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**CHRISTOPHER MEETS WITH MUBARAK,
WARNS PEACE PROCESS COULD UNRAVEL**

By Cynthia Mann

JERUSALEM, Aug. 2 (JTA) -- U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher met with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak on Monday and warned afterward that the Middle East peace process could "quickly deteriorate" if progress does not come soon in Israeli-Arab negotiations.

Christopher arrived in Egypt during the first stop of a Middle East tour designed to break the impasse in the peace process. He and Mubarak met for two hours in a presidential palace overlooking Alexandria harbor.

After the meeting, Christopher told reporters that last week's fighting in southern Lebanon should serve as a warning of what might happen if the peace talks do not succeed.

"We both agreed that recent events can serve as a reminder to all parties that the Arab-Israeli negotiations can quickly deteriorate if we do not take this moment for peacemaking."

Commenting on his informal deadline that the 21-month-old peace talks must show some marked progress by the end of this year, Christopher said, "Decision time is rapidly approaching."

The secretary also said the Clinton administration is "prepared to stay the course" as a full partner in the talks.

Mubarak expressed similar sentiments, saying that the negotiations should not stop, "because peace is so precious."

Could Extend His Trip

Hours before the Christopher-Mubarak meeting, Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasser Arafat met with Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Moussa, presumably to discuss talking points that would be put to Christopher.

Arafat was expected to meet again with Moussa, or perhaps Mubarak, to be briefed on the American secretary's responses.

Christopher's reputation has been strengthened in the region after his successful brokerage of the cease-fire between Israel and Lebanon.

After the meeting with Mubarak, Christopher flew on to Cairo. He was due to arrive in Syria on Tuesday, before flying to Israel the same day.

On Wednesday, the secretary is expected to visit Jordan and return to Syria. He is scheduled to go back to Israel the following day.

Christopher is expected to concentrate his efforts on breaking the deadlock in the negotiations between Israel and Syria.

Damascus has been demanding an Israeli commitment to full withdrawal from the Golan Heights. Israel wants a Syrian commitment to full-fledged peace before discussing how much territory it would agree to return.

Both U.S. and Israeli officials believe that Syria's consent to press the Iranian-backed Hezbollah to refrain from firing Katyusha rockets at northern Israel signals a cooperation that could be used to advance the peace talks.

With some Israeli officials reportedly voicing interest in the possibility of shuttle diplomacy between Damascus and Jerusalem, Christopher has apparently left open the option of staying in the region beyond his scheduled departure Thursday.

**NEWS ANALYSIS:
SYRIA MAY BE THE BIG WINNER
OF CEASE-FIRE IN SOUTH LEBANON
By Gil Sedan**

JERUSALEM, Aug. 2 (JTA) -- Surprisingly, Syria has emerged as the big winner of "Operation Accountability," Israel's weeklong barrage of targets in southern Lebanon.

Syrian gains in the confrontation between Israel and the pro-Iranian Hezbollah may well be registered in the history books as a rare phenomenon in that a third party made a political profit from a military conflict -- without firing a shot.

Israel came out of the confrontation with a limited military advantage. No more Katyusha rockets will be fired at settlements in northern Israel, according to verbal assurances made over the weekend.

But Hezbollah remains in the arena and is still loudly proclaiming its right to operate freely within the Israeli-controlled security zone along the border in southern Lebanon.

For an entire week, Syrian President Hafez Assad remained cool and aloof. When asked to intervene to stop the Hezbollah attacks, his aides insisted that they could do nothing to stop a "legitimate resistance against occupation."

But then the Americans turned up the pressure, and Assad changed course.

U.S. officials were concerned that Secretary of State Warren Christopher's planned visit to the region this week would be overshadowed by the shooting and the Lebanese refugee problem.

Pressure From Beirut

Damascus also came under pressure from Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik al-Hariri, the millionaire who had succeeded, with the help of Syrian bayonets, in stabilizing the shaky Lebanese political infrastructure.

The Lebanese premier warned Assad that the 270,000 refugees who had gathered around the Lebanese capital could endanger the stability of the government.

