

U.S. SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL EXPECTED TO REMAIN STRONG UNDER CLINTON

By Cynthia Mann

States News Service

WASHINGTON, Nov. 3 (JTA) -- While Bill Clinton has promised to refocus the government's attention on domestic priorities, the Arkansas governor who was elected president Tuesday has made it clear he intends to lead an administration deeply engaged in global affairs and actively committed to democratic allies, such as Israel.

In recent months, he has sought to reassure American Jews and Israeli officials that U.S. support for Israel will remain steadfast at a time when the Middle East peace process poses particularly difficult challenges for the Jewish state.

In key foreign policy speeches, Clinton has outlined three principles that will guide his administration: to work with allies to encourage and defend democracy and human rights; to develop a readiness to respond to new global threats with a restructured military; and to re-establish America's economic strength, elevating economic security to the level of national security.

At the same time, he has emphatically rejected what he calls a "divorce" by the Bush administration of foreign policy and moral principles. He has derided the strategic relations President Bush forged with despotic regimes in Panama, Iran and Iraq.

He has also criticized Bush's "hesitation when democratic forces needed our support in challenging the status quo," recalling popular uprisings in China, in the Baltic states and among the Kurds in Iraq.

The president-elect has credited Bush for bringing the Arabs and Israelis to the negotiating table. And he has vowed to assign a high priority to continuing the U.S. brokerage of the peace talks without interruption.

But he has signaled a shift in ideology that has not been lost on the Arabs, many of whom had hoped for a Bush victory Tuesday.

Iraq Could Pose First Challenge

In a speech last month in Milwaukee, Clinton chastised the administration for treating the Arab-Israeli conflict "as just another quarrel between religions and nations, rather than one in which the survival of a democratic ally, Israel, has been at stake."

But insiders say that will not translate into a policy change.

"Clinton's basic point is the United States has an essential mediating role to play, but the parties have to negotiate their own futures," said Peter Edelman, chairman of Americans for Peace Now and a longtime friend of the Clintons.

Analysts believe Clinton's Middle East policy will be tested early in his presidency and that he will respond with a demonstration of strength.

Robert Satloff of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy believes Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein could present the first challenge and that Clinton will be prepared.

"Saddam is in for quite a surprise if he thinks Clinton is more liable to shrink from confrontation" than his predecessor, Satloff said.

"All signs point to his doing what is neces-

sary to seek full enforcement of U.N. resolutions," he said. "Clinton will seek to send a message of firmness."

Satloff and others predict another test will come from the peace talks, where the Palestinians are expected to seize the election as an opportunity to try to renegotiate the ground rules. Again, they say, Clinton will hold firm.

"There is no sign there will be a re-examination or a reassessment," said Satloff. He said Clinton would have a "strong resistance" to changing the framework painstakingly worked out at the start of the peace talks in Madrid a year ago.

But some caution that it is difficult to predict an incoming administration's foreign policy on the basis of election-year rhetoric.

They say that far more telling about Clinton's priorities and ideological propensities in foreign affairs will be the players he names in the coming weeks to execute his foreign policy agenda.

Concern About Carter-Era Holdovers

Throughout the campaign in Little Rock, Clinton has been surrounded at the highest levels by Jews and pro-Israel internationalists who are trusted by the pro-Israel community.

But some Jewish leaders have privately expressed concern about isolationist tendencies among some of those surrounding Clinton and about a few Carter-era holdovers who may be picked to fill key posts in the new administration.

Many Jews remain bitter over concessions demanded from Israel by Carter and Secretary of State Cyrus Vance during their brokerage of the Camp David accords. They also remember Carter's personal crusade for Palestinian human rights.

Clinton's foreign policy crew is mixed, made up of both pro-defense centrists, such as Vice President-Elect Al Gore, and former non-interventionists, who have argued to limit U.S. involvement in crises abroad.

But the watchword is consensus, now that the end of the Cold War has virtually eliminated the old schism between hawks and doves. The election of a Labor government in Israel has also eased long-running tensions between hawks and doves in Middle East policy.

