

**U.S. PLANS MIDEAST TRIP NEXT WEEK,
PRESENTS ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN PAPER**
By Deborah Kalb

WASHINGTON, June 30 (JTA) -- In a sign that the United States is seeking to prod the Middle East peace process from its sluggish pace, the State Department has announced that a team of top U.S. diplomats will be traveling to the region next week.

In addition, the American team working on the peace talks presented the Israeli and Palestinian negotiators this week with a draft of a proposal for a joint Israeli-Palestinian statement.

The long-awaited American draft, presented Wednesday, was designed to help the two sides bridge some rather large gaps, including the issue of Jerusalem's status, that were hindering progress in the 10th round of talks between Israel and the Palestinians.

The round of talks, in which Israel was also negotiating separately with Syria, Lebanon and Jordan, was scheduled to conclude Thursday.

State Department spokesman Mike McCurry told reporters Wednesday that the American proposal was not an American document, per se. Rather, he characterized the proposal as "a way that we're helping the parties work on their differences."

Hanan Ashrawi, the spokeswoman for the Palestinian delegation, also played down the significance of the American paper. "I wouldn't make too much of it," she said at a news conference Wednesday.

She called the document an "informal draft," and said that her delegation would take it to Tunis, where they would discuss it with leaders of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Christopher Trip Possible

Neither Ashrawi nor Elyakim Rubinstein, head of the Israeli team negotiating with the Palestinians, would comment on the specifics of the American paper.

At the end of the last round of talks, the Americans attempted to get the two sides to agree on a paper, but the Palestinians complained that the draft reflected the Israeli point of view.

The State Department has been suggesting recently that the delegations negotiating in Washington lack the authority to move beyond their already-stated positions.

Next week's trip by administration officials to the region is seen as a method of pushing the process up to a higher level of authority. The U.S. delegation will be led by Dennis Ross, the administration's coordinator of the peace talks.

There is talk that Secretary of State Warren Christopher may make a trip to the Middle East following the Ross expedition.

Accompanying Ross will be State Department officials Dan Kurtzer and Aaron Miller, and Martin Indyk, a National Security Council specialist on the Middle East.

Assistant Secretary of State Edward Djerejian, who has been tapped to become U.S. ambassador to Israel next year, could also join the trip in progress, after visiting Moscow, where he will consult with the Russian co-sponsors of the peace process.

**U.S. JUDGE FINDS NO MISCONDUCT
IN HANDLING OF DEMJANJUK CASE**
By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, June 30 (JTA) -- Jewish groups have expressed satisfaction with a federal judge's report that clears the U.S. Justice Department of any misconduct in the extradition of John Demjanjuk, the man accused of being Nazi death camp guard "Ivan the Terrible."

"We are very pleased to hear this," said Mark Weitzman, associate director of educational outreach of the Simon Wiesenthal Center office in New York.

"This vindicates the Justice Department's efforts in pursuing Nazi war criminals," said Weitzman.

Elan Steinberg, executive director of the World Jewish Congress, said, "Demjanjuk's lawyers owe an apology to the government," referring to the defense's claims that the Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations withheld crucial information in the case.

The report by U.S. District Judge Thomas Wiseman Jr. of Nashville, who was appointed by an appeals court in Cincinnati as special master in the case, said the OSI engaged in no judicial misconduct and employed no fraud in prosecuting the case against the 73-year-old retired Cleveland-area autoworker.

But he also found that there was substantial evidence that Demjanjuk may not have been the notorious "Ivan" of the Treblinka death camp, where more than 800,000 Jews were killed.

The extradition was valid, however, he found, because the evidence was solid that Demjanjuk was trained as an SS guard.

But Was He 'Ivan The Terrible'?

Demjanjuk was extradited to Israel in 1986 and later convicted and sentenced to death for war crimes.

The 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati reopened the case last year after defense attorneys charged that the Justice Department had withheld exculpatory evidence about their client during the extradition proceedings.

The 210-page report, handed to the court and released Wednesday, said the defense's contentions that the Justice Department had withheld crucial information was "without merit."

