

75th ANNIVERSARY YEAR**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 1992****VOL. 70, NO. 185****BAKER SAYS SAUDIS MAKING PROGRESS
TOWARD ENDING ANTI-ISRAEL BOYCOTT****By Kimberly Moore
States News Service**

WASHINGTON, Sept. 24 (JTA) -- Progress is being made with Saudi Arabia to end the Arab boycott against Israel, White House Chief of Staff James Baker has assured Jewish organizational leaders.

The subject of the boycott came up during an hour-long meeting Baker held here Thursday with members of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

Shoshana Cardin, chairman of the conference, reported after the meeting that Baker had told the Jewish leaders that the "Saudis are moving slowly" on the boycott issue and that, from his viewpoint, "they need to move slowly."

"But he felt there was progress," she added.

A top White House official, who asked not to be identified, said the Saudis are "close to the stage where they would not enforce the boycott" against companies doing business with Israel.

The official added that the change in the Saudi position is unrelated to the proposed sale of 72 advanced F-15 fighter aircraft to the kingdom.

"We were raising the boycott issue long before the F-15 sale," the official said. "It is important in its own right."

Malcolm Hoenlein, executive director of the Conference of Presidents, said the group discussed with Baker their concerns over the F-15 sale and the need for Israel to maintain a qualitative edge in the region.

He said that even if the Saudis ended their boycott, it would not eliminate Israel's concerns about the strategic impact of the sale.

Cardin said the Pentagon and the Israeli Defense Ministry are negotiating in "five areas" to help maintain Israel's qualitative military edge in the face of the F-15 sale.

Petition From Bosnian Moslems

Negotiations are continuing between high-level military and technical experts from both countries that, if successful, would provide Israel with increased access to American intelligence and high-technology equipment.

The group is also negotiating the storage of American military equipment in Israel, which would be drawn down for Israel and the United States should the need arise.

Cardin said Baker expressed his complete trust in the relations between the United States and the current Israeli government.

She said that the former secretary of state was, in general, "very positive because the peace process has moved to a point where they are no longer posturing."

Hoenlein said that like Baker, the Conference of Presidents has been pleased with the outcome of the peace talks so far.

"Each round has made more progress than anticipated," he said. "The chief of staff said that we cannot afford to lose this opportunity."

But at the same time, Hoenlein cautioned against inflated expectations.

"People have to be patient and look forward to long-term progress," he said. The peace talks

are "a terrific opportunity for the region, not only with the Syrians, but with the Palestinians as well."

During the meeting with Baker, Cardin handed him a petition she had received from a Moslem group in the strife-torn former Yugoslav republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina. It asked the Jewish organization's help in ending the Serbian "pogrom and extermination" of their people.

"They said that we will understand," Hoenlein said. "As Jews, we cannot be silent."

Cardin said Baker was "moved" by the two-page petition, which asked the group: "Would the Jewish people not raise their voices?"

**ROUND OF MIDEAST PEACE TALKS ENDS
WITH NO BREAKTHROUGHS BUT PROGRESS****By Cynthia Mann
States News Service**

WASHINGTON, Sept. 24 (JTA) -- The sixth round of Middle East peace talks concluded Thursday with no breakthroughs but with a firm commitment by all the delegations to persevere because the stakes are so high.

All parties agreed that the more serious engagement between the Israeli and the Arab delegations over the last five weeks marked an improvement over previous negotiating rounds.

"Because of the nature and history of the conflict," said Israeli delegation spokesman Yossi Gal, "no one should expect dramatic breakthroughs. Yet every day brings us closer to our common goal of bringing peace to the region."

At the same time, the Arabs said the high expectations triggered by the election of a new Labor government in Israel had not been met and that the Israelis had recycled the same, old proposals of the former right-wing Likud government.

Still, the Arabs have accepted the Israeli proposal to return to Washington on Oct. 21, after the Jewish holidays have ended. They said they hoped Israel would use the period to draft newer and more creative responses to their papers.

Expectations had been high that Israel and Syria would issue a joint statement of principles at the end of the current round to help guide future talks aimed at achieving a peace agreement.