Front and center among Clinton's foreign policy advisers is Samuel (Sandy) Berger, a former Yale Law School classmate of the president-elect who is now an attorney in Washington. Berger, who is Jewish, served on the policy-planning staff of the Carter administration's State Department.

Known as a liberal but pragmatic internationalist, Berger was responsible for building the Clinton foreign policy coalition during the campaign. He succeeded in bring in neoconservatives like Richard Schifter, a pro-Israel hawk who served as assistant secretary of state for human rights in the Reagan and Bush administrations.

Berger, who is likely to occupy a high-level appointment in the new administration, brought into the campaign's circle his former boss at the State Department, Anthony Lake, now a professor at Mount Holyoke College.

Insiders tout Lake as a possible national security adviser.

It is an appointment that would give pause

to some pro-Israel observers, primarily because of Lake's association with the Vance Middle East strategy.

Lake also is remembered for writing a book in which he criticized the pro-Israel lobby for distorting U.S. foreign policy during the 1981 controversy over the sale of AWACS surveillance planes to Saudi Arabia.

Concern Over Warren Christopher

But others say Lake has made a concerted effort to meet with pro-Israel leaders and has convinced them he is solidly pro-Israel. They say he believes the Bush administration has been too hard on America's only democratic ally in the Middle East.

There is more concern about another of Lake's ex-colleagues, Warren Christopher, who is rumored as a possible pick for secretary of state.

Christopher, who was deputy secretary of state under Vance and an enthusiastic proponent of his policy approach, reportedly has made no move to ease any lingering tension between him and the Jewish community.

"The Carter policy created a lot of anxiety in the Jewish community and no one wants to see it return," said one pro-Israel analyst. Christopher, he said, is "the precise embodiment of the policy Bill Clinton is disavowing." His appointment "would send the wrong message."

But Lake and Christopher have their defenders, who say that while they may have an emotional distance from Israel, the dangers they pose have been exaggerated.

Another possible pick for secretary of state that displeases the pro-Israel mainstream is Rep. Lee Hamilton (D-Ind.), who is now slated to take over the chairmanship of the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

Hamilton has a solid pro-Israel record when it comes to foreign aid and arms sales. But the community has noted his strong opposition to Jewish settlements in the Israeli-administered territories, as well as the pro-Palestinian sympathies of his longtime foreign affairs aide, Michael Van Dusen.

Opposition To Gulf War Cited

Undoubtedly more important for Clinton and in Hamilton's disfavor was the congressman's high-profile opposition to the Persian Gulf War.

"It was a highly symbolic vote and conflicts with Bill Clinton's effort to say, 'I'm a different kind of Democrat,'" said the pro-Israel analyst.

Asad Abukhalil, a scholar with the Middle East Institute, said that Arabs, worried about a pro-Israel tilt in Clinton's inner circle, are heartened when they hear the names of Christopher and Hamilton bandied about, because they signal evenhandedness.

"The total picture will be clear with the appointment of the secretary of state and assistant secretary for the Near East," he said.

Another key member of the Berger clan is Michael Mandelbaum, a Johns Hopkins University scholar of the former Soviet Union who is Jewish and strongly supports a highly engaged pro-Israel policy. He is likely to be named to a senior advisory post.

Other Jewish advisers close to Clinton are Martin Indyk, executive director of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy and former policy analyst with the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, and Professor Steven Spiegel of the University of California at Los Angeles.

RABIN TELLS SETTLERS ON GOLAN ISRAEL MUST GIVE BACK SOME LAND By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Nov. 3 (JTA) -- Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin visited unhappy settlers on the Golan Heights on Tuesday and told them Israel must give back some land to secure a peace treaty with Syria.

While reiterating that he did not want a complete withdrawal from the strategic plateau, he pointed out that there is a vast range of possibilities between a full pullback and giving up no land whatsoever.

"It is my moral duty, as prime minister and as Yitzhak Rabin, to make every effort to reach peace," he said.

But leaders of the settlers said Rabin "has no mandate" to negotiate any withdrawal at all, and they pledged to oppose government plans to do so.

One leader, Knesset member Yehuda Wollman of Rabin's own Labor Party, said government plans to return land to the Syrians "take the taste out of our lives."

