

**AS SITUATION IN SARAJEVO WORSENS,
JEWS LOBBY OFFICIALS IN WASHINGTON**
By Deborah Kalb

WASHINGTON, July 22 (JTA) -- As conditions in Sarajevo deteriorated sharply this week, a group of Jewish organizational officials descended on Washington to urge the Clinton administration and members of Congress to do more for the besieged former Yugoslav republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

But the administration had already announced it would not take further steps to help the Muslims of Bosnia, who have come under increasing attack from advancing Serbian forces.

At a news conference Wednesday prior to his departure for Asia and the Middle East, Secretary of State Warren Christopher said the United States had done all it could to help the Bosnians, including providing humanitarian aid.

"That's a tragic, tragic situation in Bosnia, make no mistake about that. It's the world's most difficult diplomatic problem. It defies any simple solution," Christopher said.

Those comments elicited sharp criticism from one Jewish organization. In a statement Thursday, the American Jewish Congress called Christopher's remarks "the most appalling in a series of recent actions and statements by this administration distancing itself from the tragedy from Bosnia.

"The cold indifference to the massive human catastrophe in Bosnia expressed by this administration's policy constitutes a betrayal of fundamental American values no less than of America's national interest," said the AJCongress statement, which was issued by Robert Lifton, the group's president, and Henry Siegman, its executive director.

Jewish groups have been actively lobbying for months to encourage the United States to take stronger action, including military action if necessary, to help the Bosnian Muslims.

When President Clinton took office, Jewish groups had high hopes that the new administration would take a more forceful policy to help the Bosnian Muslims, who have been the victims of an "ethnic cleansing" campaign, mounted primarily by Serbs.

'Doing All That We Can'

To many in the Jewish community, the "ethnic cleansing" conjured up eerie images of the Nazi Holocaust and spurred Jewish officials to ensure that something be done to help the Muslims. Jewish groups have encouraged the administration to lift the arms embargo on Bosnia, for example.

But in recent months, Jewish officials have been expressing frustration that the administration, like its predecessor, has been reluctant to take a stronger stand.

On Thursday, a delegation of seven Jewish officials, led by the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council, held meetings all day on Capitol Hill and with officials at the White House and Pentagon.

Sarajevo, the Bosnian capital, is currently under siege from Serb forces, and that fact changed the entire "temperament of why we came here," said Abraham Bayer, NJCRAC's director of

international concerns, who helped organize Thursday's meetings.

Bayer said the delegation came to express the "enormous distress of the Jewish community" over the situation in Bosnia, adding, "Our purpose is to shake up the people."

The delegation met with Sens. Joseph Biden (D-Del.), the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations subcommittee on European affairs, and Richard Lugar (R-Ind.), as well as aides to Sens. Robert Dole (R-Kan.) and Christopher Dodd (D-Conn.).

In addition, the group held meetings with White House, Pentagon and National Security Council policy specialists.

The United States has blamed much of the current disastrous situation in the former Yugoslavia on America's European allies.

Christopher repeatedly said that the United States "was doing all that we can consistent with our national interest."

In addition to providing humanitarian aid, the United States has supported the imposition of sanctions on Serbia and the institution of a war crimes tribunal, Christopher said.

Other groups participating in the meetings were the Anti-Defamation League, American Jewish Committee, American Jewish Congress, B'nai B'rith and the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs.

**ISRAELI SOLDIER IS REPORTED DEAD
IN NEW FLARE-UP IN SOUTH LEBANON**
By Hugh Ortel

TEL AVIV, July 22 (JTA) -- A few days of relative calm on the Israeli-Lebanese border was broken Thursday by exchanges of fire and clashes with guerrillas in southern Lebanon that reportedly left one Israeli soldier dead.

The atmosphere in southern Lebanon has been tense since five Israeli soldiers were killed earlier this month and Israeli reinforcements were deployed in the security zone.

But aside from the firing of a few Katyusha rockets, the area had remained relatively calm this week. That changed on Thursday, with the firing of several mortar shells from north of the border security zone toward a post of the Israeli-allied South Lebanon Army near Rihan, in the eastern sector of the zone.

