

**U.S. ATTACK ON IRAQ IS WELCOMED,
SEEN AS LITTLE THREAT TO ISRAEL**

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, June 27 (JTA) -- Israeli officials here said they did not think the U.S. missile attack on Baghdad over the weekend would escalate into a broader conflict that would involve Israel in hostilities.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said he received a personal telephone call from President Clinton on Saturday informing him in advance about the attack, and he discussed the situation with his ministers at Sunday's weekly Cabinet meeting.

Israelis were eager for information about the attack, remembering how Iraq had fired Scud missiles at Israeli cities during the Persian Gulf War.

But the general perception here was that Iraq would not respond in that way again.

Clinton described the American attack, which took place early Sunday, Baghdad time, as a reaction to a foiled Iraqi plot to assassinate former U.S. President George Bush when he visited Kuwait in April.

Clinton said there was "compelling evidence" that the plot was directed by the Iraqi intelligence service.

The president claimed the attack, in which American warships fired 23 cruise missiles at Iraq's intelligence headquarters in downtown Baghdad, was a success.

The missiles destroyed part of the complex, but also killed several civilians when three missiles strayed and hit nearby residential areas.

"It is clear that it was a success," Clinton said. He did, though, express regret about the civilian casualties.

Vice President Al Gore said the U.S. attack sent Iraq the message that "this kind of activity that Iraq initiated is simply unacceptable."

Opposition From Arab States

Some Israeli observers also saw the attack as a warning to Iraqi President Saddam Hussein not to take armed action against the Kurds.

Recent reports from Iraq spoke of large ground forces massing in the north, apparently in preparation for an invasion of the Kurdish region, which is under U.N. protection.

Clinton received support for the attack from his Western allies, such as Britain, Italy and Germany, and also from Russia.

Israeli Economic Development Minister Shimon Shetreet told reporters here Sunday that Iraq had "broken the rules" by targeting an individual leader such as Bush.

In New York, the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations issued a statement Sunday backing the bombing as "an important response to terrorism."

"The bombing of Iraqi intelligence headquarters in Baghdad is a warning from America that international terrorism will be countered by forceful means and that the American people will neither abide nor accept attacks against ordinary citizens or their leaders," the umbrella group of 50 national Jewish organizations said.

By contrast, Arab countries, including Egypt,

for the most part condemned the U.S. attack and accused Washington of applying a double standard in the Middle East.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Amre Moussa said he hoped "U.S. policy positions will be as firm toward the crimes the Serbs of Bosnia-Herzegovina are committing in violation of legitimacy and all international charters."

Only Kuwait, alone among the Arab states, publicly supported the American action. Kuwait said the attack was the "natural result" of Iraq's resorting to terrorism.

**ISRAELI SOLDIER INJURED IN SHOOTOUT
BY PALESTINIANS IN THE GAZA STRIP**
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, June 27 (JTA) -- An Israeli soldier was moderately wounded and a Palestinian gunman killed during clashes Sunday in the Gaza Strip.

The attack on the soldier took place after weeks of relative quiet in the territories, largely credited to the 3-month-old closure of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The wounded soldier was in a jeep patrolling the coastal road south of Deir el-Balah early in the morning when the vehicle was fired upon by gunmen in a passing car.

At least two weapons were used in the attack, a Kalachnikov automatic rifle and an M-16 rifle. A number of bullets struck the soldier, who was hospitalized at Beersheba's Soroka Hospital with wounds in his chest and hand.

The army set up roadblocks throughout the area in an effort to catch the gunmen, who escaped in their car.

Shortly afterward, soldiers at one of the roadblocks spotted a suspicious car approaching and signaled for it to stop.

Instead, the driver opened fire as he drew near the roadblock. The soldiers returned fire, killing the Palestinian man inside the car.

The gunman was identified as Ibrahim Jamil Ahmad al-Wadi, 27, from the Khan Yunis area, who has long been on the wanted list for attacks against soldiers.