Those talks were bolstered by Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's declaration a few weeks ago that Israel was willing to apply U.N. Security Council Resolution 242, which calls for the exchange of land for peace, to the Golan Heights. That marked a sharp departure from the policy of the previous Israeli government.

But the talks got bogged down over Israel's refusal to meet Syria's demand that it declare its willingness to withdraw from the entire Golan Heights. Israel has refused to address the question of withdrawal directly until Syria spells out its terms for a peace agreement. And Syria has balked at delineating how it sees normalized relations with Israel.

Syria's chief negotiator, Ambassador Mouwaffak Allaf, said Thursday it seemed the Israeli delegation was not authorized or ready to deal seriously with crucial elements of the talks, which

he called "regrettable." He said the "ball is in Israel's court" now.

Allaf said a statement made in New York on Wednesday by Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk al-Sharaa that offered "total peace" for "total withdrawal" from the Golan should eliminate any doubts about Syria's positive intentions.

He also discounted recent Israeli statements that the talks should be "upgraded" to a summit level, saying it is substance and not procedure that is at issue.

Progress Slow With Palestinians

Some observers believe that the parties backtracked under pressure. They say Syria was urged not to strike a separate deal with Israel while the other negotiating tracks were stalled, while Rabin came under fire in Israel from the right wing and other opponents of territorial concessions on the Golan.

The Israelis are expected to come back Oct. 21 with a response to Syria's proposed joint statement of principles.

Progress has perhaps been most painstaking in the Israeli-Palestinian track, aimed at negotiating an interim self-governing authority for the Palestinians in the territories. There has been a serious exchange of papers and responses.

The Israelis have proposed general elections for a 15-member administrative council with broad jurisdiction over the affairs of daily life in the territories.

The Palestinians want a bigger body with legislative authority. Last week they also suddenly introduced a new demand: that Israel declare that Resolution 242, or withdrawal from land, applies to the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

The Israelis refused. They said that the letter of invitation to the peace talks, the only binding document of the negotiations, states that 242 applies only to the negotiation of the final status of the territories.

But the Israelis specifically stated their acceptance of 242's application to that phase of the talks, which is scheduled to begin after the third year of Palestinian autonomy.

The Palestinians ultimately retreated. Instead, they said they want assurances that whatever is done in the current phase of talks will be informed by that ultimate commitment to 242 and that nothing will be done to undermine that commitment.

The Israeli-Palestinian talks began making progress late last week after the parties established a pattern of breaking into small groups to discuss some of the issues informally.

"We are inching along in this marathon," said Israeli spokesman Gal. "We have done a lot in order to understand each other better."

Deadlock Over Agenda With Jordan

But Palestinian spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi had a somewhat different perspective.

"We still feel the Israelis are negotiating from inherited positions and (in) the framework of Likud proposals," she said. "At the same time, I don't think this is a closed door or dead end."

The current round has been "very useful as an exploratory period in which each side carefully studied each other's proposals and positions" and had "extensive communication to try to delineate areas of difficulty and agreement," she said.

Ashrawi said she hoped the Israelis would come back next month with "a new mind-set." She said she expected them to return with a

response to the Palestinians' proposed agenda, which would serve as an organizing principle for the talks.

Ashrawi stressed that time is of the essence. She said that the level of skepticism among Palestinians is increasing, and the sooner the delegation had progress to show for its efforts, the better.

While Gal reported progress in the Jordanian and the Lebanese tracks, the Jordanian spokesman, Marwan Mouasher, said the Jordanians were still stuck in their efforts to establish a common agenda with the Israelis.

Talks with Lebanon, meanwhile, reportedly improved greatly in atmosphere. The most notable development probably was the news that surfaced that missing Israeli air force navigator Ron Arad may be alive. The Lebanese delegation offered the information in response to requests from the Israelis.

ISRAEL HIGH COURT REJECTS CHARGES AGAINST RABIN BY ULTRANATIONALISTS By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Sept. 24 (JTA) -- Israel's highest court has rejected a case brought by ultranationalists seeking to stop Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin from negotiating over the Golan Heights.