Rabin compared his record favorably with that of the Likud government, which returned all of Sinai to the Egyptians and demolished the Jewish settlement of Yamit.

He said he would not repeat the Likud "precedent" of total withdrawal. And he noted pointedly that he had "not destroyed or withdrawn a single settlement anywhere" in the course of his public career.

He said Israel awaits a response from Damascus on its vision of the contents of a peace treaty between the two countries before considering a pullback of any kind.

Moreover, Jerusalem insists a treaty with Syria remain independent of Israeli negotiations with other Arab partners in the peace process. Syria has so far failed to satisfy Israel on either of these cardinal points, he said.

Settler leaders appeared especially hurt by the prime minister's statement that the number of jobless in Israel is 10 times the number of Golan settlers, and that unemployment is the government's top priority.

Before visiting the Golan, Rabin visited the Kiryat Shmona home demolished last week in a Katyusha rocket attack. He was accompanied by Interior Minister Arye Deri and senior officers.

ACADEMIC APPOINTED CABINET SECRETARY By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Nov. 3 (JTA) -- An academic expert on Spanish history, who until recently was Israel's ambassador to Madrid, has been appointed Cabinet secretary.

Shlomo Ben-Ami accepted the post from Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on condition that he be recognized as the main government spokesman, the newspaper Yediot Aharonot reported.

That means government ministers will no longer hold impromptu press interviews after meetings of the Cabinet -- unless invited to address reporters by the Cabinet Secretary.

Ben-Ami, who is personally close to Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, takes over from Elyakim Rubinstein, who was appointed to the post by former Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir.

Rubinstein reportedly will remain as head of the negotiating team handling peace talks with the Jordanians and the Palestinians.

ITALIAN PREMIER MEETS WITH JEWS AFTER ANTI-SEMITIC INCIDENTS

By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME, Nov. 3 (JTA) -- Italian Prime Minister Giuliano Amato met this week with the head of the Italian Jewish community to express solidarity with Italy's Jews amid a spate of anti-Semitic incidents and a poll saying one in 10 Italians believes the Holocaust never happened.

Amato told Tullia Zevi, president of the Union of Italian Jewish Communities, that the government was alert to the need for attention to "a worrisome recrudescence" of anti-Semitic acts.

The meeting took place Tuesday, a day after 25 Jewish shop owners in outlying districts of Rome found yellow stickers bearing Stars of David and the slogan, "Out with Zionists from Italy," pasted on their shutters.

It also emerged that a dozen gravestones at a Jewish cemetery in Finale Emilia, near Modena and Ferrara in northern Italy, had been vandalized last week, and that the incident had been kept quiet in an effort to avert copycat attacks.

Both incidents coincided with the publication in a major newsweekly, L'Espresso, of a controversial survey indicating that one in 10 Italians is anti-Semitic.

Amato expressed the support of the Italian government for Italy's Jews as "an integral part" of the national community and praised the Jewish community's "incalculable ethical and civic" contribution to national and European culture.

But anti-Semitic manifestations are alarming community leaders.

"We are very concerned," Rabbi Raffaello Lattes of Modena was quoted as saying. "These episodes get repeated. If word spreads that this happened, it could spark off other incidents."

'We Are Having Ugly Surprises'

The anti-Semitic action in Rome "had only one motive: to raise the level of anti-Jewish prejudice in Italy," said Zevi.

One shopkeeper whose shutters were defaced with the yellow stickers, said, "We are having ugly surprises from our fellow Italians."

Franco Carraro, the mayor of Rome, vowed official action. "This episode offends Rome and one of its oldest communities, which 50 years ago paid an extremely high tribute with the deportation of 2,000 Roman Jews," he said.

"I myself feel humiliated and indignant and I am instructing police to remove the stickers and make sure such actions do not occur again," he added. The mayor said he would take other initiatives "in order to get rid of the ghosts of intolerance and prejudice."

Meanwhile, politicians and commentators reacted sharply to the public opinion survey published in L'Espresso magazine.

