

**ISRAEL SENDS MASSIVE REINFORCEMENTS TO TERRITORIES ON INTIFADA ANNIVERSARY**

By Cynthia Mann

JERUSALEM, Dec. 8 (JTA) -- On the eve of the sixth anniversary of the start of the Palestinian uprising, Israel has sent massive reinforcements into the strife-torn West Bank and Gaza Strip, bolstering a force that already numbers 14,000 troops.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin made the disclosure of Israel's troop strength in the administered territories, usually a military secret, on Wednesday during an annual speech to Israeli newspaper editors.

The deployment of reinforcements in the West Bank and Gaza came during a week that is expected to be particularly tense.

Palestinian leaders have called for a strike on Wednesday and Thursday to mark the beginning of the intifada.

Dec. 11 will be the 27th anniversary of the establishment of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, a radical rejectionist faction of the Palestine Liberation Organization based in Damascus.

Yet another anniversary will take place on Dec. 14, the anniversary of the founding of Hamas.

Dozens of Palestinian activists opposed to the peace process reportedly have been detained by security forces in an attempt to head off riots on these occasions.

Dec. 13 was the original target date for Israel to begin withdrawing its troops from Gaza and the West Bank town of Jericho under the terms of the self-rule accord Israel and the PLO signed in Washington in September.

**Withdrawals May Be Postponed**

Both parties to the accord have conceded that the withdrawals may have to be postponed a week or two until negotiations for implementing the agreement can be completed in Cairo.

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher publicly endorsed a minor delay at a news conference in Cairo.

One area in which Israel and the PLO are at odds is the question of Jerusalem.

PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat said on Wednesday that Jerusalem should be made a capital city for both Israelis and Palestinians.

"You can solve the issue of Jerusalem by making it a joint capital of two states but without the so-called Berlin Wall," he said at a news conference in Bonn at the end of a two-day visit.

Israel insists that Jerusalem remain its eternal, undivided capital.

Speaking at the annual lunch of the Israel Editors Committee, Rabin said his government is doing everything it can to protect Israeli settlers from terrorism.

He said Palestinian terrorists have been shifting their targets from Israeli soldiers to settlers in the territories because they know it spurs public opposition to the accord.

"There are 120 companies, and sometimes more, serving in the territories, protecting the Israeli settlers and settlements," Rabin told the gathering.

"Today there are almost four times as many

Israeli forces in the West Bank and Gaza than on the Lebanese border and the security zone" in southern Lebanon, he said.

There are about 120 soldiers in an Israeli infantry company.

Despite the increased presence of Israeli troops, an Israeli man was critically injured when he was shot Wednesday near Bethlehem in the latest in a spiral of terrorist attacks.

The attack is part of a wave of stepped-up violence coming days before the accord with the PLO was scheduled to go into effect.

The wave has unleashed storms of anti-government protests by settlers throughout the country and prompted the Israeli military to order up the reinforcements to serve in the territories.

Army sources say there are now more soldiers in the West Bank than at any time in the past few years.

The sources said the reinforcements, in addition to increasing their activities in searching for wanted terrorists and dealing with terrorist groups active in the areas, will interpose themselves between Palestinians and settlers in an effort to restore calm in the troubled region.

**Tremendous Challenge To Security Forces**

The massive reinforcements, including several teams from elite combat units, were drawn from training bases all over the country.

Israel Defense Force sources said the army's training program "has practically shut down."

"This is a tremendous blow to our training program," one source said.

Recent statements by military commanders indicate there is no expectation that the terrorist attacks will abate or that security forces will be able to contain the situation entirely.

"Despite the massive reinforcement, the IDF and the other security forces will not be able to be everywhere all the time to prevent attacks," one senior commander told the Jerusalem Post.

"In the coming weeks and months, even after the signing and implementation of a final agreement on Gaza and Jericho, we expect the security situation to present a tremendous challenge to the security forces," he said.

