

G-7 NATIONS TO ISSUE STATEMENT CALLING FOR END TO ARAB BOYCOTT

By Deborah Kalb

WASHINGTON, July 7 (JTA) -- The Group of Seven leading industrialized nations have agreed for the first time on a "flat statement" calling for an end to the Arab boycott against Israel.

"For the first time, there is a flat statement that the Arab boycott should end. And that reflects the consensus of the parties," Secretary of State Warren Christopher told reporters Wednesday at the G-7 summit meeting in Tokyo.

Jewish groups have been urging the G-7 countries to produce a strong statement condemning the Arab boycott of companies doing business with Israel.

In 1991, the G-7 nations called for an end to the boycott, but linked it to a demand that Israel stop building settlements in the administered territories. Jewish groups have been seeking an anti-boycott statement this year that does not link the two issues.

But Israel's policies in the territories did come up at the summit meeting. "We talked about the importance of Israel respecting its obligation with regard to the occupied territories," Christopher said at his news conference.

On the issue of the boycott, Jewish groups including the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations and the International Steering Committee on Free Trade With Israel, have been holding meetings in recent months with high-level Clinton administration officials.

The Jewish leaders have urged the administration to focus its efforts on the secondary and tertiary elements of the boycott, which affect companies doing business with Israel, rather than on the primary boycott of Israel itself.

The secondary and tertiary levels of the boycott affect American and European companies, and as such are viewed as a free trade issue.

Elan Steinberg, executive director of the World Jewish Congress, said the boycott statement was expected to be released Thursday as part of a larger political statement on a wide range of issues, including terrorism, human rights and the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Christopher indicated Wednesday that the statement would not include a call for military action in Bosnia. The 1992 statement had referred to the possibility of military action there.

NEWS ANALYSIS: ISRAELIS HOPING VISIT BY U.S. TEAM WILL BREAK DEADLOCK IN PEACE TALKS

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, July 7 (JTA) -- Fresh from a visit to Cairo, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres is radiating optimism about closing the gap between Israeli and Palestinian positions in the Middle East peace talks.

But U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher warned earlier this week that unless real progress is made soon, Washington will turn its attention to other pressing foreign concerns.

Many in the region are turning their eyes toward a team of U.S. State Department peace-

makers who were expected to arrive here at the end of the week.

The delegation, led by Dennis Ross, recently appointed as the American coordinator of the peace talks, will be trying to get Israelis and Palestinians to agree on a joint declaration of principles regarding Palestinian autonomy.

"I very much hope that his mission will help positions, especially on the Arab side, to allow the continuation of the negotiations to bring results," Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said Wednesday.

Peres and his Egyptian hosts indicated in Cairo that the American draft proposal for the joint declaration is a basis for further negotiations -- despite negative pronouncements on the paper made earlier in the week by both Rabin and Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasir Arafat.

That view was also voiced Wednesday by Secretary of State Christopher in Tokyo, where he was attending the summit meeting of the Group of Seven leading industrialized nations.

Christopher told reporters that there was "no surprise at all, at least not on my behalf," that the Israelis and Palestinians had both expressed displeasure with the American draft document.

"I do not regard that as, by any means, the end of the story," he said. "It's just a step in a rather long book."

Here in Israel, Peres said he believes an Israeli-Palestinian breakthrough is, in fact, much nearer than the outward signs indicate, while Egyptian officials implied they would help urge the Palestinians forward.

"We are helping," Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak told Israeli reporters accompanying the foreign minister on the two-day trip, which ended Tuesday.

'Chemistry' Between Peres and Mubarak

Mubarak stressed that Egypt cannot speak for the Palestinians. But it was clear that he and his top ministers were determined to speak to the Palestinians and exhort them to moderate their positions.

Arafat, who passed through Cairo briefly during Peres' stay there, is due back in Egypt this weekend for more extensive talks.

