

**ISRAEL HOPES U.S. MOVE WILL BRING PALESTINIANS BACK TO PEACE TALKS**  
By Cynthia Mann

JERUSALEM, Feb. 25 (JTA) -- Israeli leaders are hoping a U.S. decision to issue invitations for a ninth round of Middle East peace talks will bring the Palestinians back to the negotiating table.

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher announced Thursday that invitations for the talks, to take place in April, will be issued shortly.

Christopher made the announcement in Geneva, where he met with his Russian counterpart a day after completing his weeklong visit to the Middle East.

But the U.S. secretary was evasive when asked if he had a firm commitment from the Palestinians to attend the talks.

In Jerusalem, the Palestinian negotiating delegation issued a statement saying that "while no final agreements have been reached, we are still engaged in ongoing discussions and hope to be able to solve outstanding issues in the near future."

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said Christopher's announcement put the burden of responsibility on the Palestinians "to come back to the reality of the situation" and return to the peace talks.

The Palestinian statement appeared to be more positive than ones issued earlier this week, which still demanded a full resolution of the crisis over the 415 Palestinians whom Israel deported to Lebanon in December.

Earlier this month, Israel offered to take back 101 of the deportees immediately and the rest by the end of the year. That plan was backed by the United States but rejected by the Palestinians as insufficient.

On Thursday, Israeli leaders reiterated that no further concessions would be made.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said in Tel Aviv that if the Palestinians are hoping for changes in the American-Israeli understanding, "they can forget about it."

But Rabin emphasized that, in accordance with the plan, all deportees would be allowed to return to the administered territories by the end of the year.

**No Plans For Dialogue With PLO**

Israel Television reported that the government is also considering allowing Palestinians who were permanently exiled years ago to return.

But it said Rabin has rejected a Palestinian demand that Israel renounce the future use of deportations as a punitive measure against the Palestinians.

"I don't enjoy deportations," the prime minister said. But he added: "If the level of violence is reduced, there will be no deportations."

Rabin expressed the hope that the Americans and the Russians would take the necessary steps to reconvene the peace talks and that the fate of the peace process would not be determined by Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasir Arafat.

Palestinian spokespersons said they needed

to get approval from Arafat and the PLO leadership before agreeing to return to the talks.

Christopher reportedly told Palestinian leaders this week that he regards the PLO as a group with terrorist tendencies and that the United States presently has no intention of reviving the dialogue with the organization that was suspended in June 1990.

A senior U.S. official traveling with Christopher told reporters that the secretary bluntly told the Palestinian delegation about this American position.

The official told reporters: "We think the PLO is an organization that is subject to the terrorist label in the sense that it is a part of an organization with terrorist tendencies."

The statements are significant because they are the first clear indication of the Clinton administration's stance on the PLO.

In Geneva, Christopher and Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev spoke of their two countries' intention to continue co-hosting the peace talks.

In a joint statement, Christopher and Kozyrev said: "The co-sponsors are convinced that at this point all sides must take additional steps to realize a historic opportunity to make progress toward a comprehensive, just and lasting Arab-Israeli peace settlement based on United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338."

"Russia and the United States agreed to intensify their role as honest brokers in the negotiations to promote forward movement in the peace process."

**CHRISTOPHER PRESSED SYRIA ON JEWS, REPORTEDLY GOT 'FIRM COMMITMENT'**  
By Cynthia Mann

JERUSALEM, Feb. 25 (JTA) -- U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher discussed at length the fate of Syrian Jews with Syrian President Hafez Assad during his visit to Damascus last weekend, sources here have confirmed.

They said Christopher followed up on the subject in additional discussions with Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk al-Sharaa.

"Christopher made it clear that the plight of Syrian Jews is one of the important considerations in the relationship between the United States and Syria," said Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, which was holding its annual mission here this week.

Since last October, Syria has all but stopped issuing travel visas allowing Jews to leave the country. But Syrian officials insist there has been no change in the policy of allowing Jews to leave, which began in April 1992.

There are about 1,450 Jews remaining in Syria, and some 1,000 of them are seeking travel visas.

Reports following Christopher's visit to Damascus said that Assad had given the Americans a "firm commitment" on reinstating the travel rights for Jews.

During the presidential campaign, Bill Clinton vowed to be tough with Syria on the issue of the Syrian Jewish community.

The meeting in Damascus is seen as a clear

sign he is making good on the pledge and assigning it a high priority.

Hoenlein said that Christopher made it clear to the Syrians "that the U.S. government expects them to live up to their previous commitments" and grant Jews visas to leave the country.

"The message was that verbal assurances not matched by actions" will not be accepted by the new administration, Hoenlein said.

