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**PERES SAYS MEETING WITH PRINCE
SHOWS JORDAN HAS ENDED BOYCOTT**

By Deborah Kalb

WASHINGTON, Oct. 3 (JTA) -- Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres says his unprecedented public meeting last Friday with Jordanian Crown Prince Hassan is proof that Jordan has ended its participation in the Arab boycott against Israel.

The meeting between the two, which dealt largely with economic issues, took place at the White House last Friday, with President Clinton playing host.

Afterward, Peres told reporters that he and the crown prince had agreed to establish working groups to discuss economic and environmental issues.

"We have decided about an economic cooperation, and that automatically brings an end to the boycott," the Israeli foreign minister said. "On the Jordanian case and on the Egyptian case," the Arab boycott "is dead."

The White House meeting took place two weeks after Israel and Jordan initiated an accord laying out the path of bilateral negotiations toward a peace agreement.

Although meetings between high-level Israeli and Jordanian officials have occurred many times in the past, they have all been held in secret. This one was unusual in that it was not only confirmed by the two sides but discussed openly by the participants.

At the White House, Clinton announced that Israel and Jordan had agreed to establish both a bilateral economic committee and a working group on economic development issues that would also include U.S. participation.

In addition, Israel and Jordan will discuss the problems of "desertification" in the region.

The president said the two sides plan to work closely with the Palestinians as they map out an economic plan for the region.

"Let me say personally that I enjoyed this meeting very much. I applaud the crown prince, I applaud the foreign minister for coming here, for being a part of it," Clinton said as he stood on the White House lawn with his two guests.

'A Peace That Benefits Everyone'

"We believe that together we can work toward a peace that benefits everyone, and we believe there are things we can be doing now to benefit the countries and the peoples economically in ways that strengthen their inner sense of security and commitment to this remarkable process," he added.

It is clear that the United States is pulling out all the stops to help the countries that are cooperating with the Middle East peace process.

After the Peres-Hassan meeting, a senior White House official told reporters that the United States will lead an international effort to help Jordan with its heavy debt burden.

On Sunday, Peres told reporters in New York that among the items on the agenda of the Israeli-Jordanian economic committee are development of the Dead and Red seas, the Arava and Negev deserts, and the Jordan River.

Also under discussion, he said, is joint

expansion of airport facilities to serve the neighboring Red Sea ports of Eilat and Aqaba.

Peres said that during their White House meeting, he had asked Prince Hassan whether he spoke Hebrew.

"I studied it for two years," replied the Jordanian, who then gave a demonstration.

"Let us go up and journey in the land," he recited in biblical Hebrew.

(Contributing to this report was JTA staff writer Larry Yudelson in New York.)

**DONOR NATIONS PLEDGE \$2 BILLION
IN ASSISTANCE FOR THE PALESTINIANS**

By Deborah Kalb

WASHINGTON, Oct. 3 (JTA) -- World leaders, including U.S., Israeli and Palestinian officials, joined together in a historic conference here last week to pledge \$2 billion in economic aid for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The International Conference to Support Middle East Peace, held at the State Department last Friday, was convened by the United States and Russia to help implement the landmark Israeli-Palestinian accord signed at the White House last month and to encourage further steps toward peace throughout the Middle East.

Forty-six delegations arrived at the State Department for the donors conference Friday morning, and the pledges soon began pouring in. In the end, the conference raised \$2 billion covering a five-year period, including \$1 billion for the first two years and as much as \$600 million for the first year.

The World Bank estimates that the Palestinians will need \$2.4 billion over the next five years, and Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentsen said Friday he was "confident" that figure would be exceeded.

Some nations, surprised by the fast pace of the Middle East peace process in recent weeks, have yet to announce their pledges.

Among the donors, the United States offered \$500 million over the next five years, Japan \$200 million over two years and Saudi Arabia \$100 million in 1994.

Israel pledged \$25 million in grants and \$50 million in credits "over the coming years."

Organized in a short time and occurring just two weeks after the Sept. 13 signing ceremony, the conference still had loose ends to tie up.

