

**CHRISTOPHER MEETS WITH DELEGATIONS AS NINTH ROUND OF PEACE TALKS BEGINS****By Deborah Kalb**  
States News Service

WASHINGTON, April 27 (JTA) -- The Middle East peace talks resumed here Tuesday amid heightened expectations and a realization that the peace process would involve a thicket of thorny issues that could prove difficult to resolve.

This ninth round of talks, which got under way Tuesday, is noteworthy both because it represents the Clinton administration's debut as co-host, with the Russians, and because of the lengthy break since the parties met in December.

The new administration has made the peace process a high priority, as demonstrated Tuesday afternoon in an unprecedented, high-profile meeting that Secretary of State Warren Christopher held with the heads of the Israeli, Palestinian, Jordanian, Syrian and Lebanese delegations.

As the meeting began, Christopher praised all the parties for attending the talks.

"The parties' decision to return to the negotiating table reflects their commitment to the peace process," the secretary said. "And I'm grateful for the courage that it took these gentlemen to attend the meeting today," he added.

Reporters present for the start of the meeting expressed disappointment that the delegation leaders would not shake hands for the cameras.

"We hope to crown this process with more than handshakes," Mouwaffak al-Allaf, chief of the Syrian delegation, told reporters. "We came here in order to discuss peace and not to care only about formalities."

There seemed to be a certain relief in the air that all the parties were actually present in Washington. Until last week, the Palestinians had refused to return to the talks because of a variety of concerns, including the fate of some 400 Palestinians deported by Israel last December.

**'Willing To Test Everything'**

But at the same time, the long delay in resuming the talks has lent an urgency to the proceedings.

"This phase is a test case," a "test for the whole peace process," Palestinian spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi said as she emerged from the State Department after the Palestinians met with American diplomats Tuesday morning.

Ashrawi stressed a need for movement both on the substance of the negotiations themselves and on "conditions on the ground," by which she meant such issues as human rights in the territories and the fate of the deportees.

"We are willing to test everything," Ashrawi told reporters. "We have taken serious risks, and we are gambling" that they will succeed.

Prior to the Israeli-Palestinian talks, which did not get under way until late Tuesday afternoon, Israeli spokesman Yossi Gal told reporters that the Israelis were "willing to explore every course of action needed in order to move the negotiations with the Palestinians forward."

Gal said the Israelis were prepared to offer new proposals to the Palestinians on such issues as land and water management.

Gal also said the Israelis welcome the par-

ticipation in the talks of Palestinian leader Faisal Husseini, who had previously been excluded because he is a resident of eastern Jerusalem.

"We said yes to Faisal Husseini joining the talks," Gal stressed. "We wish him success and welcome him to the talks."

While the Palestinian track was certainly the high-profile issue of the day, the Israelis also met their counterparts from Syria, Lebanon and Jordan on Tuesday morning.

The Syrian track, which some see as having potential for quick momentum, seemed preoccupied with definitions of terms, as it was when the talks recessed in December.

The Israelis have spoken of withdrawing from the Golan Heights, but only if the Syrians offer a "full peace," complete with exchanges of ambassadors and trade relations.

"There is no better formulation for peace than the term complete peace, full peace, for full withdrawal," Syrian negotiator Allaf told reporters before beginning negotiations with his Israeli counterparts.

**Committed To 'Full Withdrawal'**

Itamar Rabinovich, the Israeli ambassador to Washington who also serves as head of the negotiating team with the Syrians, told reporters after Tuesday's session with Syria that "the Syrian delegation is now using rather frequently the term 'full peace.'"

"Their policy means that we commit ourselves to full withdrawal," Rabinovich continued.

But, he added, "there is a problem with this formulation" of full peace for full withdrawal, "in the sense that it is an asymmetrical formulation," and the definition of "full peace has remained rather vague."

The Jordanian track, which Israeli chief negotiator Elyakim Rubinstein said has been characterized as "a solid, quiet work in which progress has been made," seemed to proceed accordingly Tuesday.

