

**CLINTON URGES RABIN TO LURE PLO
WITH CONCRETE SECURITY MEASURES**

By Deborah Kalb

WASHINGTON, March 16 (JTA) -- In a meeting with visiting Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, President Clinton reaffirmed U.S. support for Israel while encouraging Israel to take steps to help jump-start the stalled Middle East peace process.

"Today we discussed ways to put the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations back on track. We agreed on the need for concrete measures to ensure security for Palestinians as well as for Israelis," Clinton said at a joint news conference with Rabin on Wednesday.

But neither he nor Rabin announced any specific new concessions designed to lure the Palestine Liberation Organization back to the peace talks. The PLO broke off talks with Israel after a Jewish settler gunned down at least 29 Arab worshippers at a mosque in Hebron on Feb. 25.

The two heads of state also discussed the potential for peace with Syria. Rabin said he and Clinton had spoken of "the options that can be presented to (Syrian) President (Hafez) Assad in order to achieve peace with Syria.

"I hope that President Assad will respond appropriately and we shall be able to sign a peace treaty by the end of the year," Rabin said.

While not specifying what he planned to do regarding a possible withdrawal from the Golan Heights, Rabin spoke of a future point, if serious negotiations with Syria occurred, at which "painful decisions will have to be made.

"The promise of peace and its genuine benefits for all Israelis justifies making such decisions vis-a-vis Syria. We will not compromise on our security, but we will stand ready to do what is required of us if the Syrians are ready to do what is required of them," Rabin said.

Rabin's brief visit to Washington this week came at a crucial time.

The United States has been working to bring Israel and the Palestinians back to the negotiating table in the wake of the killings in Hebron.

Series of Diplomatic Maneuvers

Since that attack, there has also been a constant series of diplomatic maneuvers at the United Nations, where a controversial resolution condemning the murders is under consideration.

Reports published before Clinton and Rabin met Wednesday indicated United States may be trying to encourage Israel to consider a Palestinian proposal to establish a Palestinian police force in Hebron to better protect the local Arabs.

When asked about this at the news conference, Clinton said, "I think Israel has an obligation, as I have said, to come up with some specific initiatives for reassurance" of Palestinians concerned with security. He did not specify beyond this.

He also said he did not think the PLO should "use this as an excuse not to return to the peace talks."

Clinton praised Rabin for the actions taken by Israel since the events in Hebron. "I think the prime minister is doing what he can to demonstrate his good faith, has been very firm in reaction to the massacre in Hebron," the president said.

"There are some specifics that have been discussed. I think they will be forthcoming," Clinton said, without specifying further.

Rabin, for his part, said that in the past there had been about 900 Palestinian police officers in Hebron, Ramallah, and other cities in the West Bank, but these officers had resigned as a result of the intifada, or grass-roots Palestinian uprising that began in the territories in 1987.

He said that whether or not a Palestinian police force is put into place in Hebron, Israel still retains overall control and responsibility for the territories.

Israel Retains 'Overall Responsibility'

"As long as ours is the overall responsibility for the territories under the military government, using our civil administration, their presence will not relieve us from our overall responsibility," Rabin said.

Clinton and Rabin spoke warmly of each other's efforts to further both the peace process and a strong U.S.-Israel relationship.

Clinton said he had "reaffirmed" his commitment to work with Congress to maintain present U.S. levels of aid to Israel, which now receives \$3 billion a year in U.S. aid.

"Since the beginning of this administration, the prime minister and I have worked to promote the common interests and values our nations share. Today we are working closely together on such issues, including those which are now before the U.N. Security Council," Clinton said.

The Security Council has been considering a resolution condemning the Hebron attack and calling for greater security for Palestinians. It also includes language to which Israel has objected, referring to Jerusalem as occupied territory.

"I am profoundly aware, Mr. Prime Minister, of the great burdens you are bearing in your search for peace. You have the admiration and respect of the entire United States and our nation's pledge of support and steadfast friendship," Clinton said.

Rabin said that "the friendship and trust between our two countries are profound and are as good if not better than they have ever been. We could not ask for more."

On the issue of the talks with the Palestinians, both leaders spoke of the importance of resuming the negotiations quickly and not allowing extremists opposed to the peace process to triumph.

Rabin condemned last month's Hebron killings, adding that Israelis have also been victims of terrorism. "Security is a two-way street," he said.

Rabin said that Israel was committed to the terms already laid down in the Madrid process and the Israeli-Palestinian declaration of prin-

ciples signed last September. These terms included saving certain issues, like the status of Jerusalem and the settlements for permanent-status negotiations, which will not take place until the third year of a five-year transitional period.

Such issues have come to the fore in the wake of the Hebron killings, with Palestinian leaders urging that they be discussed now and Israeli leaders disagreeing.