For example, it was still unclear what percentage of the donations would be in the form of loans and what percentage in the form of grants.

Gore Decries Arab Boycott

U.S. officials said Friday that the American contribution would consist of about 75 percent grants in the first year, during which time the Palestinians would be settling such basic economic issues as paying teachers' salaries.

Then, in later years, as the Palestinians began emphasizing investment issues, the percentage of loans would increase.

The World Bank will serve as a sort of secretariat, coordinating the activities of the donors on a day-to-day basis.

In addition, there will be an ad-hoc liaison

group that will meet every three to six months to coordinate among donors. Its members will include the United States, Canada, the European Community, Japan, Russia, Norway and Saudi Arabia.

Israel, the Palestinians, Egypt and Jordan will serve as associate members of the group.

The Palestinians have created an organization to serve as the recipient and organizer of the funds. Palestinian officials said Friday that the group would include Palestinian economists, lawyers and business leaders.

One issue that arose at the conference was the continuing Arab economic boycott against Israel.

Vice President Al Gore, in his remarks to the conference Friday morning, said that vestiges of the past, such as the boycott, "have no place in a world seeking peace."

But at a news conference later Friday, Palestine Liberation Organization official Yasser Abed Rabbo suggested that the Arabs might not lift the boycott until such issues as the status of Jerusalem are resolved.

The touchy question of Jerusalem, a city claimed by both Israelis and Palestinians, is scheduled to be dealt with in the so-called "final status" negotiations following the current interim phase of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations.

Speaking with reporters in New York on Sunday, Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres dismissed the hard-line statements regarding the boycott, saying they were geared for domestic Arab consumption.

"The time has come to pay attention to the deeds, not to the words," he said.

"I wish we'd let some of their words pass, without an Israeli reaction. They're fighting their own battle."

(Contributing to this report was JTA staff writer Larry Yudelson in New York.)

ISRAELI RAID ON HAMAS GROUP PROVOKES PROTEST FROM ARAFAT By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Oct. 3 (JTA) -- Three weeks after the signing of their historic accord in Washington, Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization have hit a bitter snag in their fledgling relationship.

For the second time in a week, PLO leader Yasser Arafat has sent a letter of protest to Israel -- this time over an Israel Defense Force operation Saturday against members of the militant Islamic Hamas movement in the Gaza Strip.

In that action, Israeli soldiers evacuated Gazans from their homes and fired hand-held rockets at houses in an effort to find activists of Hamas, which is in bitter opposition to the peace moves by Israel and the PLO.

The operation was aimed specifically at the Izz a-Din al-Kassam military wing of Hamas, which had vowed to sabotage the agreement between Israel and the PLO.

Two commanders of the militant movement were killed and 16 others were arrested in what IDF officials termed a major setback to the group.

Arafat, in turn, claimed the IDF operation violated the agreement between Israel and the PLO.

The message was conveyed to Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin by Jerusalem lawyer Ziad Abu-Ziad, an adviser to the Palestinian delegation to the peace talks.

Arafat's previous protest was sent last week, when he criticized an Israeli operation against members of the Black Panther terrorist cell in the West Bank village of Kabatiya. The Black Panthers are an armed wing of Arafat's Al Fatah faction of the PLO.

As a result of that action, Israeli forces captured Black Panther Commander Ahmed Awad Ikmail, who had been on the IDF's most-wanted list for five years.

IDF Will Act Against Terror

Although Arafat himself is known to be worried about the power of Hamas in the Gaza Strip, his latest protest to the Israeli government was seen here as a signal to Arafat's opponents in the territories that he considers himself leader of all Palestinians, including those who oppose him.

Following Saturday's IDF operation against Hamas, several PLO leaders convened a news conference in Gaza.

They maintained that despite the fact that the operation was aimed at those who opposed the peace process, the actual operation was detrimental to the peace process.

Brig. Gen. Yom-Tov Samiya, commander of IDF forces in the Gaza Strip, said in response that the IDF is determined to act against wanted terrorists until Israeli forces withdraw from the territory.

