arab man was killed Monday, at the Eli junction south of Nablus, after an explosive charge went off in his hands. He apparently was preparing to set the bomb against a Jewish target.

In another incident, the army clamped a curfew Monday on downtown Hebron, after a Jewish woman was wounded in a stoning attack.

ISRAEL CANCELS TAIWAN JETS By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Sept. 21 (JTA) -- Israel has announced it is canceling plans to sell 40 Kfir jet fighters to Taiwan, and the Chinese have promised they will only sell Middle Eastern countries defensive weaponry in limited quantities that would not endanger peace in the region.

The announcements, while not linked, were made last week during the visit of the Chinese foreign minister, Qian Qichen, who left last Friday after spending three days in Israel.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said Israel had decided even before the visit of the Chinese minister to refrain from selling Taiwan the 40 Israeli-designed-and-built Kfir jets.

The Chinese are currently selling nuclear reactors to Iran and Libya, which the countries maintain are for civilian purposes.

Four years ago, China sold ground-to-ground missiles to Saudi Arabia. It also provided Syria with technology to produce M-9 ballistic missiles.

HUNGARIAN DEEPLY MOVED ON VISIT By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Sept. 21 (JTA) -- Although no formal agreements will be signed at the end of the visit of Hungarian President Arpad Goncz to Israel, relations between the two countries have deepened, Goncz told reporters Monday.

Goncz visited the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial in Jerusalem and then declared that the Holocaust should never recur.

His tour of Yad Vashem was extended, with the president stopping time and again by exhibits, receiving explanations by Yitzhak Arad, the Yad Vashem director.

"We are very, very deeply moved," he said, his eyes wet with tears, as he was standing at the Yizkor Hall. "This must never be repeated."

Visiting the Old City of Jerusalem, Goncz, who is also a playwright, said he felt as if he was "in the middle of time," seeing both the "very, very old and very, very young at the same time."

PERU'S JEWS RELIEVED AT ARREST OF SHINING PATH GUERRILLA HEAD

By Victoria Verlichak

BUENOS AIRES, Sept. 21 (JTA) -- The Jewish community of Peru is relieved at the arrest of Abimael Guzman Reynoso, leader of the notorious Shining Path terrorist group.

"Jews were not singled out as such," a Jewish spokesman told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. "But they suffered from terrorism like everyone else."

Guzman, who remained at large for 12 years, was apprehended Sept. 12 in Lima by Peruvian intelligence police.

Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori said Guzman would be tried by a military tribunal for treason. He anticipated that the terrorist leader would receive a life sentence without possibility of parole.

Despite his capture, the country is still troubled by terrorist attacks. Three days after Guzman's arrest, members of his group, called Sendero Luminoso in Spanish, set off a bomb on the Pan American Highway, north of Lima.

Under the impact of Peru's terrorist disturbances, the number of Jews in Peru had dwindled in recent years from 5,000 to 3,000, said Eduardo Bigio, president of the Third World Commission of the World Jewish Congress.

Bigio said Peruvians are hoping for peace after more than 12 years of terrorism that took at least 25,000 lives.

But concern remains over the Tupac Amaru, a group responsible for an estimated 15 percent of terrorist attacks. Of the five violent episodes involving Jews in recent years, Tupac Amaru was responsible for three: the kidnapping for ransom of Jews who were freed after several months of captivity.

He said Arab terrorists connected with the Abu Nidal group are suspected of the 1990 shooting attack of Jacobo Hasson, secretary of the Jewish Association of Peru. Hasson subsequently left Peru for Israel.

Many Jews Have Immigrated

Three Abu Nidal members were caught in Lima in 1988 with documents listing prominent Jews, Jewish and Israeli institutions and American institutions. They were freed after two years in jail. It has been speculated that the Abu Nidal members made contact with Peruvian terrorists while they were in prison.

The Abu Nidal terrorists were quietly freed, and it is believed they left the country.

In the most recent terrorist incident in Peru, a bombing attack took place at the Jewish-owned Channel 2 television station, but that had to do with Peruvian politics "and did not have anti-Semitic overtones," Bigio said.