Syria, the political power that really calls the shots in Lebanon, did not want to lose the measure of stability it had achieved during the past three years at great effort.

More importantly, Syria realized that if the fighting continued, the entire peace process could go down the drain -- a possibility Damascus wants to avoid.

Consequently, Syria took the necessary measures to signal Hezbollah that the Katyusha party was over.

Syria stopped the supply line between Teheran and Hezbollah headquarters in the Lebanese Bekaa Valley, and it gave the Lebanese army the green light to limit Hezbollah activities.

But the Lebanese army did little. It set up several roadblocks, preventing the free movement of Hezbollah fighters, and in some reported incidents, it prevented them from deploying Katyusha launchers.

Nonetheless, Hezbollah's leadership got the message so quickly that Damascus did need not even have to cut the flow of money from Teheran.

Iran's foreign minister, Ali Akhbar Velayati,

rushed to Damascus to try to persuade the Syrians that the show should go on.

But for the first time in the delicate relations between Syria and its eastern neighbor, Assad said no. Too much was at stake. The American pressure was heavy; the stakes were too high.

Eventually, the Iranians, too, joined the deal -- after the Syrians convinced them that there was more to gain from a cease-fire.

But At What Price For Israel?

Just the same, all the parties concerned reiterated via various channels Sunday that the cease-fire applies to northern Israel, but not the security zone in southern Lebanon.

Indeed, fewer than 24 hours after the cease-fire went into effect, a Hezbollah unit attacked a military post manned by the Israeli-supported South Lebanon Army.

During the same period, Assad said in a message to his soldiers that Washington should concentrate on putting an end to the Israeli "occupation" of Lebanon. He said Israel could not ask for security guarantees as long "as the occupation continues and it attacks civilians."

The secretary-general of the Hezbollah movement, Sheik Hassan Nassrallah, declared Sunday that "no one asked and no one would dare ask us to disarm ourselves."

Analysts here are sharing the view that Israel will pay the price for Syria's positive intervention. But it is not yet clear whether the price will be paid in Lebanon or on the Golan Heights, where the Syrians are also seeking an Israeli pullout.

The cease-fire agreement was received with general satisfaction at Sunday's weekly meeting of the Israeli Cabinet. Most ministers felt that the results of Operation Accountability would have a positive effect on the Christopher mission.

Even Environment Minister Yossi Sarid of the dovish Meretz bloc, who was the most vocal in his opposition to the military operation, praised Rabin for the way he handled the crisis.

"The settlement is better than I had expected," said Sarid, who a week ago had expressed the fear that the operation would get out of hand.

Rabin told the ministers that one needed time to see whether the cease-fire would hold. "It is an understanding, not something that is glued with cement," he said.

1 KILLED, 5 WOUNDED IN GAZA ATTACK AVENGING ISRAELI SHELLING OF LEBANON By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Aug. 2 (JTA) -- One Israeli was killed and five persons wounded Monday in a terrorist attack in Gaza described as a reprisal for Israel's weeklong shelling of southern Lebanon.

Armed terrorists who were apparently members of the Muslim fundamentalist organization Islamic Jihad commandeered a bus operated by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian refugees and then deliberately smashed it into two cars belonging to the Israeli Civil Administration.

According to reports, the terrorists had loaded the bus with explosives, which failed to detonate in the collision. An Israel Defense Force bomb squad subsequently dismantled the explosives safely.

Authorities believe that four masked attack-

ers were involved in seizing the bus, although only two of them were on board when it collided with the two vehicles.

The incident took place near the Sheik Ajlin neighborhood of Gaza City.

Yitzhak Amir, 46, an Israeli tax collector for the military government in the Gaza Strip, died in the collision.

Five people who were employees of the military government were wounded and taken to Soroka Hospital in Beersheba, where two were reported to be in critical condition.

It was not until after the attack had taken place that the driver of the UNRWA bus reported that the bus had been taken by force.

Police suspect that the driver had collaborated with the attackers, and he was held for questioning.

About a half hour after the incident took place, the Islamic Jihad publicized a communique claiming responsibility for the attack as an act of revenge for the shelling of Lebanon.

