

**RABIN EXPRESSES LIMITED INTEREST  
IN LEBANESE CEASE-FIRE PROPOSAL**

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM, Oct. 31 (JTA) -- Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin this week expressed interest in a Lebanese proposal for peace talks, but he rejected a precondition that negotiations rest on an Israeli troop withdrawal from southern Lebanon.

On Saturday, Lebanese President Elias Hrawi proposed that a joint Israel-Lebanon committee be set up to negotiate a timetable for Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon within six months.

Hrawi told the Egyptian Middle East News Agency he would guarantee that there would be no attacks on Israeli troops in southern Lebanon by Islamic fundamentalist Hezbollah guerrillas if Israel would agree to the timetable.

While this was not an unprecedented offer, it was widely perceived this time as a conciliatory gesture by Syrian President Hafez Assad in the wake of President Clinton's visit to the Middle East last week. Assad controls much of Lebanese politics, as well as the activities of Hezbollah.

But on Monday, Lebanese Foreign Minister Faris Bouez said the negotiations were preconditioned on a commitment by Israel to withdraw its troops from southern Lebanon.

Rabin, who returned to Israel on Monday from an economic conference in Casablanca, Morocco, did not dismiss the proposal.

But he said Israel would not accept a withdrawal of its troops as a precondition for the talks.

**Rabin Skeptical About Guarantee**

Rabin said he had discussed the proposal with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, whom he met with at the Casablanca conference, and had requested clarification from American mediators.

"If the meaning is that we have to commit ourselves to withdraw from the present line in south Lebanon for having this committee, it's a non-starter," Rabin told reporters Monday.

Rabin was also skeptical that Hrawi could guarantee a cease-fire by the Iranian-backed Hezbollah during the negotiations.

"On his promises alone, without putting it to a real test, we will not do anything," he said.

Rabin reiterated a standing Israeli demand that in advance of negotiations the Lebanese army first disarm and disperse the Hezbollah fighters. Israel has also stated in the past that it will not withdraw until Syria pulls out some 40,000 troops it has stationed in Lebanon.

Israel established a security zone in southern Lebanon in 1982 to prevent Hezbollah attacks on its northern border. The site of sporadic skirmishes between Israel Defense Force troops and Hezbollah gunmen, the security zone is currently Israel's only active battle front.

The IDF has meanwhile launched an investigation into the circumstances surrounding a Hezbollah assault on an Israeli military post in southern Lebanon on Saturday. Staff Sgt. Almog

Klein was killed in the attack and two other Israeli soldiers were lightly wounded.

In that incident, Hezbollah gunmen almost overran an Israeli position in the eastern sector of the security zone before being driven back.

Senior IDF officials have since labeled the actions of Israeli troops as a "scandal" and "shameful."

But the commander in charge of the northern sector, Maj. Gen. Yitzhak Mordechai, described these terms as "excessive" and said the results of the investigation would be made public soon.

Mordechai admitted nonetheless that there were "local errors" which would be corrected and for which the officers and soldiers involved would be disciplined.

The investigation showed that the post, in difficult rocky terrain and surrounded by earthen ramparts, did not have a sentry posted -- as called for in standing orders -- at the time of the Hezbollah assault.

The gunmen managed to approach as far as the ramparts during the night, and were only discovered when they opened fire on the Israelis.

And even then, not all of the Israeli soldiers returned fire. Some of them were reported to have taken shelter in foxholes, with their heads down.

Hezbollah gunmen, who have recently become more sophisticated in their military activities, now take videocameras along with their front-line fighters to record their activities for propaganda purposes.

Pictures of uniformed Hezbollah fighters planting their flag on the IDF position were shown on Israel Television on Sunday night, to the distress of many Israeli viewers.

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

**NEWS ANALYSIS:****CLINTON'S MIDEAST VISIT PRODUCED  
NO BREAKTHROUGHS, BUT SOME HOPE**

By Cynthia Mann

JERUSALEM, Oct. 31 (JTA) -- President Clinton's visit last week to the Middle East may have narrowed some gaps in the efforts between Israel and Syria to reach a peace agreement but, as expected, produced no dramatic breakthrough.

Sources say the full impact of the presidential mission will become clearer only after the next visit to the region by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher. That trip is scheduled for the coming weeks.

The sources also say a major breakthrough is possible within six months and is likelier to be achieved if Clinton stays personally involved in the diplomacy.

The outline of a basic agreement between Israel and Syria is already in place, according to insiders. Israel has expressed its willingness to withdraw from most if not all of the Golan Heights, while Syria has agreed to normalized relations in return.

The remaining dispute is over the timetable,

and the two sides were believed to have narrowed their differences during the president's trip.

Fresh from Damascus, Clinton made a point of reassuring Israelis in his speech to the Knesset last week that "something is changing in Syria."

"Syria has made a strategic choice for peace with Israel," he said. "Its leaders understand it is time to make peace. There will still be a lot of hard (work) before a breakthrough, but they are serious about proceeding."

Nevertheless, both Clinton and the Israelis voiced disappointment over the failure of Syrian President Hafez Assad to use a joint news conference in Damascus as an opportunity to assuage Israeli fears over withdrawing from the Golan.

