

**PLO SHOWING LITTLE SIGN OF READINESS
TO RESUME NEGOTIATIONS WITH ISRAEL**
By Dvorah Getzler

JERUSALEM, March 14 (JTA) -- The Palestine Liberation Organization is showing little sign of readiness to resume negotiations with Israel.

This was the general assessment here Monday night after an Israeli delegation that had unexpectedly flown to PLO headquarters in Tunis late Sunday night was due to return to Israel, apparently empty-handed.

Talks between PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat and U.S. State Department envoy Dennis Ross, who held a separate meeting in Tunis on Monday, also failed to produce positive results.

The Israeli delegation, which was led by Uri Savir, director-general of the Foreign Ministry, had been authorized to tell the PLO that Israel would accept discussion of any item the PLO wanted to place on the agenda -- as long as the talks resumed quickly and followed the guidelines of the self-rule accord hammered out last year by Israel and the PLO.

Before the delegation's return, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said that time was working against both sides.

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, asked whether he was optimistic about an early resumption of the negotiations, replied very cautiously that his only reason for optimism was the conviction that neither side had any choice but to go ahead.

The meeting between Arafat and Ross, which reportedly lasted five hours on Monday, failed to reach a breakthrough as a result of continued PLO demands for providing security guarantees for Palestinians in the wake of the Feb. 25 murder of 29 Palestinians at a Hebron mosque by an Israeli settler.

Ross, the U.S. coordinator of the Middle East peace talks, declined to discuss the status of the negotiations with reporters after he emerged from his meeting with Arafat.

But PLO officials reportedly stated the Arafat-Ross discussions had led nowhere, with the United States refusing to support the PLO's demands.

In the wake of the Hebron killings, the PLO has been calling for an armed international presence in the territories to protect Palestinians, the dismantling of those Jewish settlements which present the biggest threat to Palestinian safety and the disarming of Jewish settlers when they are traveling outside their settlements.

**LEVINGER BROUGHT IN FOR QUESTIONING
IN ISRAEL'S CRACK-DOWN ON EXTREMISTS**
By Dvorah Getzler

JERUSALEM, March 14 (JTA) -- Israeli security officials moved this week against veteran settlers' leader Rabbi Moshe Levinger and others in its continuing effort to crack down on right-wing extremist groups.

The action was taken amid charges from Israeli opposition parties that the government's outlawing of the Kach and Kahane Chai parties

was a politically motivated ploy to placate the Palestine Liberation Organization.

The PLO suspended negotiations with Israel following the Feb. 25 killings of at least 29 Palestinians at a Hebron mosque by a Jewish settler. It has since demanded that Israel get tough with right-wing settlers groups as a prerequisite for resuming talks.

On Sunday, the Cabinet voted unanimously to outlaw the militantly anti-Arab parties, declaring them terrorist organizations. That day, authorities brought in for questioning Levinger, his wife and others allegedly involved in violence against West Bank Palestinians.

In 1968, Levinger led a group of followers into Hebron, where they moved into an abandoned hotel. As the number of settlers in Hebron and in the neighboring settlement of Kiryat Arba grew, there was increasing violence between Jew and Palestinian.

Levinger -- who has been imprisoned in the past for violence against Palestinians, including killing a Palestinian merchant -- was questioned Sunday about an incident three months ago, when he allegedly intimidated Muslim worshippers at the Tomb of the Patriarchs, the Hebron site where Dr. Baruch Goldstein carried out his Feb. 25 killing spree.

Miriam Levinger was questioned about an incident in a Hebron market some months ago when she allegedly overturned market stalls and assaulted a policeman.

Also brought in for questioning was Elisheva Federman, wife of Kach activist Noam Federman, who is currently in administrative detention. He is one of six party activists who have been targeted by the government for arrest.

A blackout has meanwhile been imposed on proceedings against Michael Ben-Horin of the Golan village of Nob, who is also in custody. Ben-Horin is the self-styled president of the State of Judea, which was founded in the late 1980s by the late Rabbi Meir Kahane to claim control over the West Bank in the wake of any Israeli withdrawal.

Ben-Horin's wife told a television reporter that her husband, formerly a central figure in Kach, had become more "balanced" after the death of Kahane, who was assassinated in New York in 1990. "He is a member of Tsomet," she said of her husband, referring to the right-wing nationalist party led by former army chief of staff Rafael Eitan.

**PLAN TO REVISE U.S. FOREIGN AID
GIVES JITTERS TO ISRAEL'S LOBBY**
By Deborah Kalb

WASHINGTON, March 14 (JTA) -- The pro-Israel community is keeping a close eye on the Clinton administration's ambitious plan to revamp foreign aid, as the proposal begins to make its way through Congress.