As part of the Israeli-PLO agreement signed in Washington, Israel is to begin withdrawing its forces from Gaza and the West Bank town of Jericho by mid-December.

Samiya told reporters Sunday that ever since the signing of the Israeli-PLO accord on Sept. 13, armed Hamas units have continued attacks on IDF targets.

In response to Arafat's latest protest, Israeli officials said the IDF actions involved no violation of the agreement with the PLO.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin told reporters during a news conference Sunday in the West Bank town of Hebron that Israeli security forces would continue to target Arab militants bent on undermining the Israeli-PLO accord.

RANKING PLO OFFICIAL TO VISIT ISRAEL By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Oct. 3 (JTA) -- A high-level Palestine Liberation Organization official is scheduled to participate in the second annual Jerusalem Business Conference, to take place later this month, it was learned here over the weekend.

Ahmed Ali Suleiman Karia, 56, known as Abu Alaa, is the head of the economic division of the PLO's Al Fatah faction. He was the PLO official who headed the secret negotiations with Israel in Norway that resulted in the historic accord on self-rule signed in Washington last month.

His upcoming visit to Israel was approved by Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. But he will travel here in a private capacity, as the guest of the economic conference, which is sponsored by the economic daily Globus.

Despite the private nature of the visit, Abu Alaa is likely to meet with Israeli policy-makers to discuss pressing issues, such as the status of Palestinian laborers during the autonomy period, economic aid to Palestinian refugees, taxation for Arab residents of the territories, joint Israeli-Palestinian ventures and the joint use of water resources.

ABIE NATHAN'S 'VOICE OF PEACE' FALLS SILENT AFTER TWO DECADES

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Oct. 3 (JTA) -- Abie Nathan's floating Voice of Peace radio station fell silent at 2 p.m. last Friday, but the ship from which it operated was not sunk, contrary to the Israeli peace activist's original plans.

For more than two decades, Nathan had broadcast a mixture of pro-peace news and popular music in English, Hebrew and Arabic from a World War II-era ship anchored just outside Israel's territorial waters.

Israel made no efforts to silence Nathan's technically illegal station, which polls at times rated the most popular in the country.

But Nathan, citing mounting debts as well as the fulfillment of his dream of peace as a result of the historic signing of the Palestinian self-rule agreement in Washington on Sept. 13, announced his radio station would cease operations.

Nathan said his decision was mainly due to the state of the ship. He said he did not have the funds to pay insurance and maintenance, and refused to risk the lives of his crew and staff during the upcoming winter storms.

Nathan, dressed in the black clothes he swore 12 years ago he would wear until Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization began direct negotiations, boarded his white-painted ship for the last time at 9 in the morning Friday.

He promised he would announce at 1 p.m. what he intended doing with the vessel, hinting that at that hour he and his engineer would sink the ship.

He spent his last broadcast day telling his faithful listeners about his peace and relief efforts, which have occupied 40 of his 61 years.

His emotional account was sprinkled with appeals to his audience to send postcards to Communications Minister Shulamit Aloni asking the government to grant him a licence to operate a land-based Voice of Peace station.

During the day, he received a phone call from Vienna. Israel Philharmonic Orchestra conductor Zubin Mehta, a friend from schooldays, had phoned to appeal to him not to sink his ship.

To Be Turned Into Museum

At 1 in the afternoon, Environment Minister Yossi Sarid and Tel Aviv Mayor Shlomo Lahat boarded the ship. They, too, asked him not to sink the vessel.

Lahat said he and experts had chosen a spot on the shore at the Tel Aviv-Jaffa dividing line where Nathan could beach the Voice of Peace. He told Nathan that the ship would be turned into a peace museum to house Nathan's equipment and music collection, and provide a detailed history of Nathan's efforts for peace.

The activist readily gave his agreement. The last song he played before the station went off the air was folk singer Pete Seeger's rendition of "We Shall Overcome."

Nathan, born in Iraq but brought up and educated in India, had volunteered as a teen-ager for service with the British Royal Air Force at the outbreak of World War II. He fought with the RAF in the Far East.