One Israeli soldier was reported killed in a massive bombardment of rockets and mortar shells.

An SLA soldier was reported wounded, along with several Lebanese residents.

The Israel Defense Force chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Ehud Barak, said earlier in the week that Israeli counterattacks north of the security zone were inevitable if terrorist and guerrilla forces continued to attack Israeli forces in the zone or shoot rockets into Israel itself.

Lebanese Defense Minister Mohsen Dalloul reacted sharply to Barak's comments, saying such attacks would unite all Lebanese, leading them to take up arms against Israel.

"Resistance to the Israeli occupation in south Lebanon will stop only when Israel withdraws," Dalloul said in an interview broadcast over the Voice of Lebanon radio.

**BEHIND THE HEADLINES:
BUSINESS IS BOOMING IN NABLUS
DESPITE CLOSURE OF TERRITORIES**
By Gil Sedan

NABLUS, West Bank (JTA) -- Peering down on this city from the top of Mount Gerizim, it looks like business as usual.

The densely populated casbah is humming with activity. The monotonous sound of pounding hammers and drills is an indication of the construction boom, and soldiers are hardly in sight.

It is hard to detect the intifada and miseries of daily life in Nablus.

Despite predictions that the army-imposed closure of the territories would cripple the economy and lead to unrest, this city -- the largest in the West Bank -- appears to be quiet and doing relatively well economically.

Statistics show a much more positive picture than could have been anticipated when the army revived the "Green Line" separating the territories from Israel proper four months ago and banned most of the Palestinian population in the territories from entering Israel.

Although Palestinians mention the menacing figure of 40 percent unemployment, the number of job-seekers here does not appear to be that high.

Officials of the Israeli Civil Administration say that out of the 10,000 Nablus residents who used to make a living in Israel proper, 3,000 have returned to work there, many others have found continuous construction work in the nearby Jewish settlements, and others are engaged in the building boom that has overtaken this city.

Though some have stayed at home, they do not make up 40 percent.

One can hardly pass a block in Nablus without seeing a new construction project. Construction labor is cheaper than in the past; local entrepreneurs feel that now is a better time than ever to invest in real estate; and the army, eager to encourage stability and normalization, is more willing to grant construction permits.

In some cases, the Civil Administration is even providing necessary funds for new construction, such as infrastructure for new industrial projects.

Concern About Stability

Local entrepreneurs are also investing in small and medium economic ventures, such as shoe and paint factories.

According to the Civil Administration, foreign investors, particularly Palestinians who have made their fortune in the Persian Gulf states, have expressed interest in larger massive investments, but want to be sure of Israel's economic and political response.

Another concern of potential investors is how political developments will affect the region. Palestinian entrepreneurs have the money and the will to invest in the West Bank, but only if they are convinced the area is entering a period of stability.

Israeli military commanders stationed here say Nablus, a center of Palestinian nationalism, is indeed entering a period of stability.

Contrary to expectations that the closure would create a time bomb within the territories, Nablus is quieter now than ever.

Whereas in the past, local nationalist groups forced businesses to shut down in the early afternoon as a sign of solidarity with the intifada, now shops open until late at night. And the

local muntaza, a large garden cafe, is humming with young couples and music.

"There is a feeling that people want to live," said Col. Tal, the military commander of Nablus, who can only be identified by his first name. "They just do not want to see the army too much."

Indeed, the army has changed tactics. Soldiers avoid direct confrontations with massive groups of Palestinians, and the army refrains from deploying troops in permanent positions.

Instead, small units are being moved from one point to another, according to specific needs. The fight against local terrorism and stone-throwers is carried out using "surgical means": hitting hard at specific targets, usually identified by efficient intelligence.

But Is The Intifada Over?

The results are impressive, Col. Tal said with a self-assured smile in an interview this week. Out of hundreds of activists who used to be active in the city, only 15 are still on the most-wanted list.