# **ISRAEL MUTE ON RUSSIAN REPORT ON STOCKPILING OF NUCLEAR ARMS**

**By Deborah Kalb  
States News Service**

WASHINGTON, Feb. 25 (JTA) -- Israeli officials are dismissing but not explicitly denying the accuracy of a Russian intelligence report that asserts the Jewish state could have stockpiled between 100 and 200 nuclear weapons since 1970.

An English translation of the report was made public this week by U.S. Sen. John Glenn (D-Ohio) during a hearing of the Senate Committee on Government Affairs, which he chairs.

The Israeli Embassy responded to the report by issuing the same statement it always does when asked about the country's nuclear capability: that "Israel will not be the first (country) to introduce nuclear weapons into the Middle East."

Similar reports about Israel's possible nuclear stockpile "have been cropping up for many years now," said Michael Shiloh, deputy chief of mission at the embassy. "Israel has never related to such reports."

"I don't know" if the senator "thinks he detected anything new," Shiloh said. "I don't see anything new."

A spokesman for Glenn agreed that there have always been rumors relating to Israel's nuclear stockpile.

"We're not endorsing" the Russian findings, the spokesman said. "We're showing what the Russian intelligence service has done."

Glenn released the English translation Wednesday at a hearing where James Woolsey, the CIA director, was testifying.

The report, compiled by the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service and titled "A New Challenge After the Cold War -- The Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction," surveyed the global threat of nuclear proliferation and provided information on the nuclear stockpiles of specific countries.

A news release issued by Glenn's office focused more on the historic nature of the Russian report and did not even mention the Israeli angle.

The report, Glenn said in the release, "represents not only a historic look into Russia's research on the proliferation threat, but a further thawing of the Cold War mentality that is in the best interest of global stability."

"It is a broad overview of the entire field of nuclear proliferation," the Glenn spokesman said.

The translation includes information on Israel's alleged nuclear and chemical weapons stores.

"Israel is a country which unofficially possesses nuclear weapons coupled with missile delivery systems," the report says.

"Israel's leadership itself does not confirm but does not repudiate information on the presence of nuclear weapons on the country's territory."

# **ORTHODOX JEWS IN NORTH LONDON LOSE 5-YEAR BATTLE FOR AN ERUV**

**London Jewish Chronicle**

LONDON, Feb. 25 (JTA) -- A 5-year-old struggle by North London's Orthodox community to erect an eruv was dealt a bitter blow this week when a local planning council rejected the plan.

After weeks of controversy, the planning and research committee of the Barnet Council on Wednesday evening voted 11-7 against the establishment of what would have been Britain's first eruv.

An eruv is a continuous boundary marker used to define an enclosed area in which traditionally observant Jews are able to carry objects on the Sabbath, an activity that would otherwise be prohibited.

The North London eruv would have consisted largely of man-made boundaries such as a local highway and train tracks.

But to make the boundary continuous at other points, supporters of the eruv had proposed stringing wire between 85 poles at certain locations.

Barnet's public works committee had already approved the plans for the eruv. But a majority of the planning and research committee felt the necessary posts and wires would disfigure local scenery.

Frank Davis, one of six Jewish council members, said the poles required for the eruv would be a cause of "demonstrable harm to the environment of a conservation area of national importance."

Rabbi Alan Kimche, who originally started the campaign for the eruv, said he would appeal the decision to Michael Howard, the secretary of state for the environment.

"There certainly will be an appeal," Kimche told reporters after the vote was announced.

## **Would Have Helped The Disabled**

The eruv was to have covered 6 square miles, including Hendon, Golders Green, Hampstead Garden Suburb and parts of Finchley.

The case has drawn widespread attention after a petition signed by 3,500 supporters of the eruv was submitted to the Barnet Town Hall.

Hendon Synagogue's Rabbi Sidney Silberg, who presented the petition to an official at the Town Hall reception desk, said the eruv was vital to enable disabled congregants to attend Shabbat services.

"We have a number of members with disabilities who we would love to come to shul. We even have a wheelchair ramp," Silberg said.

Without an eruv, it is forbidden under rabbinic law to push a wheelchair or baby stroller on Shabbat.

Eruv supporters also disputed assertions that the eruv would mar the region's scenery.

Alan Perrin, technical adviser to the United Synagogue's eruv committee, pointed out that there are already 50,000 lampposts and telegraph poles in the borough of Barnet.

"Eighty-five thin poles in 6 square miles is hardly a significant change in the street scenery," Perrin said.

David Schreiber, chairman of the eruv committee, said he had sought advice from Jewish communities in Washington, Los Angeles, Boston and Melbourne, Australia, which had all won municipal approval for eruvim.

## MULRONEY, ANNOUNCING RESIGNATION, IS HAILED BY CANADIAN JEWS AS FRIEND

By Bram D. Eisenthal

MONTREAL, Feb. 25 (JTA) -- Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, who announced his resignation Wednesday, was hailed by Jewish groups as an ally and longtime supporter.