The High Court of Justice on Thursday rejected an application for an injunction against the prime minister and sharply criticized the applicants for referring to the policy pursued by Rabin as "treachery."

At the same time, the court told the Temple Mount Faithful and National Religious Party Knesset member Hanan Porat that if the government eventually decided to hand back parts of the Golan, grounds might exist for reconsidering the legal merit of the application.

The applicants argued that the apparent readiness of the prime minister to consider exchanging land for peace on the Golan Heights is a violation of the 1981 Golan Law extending Israeli law and sovereignty to the northern plateau.

Justices Menachem Elon, Theodor Orr and Dov Levin questioned counsel on whether the court had the legal power, even in principle, to interfere in the government's handling of foreign policy.

The reasoning for their decision, in which the justices will presumably deal with this point, is to be published at a later date.

Porat, a leader of the settlement movement, said he was not discouraged by the ruling. He said it implied that the Knesset, which passed the Golan Law, should have the right to review actions of the government in light of that law.

Meanwhile, former Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir said Thursday that he saw "no breakthrough" in a statement made in New York on Wednesday by Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk al-Sharaa that Damascus is ready for "total peace" with Israel in return for "total withdrawal."

Shamir, now a Knesset member, said the Syrians had "always been ready to offer vague formulations in return for an Israeli withdrawal."

He charged that the Rabin government has "walked wittingly into a trap" by signaling its readiness to make concessions on the Golan.

He said his government had joined the peace talks in Madrid last year with the policy that territorial exchange was not a component of the negotiations.

ISRAEL INVITES U.N. TO PLAY FULL ROLE IN REGIONAL TALKS

By Larry Yudelson

UNITED NATIONS, Sept. 24 (JTA) -- Israel has invited the United Nations to play a full role in the multilateral talks on Middle East regional issues, and the world body has gladly accepted.

The subject came up Wednesday evening at a meeting here between Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

Until now, the United Nations has participated in the multilateral talks only as an observer. But Peres told Boutros-Ghali, an Egyptian, that Israel's new Labor government would accept the United Nations as a full participant in the talks, which the foreign minister oversees for Israel.

During the meeting, Boutros-Ghali promised to work toward having anti-Israel resolutions still officially on the books of the U.N. General Assembly removed, such as the one that condemned the Israeli bombing of Iraq's Osirak nuclear reactor in 1981.

The secretary-general also offered his support for Israel's quest to join the Western European and Others regional bloc at the United Nations. Membership in a regional bloc is effectively a precondition for nomination to the Security Council and other prominent U.N. posts.

But the first issue raised was the fate of Israeli prisoners believed held in Lebanon, foremost among them Israeli air force navigator Ron Arad.

Boutros-Ghali reiterated earlier promises to work for the release of missing Israelis, saying he himself was heading the effort on the matter.

PUBLIC URGED NOT TO RAISE HOPES ABOUT MISSING ISRAELI NAVIGATOR

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Sept. 24 (JTA) -- Senior Israeli officials are warning the public not to raise their hopes that new information could lead soon to the release of captive Israeli air force navigator Ron Arad.

Pointing out that similar cases in the past had led to disappointment, they suggested Israelis avoid euphoria over an announcement by Lebanon earlier this week that it believes Arad is alive.

The airman was shot down over Lebanon in 1986 and is believed to have been taken captive by a Shi'ite terrorist organization.

A lawyer actively involved in negotiations on missing Israeli servicemen also cautioned Israelis to lower their expectations.

Uri Slonim said there was "nothing substantive" at this time regarding either Arad or any other missing Israeli soldiers.

On Wednesday, Slonim paid a New Year's call on the mother of the missing airman, Batya Arad.

She declined to comment on the Lebanese announcement, saying she had taken a vow to make no statements until her son returned home.

The words of caution came after Israeli negotiators at the bilateral peace talks in Washington reported Tuesday that they had received word from the Lebanese delegation that their government had "reason to believe that navigator Arad is alive."

On the instructions of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, the Israeli negotiators asked the

Lebanese delegation for further information, but without success as of late Wednesday.