Jordanian negotiator Salam al-Majali told reporters after the meeting with the Israelis that the two sides had "almost finalized" their agenda in the eighth round last year.

But, he added, unless progress was also achieved in the other Israeli-Arab discussions, "I doubt we could go further now."

Israeli spokesman Gal, on the other hand, said later Tuesday that "Israel does not condition progress in one set of talks with parallel progress in another. We hope that our Arab counterparts will do the same."

Still, the Jordanian and Israeli negotiators, at least on superficial matters, seemed to agree, using almost identical words as they stepped out of the State Department into a bright sunny day.

"We are here with open heart and open mind," Majali said. "Hopefully the good weather will have a good effect."

Rubinstein also commented on the sunny weather and said his delegation came with "open hearts, with open minds."

Israeli spokesman Gal told reporters that the Israeli-Jordanian session was "businesslike" and that it had been a "very good meeting."

The meeting with the Lebanese team, he said, was "also positive."

## NEWS ANALYSIS: JERUSALEM HOPING FOR REAL PROGRESS AS PEACE TALKS RESUME IN WASHINGTON

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, April 27 (JTA) -- As the ninth round of the Middle East peace talks got under way in Washington this week, Israeli officials said they were determined to make progress in the 18-month-old negotiations, which have netted few achievements so far.

All parties seem intent on a major effort this time to move toward the interim Palestinian autonomy program outlined in the original Camp David accords of 1978.

Israel's delegation is expected to submit new proposals that, in its view, substantially broaden the scope of Palestinian authority.

"Our approach is to hand over to them virtually all civilian responsibilities," Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said in an Independence Day interview with the Yediot Achronot newspaper.

The Egyptian ambassador to Israel, Mohammed Basyouni, declared Monday that the resumed talks are a critical testing time. He hopes for and expects progress; the failure to achieve it, he warned, could propel the region to stagnation and disaster.

Egypt has been vigorously involved in the diplomatic effort to put the talks back on track, following the crisis brought on by Israel's expulsion of 415 Moslem extremists last December.

To create a conducive atmosphere for the talks and to get the ball rolling, Israel was expected to announce several gestures to the Palestinians as the negotiations got under way.

Israel reportedly has agreed to accept back some 30 Palestinians it had deported from the administered territories between 1967 and 1987.

Sources said the Israeli security authorities were making the selection from a list of more than 50 names drawn up by the Palestine Liberation Organization.

In addition, the Israeli government was expected to announce other measures designed to ease conditions for the Palestinian population in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

One new element disclosed by Rabin this week was a proposal to hand over to the Palestinian leadership immediate control over money being invested in the territories -- funds originating from Israel, the Arab world and the West.

### Rabin Backing Police Force

In this context, Rabin noted that European states have been more generous in talking about aid than in actually providing it to Palestinians in the territories.

The issue of investment in the West Bank and Gaza Strip has taken on more significance since Israel sealed off the territories at the end of last month, leaving 120,000 Palestinians who held jobs in Israel proper with little hope of finding employment in their underdeveloped local economy.

The government intended to lift restrictions for some 10,000 to 12,000 of these workers this week, in order to ease a critical labor shortage in the agriculture and construction fields.

Rabin also has confirmed his support for the early creation of a Palestinian police force in the territories. He said preparations for training the force could begin at once in Jordan and Egypt.

The idea -- incorporated in the original Camp David blueprint -- was recently broached in

public by Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and is likely to come up at the talks in Washington.

However, the notion of armed Palestinians in the territories triggered harsh reactions from leaders of the Jewish settlers movement.

The ongoing closure of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, meanwhile, is increasingly seen as a watershed in Israel's attitude toward the territories.

Although originally triggered by security considerations to end a series of violent Palestinian attacks on Israelis -- which it has been largely successful in doing -- the closure is now being viewed as a move toward an eventual and permanent separation of the territories from Israel proper.

Israeli public opinion, with the exception of the far right, has reacted with marked approval of the closure. And Palestinians too, while decrying the economic hardship and dislocation, see it as a hopeful step toward autonomy.