FOUNDATION LAID FOR ISRAELI EMBASSY, TO REPLACE BUILDING LEVELLED BY BOMB By Victoria Verlichak

BUENOS AIRES, Aug. 2 (JTA) -- Argentine and Israeli officials gathered here last week to dedicate the foundation of a new Israeli Embassy here.

The new chancellery will replace the previous embassy, which was completely destroyed by a terrorist attack on March 17, 1992.

Some 30 people -- including four Israelis and five Argentine staff members -- died as a result of the attack, and more than 400 were injured.

Among those attending the ceremony were Foreign Minister Guido Di Tella, Buenos Aires Mayor Saul Bouer and Israeli Ambassador Yitzhak Shefi, whose participation in the ceremony was his last official appearance here.

Shefi, who was ambassador here when the bomb destroyed the previous embassy but was not in the building at the time, has ended his mission and has already left for Israel.

In recalling the attack, Shefi said that "the construction of this new building is, in a way, the reparation of so much pain and human loss."

Some of the survivors who worked for the embassy at the time of the bombing have complained that they have been discriminated against by Israeli officials.

They argue that Israeli employees were compensated in every way possible -- receiving the best medical treatment as well as first-class vacations abroad -- while the Argentine Jews were treated as second-class citizens.

The new Israeli mission is to be situated in the fashionable Belgrano neighborhood on a street that houses several other embassies.

The building permit was granted despite the protests of some 14 homeowners living nearby who had voiced fears for their security and had petitioned the government to change the embassy's location.

Despite these trepidations, Foreign Minister Di Tella, speaking at the foundation-laying ceremony, stressed "the profound existing relations between Argentina and Israel."

He used the occasion to announce that in September, the city of Buenos Aires will host a meeting for experts from around the world who will examine how Nazis sought refuge in South America after World War II.

ATTORNEY GENERAL PRESENTS KNESSET WITH CHARGES AGAINST SHAS LEADER **By Gil Sedan**

JERUSALEM, Aug. 2 (JTA) -- Proceedings to lift the parliamentary immunity of Interior Minister Aryeh Deri began Monday, when Attorney General Yosef Harish presented the Knesset with an indictment against the minister.

Deri, who heads the fervently Orthodox Shas party, a member of the governing coalition, is charged with committing acts of bribery, fraud and breach of the public trust.

Harish, still angry about his failure to get the Knesset to lift the immunity of another Shas Knesset member, Deputy Minister of Religious Affairs Raphael Pinhasi, did not show up at the Knesset in person, but instead sent the indictment sheet with a messenger.

This infuriated Hagai Meirum, chairman of the Knesset House Committee, which is charged with dealing with the matter.

He was also angry at Harish for submitting the indictment two days before the Knesset adjourns for its summer recess.

Meirum went so far as to blame the attorney general for deliberate tactics to slow down the legal process, since the indictment sheet has been ready for the past two weeks.

Meirum said, however, that he did not know of any agreement between the prosecution and the defense to postpone the parliamentary process of lifting Deri's immunity until after the Knesset reconvenes Oct. 15.

Even if such an agreement had been made, stressed Meirum, it would not be honored by the Knesset committee.

In March, the Knesset voted to strip Pinhasi of his parliamentary immunity so that he could face fraud charges connected to his position as treasurer of the Shas party.

Deri Urged To Step Down

But last month, Israel's Supreme Court ruled that the vote was invalid, since Pinhasi was not given an adequate opportunity to present his case to Knesset members before the balloting.

Last week, the Knesset voted again, and this time, those opposing lifting Pinhasi's immunity won, by a vote of 54-50.

As a result, he cannot now be prosecuted.

Deri, meanwhile, has reportedly been charged on four major counts:

- * passing public funds to his own account, and receiving a bribe of \$183,000;
- * conspiracy to receive money on false grounds from the Religious Affairs and Interior ministries;
- * fraud and breach of trust to alter the legal status of certain plots of land in order to allow construction of houses;
- * appointing a close friend as head of a municipal council, although that person did not have the qualifications for the job.

According to the charge sheet, the prosecution is intending to summon some 230 prosecution witnesses.