Egyptian officials made a point of telling Israeli reporters that there is "real chemistry" between their president and the Israeli foreign minister, implying that their talks in Alexandria could perhaps help break the deadlock over the peace process.

Meanwhile, the American effort to overcome the present impasse acquired a higher profile with Christopher's somber warning earlier this week that America's patience, in effect, is wearing thin.

During an appearance Sunday on the NBC television talk show "Meet the Press," Christopher said pointedly that he and President Clinton had their hands full with other world affairs and could not invest their efforts endlessly in Middle East peacemaking if they felt the parties themselves were not sincerely interested.

Ross' mission, which will involve shuttling between Israelis and Palestinians in Jerusalem, and

between Israel and neighboring Arab countries, stands to serve as an American test of the parties' resolve in making peace.

Ross and his assistants will be joined later in his trip by Assistant Secretary of State Edward Djerejian, who has been designated as America's next ambassador to Israel.

The American warning about the administration's continued peace efforts should influence both the Israeli government -- which was elected on a pro-peace ticket -- and the Palestinians, who have long urged a more vigorous American role in the peace process.

As for the Syrian-Israeli talks, Peres said he believes progress on the Israeli-Palestinian track would trigger a new surge forward in the negotiations with Damascus.

Mubarak, too, stressed his view, publicly and in his long meeting with Peres, that Syrian President Hafez Assad is firmly set on the road to peace with Israel.

Israeli sources said they expected that if the Ross effort results in tangible success, then Christopher may visit the region himself later this month to preside over some formal acceptance by Israel and the Palestinians of the sought-after declaration of principles.

JEWS NOW OUTNUMBER ARAB POPULATION IN EX-JORDANIAN SECTION OF JERUSALEM By David Landau

JERUSALEM, July 7 (JTA) -- Jews now outnumber Palestinians in the section of Jerusalem that was under Jordanian rule prior to 1967, Deputy Mayor Avraham Kahilla reported this week to members of the city planning committee.

The finding, which came as a surprise to many, including residents of this city, was based on recent surveys by the government and a private group, Kahilla said.

The number of Jews now living in those areas of the city that were Jordanian before being captured by Israel in 1967 exceeds 160,000. The number of Palestinians living in those same areas is about 155,000.

Kahilla said Jews became a majority in eastern Jerusalem sometime during the last year and a half, mainly due to the development of the northern Jewish suburb of Pisgat Ze'ev, situated between the Jewish suburbs of Neveh Ya'acov and French Hill.

Kahilla predicted that the Jewish population growth would continue at this accelerated rate. He said 6,000 additional housing units in Pisgat Ze'ev are approaching completion.

Kahilla, a lifelong member of the Labor Party, said the demography is a fact of political life that should be taken into consideration by everyone dealing with aspects of Jerusalem's political future.

A former Jerusalem deputy mayor and noted academic expert on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Meron Benvenisti, said in an interview that the Jewish suburbs of eastern Jerusalem are indistinguishable, in Palestinian eyes, from Jewish settlement in the administered territories.

"There is no difference to them between Ofra (a West Bank settlement) and Gilo (a southern Jerusalem suburb)," Benvenisti said in the newspaper Ha'aretz.

Kahilla's report comes against the backdrop of a hardening deadlock in the Washington peace talks, chiefly over the issue of Jerusalem's status.

The Palestinians are demanding that eastern

Jerusalem fall under the jurisdiction of the autonomy plan, or at least that "settlement" activities there cease so as not to prejudice the final political disposition of the city, to be determined in negotiations slated to begin three years after autonomy goes into effect.

Benvenisti said the publication of these new population statistics would sharpen the issues, since the Americans and others have steadily come to accept that demographic realities are creating facts on the ground in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

He pointed out that the area that the present government calls "Greater Jerusalem" adds 40,000 Jews to the city's demographic equation by incorporating "satellite" towns and villages, such as Ma'aleh Adumim, that the government regards as destined to remain under Israeli rule.