The local casbah, almost impenetrable to the army at the peak of the intifada, is now controlled by small patrols of soldiers.

"I can hardly envisage a situation which could return the intifada to its peak," said Col. Tal.

Is the intifada over? Is the area really ripe for political changes? Even the self-confident Israeli military officers here would not go that far.

One officer said it is too early to tell whether the economic burden of the closure will eventually lead to social and political explosion.

But perhaps most important, what is true for Nablus does not necessarily hold for the rest of the West Bank, and certainly does not for the Gaza Strip, where the situation is much worse.

Most observers agree that everything depends on the political process. The continuing deadlock in the peace talks could reverse the current positive trends.

On the other hand, a breakthrough could set off an economic boom, and then Nablus could boast at having been a pioneering forerunner of change.

**ARAB KNESSET MEMBER TO MEET ARAFAT,
FURTHER ANGERING RABIN ON PLO TIES**
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, July 22 (JTA) -- Arab Knesset member Abdul Wahab Darawshe has announced he will travel this weekend to Tunis to meet with Palestine Liberation Organization Chairman Yasir Arafat, taking with him an unnamed Labor Party Knesset member.

Darawshe, who heads the Arab Democratic Party, made the statement as Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin denied reports of direct contacts between the Israeli government and the PLO.

Darawshe said that prior to his departure he had met with senior Israeli and American figures for consultations.

The Israeli daily Yediot Achronot reported Thursday that Darawshe had asked to meet with Rabin before his trip, so that he could deliver a personal message from Rabin to Arafat.

But according to that report, Rabin refused to see him, stressing, in statements by his office, that he had no message to convey and that he would not make use of Darawshe's services.

**ISRAELI LEADERS ASSAIL REPORT
ON KILLING OF YOUNG PALESTINIANS
By Gil Sedan**

JERUSALEM, July 22 (JTA) -- Government and opposition figures alike have assailed a report by the Israeli human rights organization B'Tselem that criticizes the Israeli army for the large number of Palestinian children shot dead in the administered territories.

Deputy Defense Minister Mordechai Gur went so far as to describe the charges by B'Tselem as a "blood libel," a term heretofore reserved for a virulent anti-Semitic calumny that Jews kill gentiles to use their blood in Jewish ritual.

B'Tselem's report, published last week, claims that some 232 Palestinian children were killed by army soldiers and thousands wounded since the beginning of the intifada.

The report became a subject of debate in the Knesset when the issue of the killings was raised Wednesday by Knesset member Naomi Chazan of the left-wing Meretz bloc.

Chazan stressed that she was not criticizing the army, but rather the "governments of Israel in the present and in the past" whose policies led Israel Defense Force soldiers to kill children.

"Some 232 were killed, and that's a fact that cannot be erased," she said.

Chazan's comments predictably upset both Labor and opposition leaders. Likud Knesset member David Levy was furious.

When Chazan spoke, he got up from his seat and shouted: "How can you use such language? Is it the policy of the government of Israel to kill children?"

"I belong to the opposition, but with all due respect, I cannot hear such things," Levy said.

Gur said that part of the problem was the fact that the Palestinians were sending children to the front of their violent demonstrations, purposely creating a situation in which children and soldiers confront each other.

According to B'Tselem figures -- which were not disputed by the army -- some 38 children younger than age 16 have been killed in the past six months, more than double the number of children killed all last year and more than during any other parallel period in the past.

The organization announced it was staging a 38-day protest strike in Jerusalem, one day for every child killed.

**GREEK LEADER SAYS HE WILL HELP
ISRAEL JOIN U.N. EUROPEAN GROUP
By Jean Cohen**

ATHENS, July 22 (JTA) -- Greek Prime Minister Constantine Mitsotakis says he will help Israel join the European group within the United Nations and also assist it in revising its 1975 economic agreement with the European Community.

Mitsotakis made these commitments to Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin, who arrived in Greece on Thursday for a two-day official visit.

Beilin is heading the joint Greek-Israeli committee that is convening in Athens for the first time.