"The Israeli government is committed to making painful concessions on the Golan Heights," said a Foreign Ministry source.

In order to get Israeli public support, "the government needs confidence-building measures" from Syria, and "we were disappointed by (Syria's) public diplomacy," he said.

#### Assad Fell Short Of Expectations

"We had hoped to hear more details about what (Assad) means by normalization and peaceful relations" with Israel, the diplomat continued.

Not doing so "hurts the government and the peace process," he said. If the Israeli public does not understand what it will receive in return for giving up the Golan, it will not support such a move, he added.

Assad also fell far short of expectations when it came to the subject of terrorism, said the source.

"We wanted a condemnation. Instead, (Assad) was quite cynical" in his insistence that no one can prove direct Syrian links to terrorist activity.

There did appear to be one tangible development from Clinton's meeting with Assad.

After Clinton left Syria, Lebanese President Elias Hrawi offered to call a cease-fire in the guerrilla activities of the Islamic fundamentalist Hezbollah movement while negotiating with Israel about an Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon.

While this was not an unprecedented offer, it was widely seen as a conciliatory gesture by Assad, whose control of Hezbollah is commonly known.

For Eyal Zisser, Syrian expert at the Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, the principal purpose of the Clinton visit was "not to insult Assad" by leaving him out.

"The main objective was to keep Syria committed to the peace process after the agreement with Jordan," said Zisser.

At the same time, he said, Assad resisted American pressure to make the necessary conciliatory "gestures" toward the Israeli public because he does not grasp their importance and refuses to play the game.

This refusal will make it difficult to sell the concessions to the Israelis, Zisser said.

"For us, it's peace, and we want (the appropriate) statements and gestures. For the Arabs, it's a deal they have to make for their relations with the United States and the survival of their regimes," he said.

Moshe Maoz, another Syrian expert and Assad-watcher at Hebrew University, said that while he had expected more conciliatory public

diplomacy from Assad, he believed something had been accomplished privately.

"I don't think Clinton would go all this way to come back empty-handed," he said.

He said he believes the gaps in the countries' negotiating positions were narrowed.

"If Syria wants a withdrawal in one or two years, and Israel in four or five, there were probably compromises here," he said.

There may also have been agreement on starting "low-level diplomatic relations" in an earlier phase of withdrawal than Syria had wanted, he said.

"The United States holds the key," said Maoz. Syria needs to get its name off the State Department's list of countries sponsoring terrorism so it can attract international investment and become eligible for direct aid from the United States, he said.

At the same time, Maoz said, Clinton gave assurances to the Israelis that the United States would maintain Israel's qualitative edge, which is "very important to induce Israel to come to a compromise with Syria."

But Dore Gold, an analyst with the Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, criticized Clinton and his administration for being "obsessed" with "molding Israeli public opinion to prepare it for painful concessions on the Golan."

He believes the U.S. rush for a deal between Israel and Syria is ill-conceived.

#### Security Is The Agreement's Achilles Heel

"The mistake of the Clinton administration is making the top priority the achievement of agreements and signing ceremonies and not the realization of national interests."

In fact, said Gold, "the real questions should be: 'Is Syria ready to make peace with Israel? And what is the content of the security arrangements?' -- the Achilles heel of the agreement."

He said if an agreement is made without completely ironing out security provisions, the United States will have to step in and "fill the gaps," and this would have grave consequences.

"If you add Israeli military dependence on the U.S. to the (existing) economic dependence, you will (damage) all the basic underpinnings of U.S.-Israel relations since 1948," he said.

"We need a very precise clarification of what the U.S. should do and shouldn't do with regard to involvement in Israel's security," said Gold. "But they're afraid to debate this in Washington because they're afraid it will torpedo the agreement, and that's a mistake."

Meanwhile, some close observers of the process feel that the window of opportunity for a deal is slowly closing. They say something decisive must happen before next summer, when campaigns for Israeli elections go into high gear.

For his part, Gold said he does not see the Israeli public buying a deal with Syria quickly or easily. He said Israelis are "exhausted" by all the questions that have surfaced about the accord with the Palestinians and by all the "peace ceremonies."

"The government's battle of the Golan Heights will be uphill," he said.

Zisser said he would not make a prediction about when or if a deal would be made and bought by the Israelis, but said he would not be surprised if it came within six months.

## TWO NEW AMERICAN CARDINALS CONSIDERED GOOD FRIENDS OF JEWS

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK, Oct. 31 (JTA) -- The two American archbishops elevated to the rank of cardinal by Pope John Paul II this week are both considered good friends of the Jewish community.

William Henry Keeler, archbishop of Baltimore, is the Vatican's chief spokesman in the United States and considered by Jews involved in Jewish-Catholic dialogue to be an ally with good access at the Vatican.

His promotion to the College of Cardinals will only increase his access and influence in Rome, said sources.

Adam Joseph Maida, the other new cardinal, is the archbishop of Detroit and was centrally involved in the 1991 visit to the United States of the controversial Cardinal Jozef Glemp of Poland, who met with Jews here in an effort at reconciliation.