But these outlying areas also include a much larger number of Arabs, he observed. Under the government's definition, he said, Greater Jerusalem's population today is 52 percent Jewish and 48 percent Arab.

U.S. STUDY ON GAYS IN MILITARY DISCUSSES ISRAEL AS AN EXAMPLE By Lisa Mann

WASHINGTON, July 7 (JTA) -- To help in the formulation of a new U.S. government policy on the controversial subject of gays in the military, the General Accounting Office has released a study detailing how Israel and various other foreign countries have dealt with the issue.

President Clinton has stated his intention of lifting the current ban on gay men and lesbians serving openly in the U.S. armed forces.

But the Joint Chiefs of Staff and supporters in Congress have strongly objected to such a move, maintaining that homosexuality is incompatible with military service.

The White House is expected shortly to announce its new plan, which will probably involve a compromise to try to accommodate both the military and gay rights groups.

The GAO report, released by the congressional agency in June, details the status of gays in the military in Israel, Canada, Germany and Sweden, all of which allow them to serve.

In Israel, gays have been serving in the military since the country's founding.

But it was not until this May that all restrictions on the recruitment, assignment, or promotion of gays were removed.

In Israel, the report says, the issue of gays in the military is not controversial, as it is in the United States.

Because gays have served in the Israeli military for 45 years, the report says, "most people do not have strong feelings about homosexuals' presence in the military."

"Moreover, homosexuals and homosexual rights in general are not issues which are at the forefront of public debate," the report says.

It cautions, however, that because of the different societal patterns in different countries, it is difficult to reproduce one country's experience in another.

The report includes information on 25 countries. Eleven countries allow gays to serve, 11 do not and three countries' policies were unclear.

The study was requested by Sen. John Warner (R-Va.), a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, which has been conducting hearings on the issue.

MINISTER SAYS ALIYAH COULD RISE IF GOVERNMENT SPENT MORE MONEY By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, July 7 (JTA) -- If the government approved larger budgets for immigrant housing and absorption, the projected number of immigrants arriving this year could rise from 78,000 to 90,000, Absorption Minister Yair Tsaban told the Cabinet this week.

Some 513,000 immigrants have arrived in Israel during the past four years, but the rate of arrival has decreased over the last two years, mostly due to the tough unemployment situation.

Tsaban has demanded funding for specific absorption programs to create jobs for immigrants above the age of 45.

The government originally projected 120,000 immigrants for this year, but now, with half a year gone, the forecast has been modified to 78,000.

The annual number of immigrants from the former Soviet Union has dropped to around 60,000, the same number as the combined total of those going from the former Soviet Union to the United States or Germany.

Last month, 5,512 immigrants arrived here from the former Soviet Union, with another 2,846 coming to the United States under the government's refugee program, according to the National Conference on Soviet Jewry and the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society in New York.

The number of June immigrants was up slightly from May, when 4,910 Jews from the former Soviet Union entered Israel and 2,494 entered the United States.

The total number of Soviet immigrants to Israel for the first six months of the year was 30,942, up slightly from the 1992 total of 27,330 for the same six-month period.

POLITICIANS AND PROTESTERS ALIKE HAVE MESSAGES FOR VISITING MAYOR By Michele Chabin

JERUSALEM, July 7 (JTA) -- Visiting New York Mayor David Dinkins, dogged here by the ongoing controversy over the 1991 Crown Heights riots, literally stopped traffic Wednesday when he and a delegation from the Big Apple unveiled a new street sign bearing the name "New York Place."

The dedication near the Foreign Ministry, which received an unusually large amount of media coverage, drew many former New Yorkers and included about 20 demonstrators carrying placards that read "Crown Heights Place."

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek shared the podium with Dinkins as the Police Corps Band played "The Star Spangled Banner" and then "Hatikvah," the U.S. and Israeli national anthems.

Peres, just back from peace talks in Egypt, told Dinkins, "Outside of Israel, I believe that New York is the closest thing to our home. Mayor, we welcome you as a guest and as a friend."

