

**ISRAELI SECURITY ON HIGH ALERT
AMID REPORTS OF THREATS TO CLINTON**

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM, Oct. 24 (JTA) -- Israeli security forces were placed on high alert this week amid reports that Hamas militants were planning a terror attack to coincide with President Clinton's visit to the Middle East.

Some 15,000 Israeli police were slated to be on duty for Wednesday's signing ceremony of the Israeli-Jordanian peace treaty in the Arava, which Clinton was scheduled to attend, and for the president's subsequent visit to Jerusalem.

American security teams arrived in Israel early in the week to set up security arrangements at the signing ceremony with their Israeli and Jordanian counterparts.

In the wake of last week's terror bombing of a bus in Tel Aviv, the government continued its crackdown this week on members of Hamas, which claimed responsibility for the bombing and other recent attacks on Israelis.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said Monday that Israeli security forces apprehended two Hamas members who had helped the terrorist who carried out last week's bombing. The terrorist had stayed at the home of one of them the night before the Oct. 19 attack, Rabin said.

The Rabin government meanwhile weathered three no-confidence votes in the Knesset this week. The no-confidence measures brought by the opposition said the government was "unable to ensure the security" of the Israeli people.

In the Gaza Strip, Hamas political leader Mahmoud Zahar asked the Palestinian police to protect the Islamic group's activists, according to Israel Radio.

Hamas leaders in the West Bank and Gaza warned of increasing violence and tension if Israel carries out what they said were plans to assassinate Hamas leaders.

Israeli security sources dismissed the Hamas claims, but confirmed that Israel had launched a wide-scale crackdown against the organization that has resulted in the arrests of dozens of Hamas members.

In Cairo, Israeli and Palestinian leaders issued a joint statement condemning terror.

The statement was issued after a meeting of the Israeli-Palestinian Liaison Committee, the steering group overseeing the ongoing negotiations, at which the two sides discussed the recent wave of Hamas terror attacks.

Despite the Tel Aviv bus bombing, which claimed 23 lives and left more than 40 wounded, Israeli and Palestinian negotiators meeting in Cairo continued their talks on the upcoming Palestinian elections.

Peres also said that Israel had asked Jordan to stop Hamas activities in Amman.

In the Jordanian capital this week, some 1,500 people, mostly university students, demonstrated against Jordan's peace treaty with Israel, with leaders of Hamas, Islamic Jihad and the Muslim Brotherhood all vowing to undermine the accord.

**THE UNTOLD STORY OF SYRIAN JEWRY:
AMERICAN JEWS AND ISRAEL JOINED
IN RESETTLING SYRIAN JEWS SINCE 1992**
[Part 3 of 3]

By Larry Yudelson

NEW YORK, Oct. 24 (JTA) -- In April 1992, Syrian President Hafez Assad invited the leaders of his country's 4,000-member Jewish community for the first audience with him in a decade.

It was shortly before Passover, and Chief Rabbi Abraham Hamra hoped to plead for the freedom of Eli and Selim Swed, two brothers imprisoned since 1987.

His wish was granted, but an even greater liberation was in store.

Assad had decided to let Hamra's people go.

Assad let it be known that he was lifting the decades-old restrictions that barred Jews from leaving the country.

In Brooklyn's Flatbush neighborhood, and in Deal, N.J. -- strongholds of America's 30,000-member Syrian Jewish community -- there was elation, but also fear.

Would Assad keep his word?

In Manhattan, Jewish groups working for Syrian Jewry reacted publicly with a subdued, cautious optimism.

Privately, these concerns set the agenda at a meeting of Jewish organizations convened on May 8 by Martin Kraar, executive vice president of the Council of Jewish Federations.

The purpose of the meeting was to coordinate efforts in resettling the Syrian Jews who were just beginning to receive exit visas, and the thousands they hoped would follow.