Concerning settlements, Rabin said that the Israeli-Palestinian agreement "said very clearly that the settlements remain there for the period, for the interim period. I am not saying it. It is written very clearly in the DOP."

Clinton said that the matter was one that the parties themselves would have to decide. "And in accord with the declaration, it is something to be ultimately decided at a later point. That's what we think should be done."

The two leaders also commented on the other negotiating tracks between Israel and Lebanon, Jordan and, particularly, Syria.

Clinton said that both Rabin and Syrian President Assad had indicated to him a willingness to make peace. "Since I think both of them want to make peace with each other, the best thing for me to do is not to say anything which will make their task more difficult."

Both Clinton and Rabin spoke out against the Arab economic boycott of Israel, saying that it should be ended soon.

And they said they did not discuss the case of Jonathan Pollard, the former U.S. Navy analyst serving a life sentence for spying for Israel.

Clinton said that the recent case of accused spy for Russia Aldrich Ames "has not interfered" with the Pollard case "inasmuch as the Pollard case is already in the hands of the Justice Department" and "the White House is awaiting a recommendation from the Justice Department."

During his visit to Washington, Rabin also met with Secretary of State Warren Christopher and Defense Secretary William Perry, and addressed the annual policy conference of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee.

KNESSET BANS NON-KOSHER MEAT IMPORTS, ALLOWING SHAS TO REJOIN THE COALITION

By Dvora Getzler

JERUSALEM, March 16 (JTA) -- The Knesset this week approved a bill banning the importation of non-kosher meat and seafood, thereby clearing the way for the fervently Orthodox Shas party to return to the governing coalition.

In marathon sessions before the Knesset recesses for the Passover holiday, Israeli legislators finally voted their approval of the ban at 4:15 a.m. on Wednesday.

Shas officials had been calling for the enactment of the legislation as a precondition for its return to the coalition.

Shas left the coalition in the fall when its political leader, former Interior Minister Aryeh Deri, was indicted on charges of bribery, fraud and breach of public trust.

The return of Shas to the coalition is significant because it assures Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin of a parliamentary majority of 62 Knesset members. When Shas left the coalition last year, Rabin had to depend on the support of Arab members of the Knesset for a majority.

The measure passed the Knesset two days after Rabin and Deri initialed a new coalition agreement, which is expected to be ratified shortly by the Labor Party and by Shas spiritual leader and former Chief Rabbi Obadiah Yosef.

The bill ran into some last-minute snags earlier this week, when Shas leaders realized that the proposed legislation only banned the import of non-kosher beef. At their insistence, the bill was amended to bar imports of all non-kosher meat and seafood.

The bill came in the wake of a recent government decision to privatize meat imports. Israeli religious leaders had been concerned that privatization would enable businesses to import non-kosher meat.

In order to ban such imports, the Knesset first had to amend one of the basic laws that serve Israeli society in lieu of a constitution. Under the demands of coalition politics, the Labor Party pushed through the change in Basic Law: Freedom of Occupation to permit restrictions on economic freedom rooted in religious values.

This was a blow to the platform of Labor's left-wing coalition partner, Meretz, which had strongly supported the basic law and advocates the passage of others in order to introduce American-style civil liberties here.

Meretz swallowed the ban on non-kosher meat and even agreed to the shelving of the other proposed basic laws after much deliberation, in order to strengthen the coalition.

But in the actual Knesset roll calls, most Meretz Knesset members voted against the bill, forcing Labor to rely on the votes of the religious parties that intend to remain outside the coalition. Rabin, who this week traveled to the United States, is expected to make additional attempts to woo other religious parties into the coalition when he returns to Israel.

Rabin hopes to have as broad support in the Knesset as possible as he attempts to conclude negotiations successfully with the Palestine Liberation Organization.

REBBE NOW IN 'VERY CRITICAL' CONDITION

By Pamela Druckerman

NEW YORK, March 16 (JTA) -- The Lubavitcher rebbe is unconscious and in very critical condition, according to a statement issued late Wednesday by his spokesman.

Doctors for Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, leader of the Lubavitch Chasidic sect, say the condition of the 91-year-old rebbe has deteriorated as a result of the stroke he suffered on March 10.

Schneerson was admitted to Beth Israel Medical Center after suffering what doctors described as a "massive stroke" to the right side of his brain. There had been no word on the extent of damage caused by the stroke until the results of diagnostic tests performed Wednesday morning were released.

Schneerson -- who has led the movement since 1950 -- had been bedridden at Lubavitch headquarters in Crown Heights since a stroke two years ago left him almost completely debilitated.

He is reportedly receiving medication and is under continuous monitoring.

Schneerson is the seventh leader of the Lubavitch sect, and has no heirs.