Among them are the director-general of the Prime Minister's Office, former Police Inspector-General Ya'acov Ternier and three journalists.

The charge sheet reportedly mentions dozens of checks that have allegedly been deposited in Deri's bank account.

Education Minister Amnon Rubinstein urged Deri on Monday to suspend himself from office

immediately and to agree to lifting his immunity, so that the truth can be determined in court.

Deri has agreed to suspend himself from office only after the charge sheet is presented in court. Justice Minister David Libai, however, shares the view that Deri should go on leave or suspend himself immediately.

DEPUTY COMMANDANT OF TREBLINKA RELEASED FROM PRISON BY GERMANY **By Susan Birnbaum**

NEW YORK, Aug. 2 (JTA) -- Jewish groups were astounded last week to learn from news reports that Germany had released Kurt Franz, deputy commandant of the Treblinka death camp, who had been serving a life sentence for his wartime crimes.

The information about the release, which was learned only from a wire service report, rubbed fresh wounds opened by the acquittal last week by the Israeli Supreme Court of John Demjanjuk, who had faced charges that he was "Ivan the Terrible," the notorious Treblinka guard.

In fact, Franz, 79, was freed sometime in May, German officials told reporters after the release was made known.

Franz was sentenced to life in prison in 1965 by a war crimes tribunal in Dusseldorf for his part in the murder of at least 300,000 people, including 193 by his own hand in Treblinka.

Franz was freed, despite objections from German prosecutors, under a proviso of German law permitting release any time after a minimum 15 years of a life sentence is served.

"I can tell you that it's not at all linked to Demjanjuk," said an assistant to the German ambassador in Washington.

Word of Franz's release seems to have taken everyone by surprise. Representatives of Jewish groups were shocked and angered by it.

"I didn't know about it. I think we were all taken by surprise here," said Mark Weitzman, director of educational outreach at the Simon Wiesenthal Center's New York office.

"I think that his release makes a mockery of the sentence, in that Kurt Franz was not just a cog in the machinery. He was not drafted," Weitzman said.

He pointed out that Franz had a full Nazi resume, beginning with his participation in the euthanasia program at the Buchenwald concentration camp, and on through a stint as deputy to the commandant at Belzec and then to Treblinka.

According to the Encyclopedia of the Holocaust, Franz enlisted in the German army in 1935 and volunteered for the SS.

In 1939, he was transferred to the euthanasia program, which oversaw early in the Holocaust the killing of people the Nazis deemed not worthy of living, such as the infirm.

"At Treblinka, Franz dominated daily life at the camp. He was the cruelest and most terrifying of the SS officers there," the encyclopedia says.

"It is incomprehensible how someone who caused so much harm to so many could ever receive a lightening of his sentence," said Weitzman of the Wiesenthal Center.

Elan Steinberg, executive director of the World Jewish Congress, called Franz's release "obscene. It is a crime against memory."

Amcha-The Coalition for Jewish Concerns sent telegrams protesting his release to German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and to the German ambassador to Washington, Immo Stabreit.

**BEHIND THE HEADLINES:
WITH THE HOLOCAUST EVER IN MIND,
A JEWISH COMMUNITY BUDS IN WARSAW**
By Jed Sunden

WARSAW, Aug. 2 (JTA) -- Throughout Warsaw there are constant reminders of the Holocaust and the mass killing of the Jews of Poland: the Memorial to the Ghetto Fighters; Umschlagplatz, from where thousands of Jews were deported to concentration camps; and the Monument to the Children of the Ghetto.

Earlier this year, thousands of Jews, along with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and U.S. Vice President Al Gore, participated in ceremonies surrounding the 50th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising.

Against this background, it can sometimes be difficult to remember that today, a half-century after the Holocaust, there still exists a Jewish community in Warsaw.

"Foreigners are always surprised when they discover us," said Joanna Susek, a student of Polish language at the University of Warsaw. "They cannot believe that there is a new generation of Jews in Poland."

Susek is one of a growing number of Polish Jewish youths who have begun actively participating in the Jewish community in recent years.

Since the fall of the Communist regime, repression and limitations on the Jewish community have ended, and there has been a tremendous upsurge in interest in the Jewish past and present in Poland.