No Telling What Could Be Pretext To Stop

But in the shadow of fear cast by Assad, there was also a conviction that the entire process must be kept as quiet and discreet as possible. There was no telling what could serve as a pretext to cut off the exodus.

The fact that Jews were emigrating -- rather than just "traveling" abroad -- was sensitive.

Still more potentially explosive was the fact that, from the very beginning, some of the Syrians went on from New York to settle in Israel, something which Assad had specifically prohibited.

By last week, when the operation was publicized and declared complete, 3,800 of Syria's Jews had left the country, and 1,300 had settled in Israel.

It was an operation that cost tens of millions of dollars. But outside the community, there were no special appeals to meet the cost.

"One of the ideas we discussed was fundraising events across the country," said Seymour Reich, who headed the Task Force on Syrian Jewry of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations. "But we decided against it, because it would highlight the settlement aspect, rather than the travel aspect."

The meeting of Jewish groups -- which was to be repeated every few weeks while the exodus continued -- was held in the offices of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee.

Among those at the meetings were representatives of the JDC, the CJF, the Council for the Rescue of Syrian Jews, the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council, the Conference of Presidents task force, the UJA-Federation of New York, the New York Association for New Americans, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, Sephardic Bikur Cholim, the Aliyah Department of the Jewish Agency for Israel and the United Israel Appeal.

The JDC, with its long history of aiding Syrian Jews, booked the tickets for freedom. But "we did not want it to be known that an organization was orchestrating the entire rescue operation," said Gideon Taylor, who coordinated the operation for the JDC.

Instead, the American relatives of the Jews in Syria were told they could get tickets through groups in the Syrian emigre community, such as the Council for the Rescue of Syrian Jews and Sephardic Bikur Cholim.

These agencies then quietly turned to the JDC, which bought the tickets, arranging for them to be issued in the Syrian offices of the airlines, with a message that the tickets had been made available by the relatives.

To further disguise the mass exodus, the JDC booked round-trip tickets, and parceled out flights among different airlines.

"We went from using two airlines to six, to get as many Jews out as we could," said Alice Harary, president of the Council for the Rescue of Syrian Jews.

The tickets were paid for by an anonymous individual donor in the Syrian community.

For its part, "the JDC made local payments and carried out critical arrangements which ensured a free flow of people," said Taylor.

When the Syrians arrived in New York, they were greeted at the airport by representatives of the Bikur Cholim.

"We did not believe the news," recalled Mayer Ballas, a Bikur Cholim board member. But betting on their hopes, they rented apartments for the first Jews who came out.

Paid For Children's Education

Bikur Cholim further provided the newcomers with food and the household furnishings to start a new life. And in a particularly expensive measure, the organization helped the newcomers continue their childrens' Jewish education, placing 700 children in 14 yeshivot.

All in all, Bikur Cholim had spent around \$2 million by mid-1994.

The largest share of American resettlement expenses was borne by NYANA, which is also responsible for that half of the 40,000 annual immigrants from the former Soviet Union who settle in New York. Their efforts are funded by a mixture of government grants and money from the United Jewish Appeal and local Jewish federations.

But for the Syrian Jews, who arrived as tourists rather than refugees, there were no federal funds until they received asylum.

"And that was a process that takes a while," said Gloria Zicht, director of social services at NYANA who oversaw the Syrian resettlement project.

So far, NYANA has spent \$20.7 million on Syrian resettlement, with another \$4 million budgeted for this year.

NYANA services included medical care, as well as English classes and employment assistance.

But since the entry-level jobs most of the newcomers found were not enough to support their large families, particularly given the cost of kosher food and yeshiva education, NYANA chipped in to help close the gap.

By now, more than 1,400 of the Syrians have received refugee asylum -- entitling them to government support, with a few hundred more cases still in process.

"Just the fact the cases were adjudicated was unusual," said Roberta Herche, director of United States operations for HIAS, which helped process the Syrians with the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service. "These cases were not just put in line," she said.