Wadi allegedly was a member of Izz a-Din al-Kassem, an armed wing of the Islamic fundamentalist Hamas movement.

ISRAELI TEEN MURDERED BY BEDOUIN
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, June 27 (JTA) -- A 17-year-old Israeli girl, missing for two weeks in a case that captured national attention here, was raped and murdered by a Bedouin a few miles away from her home in the Negev, the police have announced.

The teen-ager, Hanit Kikos of Ofakim, was hitching a ride to a friend's birthday party in nearby Beersheba when she was accosted by Suleiman Abid, a tractor driver from Rahat village.

Police said Abid, who confessed to the crime, raped, killed and then buried Kikos at the Negev's Duda'im garbage dump, where he worked.

Officials said the evidence indicated there was no nationalistic motivation for the crime. Relations between Bedouins and Jews in the Negev have generally been good.

**JEWISH AGENCY ASSEMBLY DOMINATED
BY ALLEGATIONS AGAINST ITS CHAIRMAN**
By Cynthia Mann

JERUSALEM, June 27 (JTA) -- The annual assembly of the Jewish Agency for Israel convened here this week under the heavy cloud of a police investigation into financial fraud allegedly conducted by the chairman of its Executive, Simcha Dinitz.

The delegates arrived here over the weekend for five days of deliberations on issues ranging from immigrant absorption to Zionist education. But many said the Dinitz affair had climbed to the top of the unofficial agenda.

"It is the topic of conversation around the coffee tables, at the bar, at dinner and on walks," said Alan Markovitz of Milwaukee, an outgoing member of the Board of Governors.

Delegates say privately that Board of Governors Chairman Mendel Kaplan is under tremendous pressure, especially from Jewish community federations in the United States, to convince Dinitz to step aside until the investigation is complete.

Federation leaders say the affair is hurting the fund-raising effort for Israel at a time when the United Jewish Appeal and local campaigns are already difficult enough.

"Mendel has been warned that major federations will not hold still," said one assembly participant who did not want his name published.

"The leadership of the agency is being tested now, lay and professional, Israel and Diaspora," said Howard Weisband, Jewish Agency secretary-general, but "I believe we're going to come out stronger for it."

"Everybody is very concerned," said Audrey Citak, a World Zionist Organization delegate from the World Council of Synagogues. "People have been waiting for the ax to fall and are still waiting. We don't know how it will affect the workings of the WZO," which Dinitz also chairs.

"The affair is very difficult," she continued. "There is an element of possible mistrust of someone who has held our trust for a very long time."

"Not that we're seeking to prove him guilty," she added. "But in our heart, there's an element of uncertainty."

"It's at the stage where people are saying Simcha should be told to find a way to step aside with dignity," said another source.

An Effort To Harm Agency's Work?

For his part, Kaplan has been telling the delegates that Dinitz cannot be judged guilty on the basis of allegations alone.

He also has explained, according to sources present at a weekend briefing for the United Israel Appeal, that the standards of the West do not apply in Israel, where it is not untoward for officials under police investigation to continue to hold office.

Claims that Dinitz misused Jewish Agency money have been common knowledge inside and outside the agency for some months.

In February, the Board of Governors was presented with a comptroller's report that referred to irregularities in the chairman's spending practices. It was followed by an opinion issued by the agency's legal adviser that there was no bad intent on Dinitz's part.

Following that meeting, a Likud Knesset member, Limor Livnat, filed a police complaint about the alleged abuses, triggering the current

investigation, which is expected to conclude in the coming weeks.

While the affair has continued to nag at the Jewish Agency leadership, it was thrust into the limelight Friday by a painstakingly detailed expose in the Jerusalem Post weekend magazine.

The article's publication coincided with the arrival of most of the Diaspora assembly members.

"According to documents and dozens of interviews," the article stated, "Dinitz used agency funds to live in the lap of luxury and travel like a king."

"In the guise of business trips and despite warnings from senior agency officials, Dinitz took his wife around the world, wine and dined on a pleasure cruise in Russia, used his agency credit card to buy personal goods, and rented a car and driver for a ride of less than 200 meters."