The report recommended that the appeals court close the case and take no action against the government prosecutors. Observers expect the court to follow Wiseman's recommendation, although it is not binding.

After several months of hearings that were completed earlier this year, Wiseman found there was no evidence that would disprove the authenticity of an identification card from the Trawniki SS training camp that placed Demjanjuk there.

"Because the Trawniki allegations formed an independent ground for Mr. Demjanjuk's denaturalization and deportation, therefore, the judgment (to extradite) was, and is, a sound one," Wiseman wrote in his report.

But the judge did express "substantial doubt" as to whether Demjanjuk was in fact "Ivan the Terrible" of Treblinka.

The identification card of Ivan Demjanjuk

from the Trawniki camp lists his posting to the Sobibor camp but not to Treblinka.

Demjanjuk has repeatedly maintained that the card was a forgery and that his was a case of mistaken identity.

'Attempt To Shed Doubt' Has Failed

Holocaust historian Raul Hilberg, author of "The Destruction of the European Jews" and the recently published "Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders" said, "I have encountered no forgery in my research or experienced any so-called KGB forgery."

He said he gave "credence to the fact this man was in the Schutzmannschaft (Order Police), that he was a graduate of Trawniki, that he was, according to that card, in Sobibor."

He also cautioned, however, against trying to tie Demjanjuk to Treblinka. Eighteen Treblinka survivors placed him there during his trial in Israel.

Another Holocaust historian, Deborah Lipstadt, professor of religious studies at Emory University in Atlanta and author of the just-published "Denying the Holocaust: the Growing Assault on Truth and Memory," said Judge Wiseman's decision "is a very important step.

"It's clear that Demjanjuk played an exceptionally significant role in the annihilation of many Jews, and the court recognizes this," she said.

"The attempt to shed doubt on the Justice Department's role has failed," said Lipstadt, who studies the attempts by Holocaust-deniers to discredit Holocaust testimony.

A source at the Justice Department who asked not to be identified said he was satisfied by the judge's ruling in the department's favor.

But, he added, Wiseman's expressed doubt about Demjanjuk being the so-called "Ivan the Terrible" is "unfortunate, because it was beyond the scope of the inquiry assigned to him by the 6th Circuit."

ARGENTINA TO TRANSFER NAZI FILES TO HOLOCAUST MUSEUM IN WASHINGTON By Deborah Kalb

WASHINGTON, June 29 (JTA) -- President Carlos Menem of Argentina has agreed to turn over his country's secret files on Nazi war criminals to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Menem gave a verbal pledge to turn over the long-sought files while touring the museum here Monday with Israel Singer, secretary-general of the World Jewish Congress, and Jeshajahu Weinberg, the museum's director.

The agreement was announced by WJC officials in New York and confirmed here Tuesday by museum spokeswoman Joan Wadkins.

Under the arrangement, the WJC would transfer the documents from the Argentine government to the museum.

The WJC has been among the Jewish groups seeking release of the files from Argentina, which are believed to contain a wealth of information about Nazi war criminals who sought refuge in Argentina and other Latin American countries.

Menem agreed last year to open the files, but it was not until earlier this year that Argentine officials agreed to give Jewish groups direct access to the documents.

"Under President Menem, Argentina has moved to a policy more pro-Israel, more pro-American and more pro-Jewish, as evidenced by

the president's comments today," Evelyn Sommer, U.S. chairman of the WJC, said in a statement.

Among the documents expected to be transferred are files on Josef Mengele, the doctor who performed sadistic experiments on inmates at the Auschwitz concentration camp, and Adolf Eichmann, who was instrumental in creating Hitler's genocidal policies against the Jews.

COLLABORATOR TOUVIER SHOWS IN COURT QUELLING RUMORS HE FLED THE COUNTRY By Michel Di Paz

PARIS, June 30 (JTA) -- Dispelling rumors he had fled to Canada to avoid standing trial for war crimes, French Nazi collaborator Paul Touvier appeared in court this week in Versailles.