The continued violence in the territories has spurred calls for a new coalition to form a national emergency government.

On Wednesday, Knesset members argued about the spate of terrorist incidents, with the opposition continuing to criticize government policy as reckless.

Former Foreign Minister David Levy, now a Likud Knesset member, charged that Jewish blood was being shed in vain and that there is a widespread feeling that no government is in charge, Israel Radio reported.

Meanwhile, Hamas has challenged the IDF chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Ehud Barak, to "resign or face the bullets" of its military wing, Izz a-Din al-Kassam.

The al-Kassam unit claimed responsibility for an attack earlier this week that killed a father and son Monday outside the West Bank town of Hebron. Hamas said the attacks were to avenge recent killings by Israeli forces of Hamas gunmen.

(Contributing to this report was JTA correspondent Hugh Orgel in Tel Aviv.)

**RELATIONS WITH VATICAN PROCEED  
'IRRESPECTIVE OF THE PEACE PROCESS'**

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK, Dec. 8 (JTA) -- The Vatican and Israel are expected to sign an agreement establishing formal diplomatic relations by the end of January, according to sources close to the negotiations.

Cardinal John O'Connor, the archbishop of New York and the moderator of Catholic-Jewish relations for the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, told rabbis representing the Synagogue Council of America that he expects the accord to be signed by Jan. 31 "irrespective of the peace process," according to one witness.

"That's important because he's not linking what happens with the PLO and Israel to the Vatican establishing relations" with Israel, said Rabbi Fabian Schonfeld, co-chair of the Synagogue Council's interreligious affairs committee, who attended the Dec. 2 meeting with O'Connor.

According to Avi Granot, the counselor for church affairs and ethnic relations at the Israeli Embassy in Washington, "all that remains is the signing of papers" for diplomatic relations to be finalized.

Working committees composed of Foreign Ministry staff from Israel and the Vatican were established in June to hammer out the details that would lead to formal relations.

The Israelis prefer to have an agreement signed by the end of 1993, but the Vatican has been working out "bureaucratic difficulties and has asked for a deadline of January," Granot said.

While the "date has not yet been set, the impression everyone has is that it will not be postponed beyond January," said Granot.

Most of the major issues that previously had posed an obstacle to diplomatic relations have been resolved, and remaining issues will be dealt with by committees after an agreement is signed, he said.

The "premise of the agreement is that whatever outstanding issues remain, they will be dealt with by the two parties after the establishment of relations, not that they should bar it," said Granot.

One outstanding issue for which a special committee will be set up is the question of whether Catholic institutions in Israel will pay taxes.

Most, but not all, religious organizations in Israel are taxed.

One issue of concern to the Israeli government is maintaining the status quo that exists with other Christian denominations.

To avoid upsetting the delicate relationships, "government representatives in Israel are meeting with the leaders of other churches and going over the agreement with the Vatican with them so no one will feel it will damage relations," said Granot.

**AMERICAN OPPONENTS OF PEACE PLAN  
EXPRESS CONCERN TO STATE DEPARTMENT**  
By Deborah Kalb and Steven Weiss

WASHINGTON, Dec. 8 (JTA) -- Jewish opponents of the Middle East peace process, both Israeli and American, appear to be increasingly voicing their concerns to U.S. officials.

This week, a small delegation of activists on the right wing of the American Jewish political spectrum met at the State Department with Thomas Miller, the head of the Israel desk.

Last month, former members of the Shamir government met with officials in the capital.

Herbert Zweibon, one of seven Jewish leaders who met Tuesday with Miller, said the delegation's goal was to tell the U.S. government that not all American Jews back the peace process.

"There is opposition within the Jewish community to the so-called peace process, which is really more of a murder process," said Zweibon, who is national chairman of the group Americans for a Safe Israel.

The meeting took place as Secretary of State Warren Christopher was in the Middle East, attempting to unblock the stalled talks between Israel and Syria and to assist Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization in implementing their peace accord.

