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**ISRAEL BRACES FOR FIGHT AT U.N.
IN WAKE OF HIGH COURT'S RULING**

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Jan. 28 (JTA) -- Israel is bracing itself for a battle in the United Nations over proposed sanctions against the Jewish state, following a decision by the country's highest court to uphold the temporary expulsion last month of 415 Palestinian activists from the administered territories.

At the United Nations, the Palestine Liberation Organization has already begun circulating a draft resolution imposing sanctions on Israel for failing to comply with an earlier Security Council measure calling for the deportees' immediate return.

Arab states were pushing for the council to convene as early as Friday. But Israeli officials said no session had been scheduled and felt it unlikely that the body's 15 members would reach consensus on further action that quickly.

The much-awaited ruling by Israel's High Court of Justice, handed down Thursday morning, backed the government's Dec. 17 move to expel for up to two years the group of Palestinians, accused of leading Islamic fundamentalist organizations in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

However, the court also demanded that the government allow each deportee the right to appeal his expulsion in person before a military tribunal.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's government hailed the seven justices' unanimous decision as a "retroactive vindication" of the deportation and said it would immediately comply with the court's requirements regarding the deportees' right of appeal.

The government quickly announced the establishment of 14 military appeal tribunals and said the army would facilitate confidential meetings between the deportees and their attorneys.

The deportees are currently living in a makeshift tent camp on a stretch of land in southern Lebanon between border checkpoints manned on one side by the Israeli army and its allied militia, the South Lebanon Army, and on the other side by the Lebanese army.

Palestinians Say They Won't Appeal

Reports from the Israeli checkpoint at Zumriya said that Israeli army bulldozers were already in action, building meeting places for the deportees to talk to their attorneys.

The army announced it would permit any deportee to submit an appeal starting Friday morning, when soldiers were to be posted at the checkpoint to meet with representatives of the deportees.

Israel has also asked the Red Cross to help relay information back and forth among the deportees, their attorneys and Israeli officials.

The government said it would independently review the cases of those deportees who chose not to submit appeals -- which might include most of the group, judging from the initial Palestinian reactions.

A spokesman for the deportees, Abdel Azziz Rantissi, responded to the court ruling by declaring there would be no appeals. Rantissi referred

to Rabin and to the court justices as terrorists and Nazis, saying the world would now wait to see whether the Israeli court or the U.N. Security Council was the more powerful.

The court decision did not give the government the blanket right to expel Palestinians without affording a prior opportunity to appeal the order. In fact, the court struck down a government proposal to introduce a regulation to that effect.

However, the court held that the individual deportation orders issued against each of the 415 deportees were valid under existing legislation since the ability to appeal the orders beforehand was not absolutely necessary if extenuating circumstances existed.

To the government's delight, the court, in its 40-page judgment, dwelt at length on the dangerous characteristics of Hamas and Islamic Jihad, the Islamic fundamentalists groups to which most of the deportees belong.

Rabin, in a near-jubilant speech to his Labor Party executive committee in Tel Aviv, said Thursday that this part of the judgment was the finest description of the dangers of Islamic fundamentalism he ever read.

Rabin Meets With U.S. Envoy

Saying the document would help Israel explain its actions to the outside world, the prime minister gave orders to have it translated into English and other languages.

He scoffed at "media scribblers" who predicted the government would compromise on the issue.

But in an indication of concern over the diplomatic ramifications of the court decision, Rabin met Thursday with the U.S. ambassador to Israel, William Harrop. There were no immediate details of the meeting.

On the right of the political spectrum in Israel, there was rejoicing over the court ruling, with Likud Knesset member Benjamin Netanyahu voicing "gratification" at the result.

Rafael Eitan, leader of the right-wing Tsomet party, urged the government not to allow the deportees back, even in order to lodge their appeals. Eitan said Israel should make arrangements to hold any appeal hearings inside Lebanon.