Dozens of books about the Jewish past of the country are published every year, and nearly all the classics of Yiddish literature have been translated into Polish, including the complete works of Isaac Bashevis Singer, the Polish-born Nobel Prize winner.

Before the outbreak of World War II, Warsaw had the largest Jewish population of any European city, with more than 325,000 Jews and a thriving Jewish culture.

At its peak, more than a third of the city was Jewish, making it the capital of Polish Jewry.

Holocaust Still Reverberates

During the Holocaust, more than 90 percent of the 3.5 million Jews of Poland were killed by the Nazis.

The subsequent waves of emigration to Israel and the West, especially after Communist-orchestrated outbreaks of anti-Semitism during the 1950s and late 1960s, further depleted the Jewish population.

Today, according to official statistics from the Polish government, only 5,000 Jews remain.

Rabbi Michael Schudrich, an American-born rabbi, has worked full time in Poland since September 1992 with the younger generation of Jews. With the help of the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation, Schudrich runs summer and winter camps for over 200 people, a kindergarten and the Warsaw Center for Jewish Education Youth Club, located directly next to the Nozyk Synagogue.

Schudrich does not believe the government figure for Jews.

"The official number of 5,000 is ridiculously low," Schudrich said. "Perhaps 10,000 is right, but the number of what I like to call 'Poles of Jewish background' -- that is, those who have Jewish heritage and have taken some positive steps in discovering that heritage -- is perhaps as high as 40,000."

Last year more than 1,000 younger people who were born after the war had contact with his organization. As a result of the high rate of intermarriage, many younger people in Poland who consider themselves Jewish and participate in the community are not Jews according to Jewish law.

Schudrich said, "Despite what happened here 50 years ago, there are still Jews in Warsaw and in all of Poland who want to be Jewish."

Only one or two generations since the Holocaust, the event reverberates in all discussions about today's Jewish community here.

"We need to save the Holocaust as a memory, but we cannot live in a memory. I want to live here, but I cannot live in a cemetery," explained Piotr Sobotka, a 29-year-old student of psychology. "We must create a concrete life for Jews now."

Education Needed To Preserve Community

After four decades of Communist rule which restricted Jewish communal life to the state Jewish theater and a Yiddish weekly magazine, Dos Yiddishe Vort, funding from the Lauder Foundation has done a lot to rebuild the institutions needed for Jewish communal life.

After 15 years without a rabbi, the community now has two. Kosher meat and food are now available, and the foundation helps to subsidize Menorah, the only kosher restaurant in Warsaw. Despite the activity and the wave of fascination for Jewish culture among the younger generation, lingering questions still remain about Jewish life in Poland.

Even with such large amounts of funding, a community with such a small amount of Jews cannot support many of the institutions needed for Jewish life.

Shlomo Zieniuk is considering emigration to Israel after he completes his master's degree because of the lack of Jewish schools available.

"Without Jewish education, it is difficult to preserve the community," he said.

At a memorial service for the heroes of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in April, Schudrich connected the present situation to the past.

"The battle did not end in 1945 when the Germans were defeated," he said. "It continued under the Communists as people here continued to retain their Jewish identity and it continues today."

EL AL BREAKS DAILY FLIGHT RECORD

TEL AVIV, Aug. 2 (JTA) -- El Al broke its own record Sunday in the number of flights flown and passengers carried in a 24-hour period.

The Israeli national airline flew 76 flights that day with some 18,500 passengers arriving at, and taking off from, Ben-Gurion International Airport.

The day's flights included four jumbo jets to New York, with some 1,800 passengers, and two jumbos arriving from New York. There were also three flights to Paris, and two each to Marseille, France; Rome; London; Amsterdam; and Bucharest, Romania.

The increased passenger traffic is partly because many Israeli companies close for some or all of August, enabling workers to travel abroad.

El Al expects to fly some 280,000 passengers in more than 1,300 flights during the month.

Another bonus for the airline is Tuesday's wedding of the son of the Belzer rebbe, for which it has flown in more than 2,000 Belzer Hasidim.