Designed to bring foreign aid out of what the administration considers an obsolete Cold War aid structure, the plan would allow a continuation of Israel's \$3 billion annual installment of U.S. foreign aid, at least for now.

But despite this reassurance, some backers of Israel -- while supportive of the overall concept of foreign aid reform -- are concerned about elements of the reform plan.

For example, the revamped aid plan would switch from the decades-old system of providing aid to specific countries to a new format whereby aid is designated based on broad international objectives.

The administration has called for \$21 billion in fiscal year 1995 on spending on international affairs, of which \$14 billion would go to foreign aid.

The objectives include building democracy, promoting sustainable development and promoting peace.

Aid for Israel and Egypt, the Camp David countries, is found under the "promoting peace" category, and accounts for the majority of aid that would be disbursed in that category under the administration's plan.

The "promoting peace" category totals \$6.4 billion, of which \$5.5 billion would go to regional peace and security.

Egypt receives \$2.1 billion annually.

"The priority we attach to peace in the Middle East is reflected by the fact that our request this year is \$5.2 billion, \$5.1 billion of which would go for Israel and Egypt, the same level as last year," Secretary of State Warren Christopher recently told the Senate Appropriations subcommittee on foreign operations.

The sense among some pro-Israel activists is that Israel will emerge with its aid intact.

Congress will only be interested in tinkering with parts of the foreign aid system that do not work, and aid to Israel does not fall into that category, these activists argue.

Aid To Israel May Not Be Guaranteed

But some in the pro-Israel community continue to worry that if aid to Israel is formally justified solely on the basis of the Middle East peace process, the aid will not necessarily be guaranteed in the long run.

"What if Israel is at peace with some neighbors but not Iran and Iraq, or if the peace process breaks down completely?" one Hill staffer asked. "The language (in the administration proposal) is so narrow."

Others worry that the formulation in the new plan discounts Israel's value to the United States as a democratic ally in the Middle East.

At a recent hearing of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Rep. Eric Fingerhut (D-Ohio) touched on these concerns.

Fingerhut asked Christopher whether placing all the aid to Israel and Egypt under the "promoting peace" category might result in "conveying a different message than we wish to convey about the strategic importance of the democracy and the open election processes in the Middle East."

Christopher said that "the first step here has to be to end the conflict which has just monopolized the attention of most of the countries in that area."

He added, however, that "in the longer term we obviously will be promoting democracy there as well."

While most of the pro-Israel community has been supportive of the Clinton administration's approach to Israel and do not think he would act

to harm the Jewish state, they worry about how this aid system -- which would place more decisions in the hands of the executive branch -- would be used in the hands of a less-sympathetic administration.

The current foreign aid system was enacted in 1961.

Another concern involves the administration's desire to eliminate "earmarks" -- the congressional designations of how specific money is to be spent.

Some pro-Israel activists say this battle is not new.

They note that past administrations and Congresses have fought over earmarks and over who has the final say on how U.S. dollars are spent.

They also point out that the fight over earmarks extends beyond aid to Israel and even beyond foreign aid.

But other pro-Israel sources say they are worried about this latest battle to get rid of earmarks, because with fewer earmarks, and in the context of foreign aid reform, pro-Israel members of Congress would have less say over the specifics of Israel's aid package.

Earmarks For Israel May Be Inevitable

The administration, for its part, seems to have concluded that earmarks for aid to Israel and Egypt are inevitable, at least for the time being.

In response to a question from Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) at recent Senate hearings, Christopher acknowledged that "ultimately we did support an earmark for Egypt and Israel. We began the year hoping those could be avoided and that assurances could be given by consultation, but we did ultimately support an earmark for Egypt and Israel."

Christopher added, "We'd like to start out with a no-earmark bill, but I'm realistic enough to know that we'll probably end up where we did last year."

"The Israel earmark is around for a few more years," predicted one Hill aide, at least in part because it is "one of the only main consensus issues left for the Jewish community."

For the still-strong Jewish lobby, the aide said, "the \$3 billion earmark is still the rallying cry."

Jewish leaders have been assured repeatedly by the administration that Israel's aid will remain intact for now.

But some pro-Israel sources on Capitol Hill have expressed concern about what will happen to other longtime practices, such as congressional designations of exactly how and when and under what circumstances aid to Israel is disbursed, in a future with fewer earmarks.

"We want to find out what to substitute for that if there are no earmarks," one Hill aide commented.

And some in the Jewish community are looking to the long term, concerned that competition for foreign aid will increase, and that Israel, the largest recipient of foreign aid, will be the focus of much of this attention.

The Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, for example, is studying the long-term implications of foreign aid reform.