About 800 Jews have immigrated to Israel. Many of the remainder have settled in Miami, while others have dispersed to Los Angeles, Canada, Venezuela and Chile, Bigio said.

Most Jews live in the capital city of Lima.

Three-quarters of the community are of European descent; 10 percent are descendants of German-speaking immigrants who arrived in Peru in 1870, mostly from Alsace; and 15 percent are of North African origin.

The Peruvian Jewish community traces its origin to crypto-Jews who arrived with the Spanish in 1532. Many died in the Inquisition brought to Peru by the Spanish in 1569.

Anti-Semitism is not a native product but rather an import, a recent study says.

Western Europe, the Arab countries and former Communist states are the source of the imports, says the study by Leon Trahtemberg, director of the Leon Pinelo School, where 90 percent of Lima's Jewish children study.

"When it does come up, it is mainly among intellectual, political and journalistic circles, not among the general population," he said.

Trahtemberg says the Maoist Shining Path group does not have a particularly anti-Semitic bias. "Their firepower enabled them to attack Jews with relative ease if they chose to. But they didn't."

"Tupac Amaru is militantly anti-American, and that's why during the (Persian) Gulf War, Jewish and Israeli persons and places were targets of assault," he said.

Bigio agreed with the school director that anti-Semitism, although rare, exists. He warned of the dangers posed by the bad economy.

"The country's acute economic crisis poses the risk of being channeled in a negative direction."

WJC SEEKING FORMAL INQUIRY INTO SLOVAK OFFICIAL'S PAST

By Tamar Levy

GENEVA, Sept. 21 (JTA) -- The World Jewish Congress is calling for an independent investigation into the wartime past of a newly appointed Slovak Cabinet minister.

Files in the archives of the previous Czechoslovak government indicate Dusan Slobodnik wore the uniform of the Slovak equivalent of the Hitler Youth and was selected by S.S. specialists for training in terror actions against civilians, WJC legal adviser Daniel Lack said.

The records associate Slobodnik with the extermination of the population of Plostina Na Morave and other villages. Other allegations attribute anti-Semitic statements and actions to him.

He was appointed minister of culture in the government of Vladimir Meciar three months ago in anticipation of the formal separation of the Czech and Slovak republics on Jan. 1. He is currently in Geneva to represent his government at a U.N.-sponsored conference on human rights.

The WJC is taking up the case with the Czech and Slovak authorities, as well as with the U.S. Department of Justice, Lack said.

If the allegations against him are proven true, it would qualify him for the U.S. State Department's "watch list" of undesirable aliens, barring his entry into the United States.

It would also lead to a demand that he be removed from his government post "at a minimum," a WJC spokesman said.

Last Friday, Slobodnik denied he had taken part in wartime killings. He acknowledged to the Swiss newspaper Tribune de Geneve that he joined the Hlinka Youth in the Nazi-sponsored Slovak state at the age of 17 but said it was only because he had been forced to do so.

As evidence he was not anti-Semitic, he said he had allowed his son to marry a woman who is half-Jewish.

He also acknowledged he was arrested and imprisoned by the Soviets in 1944 but said it was an arbitrary action rather than punishment for crimes. He was released in 1953 and returned to Czechoslovakia.

NJCRAC ISSUES ANNUAL PROGRAM PLAN CALLING FOR 'SOCIAL JUSTICE AGENDA' By Larry Yudelson

NEW YORK, Sept. 21 (JTA) -- The organized American Jewish community's annual statement on a host of public issues calls this year for a "social justice agenda" and increased attention to the domestic front.

Among the top priorities spelled out in the Joint Program Plan, as it is known, are promoting the Middle East peace process, facilitating refugee resettlement, keeping abortion legal, strengthening the public school system and maintaining church-state separation in America.

The plan, released last week, is published each fall by the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council to provide policy guidelines for its constituent groups, which include 13 national Jewish agencies and 117 local community relations councils.

It provides an overview of organized American Jewry's chief concerns in the public arena and the information it contains will shape the way these issues are addressed by the major organizations charged with acting on behalf of American Jews.