Mitsotakis said Greece could fulfill its promise of assistance regarding Israel-E.C. relations when Greece assumes the rotating E.C. presidency for six months beginning next January.

Beilin also briefed his host on the Middle

East peace process on the eve of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's arrival in the region.

The Greek prime minister expressed his appreciation to Israel for not sending any kind of diplomatic representation to the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia -- called by Greeks the Republic of Skopje -- before the issue of the republic's official name is settled.

The republic's name is a hot potato in Greece, whose northern part also bears the name of Macedonia. In ancient times, the region was one, and the Greeks fear the newly independent republic will try to appropriate the Greek region of Macedonia as well.

**AMERICAN ZIONIST MOVEMENT ASSAILS
GERMAN DECISION TO FREE TERRORIST**

NEW YORK, July 22 (JTA) -- A major American Jewish organization has assailed a decision by German prosecutors to release Shi'ite Muslim terrorist Abbas Hamadi from jail after serving just half of his 13-year sentence for kidnapping two German businessmen in 1988.

"We voice shock and outrage at the announcement" by German officials, said a statement issued by Seymour Reich, president of the American Zionist Movement, and Karen Rubinstein, the umbrella group's executive director.

Abbas Hamadi, 32, kidnapped two Germans in Beirut to hold them hostage for the release of his brother Mohammed Hamadi, 28, from jail. The younger Hamadi is serving a life sentence in Germany for the 1985 hijacking of a TWA plane in which an American navy diver, Robert Stethem, was beaten to death and dumped on the tarmac of the Beirut Airport.

The businessmen held by Abbas Hamadi were released unharmed after Germany resisted the blackmail.

Germany's pending release of Abbas Hamadi is further complicated by the issue that a third Hamadi brother, Abdel Hadi Hamadi, a Hezbollah leader in Lebanon, had held two German aid workers hostage in 1989 and released them last year after lengthy negotiations.

It is thought by some that Germany's release of Abbas Hamadi was part of the deal worked out to free the two aid workers held by his brother Abdel Hadi Hamadi.

"Germany denies that its decision is part of a deal negotiated with Lebanon to free two German aid workers," the AZM statement said, "but such a denial is difficult to accept."

"In view of its timing, Germany's action will be widely seen and understood as a capitulation to terrorism," AZM said.

TWO ISRAELIS ATTACKED IN ITALY

ROME, July 22 (JTA) -- Two Israeli students were attacked and lightly injured in an Adriatic seaside town by a group of anti-immigrant thugs who apparently mistook the Israelis for North African immigrants.

The attackers shouted slogans such as "dirty Third-Worlders" during the incident Monday in the town of Ancona, according to news reports.

The thugs also threw bottles, breaking the nose of one of the students, who study at the University of Ancona's Medical School.

Police arrived on the scene and arrested five of the attackers. Three police officers were injured as they scuffled with the gang.

JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS VOICE CONCERN ABOUT ABORTION-RELATED LEGISLATION

By Deborah Kalb

WASHINGTON, July 22 (JTA) -- While the abortion rights movement received a significant boost this week from Supreme Court nominee Ruth Bader Ginsburg, some Jewish groups expressed concern about abortion-related legislation pending on Capitol Hill.

With the exception of some Orthodox groups, the majority of American Jewish organizations support preserving a woman's right to choose whether or not to terminate a pregnancy.

In confirmation hearings Wednesday before the Senate Judiciary Committee, Ginsburg said that right to choose could be found in the Constitution's explicit guarantee of equal protection for all citizens, as well as in the implied right to privacy.

"This is something central to a woman's life, to her dignity. It's a decision she must make for herself. And when government controls that decision for her, she's being treated as less than a fully adult human being responsible for her own choices," Ginsburg said.

Also on Wednesday, the five women Democrats serving in the U.S. Senate held a joint news conference proclaiming their opposition to restrictions on abortion that are currently included in federal appropriations bills.