At the other end of the spectrum, Israeli attorney Leah Tsemel, who defended several of the deportees before the High Court, castigated the ruling for opening the way to mass deportations in the future.

Another civil rights attorney defending the Palestinians, Avigdor Feldman, said the government should allow the deportees back to Israel to appear before appeal tribunals held here.

Most Palestinian and Israeli Arab leaders were critical in their reactions to the court decision. Hanan Ashrawi, spokeswoman for the Palestinian peace negotiations team, said justice had not been served.

A group of Jewish and Arab demonstrators who have pitched a tent outside the Prime Minister's Office in Jerusalem in sympathy with the deportees said they would stay put as long as the deportees are forced to stay in southern Lebanon.

(Contributing to this report was JTA correspondent Larry Yudelson at the United Nations.)

U.S. TRYING FOR DIPLOMATIC SOLUTION AS PRESSURE FOR U.N. SANCTIONS MOUNTS

By Deborah Kalb
States News Service

WASHINGTON, Jan. 28 (JTA) -- The U.S. government is still trying to find a diplomatic resolution to the crisis surrounding Israel's temporary expulsion of 415 Palestinian activists from the administered territories, despite an Israeli court ruling Thursday upholding the move and mounting pressure at the United Nations to impose sanctions against the Jewish state.

"We want to pursue this diplomatically," State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said at his daily briefing Thursday.

"Those diplomatic efforts have to be given a chance to succeed," he said. "We don't think it's time for a debate in the Security Council on sanctions."

A vote by the U.N. Security Council on sanctions against Israel would put the Clinton administration in an awkward position on several fronts.

Since the end of the Cold War, the United States has avoided exercising its prerogative to veto Security Council resolutions, and the Clinton administration is reluctant to do so as its first major foreign policy move.

A U.S. veto would further inflame Arab countries, already upset over the deportations, and put the future of the fragile Arab-Israeli peace talks in jeopardy.

On the other hand, Washington does not want to break precedent and allow the United Nations to impose sanctions on Israel, thereby angering a close ally and its supporters in the United States.

The U.S. government does "not want sanctions against Israel," said Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

"No U.S. government has ever voted for sanctions" against Israel, said Hoenlein. And on the basis of previous statements by President Clinton and Secretary of State Warren Christopher, he said he did not think the United States was about to do so now.

Senators Circulating Letter

At the State Department, spokesman Boucher again refused Thursday to discuss the likelihood of a U.S. veto, saying only that the administration is "working this diplomatically."

While Israeli officials remain confident the United States will veto a sanctions resolution if it comes up for a vote, others would like to see the administration make an explicit commitment to do so.

On Capitol Hill, Sens. Connie Mack (R-Fla.) and Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-N.Y.) were circulating a letter to Christopher urging the United States to "veto any resolution that unjustifiably condemns Israel, particularly one that does not specify and condemn the (Arab) violence that precipitated Israel's actions."

By Thursday evening, 58 senators had signed the letter, and more were expected to do so Friday morning.

In the House of Representatives, four members sent a private letter to Christopher on Thursday that strongly urged a U.S. veto of "any Security Council resolution imposing sanctions on Israel," saying such a move would "encourage

violence against Israel, undermine the peace process and strengthen a terrorist organization committed to Israel's destruction."

The letter was initiated by Rep. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) and signed by Reps. Nita Lowey (D-N.Y.), Clay Shaw (R-Fla.) and Peter Deutsch (D-Fla.).

The American Jewish Committee sent a letter to Clinton expressing the group's "grave concern about the possibility of further United Nations action" against Israel.

The letter urged the administration to stand by its stated view that "the best approach is to seek the resolution of the current problem through available diplomatic channels rather than any ultimately counterproductive public confrontation."

The Conference of Presidents issued a statement on behalf of its 50 member groups urging the United States and other members of the Security Council to "reject the hypocritical anti-Israel resolution."

Hoenlein said the Jewish community had been in "regular consultation" with the U.S. government on the issue.