He came to Israel at the outbreak of Israel's 1948 War of Independence and became one of the first pilots in the country's fledgling air force.

After establishing a popular restaurant in Tel Aviv, he became involved in the movement to

encourage peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors.

He began his one-man campaign for peace in 1970, when he flew his private, single-seater plane to Egypt to try to make peace with former President Anwar Sadat. He twice served prison sentences for illegal meetings with PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat.

Nathan later said it was during those early peace efforts that he thought up the idea of establishing a floating pirate radio station devoted to the theme of peace.

He later sold his restaurant, as well as an art collection he had assembled, and looked for a ship to buy.

He found it in Holland. The ship was of World War II vintage and in a state of disrepair. With a volunteer crew, he sailed it to the United States, where he tied up at an East River pier in Lower Manhattan.

He then began stumping around the country, appealing for donations to repair and refit the vessel with engines, generators, broadcasting equipment and a tall mast to carry the antennas.

He sailed the Voice of Peace to Israel and began his broadcasts with what he described as a "grossly underpaid and largely volunteer crew and band of disk jockeys."

An Eye Toward Making Headlines

During the 1973 Yom Kippur War, Nathan sailed close to Egypt, disregarding Israeli navy warnings, to radio peace slogans in Arabic. He later sailed to the Lebanese shore, broadcasting to Lebanon and Syria, again without harm.

Nathan, a born showman, explained that to make a point, one has to create headlines.

"If a terrorist throws a bomb, he makes a Page One story. But if you do something for peace, it's difficult to get a paragraph on Page 64," he once said.

In addition to his efforts on behalf of peace, Nathan has raised millions of dollars for humanitarian rescue operations throughout the world for the victims of earthquakes, floods and famine.

He has traveled to disaster sites in Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America to donate funds, food and emergency medical supplies.

Nathan was due to fly to Bombay this week to help the victims of yet another natural disaster, the Indian earthquake.

When he returns to Israel, Nathan will attempt to complete his plans to establish a village for the rehabilitation of drug addicts.

"I've got official support for this project," said Nathan. "The trouble is with the neighbors. Wherever I find a suitable site, the neighboring villagers tell me, 'It's a good idea -- but put it somewhere else. Not next to us.'"

DRUSE SPIRITUAL LEADER IS DEAD

JERUSALEM, Oct. 3 (JTA) -- The spiritual leader of the Druse community in Israel, one of the most influential religious leaders in the Middle East, died over the weekend in the Galilee village of Julis.

Sheik Amin Tarif, 95, had ruled the Druse community in Israel for the past 57 years. He was widely respected also in Syria and Lebanon, where most Druse in the region live.

In a noteworthy gesture, the Israeli government gave Druse from Syria and Lebanon permission to attend the funeral, which was scheduled to take place Monday.

U.S. FOREIGN AID BILL CLEARS FINAL HURDLE BY WIDE MARGIN

By Deborah Kalb

WASHINGTON, Oct. 3 (JTA) -- Israel's annual package of \$3 billion in U.S. aid cleared its final hurdle on Capitol Hill last week, as both houses of Congress voted by large margins to adopt the 1994 foreign aid appropriations bill.

The votes of 321-108 in the House of Representatives Sept. 29 and 87-11 in the Senate the next day came as a relief to pro-Israel forces.

In the current climate of economic shortages, supporters of Israel here had worried that Congress might not look favorably on a continuation of hefty aid packages to countries like Israel, the largest recipient of U.S. foreign aid.

The congressional votes followed a House-Senate conference committee meeting on Sept. 27.

Aside from the \$3 billion, the foreign aid legislation calls for Israel to receive an additional \$80 million to absorb refugees from Ethiopia and the republics of the former Soviet Union.

The bill also calls for Israel to receive its aid no later than Oct. 31.

Other provisions state that the United States would consider a country's participation in the Arab boycott against Israel before selling it arms, and that the United States should urge Syria to allow its Jewish community to emigrate freely.

The bill also stipulates that U.S. funds to international organizations should not support terrorist groups.