The Versailles Chamber of Accusation, sitting behind closed doors, heard State Prosecutor Bernard Pasturaud request that Touvier, 78, be arrested or at least required to report weekly to the police station near his home until the trial begins.

Touvier's lawyer, Jacques Tremolet de Villers, argued against the request on a technicality, claiming the Versailles court was not the right jurisdiction to deal with the issue.

Touvier, a former officer of the Vichy regime's police militia in Lyon, is accused of participating in the execution of seven Jewish hostages in Rillieux-le-Pape in 1944, a retaliation for the assassination of Philippe Henriot, Vichy's minister of propaganda.

He was twice sentenced to death in absentia for war crimes but was sheltered by church institutions until the statute of limitations on war crimes took effect and he received a presidential pardon by the late President Georges Pompidou.

That pardon was rescinded and Touvier went into hiding again. He was arrested at a monastery in Nice in May 1989.

The Chamber of Accusation decreed in February 1992 that Touvier must stand trial. That ruling was overturned by a higher court which dropped all charges against Touvier in April 1992 based on what it said was lack of evidence.

After a loud chorus of outrage erupted in France, that decision was also overturned. The war crimes charges were reinstated this year, but no date was set for trial.

Earlier this month, rumors were spread that Touvier had left France for a hideaway in Quebec. The rumors were picked up by the Los Angeles-based Simon Wiesenthal Center, which tracks Nazi war criminals.

But the rumor was apparently unfounded. The French extreme-right weekly Minute recently printed a photograph of Touvier in a Paris street in front of a poster for another French magazine, showing Touvier was in France that week.

Touvier's lawyers also strongly denied the rumors, telling the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that Touvier did not have a passport, which he had to surrender.

De Villers said that while his client was not required by law to appear Tuesday in court, he advised him to do so.

"It was necessary that (the court) see Paul Touvier and that he appears in court even when he doesn't need to," de Villers said.

A large contingent at the courthouse made sure that the media was kept away from Touvier.

The Versailles Chamber of Accusation is expected to decide July 7 on whether Touvier must be sent to jail to wait there until his trial.

ISRAELIS PRESS NORTH KOREANS, SWISS NOT TO HELP IRAN WITH ARMS TECHNOLOGY

By David Landau and Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, June 30 (JTA) -- Israel is intensively working to prevent Iran from gaining weapons and weapons technology from both North Korea and Switzerland, government officials said this week.

Two Israeli diplomats who visited the North Korean capital of Pyongyang held discussions with North Korean officials that included attempts to dissuade the country from selling Iran Scud-C-type missiles.

The missiles, whose range would encompass Israel if launched from Iran, are also capable of carrying a non-conventional payload.

Israeli officials said the North Koreans proposed that Israel make large investments in their country as a sort of payment in exchange for Pyongyang's consent to cancel the missile deal with Iran.

According to the newspaper Davar, the Israelis, Eitan Bentsur, deputy director-general of the Foreign Ministry, and Avi Siton, a senior diplomat, told the North Koreans that the two of them were not authorized by Jerusalem to negotiate such matters.

The subject of large-scale cash "compensation" to North Korea has surfaced in various reports in the international media.

Bentsur went on to Washington, where he is understood to have briefed U.S. officials on the meetings, while Siton proceeded to Seoul and Tokyo, to brief those governments on the talks.

Meanwhile, reports also surfaced this week that Switzerland has been helping Iran develop a nuclear capability.

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres told the Knesset on Wednesday that Israel had questioned Switzerland on the matter and that the Swiss denied most of the details of a report that appeared in the Ma'ariv newspaper.

However, the Swiss added that various industrial components were being exported to Iran that could assist that country in developing its nuclear capability.

Therefore, Peres said, Western countries should supervise not only the production of such components but also their delivery to countries such as Iran and Iraq.

Peres said Israeli intelligence was fully aware of the scope of Iran's armament and the spread of Iranian-sponsored terrorism. But he placed the burden on the United States to lead an international effort against terrorism.

The Clinton administration has stated its determination to oppose aggression on the part of both Iraq and Iran, Peres said.