It remains to be seen how this unilateral step by Israel will impact the talks in Washington.

### Trading 'Everything For Everything'

While recent media reports have tended to focus attention on the Israeli-Palestinian talks, some observers in Jerusalem believe the Syrian talks could quickly capture center stage again, that is if President Hafez Assad throws down the gauntlet to Rabin.

To accomplish this, the Syrian leader must instruct his negotiators to offer a broad and generous definition of the "nature of the peace" that Damascus is prepared to embrace.

Israel has long demanded this Syrian definition before it, in turn, defines its own readiness for territorial withdrawal.

Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak publicly assured Rabin in Ismailia, where the two men met earlier this month, that Assad wants to trade "everything for everything."

Rabin quickly made it clear that such second-hand assurances are not enough. He wants to hear them spelled out in detail. And he wants to hear them directly from the Syrians.

At the same time, Rabin is still committed to his electoral pledge of last year "not to descend" entirely from the Golan Heights.

But the prime minister noted pointedly in his interview that the precedent of the Sinai agreement, in which Israel handed back the entire peninsula to Egypt, would be "very difficult to change."

Israeli officials have also said they were discouraged by Syria's refusal, during these past months, to resume the peace talks with Israel unless the Palestinians did as well.

It is precisely such dependence on progress on the Israeli-Palestinian front that Israel wants to avoid in any far-reaching agreement with Damascus.

A final element that all parties to the peace talks will be judging is the significance of the Clinton administration's proclaimed determination to play the role of "full partner."

American consultations in preparation for the talks were intensive. Samuel Lewis, director of policy planning at the State Department and a former U.S. ambassador to Israel, visited here for further talks early this week.

When asked by reporters about the peace process, Lewis said, "I think we're going to make some real progress. We're going to work as hard as we can, and I'm optimistic."

**CHRISTOPHER TELLS ARAB AMERICANS  
U.S. WILL BE EVENHANDED ON MIDEAST**

By Deborah Kalb  
States News Service

WASHINGTON, April 27 (JTA) -- Secretary of State Warren Christopher, who received a rousing welcome at an American Israel Public Affairs Committee conference here last month, got an equally enthusiastic reception at an Arab American gathering last week.

Speaking last Friday night to the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, Christopher pledged the United States would "not only seem evenhanded" but "actually be evenhanded" in dealing with the parties to the Middle East conflict.

At the State Department briefing Monday, spokesman Richard Boucher told reporters that Christopher's comments did not signify any change in policy.

"It intended to convey our strong desire to be a full partner, be an honest broker in the next phase of the peace negotiations, to consider fully the views of all the parties," Boucher said, adding, "We don't think anybody should read anything more than that into the comment."

Christopher praised the Palestinian delegation's decision to return to the peace talks this week as "difficult and courageous."

He told the Arab American leaders, as he had told the AIPAC leaders in March, that they would "always have access" to him.

The secretary told the gathering about his recent trip to the Middle East, poking fun at his own sphinxlike persona as he recounted a story about a photograph of himself standing next to the Sphinx in Egypt.

"I knew I had made a mistake when I let that picture be taken," Christopher said, adding that someone "trying, I guess, to be helpful" said at one point, 'In case you wondered, the one on the left is Mr. Christopher.'

**BROWN RETURNING AS U.S. ENVOY**

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, April 27 (JTA) -- William Harrop, the current U.S. ambassador to Israel, is scheduled to end his tour of duty May 7 and will be replaced on a temporary basis by his predecessor, William Brown, according to sources here.

Brown, in turn, is expected to be replaced after a few months by Reginald Bartholomew, a former U.S. ambassador to Lebanon and currently U.S. ambassador to NATO and special envoy to the Balkans, according to a report in the Yediot Achronot newspaper.

In Washington, the State Department confirmed Harrop's departure and Brown's temporary assignment, but could not give an exact date of the changeover. But it had no comment on the expected appointment of Bartholomew, whose nomination would have to be confirmed by the Senate.