Dinitz says he has been advised by his attorney not to comment on the allegations in the case. But sources close to him say the piece is filled with inaccuracies and that he plans to refute many points in it.

A statement issued by his spokesman said the article was an obvious effort "to harm the leadership of the Jewish Agency and the vital work it is performing."

Agency Must 'Confront The Issues'

Dinitz was able to take comfort in the fact that, in the face of recent calls by a few Labor Party members to step aside until the probe is finished, he has received the strong public backing of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and other party leaders.

In a briefing Sunday for the Board of Governors, Kaplan said he would not comment on "the issue," but he advised members to keep the affair in perspective. He urged them to stick to the official Jewish Agency agenda and not be "dictated to by outside forces" that "attempt to undermine" the agency's work.

Sources present at the United Israel Appeal briefing Saturday night said Kaplan confessed he had been struggling for six months with how to proceed on the matter. His struggle, he reportedly said, was over how to balance the damage the affair might do to Dinitz personally against the damage it might do to the agency.

Secretary-General Weisband said what he has heard from delegates is that in the face of "listening to or reading allegations in the paper, we need an (internal) mechanism to be able to know what is factual and to be able to respond."

Precisely such a mechanism was attempted this week by Kaplan. According to informed sources, it would have called on Judge Abraham Gafni, a UIA delegate from Philadelphia, to look at each of the statements in the Post article and determine the accuracies of the allegations.

But legal advisers apparently quashed the proposal immediately, saying it might involve an obstruction of justice.

Weisband conceded that the story in the Post has done damage. Since February, "we learned that the agency itself must confront the issues and make decisions for itself," he said. Not doing so "directly affects" the credibility of the agency and the campaign.

"Perhaps had an internal process been set in motion earlier," he said, "the article might have been reporting on the results of the process rather than the allegations themselves, and that would have put the agency in a stronger position."

ARAB AMERICAN GROUPS FILE CLAIM AGAINST POLICE FOR TIES WITH ADL

By Tom Tugend

LOS ANGELES, June 27 (JTA) -- A coalition of Arab American groups has filed \$2.4 million in claims against law-enforcement agencies in Los Angeles, San Francisco and San Diego, alleging that police and sheriff's officers exchanged confidential information with the Anti-Defamation League.

The claims are a first step in anticipated invasion-of-privacy suits claiming that the officers swapped their confidential computer data on individuals and groups for intelligence gathered by ADL, an attorney for the Arab American coalition said.

"What we're seeing here is pure political surveillance for "purposes of dirty tricks, for disruption, for discrediting," Abdeen Jabara, vice chairman of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, said at a news conference here last Thursday.

Other plaintiffs are the National Association of Arab Americans and a group calling itself the American Federation of Ramallah, Palestine.

The Arab groups' charges come in the wake of an investigation by the San Francisco Police Department into ADL's information-gathering activities. While no charges have been lodged, the police suspect some of the activities were illegal.

But the Arab groups' latest claims were labeled "totally ridiculous" by a spokesman for the San Diego Sheriff's Department and denied by ADL officials in Los Angeles and New York.

"These specious allegations come as no surprise," said David Lehrer, ADL regional director for Southern California. He pointed out that "most of the groups active in attacks on ADL and law-enforcement agencies have a long record of antipathy toward ADL and Israel."

In New York, ADL National Chairman Melvin Salberg called the charges "a further effort to inhibit appropriate and legal cooperation with the ADL, a longtime valuable supporter of law enforcement in the fight against hate crimes and violence."

Earlier last week, some 65 people demonstrated for 90 minutes outside the ADL office in Los Angeles, and other rallies were held in front of ADL offices in Washington and other cities across the country.

ADL, NAACP PLAN JOINT TASK FORCE

WASHINGTON, June 27 (JTA) -- The Anti-Defamation League has joined with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in an effort to reduce racial tensions among young Americans.

Spurred by troubling reports of American racial polarization, ADL and NAACP are exploring the creation of a multiracial task force geared toward lessening racial prejudice.