ABIE NATHAN VISITS LIBYA, BUT FAILS TO MEET GADHAFI

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, June 30 (JTA) -- Israeli peace activist Abie Nathan visited Libya this week, but failed to meet with Moammar Gadhafi after being told that the Libyan leader had a sore throat.

Nathan visited Libya on the understanding that he would be granted an interview by Gadhafi, but left Tripoli on Tuesday with only verbal replies to his written questions, passed on to him by Gadhafi's aide.

In telephone interviews from Libya, Nathan said he had no reason to doubt the explanation

that Gadhafi could not see him because of a sore throat which prevented him from talking.

Nathan left Libya for Tunisia after a short visit to the island of Djerba, where there was once a large Jewish population.

He said Gadhafi had assured him, in his replies, that he had no objections to a peace settlement in the Middle East and would support any agreement reached between Israel and the Palestinians.

PROTEST ON BEHALF OF SYRIAN JEWS STAGED OUTSIDE THE SYRIAN EMBASSY

By Lisa Mann

WASHINGTON, June 30 (JTA) -- A coalition of national and Washington-based Jewish groups rallied outside the Syrian Embassy this week to protest the denial of travel visas to the 1,400 Jews remaining in Syria.

About 70 demonstrators representing at least five Jewish organizations demonstrated Tuesday for more than an hour with signs reading "Freedom for Syrian Jews."

The rally was held across the street from the embassy, in accordance with an ordinance that prohibits the obstruction of traffic in front of diplomatic missions.

According to Gilbert Kahn, executive director of the Council for the Rescue of Syrian Jews, only 50 Jews have been allowed to leave the country since October, when the Damascus government virtually suspended issuing travel permits to Jews.

During the prior six months, more than 2,600 Jews had been permitted to leave the country, after the Syrian government lifted longstanding travel restrictions in April 1992.

"With renewed pressure from a variety of sources, congressional as well as others, the Syrians have begun to issue two to three permits a week over the past few weeks.

"But essentially they're not letting anyone out," Kahn said.

"We are hoping to upgrade our public protest and just get more attention to the issue," said Reva Price, assistant director of B'nai B'rith's department of international, governmental and Israel affairs.

After Tuesday's demonstration, the protesters tried to present a letter protesting the restrictions against Jews to Syrian Ambassador Walid al-Moualem, but the embassy would not accept it.

Instead, a State Department official delivered a copy of a press release stating the intent of the demonstration.

According to Tami Schultz of the Jewish Community Council of Greater Washington, the letter will be mailed to the ambassador this week.

"As American Jews, we are extremely dismayed at the failure of your government to honor the commitment and assurances that President Hafez al-Assad has given to two consecutive United States administrations to permit all the Jews of Syria to travel, as entire family units, for business and for pleasure," the letter says.

Kahn of the Syrian Jewry council said that Assad and Foreign Minister Farouk al-Sharaa had promised Secretary of State Warren Christopher in February that the "moratorium on travel for Syrian Jews was merely a bureaucratic problem and that the ban would be lifted."

"Christopher has assured us that he continues to work with us, but we have to step things up for ourselves," said Price.

**METZENBAUM TO RETIRE NEXT YEAR
AFTER THREE TERMS IN THE SENATE**

By Deborah Kalb

WASHINGTON, June 30 (JTA) -- Sen. Howard Metzenbaum (D-Ohio), a strong advocate of church-state separation and a longtime supporter of Israel, announced this week that he would not run next year for a fourth six-year Senate term.

Metzenbaum, a liberal and one of 10 Jews currently serving in the Senate, has represented Ohio as a senator for 17 years.

He has been an advocate for positions taken by the Jewish community on a variety of domestic issues, including civil rights, hate crimes laws, religious freedom and voting rights. He has also voted consistently with supporters of Israel.

In 1973, Metzenbaum served as chair of the Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism. He also served as a national officer of the American Jewish Congress before his Senate service and chaired an AJCongress national convention.

At 76 years of age, the senator decided it was time to spend more time with his family, including his wife of 46 years, Shirley, and their seven grandchildren.