Israeli reports said Brown was expected to serve here as an active ambassador for only a few months, until Bartholomew takes over.

Brown, who speaks fluent Hebrew, has served two previous tours of duty in Israel. Prior to becoming ambassador in 1989, he served as deputy chief of mission under Ambassador Samuel Lewis. Lewis, who is now director of the State Department's policy planning team, was visiting Israel this week.

**DOVISH POLITICIANS ASK GOVERNMENT  
TO REDUCE HARDSHIPS IN TERRITORIES**

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, April 27 (JTA) -- For the first time since the administered territories were closed off almost a month ago, the left wing of Israel's ruling coalition has demanded that the government take measures to alleviate the economic plight of Palestinians deprived of jobs in Israel proper.

Ministers from the Meretz bloc said at Sunday's Cabinet meeting that they continue to support the general ban on Palestinians from the territories entering Israel proper, but proposed that unemployment allowances be paid to those who had lost their means of livelihood.

Tourism Minister Uzi Baram of the Labor Party also backed the demand, arguing along with the Meretz ministers that these Palestinians should be entitled to the unemployment allowances, since they pay insurance like Israelis.

Under the present system, only Israelis get unemployment benefits. The money withheld from Palestinian salaries is largely used to cover general welfare investments made by the military-run administration in the territories.

The general ban has been lifted partially, primarily in order to ease the labor shortage crisis in Israel.

Of the 120,000 Palestinians who used to work daily in Israel proper, about 23,000 have been issued work permits for this week. Only half of those have actually come to work, partly due to mounting pressure by other Palestinians that none should return until the closure is lifted.

Some 4,000 permits were issued to construction workers, but fewer than 2,000 workers appeared on the construction sites.

**Palestinians Stage Protest Strike**

The Building Contractors Association has warned that the entire industry is in danger of collapsing because of the labor crisis caused by the closure. The association has threatened to close down work sites throughout the country.

The contractors want the government to train 20,000 Jewish workers and allow 10,000 foreign workers, from Europe and the Far East, to replace Arab workers temporarily.

Although the government is reluctant to allow in foreign labor while Israeli unemployment remains very high, the authorities were, in fact, expected this week to allow in some foreign workers.

Meanwhile, tension in the territories was high Tuesday, as rejectionist Palestinian groups called a three-day strike to protest the resumption of the Middle East peace talks in Washington. The strike was almost fully observed throughout the territories.

In the West Bank, two Jewish youths barely escaped death Sunday, as the car they were driving was shot at by Israeli soldiers in a misunderstanding.

The youths, Kobi Gur-Arye, 17, and his brother Yisrael, 13, of the settlement of Kochav Hashachar, were driving from the settlement of Ofra, near Ramallah, to the nearby settlement of Beit El. As they passed by an army checkpoint, the two youths thought the soldiers were waving them to pass through, but the soldiers had actually ordered them to stop.

When the soldiers saw the car continuing to drive, they shot at the car, following standing orders. The two brothers were lightly wounded.

## JEWISH GROUPS CLOSE RANKS IN SUPPORT OF EMBATTLED ADL

By Larry Yudelson

NEW YORK, April 27 (JTA) -- Jewish organizations have closed ranks behind the embattled Anti-Defamation League, which is under investigation by the San Francisco Police Department on suspicion of carrying out illegal information-gathering activities.

In separate statements, four major umbrella groups have expressed their confidence that the accusations leveled against ADL would prove groundless.

The groups are the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council, the World Jewish Congress and the American Zionist Movement.

"ADL deserves our respect and confidence. We are certain that after all the legal processes are concluded, our trust in and respect for the ADL will be justified," read a statement issued Tuesday by Lester Pollack, chairman of the Conference of Presidents, and Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice chairman.

The controversy surrounding ADL stems from accusations made by the San Francisco police that the organization illegally obtained information using a variety of means, including wiretapping and the purchase of confidential police files.