NEWS ANALYSIS:

RABIN FEARS HEBRON INVESTIGATION FOR IT MAY ULTIMATELY IMPLICATE HIM

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, March 16 (JTA) -- Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's quiet opposition to the establishment of a commission of inquiry to investigate the killings in Hebron is becoming more and more understandable.

As the televised hearings entered their second week, military official after military official continued to point to yawning lapses of security and widespread lack of discipline among Israeli forces in the territories.

The testimony inevitably focused attention on the extent of liability of the one man who, more than any other, has controlled the defense of the state for most of the past decade: Yitzhak Rabin.

Whether the commission's conclusions will actually reach the premier cannot yet be predicted.

But Rabin knows that he first assumed the premiership, 20 years ago next month, when Golda Meir resigned in the wake of the searing report of the commission charged with investigating Israel's unpreparedness for the Yom Kippur War.

Several Cabinet members, having joined in the unanimous Feb. 27 vote ordering the investigation into the events in Hebron, have since proclaimed themselves aghast to learn that the prime minister was strongly opposed to it. Had they only known, they say.

But their protestations are looking more and more disingenuous, and suspicions are growing that some of Rabin's government colleagues will not be distressed no matter how far-reaching the possible judgment against him.

Granted, the prime minister let the Cabinet debate proceed without taking an active part in it himself because, as minister of defense, he bears ministerial responsibility for the army (and as prime minister, for the Shin Bet internal security forces).

Privately, though -- and ostensibly too late to affect the decision -- he predicted that the commission could turn into a major mistake.

Quietly Lobbying Against The Commission

In his quiet efforts to lobby against the commission, he argued that army generals and other key officials would be devoting their best efforts to preparing and conducting their own defense before the five-person panel instead of getting on with their jobs.

But it is Rabin himself who, as minister of defense from 1984 through 1990, and again from 1992 until now, was at the pinnacle of the defense and security pyramid when most of the decisions were made regarding security arrangements at the Tomb of the Patriarchs.

He was at the top of the same pyramid when these various arrangements broke down one after another amid rising tension between Jews and Arabs in this most sensitive place.

Whatever the formal frame of reference crafted for the commission by the Cabinet, the fact that its hearings are being broadcast live on national television will make it virtually impossible for Justice Meir Shamgar, the commission chair, and his four colleagues to keep the scope

of the investigation narrowly focused on the events of February 25 alone.

By the same token, Shamgar will find public opinion up in arms if he reaches the decision to keep the witness list confined to officers and soldiers, and not call on the political top echelon to testify.

At the head of the political echelon, of course, is Yitzhak Rabin, in his dual capacity as prime minister and minister of defense.

As the commission goes about its somber work, the notion that Rabin personally might be held accountable for the tragedy becomes less and less fantastic.

Indeed, even if the commission's findings and recommendations focus only on the army, the police and the Shin Bet, the public's reaction might be to demand that the political echelon take responsibility too.

This is what happened, in essence, in the wake of the commission on the Yom Kippur War, headed by then-Supreme Court Justice Shimon Agranat. Prime Minister Meir and Defense Minister Moshe Dayan were forced by public opinion to relinquish their posts even though the commission's recommendations concerned only the army chief of staff and key officers.

Such scenarios for the present commission, while no longer outlandish, are still not -- at this point -- to be seen as likely.

But the seasoned politicians who sit around the Cabinet table must surely have taken them into account when they insisted on forming the commission of inquiry despite the prime minister's unarticulated reluctance.

What, then, were they thinking?

Dovish Ministers Working Against Rabin?

One theory, admittedly extreme and not widely held, is that a number of the dovish ministers are coming to the conclusion that Rabin, having performed the historic and irreversible handshake with Palestine Liberation Organization Chairman Yasser Arafat, has outlived his usefulness.

They fault him for pedantry, even obstructionism, in the ongoing negotiations on implementing the Declaration of Principles signed by Israel and the PLO last September.

These dovish ministers might, accordingly, be prepared to see him chastened, even removed, by the inquiry commission -- in the hope that the government itself could survive, and would subsequently make better progress under a less rigid leader.

A more moderate, and more widely held, variation of that theory posits that many ministers, probably most of them, actively want the commission to come out with a sweeping condemnation.

They want a condemnation not only of specific security lapses, according to this theory, but of the whole edifice of prolonged military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza that, arguably, gave rise to the lapses that led to the Hebron killings.

That message would inevitable resonate both at home and abroad, and create pressure on Rabin and his top policymakers to move forward faster with the PLO, first on the Gaza-Jericho accord, and then swiftly towards autonomy for the whole West Bank.