Israeli officials here were also said to be in constant consultations with the U.S. administration.

On the Arab side, Lebanon's ambassador to Washington was scheduled to meet Thursday with Edward Djerejian, the U.S. assistant secretary of state for Near East and South Asian affairs.

Meanwhile, there were unconfirmed reports that Secretary of State Christopher would accompany U.N. Ambassador Madeleine Albright to the United Nations for meetings Monday.

Although there was talk of convening the Security Council as early as Friday, Israeli officials said it was highly unlikely that consensus on a sanctions resolution could be orchestrated that quickly.

A State Department official also cast doubt on whether any substantive action would take place Monday, pointing out that the first day of the month is generally reserved for consultations by the new head of the rotating Security Council presidency.

The official added, however, that anything was possible.

ENVOY TO ASSUME U.S. POST ON TIME

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Jan. 28 (JTA) -- Itamar Rabinovich's appointment as Israel's next ambassador to the United States appears to have cleared its final hurdle with the High Court of Justice's rejection of a petition to block the posting.

Knesset member Gonen Segev of the right-wing opposition Tsomet party had petitioned the court to stop the Tel Aviv University professor from taking up his post.

Segev's complaint was connected to charges that Rabinovich mishandled tax payments on income earned when he was working in America.

A three-justice panel dismissed the petition, holding that Rabinovich's brush with the income tax authorities, which ended with a monetary settlement, did not give the court the right to intervene in the Cabinet's move to name him ambassador.

The way is now clear for Rabinovich, who also heads Israel's delegation to the peace talks with Syria, to take up his job in Washington early in February, as scheduled.

POPE TO MEET WITH EL AL GROUP TO DISCUSS ISRAEL PILGRIMAGES

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Jan. 28 (JTA) -- In an unprecedented move, Pope John-Paul II has agreed to meet with a delegation of El Al representatives to discuss Christian pilgrimages to Israel.

The Vatican decision, reported by the Israeli daily Ma'ariv this week, reflects the growing contact between Israel and the Vatican, and their gradual progress toward better relations.

Representatives of Israel's national airline have gathered in Rome to investigate ways of encouraging higher levels of Christian pilgrimage to Israel.

Tourism to Israel is already at an all-time high. In 1992, 1,499,200 tourists arrived in Israel, a 60 percent increase over 1991 and a 9 percent increase over the previous record year of 1987, according to figures in the newspaper Davar.

Last year, 23 percent of the tourists came from the United States, 11 percent from Germany, and 10 percent from both Britain and from France, the reports said.

COURT RULES EL AL MUST GRANT GAY PARTNERS SPOUSAL BENEFITS

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Jan. 28 (JTA) -- Israel's national airline, El Al, must grant free tickets to homosexual partners of its flight attendants just as it would for legal spouses, according to a court ruling issued this week.

The court ruling is being carefully studied in Israel because it might set a wider precedent for benefits granted to the "permanent partners" of employees.

A specified number of free or discounted tickets are routinely issued to airline employees and their spouses under employment benefit packages offered by the companies.

The court dispute arose out of an El Al company rule stipulating that if an employee signs a declaration that he or she has a binding relationship with a "common law" wife or husband, then that partner should be recognized as a spouse eligible for the benefit of free tickets.

The company also included permanent partners that could not be married to the employee because the couple could not legally marry. In Israel, such a situation could result if one of them could not obtain a religious get, or divorce, from a previous spouse, or if the male was a Kohen and the woman a divorcee.

The Tel Aviv District Labor Court ruled that the company could not discriminate between these situations, where heterosexual partners could not marry in Israel's religious courts because of various technicalities, and unmarried partners who could not marry because they are of the same sex.

So far, only one flight attendant has filed suit against El Al, after his request for a free ticket for his gay partner was rejected.

If others wish to receive the same benefits, they will have to sign a declaration asserting they have a "binding relationship" with the given partner, the court ruled.