About 1,300 Syrian Jews have settled in Israel over these past two years; with the exception of 113 who came via Turkey, all had arrived in New York first. Another 500 or more are expected to make aliyah from New York in the coming months.

"We expect that the aliyah of Rabbi Hamra (last week) will encourage their aliyah to Israel," said Gad Ben-Ari, head of the Jewish Agency's delegation to America.

"With the arrival of the first Jews to Brooklyn, we started a wide effort to reach every family here, to help them make aliyah to Israel," said Ben-Ari.

Israel Encouraged Them To Make Aliyah

This included special Arabic-speaking emissaries, traveling to New York to make the argument for aliyah.

Because Assad had explicitly said that Syria's Jews did not have permission to travel to Israel, the question of aliyah was one of great sensitivity.

"The first wave was not allowed to go to Israel, for security reasons basically. They were discouraged until mid-'93," said Ballas of Bikur Cholim.

Jewish Agency officials also found themselves competing with the assistance the Jewish community in America gave the newcomers here.

To help encourage Syrian Jews to make aliyah -- and to indirectly compete with the resettlement assistance offered by the American Jewish groups -- Israel increased the benefits being given to new Syrian immigrants to exceed those being offered Russian Jews, said one person familiar with the discussions among Jewish groups.

By early this year, Jewish groups in New York had become strongly supportive of the Jewish Agency aliyah efforts. At this point, people no longer feared that the aliyah would jeopardize the exodus -- and it also became clear that American Jewish philanthropy could not afford the mounting costs of resettling the Syrians in New York.

CJF Associate Executive Vice President Richard Jacobs said the primary factors moving the community to support aliyah for the Syrians was their desire to be in Israel, and in some cases, to be reunited with their families in Israel.

But he said there was a financial component as well, particularly given the large Syrian families and low earning power of new immigrants. "Many of them will in fact be better off and have better opportunities in Israel," he said.

NEWS ANALYSIS:**ISRAELIS' MESSAGE TO CLINTON:****TELL ASSAD PEACE MUST BE SECURE**

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Oct. 24 (JTA) -- The audience at Tel Aviv's glittering new opera house fell silent as Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin mounted the conductor's rostrum Sunday night to deliver a speech inaugurating the hall.

The tension was almost palpable, and Rabin, not always a great orator, rose to the occasion.

"The greatest privilege," he said, "is to belong to this people, the people of Israel."

Time after time, he continued, the Israeli people are struck by cruel blows; but each time they rise up to overcome adversity and protect the values of their Jewish and universal heritage.

Many people in the hall wept, as did many thousands around the country who watched the prime minister's brief, unscripted speech on television. It seemed to encapsulate, somehow, the see-sawing emotions that affected the entire nation in the wake of last week's devastating suicide bombing of a bus in the heart of Tel Aviv.

The nation at large, drawing on that same fund of resilience and indomitable optimism, settled back in its collective armchair midweek to watch the historic signing of the Israeli-Jordanian peace treaty, to which no less a figure than President Clinton was lending his presence.

Israelis are slowly recovering from last week's terror attack. But the visiting American president, along with his interlocutors in Damascus and elsewhere in the region, would be terribly wrong if he concluded that the much-tried Israeli public can take endless punishment, that there is no breaking point.

Israelis Cannot Take All The Risks

Indeed, perhaps the most central message that Israel's leaders were preparing to deliver to Clinton, and through him to Syrian President Hafez Assad and other key Arab leaders, is that the Israeli people will not -- indeed, cannot -- move on toward new risks and sacrifices in the peace process as long as more and more innocent names are added to the decades-long list of terror victims.

Granted, terrorism is not a threat to national survival, in the way that an all-out war can be. The peace process is primarily designed to end the possibility that war will ever again threaten the existence of the Jewish state, or force it to consider "doomsday" scenarios to destroy its enemies.