The decision "demonstrates that our two communities are serious about working together to change negative racial attitudes of young Americans before they become ingrained," leaders of the two groups said in a joint statement following a meeting here last Thursday.

ADL National Chairman Abraham Foxman and NAACP Executive Director Benjamin Chavis Jr. said their organizations would work with other groups to develop educational programs on the high school and college levels.

AUSTRIA GIVES WJC LIST OF VIENNA JEWS WHOSE GOODS WERE CONFISCATED BY NAZIS

NEW YORK, June 27 (JTA) -- Austria has made available a list of 50,000 Jewish residents of Vienna in 1938 who were forced to hand over their private possessions to the Nazi authorities.

The list, which was presented to the World Jewish Congress by researchers from the Austrian State Archives, is an important historical source providing a way for Holocaust victims to document claims against the Austrian government, the WJC said last week.

But the WJC also pointed out that Austria has so far refused to pay reparations to Holocaust survivors as Germany has done.

The Jewish organization stressed that the 350-page volume lists those individuals who were forced to register with the Nazi authorities, but it does not provide the underlying information on assets they had registered.

This initial volume also does not include assets other than private holdings.

The WJC has been informed that further studies will focus on trade, bank holdings, industry and statistics.

The material sent to the WJC was derived from the holdings of the Nazi regime's Authority for the Transfer of Assets. The listings were the result of two years of intensive work by two research historians from the Austrian State Archives, Hubert Stein and Christian Kucsera.

In their letter of transmittal to the WJC, the two historians wrote that the seizure of Jewish property by the Nazis "stood as the signpost of the way which would end in Auschwitz, Treblinka, Majdanek, Sobibor and other concentration camps."

"As archivists and historians," they wrote, "we consider it necessary to come to accounts with Jewish culture and its history in order to counter revisionism through objective views."

In 1938, Hitler engineered the Anschluss -- the union of Nazi Germany and Austria to form the Greater Reich. The Nazis began their persecution of Austrian Jews by depriving them of their economic means.

Among the initial measures introduced were the "Instructions for the Registry of Jewish Belongings" which compelled all Jewish citizens to determine their total assets in the country and outside its borders and to register any sum in excess of 5,000 marks.

More than 500 officials were engaged in the transfer of Jewish assets -- the forced sale of Jewish businesses to "proper Aryan owners."

ITALY PASSES ANTI-RACIST LAW

ROME, June 27 (JTA) -- The Italian Senate has passed a law against racial, ethnic and religious discrimination that was approved recently by the Chamber of Deputies.

The law, aimed largely at far-right skin-heads, foresees prison terms of up to three years for anyone convicted of spreading racial or ethnic hatred or prejudice.

It also provides for a period of community service of up to three months to follow the jail term. This community service would include repair to buildings defaced by racist graffiti.

The law also bans the display of banners bearing the swastika in sports stadiums and includes penalties for anyone publicly expounding or promoting fascism.

**GREECE COMMITTED TO RESOLVE
ISSUE OF RELIGION ON ID CARD**

By Jean Cohen

ATHENS (JTA) -- The Greek government is committed to renewing its attempts to resolve the controversy over Greek identification cards that require citizens to state one's religion, according to American Jewish leaders who met with Greek officials in Athens earlier this month.

Jewish groups as well as other minorities in Greece oppose the ID card policy, but an attempt by the government earlier this year to remove religion from the cards was rebuffed by the Greek Parliament.

"The government has committed itself to revisiting the issue," David Harris, American Jewish Committee executive vice president, said in New York upon his return early from the trip.

But he said "there were no concrete solutions offered about how to overcome Parliament's resistance."

The delegation was unique in that it combined leaders from the American Jewish community -- AJCommittee members -- with leaders from the Greek American community -- members of the United Hellenic American Congress.

The joint delegation traveled to Israel after Greece and visited Cyprus as well, before returning to America after the 14-day trip.