Among the consequences of the ruling that the El Al management is now studying are fears that its religious passengers might be offended by a company policy granting free tickets to gay partners of flight attendants.

ADMITTED NAZI LEAVES THE U.S. RATHER THAN FACE DEPORTATION

WASHINGTON, Jan. 28 (JTA) -- A Chicago-area man who acknowledged he was an SS guard at a Nazi concentration camp has voluntarily left the United States rather than face deportation hearings.

Michael Schmidt, who was stripped of his U.S. citizenship three years ago, left the country for Austria, from which he planned to go to Germany, the Justice Department announced Thursday.

He promised never to return to the United States.

Schmidt, 69, a retired school janitor from Lincolnwood, Ill., signed an agreement three years ago with the Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations saying he had participated in Nazi-sponsored persecution at the Sachsenhausen concentration camp in Germany. He admitted having been a member of the SS Death's Head Battalion.

The Sachsenhausen camp was the scene of many atrocities, including killings by various means and grotesque medical experiments.

Although he initially denied the government's charges against him, Schmidt later acknowledged he had lied about his wartime activities when he applied for admission to the United States in 1952 and on his citizenship application.

Deportation proceedings against Schmidt were begun in December 1991. Last June, he agreed to leave the country.

JAN GIES, WHO HID ANNE FRANK, DEAD IN AMSTERDAM AT AGE 87

By Henriette Boas

AMSTERDAM, Jan. 27 (JTA) -- Jan Gies, the man who helped hide Anne Frank and her family from the Nazis in the Amsterdam "secret annex," died Tuesday at the age of 87.

Gies, together his wife Miep, helped hide the Frank family and four other Jews in an upstairs hidden loft above Otto Frank's own business from July 1942 until August 1944, when the entire group was discovered by the German Gestapo.

Anne later died at the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. All but Otto Frank perished in concentration camps. He returned to the annex behind the bookcase after the war and retrieved Anne's diary.

The moving Holocaust story of how the non-Jewish Gies couple protected the Franks has been unforgettably etched in history by the surviving diary of the teen-age Anne. "The Diary of Anne Frank" has been published around the world and translated into scores of different languages.

Reacting to news of Gies' death, Abraham Foxman, the national director of the Anti-Defamation League, said in New York, "The only light in the dark of the murderous Nazi regime were those like Jan Gies who risked their lives to protect Jews."

The ADL honored the couple in 1987 with its Courage to Care award. The couple also received an award in 1988 from the Yad Vashem Holocaust museum and memorial in Jerusalem.

The Gies couple for many years shunned publicity, but the American author Allison Leslie Gold eventually persuaded Miep Gies to tell her story.

Miep's recounting of the story, "Anne Frank Remembered," was published in English in 1987.

AMERICAN ZIONISTS FACE KEY MEETING HOPING FOR RENEWAL OF MOVEMENT

By Larry Yudelson

NEW YORK, Jan. 28 (JTA) -- America's Zionist organizations are girding themselves for what may be a critical chance to re-emerge as major players in American Jewish life.

Once, they represented the vanguard of support for a Jewish state, fighting against the many non-Zionist Jewish groups who were cool or even hostile prior to the creation of the State of Israel.

But with support for the State of Israel having become an almost universal assumption in the Jewish community since the 1967 Middle East war, Zionism as a separate movement has been increasingly eclipsed.

Even veteran Zionists are saying that the future of the movement rests on the measures expected to be approved in Miami at what is being billed as the first American Zionist Congress, to be held Jan. 31-Feb. 2.

Among the changes to be put for a vote will be the reorganization of the American Zionist Federation, the umbrella body for the American Zionist groups such as Hadassah, the Zionist Organization of America and the Association of Reform Zionists of America.

The new body hopes to provide a central address for Zionist activities that have until now been distributed among the American umbrella group, American representatives of the World Zionist Organization, and the Israelis sent by the WZO to carry out activities in the United States.