Rabin himself, in persuading the Israeli public to support his peace policies, often sought to make this distinction between the strategic dimension and the tactical one embodied in terrorist attacks.

But as he advances along the road to peace, Rabin is learning -- and with him the nation -- that while terror cannot, arguably, destroy a powerful state, it can destroy a peace process.

Whatever the strategic arguments in favor of the process, politics and psychology will overwhelm those arguments if the streets of Tel Aviv run red with innocent civilian blood.

That is the message that Clinton has been hearing from his own advisers as he prepares for

his trip to the Middle East. And that is the message he will be asked to convey -- as the highest-ranking and therefore most authoritative emissary in the world -- to Assad and the others.

The Israeli people want peace, long for peace, await the moment when they can touch and taste the fruits of peace. But they will draw back if those fruits can only be attained at the price of more and more random victims to terror.

The strength and significance of public opinion is always crucial in a democracy at times of major governmental decision-making. But in Israel at this time, the public and its sentiments play an even greater and more direct role in the evolution of policy than in other similar situations.

This is because Rabin has solemnly pledged to go to the nation, in a plebiscite or in elections, when and if a land-for-peace deal with Syria has been hammered out.

President Clinton's prime diplomatic purpose in embarking on this week's trip -- apart from his domestic political aims -- is to nudge Syria, and Israel, toward precisely such a deal.

Assad Must Reassure Israeli Public

To do so, Clinton will have to make Assad see that the peace must appeal to and reassure the people of Israel.

Only if ordinary Israeli civilians can get into their cars in Tel Aviv and drive, via Syria and Turkey, on into Europe, will they be convinced that this is indeed real peace -- a peace worth trading the precious Golan Heights for.

In the case of Jordan, where the enmity was of an incomparably lower intensity, this message was thoroughly understood by King Hussein.

He has been assiduously wooing Israeli public opinion in his speeches and public gestures. In a show of tangible results that every Israeli can appreciate, Jordan's borders will open to Israeli tourists within weeks of ratification of the treaty.

The Jordan peace will certainly earn points for Rabin and his government. But his real test, of course, still lies ahead: the Syrian track.

And when, eventually, the prime minister submits for the approval of the people an accord with Damascus, he will be submitting, in effect, a peace package incorporating the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, the peace with Jordan, a settlement (with Syria) of the Lebanon border problem -- and the prospect of providing reasonable personal security for every Israeli citizen.

Advocates of the accord with Syria will invoke all these other elements in order to "sell" it to the Israeli public. Opponents will criticize those same elements in order to argue against it. The public, battered and traumatized by the recent wave of terror attacks, will be asked to judge.

Ironically, it was the Arabs who over all the years of failed peace attempts insisted on the principle of "comprehensive peace."

Now, Israel is the side stressing the comprehensive, interlinked nature of the various evolving agreements.

Above all, the Israeli government, together with all its Arab partners in peace, must find the way to convince a solid majority of ordinary Israelis, war-weary but still wary, suspicious and grieving, that peace can really mean an end to the killing.

**ISRAELI DELEGATION IN BAHRAIN
FOR MULTILATERALS ON ENVIRONMENT**

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM, Oct. 24 (JTA) -- An Israeli delegation led by Environment Minister Yossi Sarid arrived in the Persian Gulf state of Bahrain this week to participate in multilateral peace talks on the environment.

Key issues on the agenda for the conference include developing a code of conduct for managing the environment and fighting marine pollution in the northern Gulf of Aqaba.

The Israeli delegation joins representatives from some 45 countries and organizations at the conference.

Syria and Lebanon have so far boycotted all five sets of multilateral talks, which in addition to environmental issues focus on water, refugees, arms control and economic development. The two countries insist it is premature to discuss issues raised in the multilateral talks before a settlement is reached in their bilateral negotiations with Israel.

Gulf officials say hosting the multilateral talks does not imply recognition of Israel. But the six states of the Gulf Cooperation Council -- Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Oman and Qatar -- last month announced they were lifting the secondary and tertiary boycotts of firms dealing with Israel.