WALDHEIM DOCUMENT KEPT FROM PUBLIC SHOWS HE PARTICIPATED IN WAR CRIMES

By Steven Weiss

WASHINGTON, March 14 (JTA) -- A Justice Department report kept secret until last week documents previously leveled accusations that former U.N. Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim participated in war crimes under Nazi command during World War II.

The report, completed in 1987 but released only last Friday, led to the banning of Waldheim from the United States by the Bush administration.

It details that "Waldheim assisted or otherwise participated in persecution because of race, religion, national origin or political opinion."

It is not known why neither the Bush and, initially, Clinton administrations kept the report from the public eye. The report, written by Neal Sher, who recently resigned as director of the Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations, was made public after the World Jewish Congress filed a request for it under the Freedom of Information Act.

According to a Justice Department spokesman, Attorney General Janet Reno eased the act's restrictions last fall, thereby allowing documents such as this report to be released.

In 1986, while Waldheim ran for president of Austria, the WJC launched an inquiry into his wartime activities with the Germany army, or Wehrmacht, in the Balkans during World War II.

He was elected president in June of that year.

The report states that in memoranda contesting the attempt to bar him from the United States, Waldheim "offered explanations of historical events which are so completely inconsistent with document facts as to smack at rank distortion."

Waldheim failed to rebut the case against him or otherwise demonstrate that he did not engage in activities he is accused of participating in, the report said.

The WJC has long sought that the report be made public so that the story of Waldheim, who served as the United Nations top official from 1972 to 1982, would be known.

'This Man Should Never Have Served'

Israel Singer, WJC secretary-general, said he was pleased that the Justice Department made the report available to the public.

"The report confirms that this man should never have served as secretary-general to the United Nations," Singer said Monday.

"Waldheim lies about the most horrendous event in world history," Singer said.

The report states that, as a lieutenant for the German army between 1942 and 1945, Waldheim was involved in the deportation and deaths of nearly 3,000 Greek Jews.

He also played a part in the transfer of civilian prisoners to the SS for use as slave labor, the mass deportation of civilians to concentration and death camps, the utilization of anti-Semitic propaganda and the mistreatment and execution of Allied prisoners.

Much of Waldheim's wartime involvement has been known for several years.

The 204-page report confirms an important

disclosure made only recently in a book by Eli Rosenbaum, former legal counsel at the WJC and now acting director of the OSI, which is responsible for prosecuting Nazi war criminals.

In his book, titled "Betrayal" and published last year, Rosenbaum provides evidence linking Waldheim to an incident in Bosnia during which Jews, Serbs and others were deported to concentration camps.

The book, which Rosenbaum researched using accessible Justice Department documents, states that the people sent to Nazi camps from Bosnia numbered nearly 70,000, including 23,000 children.

The incident is described in the Justice Department report, which states that German authorities were sending Serbs, Jews, and suspected Communists to gruesome concentration camp

Sher, principal author of the report, was OSI director and is now head of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee.

A statement by the Austrian Press and Information Service on Monday welcomed the report but said all allegations against Waldheim were previously investigated and completely unfounded.

LAST UNION JACK TO FLY OVER PALESTINE WILL BE RETURNING TO ISRAEL WITH OLEH

London Jewish Chronicle

LONDON (JTA) -- The last Union Jack flag to fly in the British Mandate of Palestine is returning to Israel.

The flag was hauled down at a Haifa dock on June 30, 1948, as the last remaining British troops left the country.

The flag was handed to the commander of British forces in Palestine, Gen. Gordon Macmillan, who gave it to the American consul for safekeeping.

A few days later, the flag was passed on to the British consul-general, Cyril Marriott, whose family had it in its possession in Leicester, England, until it was recently auctioned off.

Sefton Woolf, a resident of Manchester, England, bought the flag at auction and planned to make this moth and take the flag with him.

Woolf discovered the flag was up for sale when he saw it in an auction house catalog in Leicestershire.

An avid collector of autographs of famous people, he spent several sleepless nights trying to fix a ceiling on how much he was prepared to pay for the flag.

"I realized it was fantastic. If I could possibly afford it, I would like it.

"I knew there was going to be competition from America, and I was getting a bit worked up. It was nerve-wracking," said Woolf.

After successfully bidding for the flag, Woolf obtained a letter from Marriott's son, Patrick, confirming the flag's authenticity.

"That letter is the final link between the flag and me.

"It's very important," he said. "I'm thrilled with the whole thing."

Woolf, whose collection of autographs ranges from Tolstoy to the Beatles, is hoping to set up a small autograph business in the foyer of a major Israeli hotel.

He plans to display the flag as the centerpiece of his collection.