"They served as hosts of the trip to Greece and Cyprus and we served as hosts of the trip to Israel," Harris said.

The delegation met in Athens with Greek Prime Minister Constantine Mitsotakis and Foreign Minister Michalis Papakostantinou, among other officials.

The joint delegation was asked by Papakostantinou to help the Greek government organize the 1 million Greeks who live in the former Soviet Union.

In order to drive his plea home, the Greek minister reminded his guests that Jews and Greeks have in common large diasporas.

The delegation was also received by the Central Jewish Board of Greece, an umbrella organization representing Greek Jewry.

The board's president, Nissim Mais, stressed how important it was for Greek American and Jewish American organizations to join forces to help their respective countries.

Andrew Athens, head of the Hellenic Congress, said cooperation between the two groups started 25 years ago. Ever since, the two organizations meet regularly to exchange views and plan common strategy, he said.

MEXICO OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZES JUDAISM

NEW YORK, June 27 (JTA) -- Mexico has given official recognition to Judaism, in accordance with a new constitutional amendment designed to protect the rights of religious organizations, the World Jewish Congress has reported.

Interior Minister Patrocinio Gonzalez Garrido received the leadership of Mexico's Jewish community at the official registration, according to a report the WJC received from the Comite Central Israelita de Mexico.

Mexico last year adopted the constitutional measure, aimed at easing institutional hostility against religious structures -- principally the Roman Catholic Church -- that followed the 1910 Mexican revolution.

The Catholic Church had historically been

aligned with reactionary forces in early Mexican history.

The Jewish community joins more than 30 other religious bodies which have registered under the new law.

Registered groups are entitled to operate openly as legal entities and have transactional rights, such as owning and transferring property.

**REAGAN, OTHER AMERICANS HELP LAUNCH
CHRISTIAN PRAYER LINE TO JERUSALEM**
By Michele Chabin

JERUSALEM, June 27 (JTA) -- Israel's state telephone company inaugurated its Christian prayer line to Jerusalem this weekend with a taped message from former U.S. President Ronald Reagan and live pronouncements from prominent evangelists.

Christians and Jews were on hand at the Hyatt Regency Hotel here to "christen" the project, and Christian dignitaries from around the world joined the proceedings by phone or recorded messages.

Among the Americans who rose in the wee hours of the morning Sunday to participate in the program were former Housing and Urban Development Secretary Jack Kemp, former U.N. Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick, and television evangelists Pat Robertson, Jerry Falwell and Billy Graham.

The new prayer line is a joint venture between the Jerusalem Christian Review, Israel's leading Christian newspaper, Bezek Telecommunications, Israel's national telephone company, and several Christian organizations based in Jerusalem.

The new Christian prayer line comes after Bezek introduced a new facsimile service earlier this year for Jews around the world wanting to have their messages inserted into the Western Wall.

"Although there are many prayer lines around the world," says Dan Mazar, administrator of the Christian Review, "only this one links Jerusalem to the rest of the world."

"The Jerusalem prayer line will be the first to offer Christians throughout the world the opportunity to commune with their Christian brothers and sisters who live in the Holy City," he said.

According to Grant Livingston, the program's prayer adviser, trained volunteers from Christian congregations in Jerusalem will staff the line 24 hours a day.

"The caller will tell the prayer counselor his or her problem and pray for the Lord's help for its solution. People should call whenever they feel the need to join in prayer, or whenever they have a question that needs to be answered," Livingston said.

Virtually all those who spoke, either in person at the inauguration ceremony or by phone, prayed for world peace and especially for the peace of Jerusalem.

Many shouted "Amen" as Kemp proclaimed, "My prayer today is that Jerusalem remain a united city. It must always be united, never divided. Jerusalem is a city holy to all religions."

"It is our obligation not only to offer prayers for Jerusalem's protection, but to recognize that Jerusalem must never be divided again."

Bezek officials said six additional phone services will be introduced shortly.

One Israeli quipped, "We have Fax a Kvitel, now Dial a Prayer. What's next? Message the Mosque?"