No formal charges have been filed yet, although the police executed search warrants at ADL's Los Angeles and San Francisco offices earlier this month.

Police officials suspect ADL violated the law in the process of keeping tabs on thousands of individuals and organizations as part of a nationwide "spy network."

ADL, an organization founded to fight anti-Semitism and racism, maintains it has not broken any laws and that its compilation of information on racist and extremist groups is totally legitimate.

ADL reiterated this stand to the 20 or so representatives of Jewish organizations who gathered Tuesday morning to draft the Conference of Presidents statement.

### 'Full Confidence' In ADL's Integrity

A representative from Americans for Peace Now, the newest member of the 50-member conference, asked about reports that her organization was among those concerning which ADL maintained files.

"I was told that the folder marked APN contains informational materials, our own publications and clippings about our activities," said Letty Cottin Pogrebin, chair of Americans for Peace Now.

"I certainly subscribe to the view that what's important is how people use files, and if I don't see any evidence that they have used the files to denigrate us, I don't have any problem with it," she said.

NJCRCAC, an umbrella group comprising 13 national and 117 community agencies, applauded ADL's work, saying its "fact-finding activities have been significant in countering extremism and protecting the rights of all Americans.

"For this work, the organized American Jewish community, and indeed all who support civil rights for all Americans, are in the debt of the ADL," NJCRCAC said in a statement Monday.

The American Zionist Movement, composed

of 21 Zionist groups, likewise praised ADL and dismissed the recent allegations against it.

"The Anti-Defamation League is the pre-eminent organization devoted to the struggle against anti-Semitism, racism and bigotry," Seymour Reich, president of the movement, said in a statement issued Tuesday.

"Having heard the report of the leadership of the ADL, we reject the allegations that ADL has employed illegal methodologies in the course of information gathering," he added.

The World Jewish Congress also joined the chorus of support for ADL.

"The World Jewish Congress, representing the Jewish communities of 86 countries, expresses its full confidence in the integrity of the operations of the ADL," a WJC statement said Tuesday.

A leader of one of the groups involved said the relatively late show of support by the major organizations came as a result of ADL's own low-key response to the allegations, which first surfaced some months ago, but did not explode into newspaper headlines this month.

ADL has only recently begun to respond to the charges.

"The whole community got a late start on the subject because of the ADL's reticence to go forward," said the leader, who requested anonymity. "It would have been chutzpahdik for any of the organizations to jump in ahead of them."

## EX-NAZI LIVING IN ARGENTINA IS LINKED TO GERMAN NEO-NAZIS

By Victoria Verlichak

BUENOS AIRES, April 27 (JTA) -- The Simon Wiesenthal Center has exposed a former Nazi army intelligence agent, Reinhard Kopps, who has lived for more than 40 years in Argentina under the assumed name of Juan Maler while maintaining active ties to the neo-Nazi movement in Germany.

The center has not accused Kopps, 80, of being a war criminal, but is investigating the possibility that he was involved with war crimes, possibly against Albanian civilians.

Maler's true identity as Kopps was a "fairly well-kept secret," according to Rick Eaton, a researcher for the center who visited Kopps in Argentina posing as a neo-Nazi sympathizer.

However, after the center revealed its findings, Kopps admitted to the media he had served as an intelligence officer under Hitler.

In fact, Kopps described some of his wartime activities in a book he wrote in German and distributed among the far-right movement in Germany.

The center's identification of Kopps came about through its investigation of right-wing groups in Germany, conducted by an Israeli journalist and Eaton.

The two infiltrated neo-Nazi groups and were told about Kopps in Argentina.

In response to the Wiesenthal Center's report, the Argentine interior minister ordered the police to investigate Kopps' legal situation.

According to the Wiesenthal Center, Kopps also has financial contacts enabling him to send money to neo-Nazi groups in Germany through banks in Luxembourg.

In an interview with a local newspaper, Kopps denied accusations he had been involved in the persecution and extermination of resistance fighters in Albania.

And he described the accusations about his links with neo-Nazi groups as "a huge lie."