AFTER ISRAEL TRIP, ASIAN AMERICANS PLAN NEW TIES WITH JEWISH COMMUNITY

By Deborah Kalb

WASHINGTON, March 14 (JTA) -- Members of a group of prominent Asian Americans, just back from an eventful trip to Israel, are planning joint efforts between the Asian American and the American Jewish communities.

While Jews and Asian Americans have long been involved in coalitions on various domestic issues, including immigration and hate crimes, the agenda has expanded to include foreign policy, said Neil Sandberg, director of the Los Angeles-based Pacific Rim Institute of the American Jewish Committee.

"It seemed only natural to want to extend this (relationship) to the world scene," Sandberg said.

This shift is due in part to the increasing ties in recent years between Israel and Asian countries including China, Japan and India.

The Feb. 19-28 trip was believed to be the first involving Asian Americans of varying backgrounds, including Chinese, Korean, Japanese and Vietnamese. The 11 participants live in cities across the United States, from San Diego to Atlanta.

This was the participants' first trip to Israel, and it happened to coincide with the Feb. 25 murders of Palestinian worshipers in a Hebron mosque by a Jewish settler.

Several of the participants, contacted after their return home, were still trying to sort out their emotions and impressions of the trip, which was sponsored by Project Interchange, an AJCommittee institute.

"I got so much information from the trip, it will take me many days to digest," said Susan Lew of San Diego, a businesswoman born in China.

North Vietnam-born Tony Lam of Westminster, Calif., did not wait to come home before contacting Vietnamese Americans to discuss his trip.

While in Israel, Lam called a U.S. radio station that he said reaches 300,000 Vietnamese Americans and spent about 35 minutes on the air.

'They Love Israel So Much'

Lam, who serves as mayor pro tempore of Westminster, an Orange County community with a heavy concentration of Vietnamese Americans, said he told his listeners about the Vietnamese community in Israel and put some members of this community on the radio.

According to Lam, there are about 200 Vietnamese who fled their homeland and have been living in Israel since 1979.

"They were the first boat people ever accepted by any country," Lam said. "They love Israel so much," Lam said. "They talk about how nice people are, and their children are in the army. To them, (Israel) is their country. That story is so good to the Vietnamese listener."

"Early on, Israel was very forthcoming and sensitive to the plight of the boat people and took in a number of refugees," said Sandberg. He added that Israel "has done a very good job in involving the Vietnamese immigrant community in the national life of the society," including in schools and in the army.

"The area of escape from persecution is an area Jews know well," Sandberg said.

Lam said his trip gave him an understanding of the issues involved in the Middle East conflict. "It is a matter of survival for Israel to defend itself," he said.

He added that television news only showed rock-throwing in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho.

He plans to talk to a Jewish group in Orange County about his trip. "I also work as an ambassador of good will, as a liaison between the two communities here," he said.

Lew also plans to discuss her trip before a joint Asian-Jewish group. She hopes to see the Jewish community "more integrated in a network" with Asian Americans. "There is a lot of similarity between Asian and Jewish people," she said.

She said she hoped the Mideast peace process would succeed and result in an expansion of trade between Israel and Asian countries. Such trade has already grown in the past few years.

But participants, including Clifford "Kip" Tokuda of Seattle, a Japanese American, said the focus of the trip tended to be politics and social programs rather than trade.

Project Interchange has contacted American-Israel chambers of commerce in cities where participants live, asking the business groups to send material to participants who are interested in fostering Israeli-Asian trade ties, said Andrea Hillman, Project Interchange's assistant director.

Tokuda, who is director of the Washington Council for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect, is planning to discuss his trip before a joint board meeting of the Japanese American Citizens League and the local AJCommittee chapter.

Hoping For More Substantial Relations

He said the two groups held a joint meeting a couple of years earlier, but he hoped this time it would lead to a more substantial relationship.

Such joint plans are exactly what Project Interchange hoped would result from the trip. Also, Project Interchange hopes that the Asian American leaders will share their experiences with their communities, Hillman said.

Tokuda said the trip was "a pretty amazing time," the "best short course I've ever had from a historical, political and cultural standpoint."

The participants' agenda included a visit to a refugee absorption center and a meeting with the Arab director of a new Arab-Jewish community center in Jaffa.

"I thought that was pretty unique, given the conflict and a lot of what we had seen," Tokuda said of the joint Arab-Jewish program.

Lam, of Orange County, also said he was impressed with the community center, calling it "really advanced. I can use it as a model for my city as well."

Pin Pin Chau of Atlanta, a Hong Kong-born banker, said she would like to write about her experiences, including being in Israel during the Hebron murders and visiting Yad Vashem. "It was very emotional to me," she said.

Chau said that after her visit she "can appreciate how difficult it is to maintain" calm in Israel.

"The Jewish people have my admiration," she said.