Rabin also reportedly instructed Uri Lubrani, co-chairman of the Israeli team negotiating with Lebanon, to tell his counterpart that Israel regards Lebanon as responsible for providing the information on Arad.

The prime minister said he hoped the Lebanese were serious enough "not to play with the life" of the missing airman.

Rabin indirectly criticized Israel's foreign minister on Thursday for making the Lebanese disclosure public prematurely.

Speaking to army radio, Rabin said: "Reports on the fate of the missing soldiers and the prisoners have been with us throughout the years. The problem is that the story was publicized before the matter was checked."

Earlier in the week, Peres informed reporters in New York about Lebanon's announcement and said at the time he believed Iran might be involved in the case.

Israel believes Arad is being held by one of three Moslem fundamentalist groups: Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad or the Organization of the Oppressed on Earth. Sources here believe he is being held in the Bekaa Valley in the Syrian-dominated eastern part of Lebanon.

Several times over the past few years, Israel has received signals that Arad is alive, giving life to efforts to bring about his release.

POLICE HOLD ISRAELI ARABS SUSPECTED OF MOSHAV ATTACK

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Sept. 24 (JTA) -- In a surprise development, police have detained three Israeli Arabs in connection with the shooting of a farmer working the fields of Moshav Gadish, in Lower Galilee.

Suspicion fell at first on a nearby village in the West Bank after Avraham Cohen, 32, was wounded Wednesday by gunfire from a passing car. He was admitted to Afula Hospital, where his condition was described as stable.

Police later traced the car and its owners to the village of Salim, within Israel's pre-1967 borders, and arrested its owner and his two sons.

News of the arrests came as a surprise to inhabitants of the region, where Israeli Arabs are rarely involved in terror attacks. Salim, most of whose inhabitants work in nearby Afula, has a reputation for peaceful relations with its neighbors.

The attack came as Jerusalem reported several terror assaults over the last few days. Security sources attribute the escalation to the Hamas fundamentalist group, which opposes the peace negotiations currently taking place between Israel and the Palestinians.

A 33-year-old yeshiva student, Hanan Gol, was stabbed and slightly wounded Wednesday while walking through an Old City alley near the Jewish Quarter.

At the same time, in the western part of the city, Sima Kiwiti, 43, was stabbed and suffered a slight wound in her arm. She said she was assaulted by an Arab on emerging from her place of work at an old age home on Toviya Hefetz Street. Both attackers managed to escape.

Police, meanwhile, were holding a Palestinian in connection with the shooting death earlier this week of an Israeli border policeman in East Jerusalem.

WISCONSIN, OHIO ASK HIGH COURT TO REINSTATE HATE-CRIMES LAWS

NEW YORK, Sept. 24 (JTA) -- Wisconsin and Ohio this week separately asked the U.S. Supreme Court to reinstate hate-crimes laws in their states.

The attorneys general appealed decisions by their respective state supreme courts striking down increased penalties for crimes committed out of bigotry.

In Wisconsin, Jewish organizations lined up behind an appeal, filed Monday, against a 5-2 decision in the state Supreme Court last June that found enhanced penalties unconstitutionally penalized speech and thought.

The National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council voted Sunday to join the Milwaukee Jewish Council and Anti-Defamation League in a friend-of-the-court brief urging the high court to hear the appeal.

The theme was echoed Wednesday when the Ohio attorney general filed an appeal urging the U.S. Supreme Court to reinstate Ohio's hate crimes law, struck down by the state's Supreme Court in August in a decision akin to Wisconsin's.

The two appeals, in conjunction with a decision by the state Supreme Court of Oregon in August to uphold a similar hate-crimes law in that state, "make it more likely" that the U.S. Supreme Court will decide later this autumn to hear one of the appeals, said Steven Freeman, ADL's legal director.

He said it was hard to predict if the court would take the Wisconsin or Ohio case or both.

Milwaukee attorney Robert Frieberg, a former president of the Milwaukee Jewish Council, will prepare the amicus brief on behalf of the Jewish organizations, together with the Washington law firm of Chadbourn and Parke and the ADL legal department.