"I've concluded that it's time to turn the final pages of this chapter in my life and begin another. It's a decision I have struggled with, and one I am convinced is sound," Metzenbaum said in a statement announcing his retirement plans.

Metzenbaum, a lawyer and former businessman, is perhaps best known for his tenacious questioning during televised, high-profile hearings of the Senate Judiciary Committee. But he also serves on the Environment and Public Works Committee, the Labor and Human Resources Committee, and the Select Committee on Intelligence.

He is the author of a 1987 amendment that placed limits on arms sales to Saudi Arabia.

**ISRAEL'S HIGH COURT CLEARS WAY
FOR MANNING'S EXTRADITION TO U.S.**

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, June 30 (JTA) -- Israel's Supreme Court has rejected the latest in a series of appeals by Robert Manning, thereby clearing the way for his extradition to the United States, where he is wanted on charges connected to a 1980 mail-bombing murder in California.

The court rejected Manning's argument that as a prisoner in the United States he would be unable to fulfill his religious commitments properly as an observant Jew.

Manning should be extradited to the United States within two months, the court ruled.

Manning and his wife, Rochelle, who are American immigrants, are both wanted in the United States in connection with the murder of secretary Patricia Wilkinson by a parcel-bomb addressed to her employer.

The couple's fingerprints allegedly were found on the wrapping paper of the parcel.

The couple have since moved to Israel and settled in the West Bank settlement of Kiryat Arba several years ago.

In his latest effort to block his extradition, Robert Manning claimed that American prison authorities were harassing Jewish prisoners, preventing them from carrying out basic mitzvot, such as wearing a skullcap, laying tefillin and eating kosher food only.

But the Israeli government argued in re-

sponse that the U.S. Justice Department had given assurances that Manning would be permitted to carry out all his religious obligations. Manning could also appeal his prison conditions within the U.S. court system, the Justice Department said.

But Manning rejected these assurances, saying they were "lacking, misleading and irrational."

A ruling on another appeal, by Rochelle Manning against her extradition, is expected to be handed down shortly.

**INTRUDER IN KNESSET GUEST BALCONY
LEAPS TO ASSAULT AN ARAB LAWMAKER**

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, June 30 (JTA) -- An intruder jumped onto the floor of the Knesset from a guest balcony Wednesday and tried to attack an Arab Knesset member before being dragged away by another lawmaker and security officials.

The intruder, identified only as an Italian national in his early 30s, jumped from the press gallery just as Knesset member Hashem Mahameed of the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality concluded a speech on the need to reunite Palestinian families in the territories with their families abroad.

The man jumped right onto the row of seats where Mahameed was seated, alongside another Arab Knesset member, Abdul Wahab Darawshe of the Arab Democratic Party.

As soon as the man approached Mahameed and Darawshe, Knesset member Haim Dayan of the opposition Tsomet party seized the man and, together with Knesset guards, dragged the attacker out of the room.

No one was hurt in the incident.

An initial investigation has indicated that the man arrived at the entrance to the press gallery. He appeared to be looking in his pocket for an entry permit when he suddenly ran past the guards and jumped from the balcony onto the main floor.

Mahameed drew wide public criticism several months ago when he appeared at a rally in the Gaza Strip and told his Palestinian audience that they should resist "Israeli occupation with all means at their disposal."

As a result of this speech, his parliamentary immunity was partially removed.

Wednesday's incident was the second such attack on a Knesset member in almost 40 years.

In the late 1950s, an apparently unbalanced Israeli, Moshe Douwek, threw a hand grenade toward the front table in the Knesset where the Cabinet was seated, slightly wounding several ministers, including then Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion.

As a result, a bullet-proof glass partition was installed between the public gallery and the Knesset floor. But the VIP and press gallery remains unenclosed.

Knesset Speaker Shevach Weiss issued a statement Wednesday describing the incident as "very grave."

He instructed the house officer to suspend whoever should have been responsible for preventing the attacker's entrance.

Because of the Independence Day holiday, the JTA Daily News Bulletin will not be published Monday, July 5.