Surveys taken just after the Israeli-Palestinian accord showed that most American Jews backed the peace process and the Rabin government's handling of it.

But opponents of the peace process call it misguided and dangerous.

The delegation told Miller its concerns about the Jewish communities in the West Bank and Gaza.

"Settlers' lives are not expendable in the name of an illusory peace agreement with terrorists of the PLO," Raphael Rothstein, a member of the delegation, said Tuesday after the meeting.

Harry Taubenfeld, another member of the delegation, said that the group sought a meeting at the State Department after reading an October article from the Jewish Telegraphic Agency about Christopher's meetings with various Jewish officials to discuss the peace process.

The delegation wanted to present its positions to the department about the peace process and the settlers, said Taubenfeld, who serves on the board of a group called the Israeli Community Development Fund, which deals with settler needs.

The State Department had no comment.

**TREASURY, HISTADRUT TALK  
TO TRY TO AVOID MASSIVE STRIKE**  
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Dec. 8 (JTA) -- Negotiations between the Treasury and the Histadrut trade federation were expected to go on throughout Wednesday night, in a last-minute effort to avoid a massive labor strike that threatens to paralyze the country.

Israel's large trade federation, comprising more than 100,000 workers at government-owned corporations, has called a 24-hour strike to begin Thursday.

Histadrut Secretary-General Haim Haberfeld has said the government and Histadrut had reached impasses over critical economic issues, including national health insurance, pension funds, wage erosion, the government's privatization policy and the so-called "creeping introduction" of personal contracts into union shops.

Efforts were under way Wednesday to avoid work stoppages that would paralyze Ben-Gurion Airport and the telephone system. But the strike was expected to black out radio and television broadcasts, close the postal service, Israel Aircraft Industries, the water and electric companies, El Al, the railroads and other important services.

One Histadrut official, asked how workers would know whether to strike, said: "Listen to the radio. But if there is a strike, you won't know anyway -- as there will be no radio."

## JEWISH 'AGENDA' FARED WELL IN FIRST SESSION OF CONGRESS

By Deborah Kalb

WASHINGTON, Dec. 8 (JTA) -- While important battles still lie ahead, Jewish officials view the recently concluded first session of the 103rd Congress with a sense of accomplishment.

On one domestic issue after another, this year Jewish groups saw long-awaited goals transformed into legislative realities.

"Many issues that were high on our priority list for five, six, seven, eight years, we finally saw enacted this year," Mark Pelavin, Washington representative of the American Jewish Congress, said this week.

Pelavin's words were echoed by others in the community, many of whom were frustrated on domestic issues during the Reagan and Bush years.

Among the domestic bills backed by Jewish groups and making their way into law this year were the landmark Religious Freedom Restoration Act, the Brady gun control bill, and the Family and Medical Leave Act.

"The nice thing about it was that these weren't Pyrrhic victories but were real gains made for real people," Sammie Moshenberg, Washington representative of the National Council of Jewish Women, said this week.

The new laws' "impact will be felt immediately," she said.

On the international side, in a year when foreign aid was an unpopular topic, Congress passed a bill maintaining Israel's \$3 billion a year in U.S. aid.

Congress also approved a large aid package for Russia, which is home to at least 1.5 million Jews.

In addition to foreign aid, Congress passed legislation urging an end to the Arab League economic boycott of Israel.

Many Jewish officials here credit President Clinton with creating a climate that made it easier for some of these issues, at least those dealing with domestic concerns, to pass.

### Clinton Domestic Agenda Pleases Jews

Clinton, who received about 80 percent of the Jewish vote last year, has a domestic agenda more in line with that of many Jewish groups than his predecessors had.

With both Congress and the White House now controlled by one party -- the Democrats -- some in the community had a sense last January that some of the gridlock afflicting Washington could be broken.

And with the success of this session, "the Jewish community and other Americans can look to Congress and say there's a possibility for moving ahead," said Abba Cohen, Washington representative of Agudath Israel.