His announcement ended weeks of speculation and paved the way for a new leader to take over the Conservative Party at a leadership convention in June.

Polls taken within the last year showed Mulroney, who has been in office since 1984, to have become the most unpopular prime minister ever. His departure gives the Conservatives a chance of mending their party's reputation before the scheduled elections this fall.

The non-partisan Canadian Jewish Congress wished Mulroney well in his future endeavors.

Irving Abella, the group's national president, said the prime minister has "demonstrated great personal interest and sensitivity to the domestic and international concerns of the Jewish community of Canada. As well, we were very supportive of his singular commitment to national unity."

Mulroney failed last year to push through a referendum that would have solidified unity among English- and French-speaking Canadians.

Abella pointed to several initiatives begun by Mulroney that were helpful to Jewish interests.

In February 1985, the government established the Deschenes Commission of Inquiry on War Criminals, which resulted in a law being passed in 1987 enabling the Justice Department to prosecute Nazi war criminals residing in Canada.

Other initiatives, said Abella, were "the battle against racism and anti-Semitism. His longstanding friendship and understanding for Israel has been greatly appreciated."

B'nai Brith Canada also had kind words for Mulroney, contained in a letter forwarded to him by Gabriel Nachman, the group's national president, and Frank Dimant, executive vice president.

"We are writing to commend your many years of dedicated service to the people of Canada and to wish you well as you retire from the leadership of the Progressive Conservative Party and as prime minister," the letter stated.

"We wish to applaud the major actions undertaken under your leadership which have demonstrated a true responsiveness to our (Jewish) community's needs."

### 'Unwavering Support' For Israel

The letter cited other initiatives spearheaded by Mulroney of concern to Canadian Jews.

His government took action limiting the possibility of a Jewish get, or religious divorce, being used as a bargaining tool in divorce proceedings involving Jewish partners.

"The legislation enacted has already served to control an abusive situation," the letter said. "It is now a model for similar legislation in many democratic countries."

B'nai Brith also took note of "the uniquely honest and clear-thinking approach which characterized your interventions on the matter of Israel and the Middle East peace process. No other Western leader has so plainly and so clearly affirmed reality and affirmed a commitment to fairness and honesty as you have in this area."

Mulroney was also seen by the Canada-Israel Committee as a true friend of Israel.

Robert Ritter, the group's national executive

director in Ottawa, said Mulroney demonstrated "unwavering support" for the Jewish state throughout his tenure.

Mulroney's intended departure was the second announced by a Conservative politician in less than a week.

Joe Clark, current constitutional affairs minister and prime minister for a brief time in the late 1970s, announced that he would not seek re-election at the end of his term.

Clark, who entered the Canadian political arena more than 30 years ago is remembered by Jews as the Canadian leader who reneged on an election promise to move the Canadian Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

## PARAGUAY RELEASES FILES SAYING HITLER AIDE DIED THERE IN 1959

By Victoria Verlichak

BUENOS AIRES, Feb. 25 (JTA) -- Nazi war criminal Martin Bormann died in Paraguay in 1959, according to files of the Paraguayan police that were recently discovered and made public.

The finding, if accurate, challenges a widespread belief that Bormann, who was one of Adolf Hitler's top aides, committed suicide in Berlin in 1945.

A report in the police files said Bormann succumbed to stomach cancer in Hohenau, an insular German-speaking colony 220 miles south of Asuncion, the Paraguayan capital.

The report, dated Aug. 24, 1961, was prepared by security personnel from what was then the dreaded Division of Technical Affairs of the Paraguayan Interior Ministry during the dictatorship of Alfredo Stroessner.

One source in the world Jewish community who asked not to be identified said that the information does not "pan out with what we do know," that Bormann died in Berlin at the end of the war.

But in New York, Mark Weitzman, associate director of educational outreach for Simon Wiesenthal Center, said it was "not uncommon for Nazis to stage their own deaths."

"And if they could find someone who resembled Bormann, that would take some of the heat off them if they were still alive."

In Asuncion, Judge Luis Benitez Riera verified the document's authenticity and reminded journalists that those files are now open to the public.

Paraguay was a well-known haven for Nazis after World War II and particularly under the 35-year reign of Stroessner.

Edward Roschmann, known as the "butcher of Riga," died in Asuncion in 1977. And Josef Mengele, dubbed the "angel of death" at Auschwitz, is believed to have lived in Paraguay before he went to Brazil, where he died in 1979 of a stroke while swimming.

The police report released in Asuncion says that Mengele, who was a medical doctor, traveled to Paraguay at the end of 1958 to try to cure Bormann of his cancer.

According to the report, Bormann lies buried in an unmarked grave in a cemetery in Ita, some 17 miles from the capital.

It says that "Bormann died after a long agony from stomach cancer."