Sarid is the highest-ranking Israeli to visit a Gulf state. Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin led the first official Israeli delegation to the region when he attended the multilateral talks on water in Oman in April.

David Ivry, director-general of the Defense Ministry, led the Israeli delegation to the multilateral talks on arms control in Qatar in May.

The multilateral framework was created at the 1991 Madrid peace conference.

**HOLLAND'S JEWS JOIN DEBATE
OVER GERMAN ROLE IN CELEBRATIONS**

By Henriette Boas

AMSTERDAM, Oct. 24 (JTA) -- As Holland prepares for the 50th anniversary of its liberation from the Nazis, Jews here are joining the debate over whether Germany should be invited to participate in the commemorations.

Representatives of Holland's Ashkenazic, Sephardic and Liberal congregations recently weighed into the debate with a statement saying that the Jewish community in Holland was not in favor of inviting Germany to next year's commemoration, scheduled for May 5.

"Emotionally our community has still a long way to go to commemorate the dark period of 1940 to 1945 jointly with Germans," the statement said. "The wounds have by no means yet been healed. The fact that over 80 percent of the Jewish population was murdered is still in vivid memory with the survivors and their children."

The congregational leaders said that despite their objections to including the Germans in the celebration, they understand the need to work with present-day Germany and to avoid prejudices regarding the new generation of Germans.

In contrast to the views of the congregations, Ronny Naftaniel, director of the Center for Information and Documentation on Israel, sup-

ported the idea of allowing German participation in an article he wrote for the daily newspaper *Handelsblad*.

Germany has not sought to participate in the commemoration, but some in Holland have put forth the idea as an opportunity for reconciliation.

Anti-German sentiments remain strong in Holland. A recent opinion poll found that many people here hold anti-German stereotypes, including the beliefs that all Germans are arrogant and aggressive, and that the majority of them are neo-Nazis.

**GERMAN COURT RECOGNIZES ADASS JISROEL
AS THE COMMUNITY FOUNDED 1885 IN BERLIN**

By Miriam Widman

BERLIN, Oct. 24 (JTA) -- A small Orthodox congregation in the former East Berlin has been recognized by a local court as the same community that was founded in 1885, giving it the chance to repossess valuable real estate in the city.

As a result of the ruling last week by an administrative court, the 260-member Adass Jisroel community not only could repossess property that has been at the center of a controversy between the Jewish communities of the former East and West Berlin but can also ask for government subsidies.

Adass Jisroel existed until it was shut down by the Nazis in 1939. But the community, which is located in the heart of the Jewish section in the former East Berlin, did not resurrect itself until 1986.

Because of this hiatus, Heinz Galinski, the late chairman of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, had argued along with Berlin city officials that the group was in fact a new community and therefore not entitled to reclaim what has now become valuable real estate in the heart of the former East Berlin.

But the directors of Adass Jisroel filed suit against the Berlin municipality and will now profit from the court decision.

Matthias Thilo, director of the city's cultural administration in charge of church-state issues, said it was unclear whether Adass Jisroel will receive public funding soon, adding that the community must first provide the government with a detailed financial statement of its activities.

RABIN DEDICATES NEW OPERA HOUSE

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Oct. 24 (JTA) -- Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was among the featured speakers at the inauguration Sunday night of Tel Aviv's new \$50 million opera house.

During his remarks, Rabin called for a moment of silence to remember the victims of last week's suicide bus bombing in Tel Aviv that left 23 dead and more than 40 wounded.

Praising Tel Avivians for their restraint and courage in the face of tragedy, Rabin said it was "in this spirit that we inaugurate the opera house today, not forgetting the past, but looking forward toward the future."

The New Israeli Opera will launch its first season at its new home in the Tel Aviv Performing Arts Center with a new production of Musorgsky's "Boris Godounov" next week.