This year, issues backed by many Jewish groups such as the Family and Medical Leave Act and the "motor voter" act, which facilitates voter registration, were signed into law.

In February, Clinton signed the Family and Medical Leave Act, allowing unpaid leave to workers with new children or seriously ill relatives.

"Starting the year with the Family and Medical Leave Act put us all at such a great starting point," Reva Price, assistant director for international, governmental, and Israel affairs at B'nai B'rith, said this week.

Mainstream Jewish groups, most of whom

support abortion rights, also hailed congressional passage of legislation allowing the District of Columbia to finance abortions for poor women.

National service for young people was another issue backed by many in the Jewish community that received strong support from the Clinton administration and was signed into law.

This year's budget also contained anti-poverty measures supported by the Jewish community.

Such provisions contain "the moral vision people were hoping for from the Clinton administration," Rabbi David Saperstein of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism said this week.

And last month, as Congress was winding up its session, it passed the Brady handgun control bill. The measure, which calls for a five-day waiting period before the purchase of a handgun, has long been a priority of Jewish groups.

Perhaps the biggest domestic issue on the Jewish agenda was the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, also signed into law last month.

"It will be viewed by many as a landmark piece of legislation," Jess Hordes, Washington representative of the Anti-Defamation League, said this week.

The law, which garnered support from a large coalition of religious groups, protects religion from government infringement. It reversed a 1990 Supreme Court ruling that had made it easier for states to pass laws banning certain religious practices.

There were other issues backed by the Jewish community that made progress this year on Capitol Hill although they have yet to be signed into law.

One of these, strongly backed by the ADL, is a bill that would increase federal penalties for hate crimes. That measure has been passed by both houses of Congress.

This congressional term also was noteworthy for the absence of some staunch supporters, such as former Rep. Stephen Solarz (D-N.Y.) who was defeated last year.

But Jewish officials here said Rep. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) had picked up the lead this session on issues including the Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

And Jewish groups are looking ahead to a host of other issues in the next session.

Health care reform is on the agenda when Congress returns in January, as is welfare reform, foreign aid reform, immigration reform and so-called "religious accommodation" legislation.

"Although the Religious Freedom Restoration Act has been enacted, the battle to protect free exercise liberties of all Americans is not over," Richard Foltin, legislative director for the American Jewish Committee, said this week.

### IDF CHIEF DOESN'T FOOL ANYONE

TEL AVIV (JTA) -- A soldier on guard at the gate of an army camp looked through a car window and, seeing Arabs dressed in traditional Muslim garb, waved the car through.

"You look familiar from somewhere," the soldier told one of the passengers.

That man was the Israel Defense Force chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Ehud Barak, who was using the disguise for an unannounced spot-check of IDF installations.

Army sources later said the inspection was "generally satisfactory." But Barak left orders to tighten up some aspects of discipline at the base.

**SUPREME COURT HEARS DEBATE  
ON ACCESS TO ABORTION CLINICS**

By Steven Weiss

WASHINGTON, Dec. 8 (JTA) -- The Supreme Court heard arguments this week on a closely watched case involving the way pro-life activists demonstrate their objection to abortion.

The debate focussed upon whether abortion clinics can sue pro-life protestors who have used dramatic and sometimes violent tactics to try to close the clinics.

Several mainstream Jewish groups, who have long supported a woman's right to choose, filed friend-of-the-court briefs in support of the abortion clinics.

"We want to do whatever we can to thwart those who wish to deny women their constitutional right to abortion," said Samuel Rabinove, legal director of the American Jewish Committee.

AJCommittee joined in a brief filed by the NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund. Also joining the brief were B'nai B'rith Women, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, and the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism.

The case centered on the actions of an anti-abortion group called the Pro-Life Action Network that allegedly tried to close abortion clinics using methods that included bombings and arson, physical and verbal intimidation of clinic personnel and patients, break-ins and blockades.