Dinkins, who visited Tel Aviv amid the onslaught of Iraqi Scud missiles during the Persian Gulf War, has received hospitality from the highest echelons of Israel's government. Addressing the crowd, he said, "New York and Jerusalem share an important bond. The dedication of New York Place will span continents."

Members of his delegation, which included

politicians, clergy and business people, expressed hope that the mayor's visit would not only foster good will and trade between Jerusalem and New York, but would bridge a gap between Jews and blacks back home.

Writer Letty Cottin Pogrebin, chair of Americans for Peace Now, said she came on the mission "because I really wanted to support the mayor. He has always been a friend of Israel and a healing force in black-Jewish relations."

Not everyone in the crowd was as enthusiastic, however.

Dinkins has been the target of continuing harsh criticism for not acting forcefully enough during the black riots against Jews in the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn two years ago, in which Australian Jewish scholar Yankel Rosenbaum was murdered.

Among the demonstrators carrying signs referring to Crown Heights was activist Rabbi Avi Weiss of the Bronx, whose angry "open letter" to Dinkins was published Tuesday in The Jerusalem Post.

Weiss, who leads an organization called the Coalition of Jewish Concerns -- Amcha, said, "We applaud the mayor's visit, but he is here to politic for votes in the hope that our community will forget Crown Heights," said Weiss, in reference to Dinkins' candidacy for re-election in November.

"For me, personally, it would be unconscionable to be in Israel and to dedicate New York Place without reminding everyone that it was under his tenure that the Crown Heights pogrom occurred," said Weiss.

With much of the New York press corps here in Israel covering the four-day visit, few people were likely to forget.

CIVIL SERVANTS STRIKE AFFECTS OFFICES, HOSPITALS AND COURTS By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, July 7 (JTA) -- Work in Israeli government offices, courts and hospitals virtually ground to a halt Wednesday as more than 60,000 state employees staged a strike for higher wages.

Representatives of the striking workers announced at midnight Tuesday that they were beginning an open-ended work stoppage to pressure the Treasury into accepting their demand for salary increases of some 35 percent, to be paid over three years.

The Finance Ministry has responded by offering three annual 3 percent increases.

On Wednesday morning, the government obtained court orders against 15 percent of the strikers, ordering them to return to work immediately to ensure a continuation of minimum services by essential workers.

The strikers included non-medical workers in government hospitals and all employees in ministerial offices, the National Insurance Institute, the Public Works Department, the Meteorological Service and civil and religious courts.

Educational Television programs were off the air throughout the day, and Israel Radio and Television services were due to close down after their 9 p.m. news broadcasts Wednesday evening.

Customs officers were not at work at air and seaports.

The strike committees announced that the work stoppage would probably be extended to other groups of civil servants on Thursday, possibly including all radio and television services, as well as post offices and Bezek telephone services.

**ISRAELI ENVOY PRESENTS MEDALS
TO POLISH RIGHTEOUS CHRISTIANS**
By Jed Sunden

WARSAW, July 7 (JTA) -- Nearly a half century after the end of World War II, Israel's ambassador here presented over two dozen Poles with medals recognizing their heroic acts in saving Jewish lives during the Nazi occupation.

The ceremony Wednesday marked the first time that any Polish citizen had been honored on home soil for saving Jewish lives in Poland. It was also the first time many of the recipients had received public recognition of any sort.

The Holocaust and Polish-Jewish relations were long considered taboo topics under the Communist regime in Poland.

The rescuers, who were also given honorary Israeli citizenship, were recognized during proceedings of the first International Conference on Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust.

The conference also brought together Jewish Holocaust survivors and the Poles who had saved them.

"Without the help of the righteous, we were dead," said one such survivor, Jack Pariser, who now lives in the United States.

"I look at it not as saving us, but as giving us life," he said.

Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League, which sponsored the conference, said about the meetings: "I feel it was successful because it identified this subject of Poles rescuing Jews as one which is in need of original research.