NJCRAC maintains a strong interest in domestic issues, unlike other Jewish umbrella groups, such as the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

"There is an urgent need to reverse the trend of a declining commitment by government to redress the social and economic ills of American society," the plan states in its introduction.

At the same time, the plan stresses that "focusing either on domestic or international concerns exclusively will not serve the best interests of the United States."

The plan looks closely at 18 issues. For each, a detailed analysis, focusing on events of the past year, is coupled with a series of "strategic goals."

Dissent On Education, Abortion

Regarding the peace process, for example, the statement urges those active in Jewish community relations to "convey to the American public the need of the parties to the conflict to focus on a step-by-step process and confidence-building measures that would lead to peace treaties with neighboring Arab states, and interim self-governing arrangements for the Palestinians leading to final status negotiations."

Goals in other areas include urging all Jewish communal agencies to adopt environmental policies; pressing for legislation banning the hiring of permanent replacements for striking workers; calling for a re-examination of the judicial-nominations process; supporting state measures to provide universal health care as a step toward a national plan; and encouraging Jewish communal agencies to examine their employment policies for gender discrimination and sensitivity to family needs.

With few exceptions, the goals represent the unanimous consensus of NJCRAC member agencies. The exceptions include disagreements by the Anti-Defamation League and the American Jewish Congress on college scholarships directed to minorities, and a dissent by the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America from the document's support for "reproductive choice."

The Orthodox Union also dissented from a lengthy policy paper, approved by NJCRAC at its

plenum this past February in Portland, Ore., discussing the issue of educational choice plans which enable parents to select from among a number of schools.

NJCRAC's position was that choice plans must be limited exclusively to public schools.

The Orthodox Union said in dissent that this reflected a "wooden application" of the principles of church-state separation, saying that "educational choice programs can constitutionally and equitably provide funds for non-public school students and their parents as long as there is no direct government funding of religious instruction."

Neither view is necessarily binding on other NJCRAC members. The program plan states its own mandate as being only an advisory guide for agencies, which are free to accept or reject it.

FAMILY TREASURES HIDDEN FROM NAZIS UNEARTHED IN ROMANIA, LOANED TO REBBE By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Sept. 21 (JTA) -- A treasure trove of Jewish ritual objects and family heirlooms, buried for safety during the Holocaust, was restored, briefly, to its rightful owner this week.

Rabbi Yekutiel Yehuda Halberstam, 90, the Hasidic rebbe of Klausenberg (Cluj), Romania, who now lives in Israel, was able to touch the Torah crowns, candlesticks and inscribed cutlery that were hidden underground by his family 49 years ago.

The rare and moving story was published by the Israeli newspaper Yediot Achronot.

The silver artifacts must have brought painfully mixed memories to the Klausenberger rebbe, who is now bedridden and barely speaks.

The objects had been buried by the rebbe's son, Chaim Zvi, who was slaughtered, along with his mother, 10 brothers and sisters, by the Nazis soon afterward.

Only the rabbi himself survived the concentration camps and eventually remarried and had a new family.

After the war, the Klausenberger rebbe settled in New York, and later in Union City, N.J., where he built up a new Hasidic court and yeshiva.

He founded Kiryat Zanz, near Netanya, in the early 1960s, one of the first such all-Hasidic quarters to be built in Israel, moving there himself in his old age.

The silver treasure was unearthed by chance, during construction work in Cluj, and turned over to local authorities.

They decided to house it in the town museum, where it was recently rediscovered by a Klausenberg Hasid, who identified the pieces.

The Hasid quickly contacted the rebbe's family in Israel, who launched a delicate diplomatic effort to recover its property.

A Romanian-born member of the Netanya City Council, Miriam Ben-Elazar, who has wide contacts with Romanian political figures, was asked to go to Bucharest, and it was largely through her efforts that the trove was eventually loaned out for a week. It arrived in Israel early Sunday, accompanied by Romanian officials.

The collection, 83 pieces in all, will be on exhibit throughout this week behind bulletproof glass at the Galei Zanz Hotel in Netanya, after which it will be returned to the Cluj Museum.

The Halberstam family and its Hasidic supporters intend to pursue efforts to recover permanent possession of the artifacts.