"The results of the survey on anti-Semitism are chilling," said Giovanni Spadolini, president of the Senate and a longtime supporter of Israel.

"How is it possible to maintain the Jews are not real Italians?" he added, referring to the fact that more than a third of those surveyed felt that way.

Many commentators, including Jews, however, said the survey was distorted or that the responses were interpreted mistakenly.

"Limiting the survey to attitudes about Jews, isolated from other elements that society regards as 'different' puts the credibility and usefulness of the results in a different light," said Zevi.

AUSTRIAN LEADERS CONDEMN JEWISH CEMETERY DESECRATION

By Marta S. Halpert

VIENNA, Nov. 3 (JTA) -- Austrian leaders have condemned the desecration of a Jewish cemetery in the eastern part of the country that was described as the largest such act of vandalism since the end of World War II.

President Thomas Klestil voiced abhorrence at the incident, in which vandals daubed swastikas and anti-Semitic slogans on 80 of the 120 graves at Eisenstadt, a once-thriving Jewish community on the Hungarian border.

Similar sentiments were voiced by Austrian Chancellor Franz Vranitzky after the desecration was discovered Saturday morning.

Police found a pamphlet signed by the "Racist Socialist Aryan Resistance Movement" saluting the head of the right-wing Freedom Party, Jorg Haider. Tombstones were sprayed with "Hitler forgot too many" and other anti-Semitic slogans.

Police urged the public to phone in any information on the incident over a special hotline.

Only a few Jewish families today live in Eisenstadt, whose Jewish museum reflects the long history of the community.

Jewish communal leaders visited the cemetery and condemned the vandals' act of barbarism.

"Jews have always been the first victims of xenophobia, but never the last," said Paul Grosz, president of the Austrian Jewish community.

Although top government leaders condemned the vandalism, Nazi-hunter Simon Wiesenthal expressed his dismay that it took them over 48 hours to do so.

Public action was proposed by the chairman of the Green-Alternatives in the Vienna City Council, Peter Pilz, who called on prominent politicians to join in cleaning the cemetery site.

Freedom Party leader Haider distanced himself from the deed but said the government and its coalition partners encouraged such acts by opposing his policies. The right-wing figure recently offered a 12-point program for restricting the influx of foreigners into Austria.

Local police forces had been alerted by federal security authorities that right-wing extremists were planning actions on the occasion of the 42nd anniversary of Kristallnacht on Nov. 9, when synagogues in Germany and Austria were torched.

NEW EMBASSY OPENS IN BUENOS AIRES

By David Landau

JERUSALEM (JTA) -- Foreign Minister Shimon Peres saluted the friendship of the Argentine people with Israel on the occasion of the inauguration of new Israeli Embassy offices in Buenos Aires last week.

The new premises replace the embassy building destroyed in a March 17 bomb explosion that killed 29 people and injured more than 400.

In a message to embassy personnel, Peres paid tribute to the "expressions of support and solidarity" by Argentine President Carlos Menem, his government and the people of Argentina following the bomb attack.

Menem joined tens of thousands of Argentines in a demonstration two days after the blast to protest the bombing, which killed four Israelis, including deputy mission head David Ben-Raphael, and four local staffers.

**BEHIND THE HEADLINES:
BEING A REFUGEE IN GERMANY TODAY
MEANS FEAR AND RISK OF VIOLENCE**

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

BERLIN (JTA) -- What does it mean to be a refugee in Germany today?

For Gamal Mukhta, one of about 500,000 asylum-seekers who have arrived in the country since the beginning of 1991, it means spending long, empty days in a refugee hostel in the East German city of Potsdam, afraid to go out for fear of being beaten by racists.

Mukhta's face, which still bears a jagged scar across his nose, was sliced open by knife-wielding skinheads several months ago as he returned to the hostel. He spent two weeks in the hospital recovering from the damage.

When he tried to file a complaint with the police, they just laughed and told him not to bother, said Mukhta, a native of Sudan.

Now he waits his days out in the prefabricated two-story hostel. Ninety-eight people from 21 different nations share the warren of rooms at the Potsdam hostel, where the corrugated-metal walls and ceiling are covered with peeling paint.