"This conference has also made the beginning of an impact in Poland," said Foxman, who was himself saved by his Polish Catholic nanny.

Heroes Both Of Poles And Jews

Looking toward the future, Foxman expressed the hope that "the Polish government will find a way to honor these people (the rescuers) as national heroes.

"They are not just Jewish heroes but also Polish heroes," he said.

The conference -- titled "Can Indifference Kill?" -- also featured two days of scholarly presentations and debate on Polish-Jewish relations and the action, or inaction, taken to save the Jews from the Nazis.

The presentations on the Polish record during the war inspired the most heated debate, reflecting a growing controversy in Poland that has emerged since the collapse of communism and the beginning of free academic inquiry.

Yehuda Bauer, a professor of Holocaust studies at Hebrew University in Jerusalem and a participant in the presentations, explained his view on the new controversy.

"I think the Poles are still in the first stages of self-investigation," Bauer said.

Tomasz Szarota, a professor at the Historical Institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences, saw the situation as a continuing legacy of communism.

"Many of my colleagues have continued the official line of anti-Semitism from before. The only difference is that now we can freely discuss these issues," he said.

Another highlight of the conference was a commemoration service in honor of those Christian Poles who saved Jewish lives, which included the participation of officials of the Polish Catholic Church.

**MACCABIAH INSTILLS JEWISH PRIDE
IN ATHLETES FROM AROUND THE WORLD**
By Michele Chabin

RAMAT GAN, Israel (JTA) -- With Jewish athletes competing in the Olympics, is there still a need for Israel's Maccabiah games?

That question gets a resounding yes from the participants in the 14th Maccabiah, which kicked off here Monday evening with a festive opening ceremony.

Though they come from dozens of countries and speak a myriad of languages, the athletes have one thing in common: a pride in being Jewish.

The Maccabiah has come under attack in recent years, largely because of the cost of staging the games. Some believe the Maccabiah's time has past, since Jewish athletes can and do compete in most international competitions, unlike an earlier time when Jews faced discrimination or exclusion.

But the feeling that the Maccabiah is anachronistic is certainly not shared by the participants. No matter where they come from, or what sport they compete in, the athletes are unanimous in their enthusiasm for the event.

"The reason the games continue is because the athletes want it to," said Aryeh Rozensweig, chairman of the event's organizing committee.

"All of them feel that it's important to come to Israel, and most have paid their own way to come here. Many of the athletes have competed in previous Maccabiah's, and now they are back again," Rozensweig said.

'More Than Just Another Competition'

The Maccabiah, he said, "is more than just another competition. The athletes are here to soak up the Jewish environment, to be among a larger family of Jewish athletes. For many athletes, combining their Jewish heritage with athletic competition is the best of both worlds."

That is the case for 27-year-old David Cassuto, a strapping 6-footer from Cedarhurst, N.Y. This is the sprinter's second Maccabiah, having competed here in 1990.

"It's wonderful being back in Israel," said Cassuto. "Last night, during the opening ceremonies, I had the privilege to carry one of the banners. It was incredible to think that everyone walking into the stadium was Jewish. It was a very powerful feeling."

Jennifer Frank, an 18-year-old track and field star from Oak Park, Calif., is visiting Israel for the first time. "It's been a thrill to see where everything (in the Bible) originated," she said. "My family doesn't keep all the Jewish traditions, but we do celebrate the holidays."

Frank called the competition "a high point in my sports life so far," and said, "This visit has made me realize I'm Jewish and that it's important not to let my Jewishness go."

Stacey Schefflin, 25, who recently retired from the pro tennis circuit, also called the Maccabiah a high point in her sports career.

"Other than the Maccabiah, the two highlights have been making it to the third round of the Australian Open and getting to" the National Collegiate Athletic Association team finals, she said.

But of the three competitions, said the Charlotte, N.C., native, "only the Maccabiah allowed me to combine my identity as a sports-woman with my identity as a Jew."