The revised organization will be called the American Zionist Movement Inc., with the explicit wish that with the new name will come movement.

The new organizational structure will also encourage the participation of newcomers to the movement, since positions in the Movement, unlike those in the Federation, will not depend on long-time involvement with one of the constituent Zionist organizations.

Movement Turns To Reich

And in a recognition of the need for fresh blood, the American movement, which once boasted Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis and Rabbi Stephen Wise as leaders, is now turning to someone from outside its ranks to be its next president.

Seymour Reich, the former chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, is expected to be elected to that post in Miami.

Zionists from across the political spectrum express the hope that Reich will both inject vitality into the movement and lend it the prominence he achieved while heading American Jewry's leading umbrella group.

"It's a new ballgame now with Seymour Reich," said Rabbi Louis Bernstein, veteran leader of the Orthodox Religious Zionists of America, which is a member of the Zionist Federation.

In an interview in the Zionist offices in New York, Reich stated his intention "to claim our rightful place as a strong and vivified entity, capable of acting decisively. 'The Zionist movement is a sleeping giant,' he said.

Currently, the Zionist Federation has five staff members in New York, and offices in Chicago and Los Angeles. Reich intends to add a New York-based staffer to deal with political activity.

"We intend to be heard on issues relating to anti-Semitism, relating to U.S. and Israel, and to bring a different viewpoint than other organizations, which is the Israeli experience," said Reich.

He hopes as well to re-open regional offices closed in recent years due to financial problems.

"We want to better market the need for American Jews to spend time in Israel and send their children there, to promote Jewish-Zionist education, and to relate the commonality of Israel and the U.S. in terms of democratic values and culture," he said.

The problem for the movement, however, is that these goals are no longer the monopoly of the Zionist organizations. Instead, they have become increasingly the consensus view among Jewish organizations across the board.

"They've won the war," said an organization official who raises money for Israel under the federation, rather than Zionist, banner. "They should declare victory and go home."

'Israel Is The Only Focus'

The United Jewish Appeal, for example, has committed \$250,000 annually toward a program, sponsored by the Montreal-based CRB Foundation, aimed at making a trip to Israel a rite of passage for American Jewish youth.

Karen Rubinstein, executive director of the Zionist Federation and soon of the Zionist Movement, responds with this distinction: "For Zionist groups, Israel is almost the only focus. For other institutions, it's almost faddish. The Zionist movement always is, and always will be, dedicated to Israel, whether it's popular or not."

And unlike the Conference of Presidents, for example, the Zionist umbrella is designed not so much to represent American Jewry in political capitals, but rather to coordinate efforts to nurture the grass roots. It is an emphasis expected to be renewed under Reich.

"Federations have to understand that we're part of the amcha (the masses)," said Reich. "The community is not only those who raise the money, but the organizations that have a grass-roots constituency in Jewish life."

But one clear vote of no confidence in the American Zionist organizations has come from Israel itself. When it comes to fund raising, for example, Israel's Labor Party has bypassed the Labor Zionist Alliance, its affiliate within the Zionist Federation.

Instead, the Labor Party turned to Friends of Labor Israel, an independent organization that lies outside the Zionist framework.

At the same time, the Zionist movement has lost its distinctive ideological edge. Unlike the more strident demands of classical Zionist thinkers that the Diaspora was doomed to extinction, and that emigration to Israel was required of all Jews, the current definition of Zionism, as approved by the World Zionist Organization, is more modest.

Its platform, the Jerusalem Program, affirms "the centrality of Israel in Jewish life" and "the ingathering of the Jewish people."

The problem is that "if everybody's a Zionist, then in a way nobody's a Zionist," conceded Arieh Lebowitz, a leader of Americans for Progressive Israel, which is a member of the Zionist Federation.

Still, Lebowitz and other members of the young guard of the Zionist movement are cautiously optimistic that Reich may be able to reinvigorate the movement and turn it around.