All are scared. And with good reason.

As German politicians discuss possible solutions to their "refugee problem," violent incidents against asylum-seekers all across Germany, particularly in the East, continue to mushroom.

By mid-September, more than 2,200 reported acts of violence had been committed against foreigners this year, according to the president of the federal criminal police, Hans-Ludwig Zachert.

Violence Resonates Among Jews

This wave of xenophobic violence resonates deeply in the collective Jewish psyche, which is still deeply scarred from the events of the 1930s and '40s, when a similar scapegoating of minorities resulted in the Holocaust. Jews around the world have expressed concern over the recent events here.

Only recently, after months of tension, have government officials pledged to take concrete steps against the law-breakers. And their pledges have yet to be realized.

Over the past few months, rather than crack down against those causing the violence, the government has tried to alleviate tensions by evacuating the refugees from hostels when there are riots against their presence.

And now legislators are working to amend the constitutional article that gives refugees from the Balkan states, Central Europe, Africa and Asia the right to seek asylum in Germany.

The reluctance to crack down has had a price: 10 refugees have died and countless others have been injured.

And according to observers, the government's lethargic response to the terror is being interpreted by the law-breakers as tacit permission to continue.

"It is encouragement," said Dr. Gerhard Schoenberner, director of Wannsee House, the Berlin villa where Nazis planned the Final Solution to "the Jewish problem" in 1942, which now serves as a museum about the Holocaust.

"What can these neo-Nazis learn but that it is an invitation to the next city to do the same?" asked Schoenberner.

Complicating the problem is rhetoric used by politicians to appease voters fed up with high unemployment and special treatment for refugees.

"Certain politicians use language I can only understand as encouraging violent ideas," said Schoenberner, noting that some have refused to condemn the violence. "They are starting to talk like people from the extreme right."

The perpetrators of the violence are mostly skinheads and neo-Nazis, groups with a lot of overlap whose combined numbers have remained fairly steady in Germany at about 40,000 since 1988, according to data from the Office for the Protection of the Constitution.

Around the country, in the West but more so in the East, the extremists find Germans who are unsure of the future, fearful of burgeoning financial difficulties and resentful of the financial benefits that asylum-seekers receive from the government.

Liberal Asylum Law

Violence against foreigners has come to be accepted as a legitimate expression of the escalating tension.

Asylum-seekers are permitted into Germany by dint of one of the most liberal asylum laws in the world.

All one must do to apply for asylum is to cross the border into Germany and ask for it. Asylum-seekers get social welfare benefits, housing and food, until their cases are decided, which takes an average of 13 months but can stretch on as long as five years.

The cost to Germany of supporting asylum-seekers in 1991 was about \$4 billion, and in 1992 the cost is expected to reach as high as \$6.7 billion, according to Eduard Lintner, junior secretary of the interior.

Fewer than 5 percent of asylum-seekers' applications are approved, but only 4 percent of those whose applications are rejected are deported. Many whose applications are rejected destroy their passports, without which their home country refuses to accept them. They become people without a state and stay on in Germany illegally.

Resentment is most palpable against immigrants who have cultural norms that do not meld into German culture, notably Gypsies and Turks.

"If someone wants to be a German, he has to be a 'real' German. Germans like to live in a Christian-oriented culture. They don't like to live among non-Germans," Dr. Gerd Langguth, the European Community representative in Germany, said in an interview in Bonn.

Another element adding to the tension is the local and regional governments' strategies for settling the asylum-seekers.

Hundreds of refugees from a dozen different cultures are routinely installed in barracks-like buildings with only the barest of toilet and cooking facilities, in the middle of dense apartment complexes.

Residents Cheer Skinheads

In Rostock, where five nights of rioting at the end of August included the firebombing of a hostel in which 150 people lived, local residents vented their frustration by applauding the skinheads, cheering them on.

"Out of ignorance or bad intentions, the city administration in Rostock put all foreigners together in a central living area, though they knew it would cause problems," said Schoenberner of Wannsee House.

"There were no toilets, nothing. It was completely overcrowded," he said. "It ends with everything dirty, begging, stealing."