DUTCH NAZI COLLABORATOR TO BE FREED; HAD BEEN DEPORTED FROM CANADA IN 1992

By Henriette Boas

AMSTERDAM, March 16 (JTA) -- Dutch authorities have announced they will free a 74-year-old Nazi collaborator who was jailed for life in 1992 after being deported from Canada.

Dutch Deputy Justice Minister Aad Kostol told Parliament he had commuted Jacob Luitjens' life sentence and he would be freed in March 1995.

The decision was based in part on Luitjens' age and in part because sentences in similar cases have been reduced, the minister said.

Luitjens was also praised for his irreproachable behavior while in Dutch prison.

A former botany instructor at the University of British Columbia, in Vancouver, Luitjens was extradited to the Netherlands in 1992 after years of legal wrangling in the absence of any extradition treaty between the two countries.

Luitjens took part in wartime raids by a group of Dutch Nazi collaborators, the Landwacht (Blood Squad), during which Jews and several members of the Dutch resistance were killed.

He served as a guard in the province of Drenthe in the years 1944 and 1945.

After being convicted in the Netherlands in 1948 for war crimes, he was sentenced in absentia to life in prison.

Luitjens spent two years in Allied prisons in the Netherlands at the end of World War II before escaping to Germany, from which he fled to Paraguay.

From there he emigrated to Canada in 1961.

In 1987 his name appeared on a report of Nazi war criminals living in Canada. In 1991, he became the first Canadian to lose his citizenship because of war crimes.

In 1992, after four years of hearings and appeals, Luitjens, by then a retired university teacher, was ordered to leave Canada because he lied about his past when he entered the country and again when he applied for Canadian citizenship in 1971.

Under a new treaty between the two countries that went into effect that year, the Dutch government in 1992 sought and obtained Luitjens' extradition.

Dutch Government Was 'Relentless'

In 1983, Sol Littman, director of the Canadian office of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, tracked Luitjens down in Vancouver.

But Littman took a balanced approach to the news.

Hearing that Luitjens would be freed from prison, Littman said he was nevertheless satisfied that justice had been done and felt the Dutch had acted honorably.

"The post-war Netherlands government has an excellent record in the pursuit and prosecution of war criminals and was relentless in its efforts to persuade the Canadian government to return Luitjens to Holland so that he would serve the balance of his sentence," said a statement issued by Friends of the Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies.

The decision was condemned by B'nai Brith Canada.

Jonathan Richler, a spokesperson for that

group, said, "We are not in sympathy with convicted Nazi war criminals and their accessories being released. We regret the decision to allow Mr. Luitjens to go free."

Irving Abella, president of the Canadian Jewish Congress, was also angered but sanguine about Luitjens' impending release. "We regret that the government of the Netherlands saw fit to commute his sentence. But we are happy he is not in Canada."

Meanwhile, in Holland the news has aroused little protest.

(Contributing to this report was JTA staff writer Susan Birnbaum in New York.)

U.S. STARTS DEPORTATION PROCEEDINGS AGAINST MAN WHO WAS FORMER CAMP GUARD

NEW YORK, March 16 (JTA) -- The Justice Department has initiated proceedings to deport a Colorado resident who was an armed Nazi concentration camp guard in France during World War II.

Peter Mueller, 70, a resident of Boulder, Colo., has admitted to having been a member of the Waffen-SS Death's Head Battalion from March 1943 until at least the summer of 1944. Deportation proceedings against Mueller were opened last week at the Immigration Court in Denver.

The government complaint says Mueller was stationed at the Natzweiler concentration camp, which was located in eastern France, in the eastern province of Alsace, near the German border.

Mueller also served at the Natzweiler sub-camp, Schorzingen, located in Wurttemberg, Germany.

Mueller is a German national who never obtained U.S. citizenship. He entered the United States in 1956 on a resident alien visa.

The Justice Department reported that Mueller had admitted to the Office of Special Investigations, the department's Nazi-hunting unit, that he was an armed guard with the Waffen-SS at the Natzweiler and Schorzingen camps. He also admitted that he guarded slave laborers at the Natzweiler stone quarry and in underground mines at Schorzingen.

The Justice Department reported that during the time that Mueller served at the camp, thousands of Jews, Russians, Poles and Gypsies were subjected to inhumane living conditions, slave labor and murder.

Although Mueller has been charged with being a guard at the camps and lying about his past when entering the United States, the Justice Department has not charged him with any specific criminal acts committed at the camps. But he is charged with persecution, a crime against humanity, according to the post-war judgments at Nuremberg.

Mueller told reporters, "I didn't do criminal things. I did what a soldier does," the Denver Post quoted him as saying.

The proceedings against Mueller are the result of OSI's ongoing investigation of Nazi persecutors illegally living in the United States. To date, 49 former Nazis have lost their U.S. citizenship and 39 persons have been removed from the United States.

Nearly 400 persons remain under investigation by OSI.