Oregon Decision Cited

NJCRC's signature will represent 13 national and 117 Jewish community agencies throughout the United States, said Jerome Chanes, the umbrella group's co-director for domestic concerns.

Additional signatories will also be sought from among non-Jewish organizations, particularly those that supported passage of the federal Hate Crimes Statistics Act of 1990, Freeman said.

Attorney General James Doyle's brief contends that the Wisconsin high court misunderstood the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in June overturning a hate crimes ordinance in St. Paul, Minn.

Unlike the Wisconsin law, Doyle argues, the St. Paul ordinance targeted certain kinds of speech, "fighting words," based on the content of the expression.

In Ohio, Attorney General Lee Fisher appealed an Aug. 26 state Supreme Court ruling that the state's 1987 ethnic intimidation law violated the Constitution's protection of free speech.

Fisher pointed to the unanimous decision in the Oregon Supreme Court to uphold an ethnic intimidation law and said the U.S. Supreme Court should accept the case because a conflict existed between state courts.

He argued, too, that recent federal court decisions have held that a judge may take into account the harm caused by a racial crime when issuing a sentence.

(Contributing to this report were Leon Cohen of The Wisconsin Jewish Chronicle and the staff of the Cleveland Jewish News.)

ISRAELIS MOVE INTO HIGH GEAR TO PREPARE FOR ROSH HASHANAH

By Michele Chablin

JERUSALEM, Sept. 24 (JTA) -- With Rosh Hashanah set to begin on Sunday night, Israelis are racing the clock -- and each other -- to prepare for the holiday.

Whether in the trendy neighborhood of Baka or the ultra-Orthodox section of Mea She'arim, Jerusalemites are gearing up for the new year.

While Rosh Hashanah means different things to different people, the holiday spirit is universal.

"The atmosphere here is a lot like the Christmas season in America," noted one first-time visitor to the capital this week. "Everyone seems to be in a good mood and ready to spend money on gifts."

Unlike most Diaspora Jews, who confine their gift-giving to Chanukah, Israelis feel obliged to buy expensive New Year's presents for their friends and family. The practice is so widespread, in fact, that most companies give their employees a cash bonus to offset the expense.

Though most shops seemed to have a steady stream of customers this week, many storekeepers complained that sales are down from last year.

"I've been working here 18 years, and I've never seen such a slow holiday season," complained a clerk at the Hamashbir department store in the city center. "Sales were much better in August, even with people out of the country on vacation. I guess the high unemployment rate is filtering down to us," she said.

Business was a bit more brisk in Geula and Mea She'arim, where the ultra-Orthodox tend to shop. Women in wigs and long-sleeved dresses crowded into local shops to buy their children a new holiday outfit and a pair of shoes. The men, meanwhile, searched for a new black coat or a fur-lined hat to wear in the new year.

All About 'New Beginnings'

Those wishing to get a head start on Sukkot could already be seen shopping for lulavim and etrogim in shops along Mea She'arim Street. In one store, several Orthodox men compared green-colored etrogim for shape and texture.

"This is the best time to buy an etrog," said one customer. "There are no crowds and there's a big selection. In a couple of weeks the etrog will turn yellow, just in time for Sukkot."

One place that has been full of crowds is the Machaneh Yehuda open-air market. Considered the least expensive place in the city to buy food, tens of thousands of people jostle one another every day for a bagful of bright red apples and sweet round challahs.

Many of the customers are new immigrants from the former Soviet Union trying to stretch their shekels by buying at the shuk.

For Ludmilla, who immigrated to Israel nine months ago, Rosh Hashanah is a novel concept. "In the Soviet Union, the new year began in January. It's strange to have a new year in the middle of September," she remarked.

Though she knew nothing about the Jewish holidays before making aliyah, she says she is eager to learn about her new country's customs.

"My 10-year-old son came home from school this week and told me about Rosh Hashanah and what it means. While I don't understand all the fine points, I gather that it's about new beginnings," she said. "That is something I can certainly relate to."