The Senate is currently deciding on its version of several abortion-related provisions, including the well-known Hyde Amendment barring Medicaid funding for abortion in most cases. In a defeat for pro-choice forces, the amendment was recently adopted by the House of Representatives.

The news conference was called by a coalition of groups, including the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights, to which 13 Jewish organizations belong.

It featured Sens. Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.), Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), Barbara Mikulski (D-Md.), Carol Moseley-Braun (D-Ill.) and Patty Murray (D-Wash.). Mikulski, Murray and Feinstein serve on the Appropriations Committee.

"The press conference was about the fact that even though abortion is a legal health service in this country, there is a two-tier system," said Sammie Moshenberg, Washington representative for the National Council of Jewish Women, which belongs to the Religious Coalition.

She said that poor women and some others are "essentially barred from having this legal procedure because the funding has been cut off."

'A Long Way To Go'

Mark Pelavin, Washington representative for the American Jewish Congress, which also belongs to the coalition, said his group is in complete accord with the five senators and that Robert Lifton, the group's president, had sent a letter to the Senate Appropriations Committee urging that the restrictive language be dropped.

"Funding issues are of paramount importance to women across the country. Otherwise, we provide poor women, federal employees and others with nothing but a hollow promise of a right" exercised by others, Pelavin said.

Ginsburg's remarks on abortion were made in response to questioning from Sen. Hank Brown (R-Colo.).

She has written and spoken out on the abortion issue before and has criticized the sweeping nature of the high court's landmark Roe

vs. Wade ruling legalizing abortion. But her criticisms are seen as within the range of pro-choice opinions.

Moshenberg praised Ginsburg but added that abortion rights supporters "have a long way to go, even with Ginsburg."

And Pelavin said that one of the biggest abortion fights would probably emerge later this year, in the upcoming debate over whether abortions would be covered under the Clinton health care reform package.

FORMER BRITISH CHIEF RABBI ENDORSES GENETIC MEANS TO STOP HOMOSEXUALITY

By Valerie Monchi

London Jewish Chronicle

LONDON, July 22 (JTA) -- Britain's former chief rabbi has caused a stir here by saying he would favor genetic engineering as a way of eradicating homosexuality.

Lord Jakobovits's views come amid a heated debate among rabbis on the implications of new scientific evidence pointing to a "homosexual gene" or, at any rate, to specific genetic regions that may play a role in determining sexual orientation.

While stressing that his statements were "tentative" and "did not have the status of a ruling," Jakobovits told the London Jewish Chronicle: "If we could, by some form of genetic engineering, eliminate those trends, we should," adding "so long as it is done for a therapeutic purpose."

But the former chief rabbi ruled out abortion in this context.

"I cannot see any justification for destroying a potential life. One would have to train a child to help him overcome his (homosexual) predisposition," he said.

In a letter to The Times of London, Jakobovits had earlier compared homosexual practices to stealing, adultery and murder, writing that if it could be proved that these were hereditary traits, this would not make them any more tolerable.

His letter angered non-Orthodox rabbis as well as the Jewish gay and lesbian community.

Rabbi Stephen Howard, chairman of the Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues' Rabbinic Conference, described Jakobovits' letter as "rather disgusting."

"I find it reprehensible to bracket homosexuality with the examples he gave," he said.

Howard added that he would consider it a "very serious matter" if somebody were to endorse genetic engineering as a way of wiping out homosexuality.

Jack Gilbert, secretary of the Jewish Gay and Lesbian Helpline, was equally critical. He said, "Such an idea is morally reprehensible. As Jews, we must know that such tampering, except in the most extreme cases, is very dangerous."

But Rabbi Nissan Shulman, who holds the medical ethics portfolio in the chief rabbi's Cabinet, said he agreed with Jakobovits that "tendentious homosexual feelings had to be overcome."

But he added that genetic engineering "can only be used for healing purposes, and not for selective human breeding. Homosexuality would fall under the latter."

A spokesman for the current chief rabbi of Britain, Jonathan Sacks, said the rabbi was "greatly concerned" with these issues and would be having a full consultation with his Cabinet in September.