"He was buried in the shadows of the night in Ita's cemetery, where he was taken after not even Mengele's medical care could cure his illness," the report says.

## CHRISTIAN RIGHT POSES SERIOUS THREAT IN LOCAL ELECTIONS, JEWS ARE TOLD

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK, Feb. 23 (JTA) -- The "stealth" candidates of the Christian religious right who have been winning local political races around the country pose a serious threat to Jewish interests, Jewish community activists say.

And the success of these candidates has created new challenges for the organized Jewish community.

Organized nationally and regionally in groups with innocuous-sounding names like CARE--Citizens Advocating Responsible Education -- and CEE -- Citizens for Excellence in Education -- these candidates have been running successfully for seats on school boards, local Republican committees, water commissions and real estate zoning boards.

These "stealth" candidates earned their moniker because individuals running for office cloak their affiliation with the Christian organizations until they are safely in office.

"They bury their stealth message beneath honeyed words," said Maxine Cohen, director of the Jewish Community Relations Council in San Antonio, Texas.

While they have been particularly successful in California, Texas, Florida, Minnesota and Mississippi, they are also advancing in Northeastern cities, including Philadelphia and New York.

CEE, which was started in 1989, has 925 chapters around the country and was able to get 1,965 of its candidates elected in 1990, according to Jodyne Roseman, chair of the San Diego Jewish Community Relations Council.

Roseman spoke at the annual plenum of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council, held in Washington Feb. 13-17.

But perhaps the most important group on the Christian religious right, which spawned many of the local efforts, is the Christian Coalition, which grew out of Pat Robertson's failed 1988 presidential bid.

The group says it now has 250,000 members in 550 chapters nationwide.

In the last few years its candidates have won a large number of the races they have entered.

People for the American Way, a liberal, Washington-based group, monitored 500 local races last year.

The Christian Coalition-endorsed candidates won in 42 percent of those races, said Matthew Freeman, director of research for the watchdog group, in an interview.

### Goal Is To 'Take Over Republican Party'

And their goal, ultimately, is to have a national impact.

They want to "take over the Republican Party by the year 2000," according to Beth Rickey, formerly a member of the Louisiana State Republican Committee, and founder of the Louisiana Coalition Against Racism.

In the meantime, running as "stealth" candidates in local races, they make their views known quickly once elected.

Once on school boards, for example, they advocate school prayer, teaching creationism in science classes, removal of books with content they consider profane and eradicating AIDS education in favor of teaching abstinence.

They say that "AIDS education may lead to (sexual) experimentation, that critical thinking spiritually destroys children, that schools are atheistic institutions, and that the First Amendment is for the freedom of religion, not freedom from religion in schools," said Ellen Faust, chair of the Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Dayton, Ohio.

In Dayton-area elementary and middle schools, fundamentalist Christians "demanded to go through classroom shelves book by book," she said.

They want to get rid of "anything even approaching the traditional role of parents," said Roseman.

In addition to the agenda which is anathema to most of the Jewish community's concerns, many of the religious-right groups are also anti-Semitic, according to Louisiana's Rickey.

### 'They Share Conspiratorial Beliefs'

"They share conspiratorial beliefs and believe Jewish people are in a conspiracy to control the world. They also use the word 'liberal' interchangeably with Jew," she said.

In trying to counter the success of the "stealth" strategy, the Jewish community faces several challenges of its own.

First, the candidates' affiliation must be exposed before they are elected.

The Christian-right candidates have learned to avoid contact with mainstream voters and the media in order to evade scrutiny during the campaign.

In San Diego, the JCRC countered that by making sure that someone from the Jewish community attended each pre-election forum to ask the candidates specific questions about their positions on teaching "creationism," about where their kids go to school, how long they've lived in the district, and their views on sex education and subsidized breakfast and lunch programs.

These kinds of efforts by mainstream community groups made a significant difference between the 1990 and 1992 elections in San Diego, he said.

In 1990, two-thirds of the 90 Christian Coalition-endorsed candidates won seats on various local boards. In 1992, half that number succeeded.

One problem in fighting the efforts of the religious right is that the traditional coalition partners of the Jewish community in efforts against the religious right -- mainline Protestant and Catholic churches -- have distanced themselves from the issue because they are losing so many of their own members to evangelical congregations and are afraid of alienating more.

"What support we used to be able to rally with a few phone calls has evaporated," said Roseman of San Diego.

Jewish activists also face a serious challenge within their own community.

Community relations professionals find that Jews are unwilling to devote the time and energy it takes to counter this type of volunteer effort, say observers.

"We could not get the Jewish community as exercised about this as we wanted," said Roseman.

"When there are only 25 people in a room, 10 can do a lot," said one community activist.

What it boils down to, said another community relations worker, is that "they've got the zealots and we don't."