"They will use any and all means necessary" to close abortion clinics, argued Fay Clayton, attorney for NOW and the clinics.

"We don't want in any way to infringe on their First Amendment rights" to freedom of speech and association, Clayton continued, "but the use of force, violence, and fear crosses the line."

The key issue is whether abortion clinics can use a federal anti-racketeering law to prohibit such anti-abortion activity.

The law, called the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act, is an attractive legal option for clinics because it could allow protection of clinics nationwide and provide winning parties with triple money damages.

RICO, which was originally drafted to thwart organized crime activity, makes it illegal to conduct an enterprise through a pattern of racketeering activity.

Clayton argued on behalf of the clinics that Congress' intent when it passed RICO in 1970 was to include activity driven by motivations other than economic gain.

Both houses of Congress this past term have passed similar versions of the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances act, which would provide both civil and criminal penalties for blocking abortion clinic entrances and exits, said Wendy Lecker, assistant legal director of AJCommittee.

**SYNAGOGUE GROUP, BISHOPS ISSUE  
JOINT APPEAL AGAINST PORNOGRAPHY**

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK, Dec. 8 (JTA) -- The Synagogue Council of America and the National Conference of Catholic Bishops have issued a joint call to step up anti-pornography efforts.

"Graphic public displays, books, videocassettes, advertising displays and even telecommunications frequently portray degrading and violent sexual behavior which demeans the human character, debases the individual and is openly

pornographic and morally offensive," says the joint statement, which was issued Dec. 2.

"Right now, the climate in this country is freedom, one of doing whatever you want as long as you have consenting adults," said Rabbi Haskel Lookstein, president of the Synagogue Council.

"Catholics and Jews, from a religious point of view, are trying to say that people should practice much more discrimination in what they will look at and how they will act, and that there should be norms in society," he said.

"If people stop watching it, it won't be on television. MTV, for example makes primarily women and sometimes men objects of sexual curiosity," he said.

"That's not the purpose of sex, which is to develop intimacy between husbands and wives," Lookstein said.

The statement will be circulated to synagogues of every denomination and Catholic churches across the country.

"We call upon our fellow citizens to help stem the proliferation of pornography in our community by refusing to purchase or to view such materials," the statement says.

"We further call upon all members of our religious communities to foster a true respect for human sexuality among all those with whom they come in contact.

"We especially appeal to parents to give guidance to their children in this area. In addition, we believe it is incumbent upon teachers and religious leaders to openly address these issues," it says.

The statement was the result of several months of work between committees on inter-religious affairs of the two religious bodies and was made public at their semi-annual joint consultation.

The bishops and the council are now working on joint statements that will address Holocaust denial and hate crimes.

**GIMEL SPELLS GELT FOR CLINTON  
AT OVAL OFFICE CHANUKAH PARTY**

By Deborah Kalb

WASHINGTON, Dec. 8 (JTA) -- Less than a month after signing a landmark religious freedom bill, President Clinton honored a much earlier battle for religious freedom by hosting a White House Chanukah celebration.

A menorah, a dreidel and Chanukah gelt found their way onto Clinton's desk as 21 children from the Washington, D.C., Jewish Community Center's after-school program joined the president in the Oval Office on Wednesday afternoon.

Clinton received lessons in the fine art of dreidels from the children.

When, on his first attempt, he came up with a "gimel," thus theoretically entitling him to all the gelt on his Oval Office desk, he quipped, "Beginner's luck."

The president, wearing a black yarmulke, sat on his desk with the children clustered around him. Clinton was lavish with his praise, telling the children repeatedly that the menorah was "so beautiful."

And he applauded heartily after the children's rendition of "I Have a Little Dreidel."

The one moment of drama came after the children, ages 4 to 7, and a teacher lit one candle for the first night of Chanukah.

One girl, standing next to Clinton, leaned too close to the menorah and burned her hair.