But in a sign of changing times, the bill modifies some previously existing restrictions on U.S. funds to international groups assisting the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Since the historic agreement was signed Sept. 13 between Israel and the PLO, the Clinton administration has sought to modify some restrictions on U.S. ties to the PLO.

The PLO, long considered a terrorist group, has been the subject of various congressionally mandated prohibitions over the years.

The new bill calls for one-year waivers on some of the financial restrictions, provided that President Clinton certifies to Congress that the PLO is abiding by its agreement to recognize Israel and renounce violence.

Under the \$12.9 billion bill, the Palestinians will receive \$25 million, the former Soviet republics \$2.5 billion and Egypt \$2.1 billion.

SENATE URGES CROWN HEIGHTS PROBE

WASHINGTON, Oct. 3 (JTA) -- In a move hailed by Jewish groups, the Senate voted unanimously last week to seek a Justice Department investigation of the 1991 disturbances in the Crown Heights neighborhood of Brooklyn.

In a 97-0 vote last Wednesday, senators called for a federal investigation into the rioting two years ago between Jews and African Americans.

Two members of the House of Representatives who have been urging Attorney General Janet Reno to investigate the disturbances, New York Democrats Charles Schumer and Nita Lowey, welcomed the news Wednesday.

Reno is expected to announce soon whether she will pursue an investigation. In early September, she was expected to announce that she would not pursue a federal investigation, but she postponed the decision at the urging of Schumer and Brooklyn District Attorney Charles Hynes.

HOLLAND MARKS 1ST ANNIVERSARY OF EL AL CRASH AS CLAIMS MOUNT

By Henriette Boas

AMSTERDAM, Oct. 3 (JTA) -- Thousands of people attended a memorial service here Sunday to commemorate the first anniversary of the crash of an El Al cargo jet into a 10-story apartment block in suburban Amsterdam.

Forty-three people died, 80 apartments were destroyed and another 150 were made uninhabitable as a result of the crash, the worst in Holland's history.

Crowds marched in a silent procession on the eve of the anniversary of the disaster, which occurred when the Boeing 747 lost two of its four engines shortly after taking off from Amsterdam's international airport.

Wreaths were laid by Amsterdam Mayor Ed van Thijn and by representatives of local immigrant communities, which suffered the heaviest tolls in the disaster.

Along with the three Israeli members of the plane's crew and one passenger, 39 people living in the apartment complex died as a result of the crash. Only one of them was Dutch; the rest were from mainly Caribbean and African nations.

Boeing has announced that it will pay damages only to those people who are next of kin to the victims or to those who lived in apartments that were damaged in the crash. The company said it would not pay damages to those living in neighboring apartments who claimed that they were traumatized by the disaster.

Some 1,400 claims for damages have been submitted to the representatives of Boeing and El Al in Amsterdam. Claims were also filed by the city of Amsterdam and the company that owns the damaged apartment complex.

Lawyers for Boeing and El Al have alleged that some 125 people have submitted claims through more than one lawyer and that others have submitted claims under more than one name.

SUPPORTERS OF MISSING AIRMAN RETRACE AIR ROUTE IN SOLIDARITY

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Oct. 3 (JTA) -- In a display of solidarity for missing Israeli air force navigator Ron Arad, scores of private planes flew over northern Israel during the weekend to commemorate the seventh anniversary of his disappearance in southern Lebanon.

The airborne armada, which included 68 light aircraft, gathered Saturday at the airfield near Hadera from which Arad's ill-fated flight in 1986 began. The planes retraced most of the route taken by Arad's Phantom jet, landing at an airfield just south of the Lebanese border.

Arad bailed out from the fighter plane over Lebanon in 1986 and was believed to have been held by pro-Iranian troops in Lebanon. The last time any message was received that he was alive was in October 1987.

There have been sporadic reports that he was subsequently transferred to captivity in Iran.

Among those taking part in the solidarity display was the pilot on Arad's flight, who at the time was rescued by Israeli helicopters after both men had bailed out. The helicopters were not able to locate or rescue Arad.

Hundreds of Israelis gathered at the airfields to express their hopes for Arad's safety and return to Israel in the near future.