In 1989, Glemp gave a homily in Czestochowa, in which he said that Jews control the international media, introduced communism to Poland and got peasants drunk.

Keeler, 63, and Maida, 64, were among 30 new cardinals worldwide appointed by the pope this week.

In addition to being promoted to cardinal, Keeler was this week appointed to the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity, an umbrella body which includes the Vatican's Commission for Relations with the Jews.

Keeler is currently president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, and formerly chaired the Bishop's Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations. Before heading the conference, he also served as U.S. Catholics' episcopal moderator for Catholic-Jewish relations.

According to Rabbi A. James Rudin, director of interreligious affairs at the American Jewish Committee, Keeler's elevation to the rank of cardinal "represents the maturing of the church's relationship with the Jewish community."

### Jewish Relations Mainstream Part Of Church

"It shows that positive Catholic-Jewish relations is a mainstream, mainline part of the Roman Catholic Church today," said Rudin. "It shows how important Catholic-Jewish relations are to this pope."

"It is one of the ironies of Jewish history that a reliable friend that the Jewish people have in the world is the Catholic Church," said Rabbi Mark Winer, vice president of the Synagogue Council of America, and chair of its interreligious affairs committee.

"Nobody in the Catholic Church is a better friend of the Jewish people than Archbishop Keeler. He's a mensch," said Winer, using the Yiddish term for "decent man."

As an example of Keeler's deep commitment to relations with Jews, Winer said that Keeler personally stepped in during the last of a long series of crises surrounding the presence of a convent at the Auschwitz death camp.

"The nuns had still not moved and the 50th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising was coming. There was the danger of nasty confrontations" between Jewish demonstrators and the nuns, said Winer.

"Archbishop Keeler went the full nine yards as president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. He sent a letter by diplomatic courier to the pope, making it clear that the problem had to be resolved, which it was."

The pope, apparently in response, sent a letter to the nuns instructing them to leave the death camp convent.

Keeler also worked to secure backing in the Catholic community for the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, a piece of legislation considered very important in the Jewish community.

The bill, which Congress passed last year, was designed to ensure that government could not arbitrarily infringe on the religious practice of minority groups.

## PRINCE PHILIP VISITS ISRAEL IN FIRST TRIP BY BRITISH ROYAL

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM, Oct. 31 (JTA) -- Marking the first time that a member of the British royal family has visited the State of Israel, Prince Philip arrived here Sunday for a ceremony honoring his mother's efforts to save a Greek Jewish family during World War II.

The Duke of Edinburgh, who is the husband of Queen Elizabeth II, met Monday with members of the family whom his mother, Princess Alice of Greece, hid in her Athens palace for 13 months during the Nazi occupation of Greece.

At a ceremony at the Yad Vashem Memorial in Jerusalem, Prince Philip accepted the Righteous Among the Nations award that was bestowed posthumously upon his late mother.

He also planted a maple tree in memory of his mother along the Avenue of the Righteous Among Nations, which commemorates gentiles who saved Jews during the Holocaust.

"God brings everything we do to judgment," the prince wrote in the visitors' book at Yad Vashem.

Prior to the ceremony, Philip visited the crypt in the Church of St. Mary Magdalene on the Mount of Olives, where his mother's coffin lies. Princess Alice died in 1969. In 1988, she was reinterred at the Russian Orthodox church in accordance with her dying wishes.

Princess Alice joins more than 12,000 others recognized as Righteous Gentiles for saving Jews from the Holocaust.

In September of 1943, members of the Cohen family, from the Greek town of Trikala, appealed to Princess Alice for refuge. An acquaintance of theirs, she took them in and hid them until the Nazis withdrew in October 1944.

The story was unknown until two years ago, when Michel Cohen, 78, told Yad Vashem officials how the princess save him, his mother and sister.

The surviving members of the Cohen family now live in France. They flew to Israel to attend the ceremony.

Philip, accompanied by his sister Princess Sophie, was met at Ben-Gurion Airport on Sunday by Education Minister Amnon Rubinstein.

While the visit is considered a private one, Rubinstein said it reflected Israel's changed status in light of the peace process.

"It is another sign of the much warmer and better relationship between Israel and the United Kingdom," Rubinstein said.

**JEWISH RELIEF EFFORTS FOR RWANDA:  
AMERICAN AND ISRAELI VOLUNTEERS JOIN  
IN RELIEF EFFORTS FOR RWANDAN REFUGEES**  
[Part 2 of 2]

By Deborah Kazis

BUKAVU, Zaire, Oct. 31 (JTA) -- As part of ongoing efforts to provide much-needed assistance to Rwandan refugees, 18 Israeli and American volunteers, led Israeli by peace activist and humanitarian Abie Nathan, are clearing a new site here for many of those who have fled their war-torn land.

When they finish bulldozing the rough jungle area, the volunteers will construct 500 toilets -- crucial weapons in the battle to stem the spread of diseases, including shigella, a virulent form of dysentery now racing through the refugee camps.

The volunteers, who have also brought 500 large tents and 100 water tanks for the refugees, are expected to spend one month in Bukavu. They hoped to be finished with their work by the end of the month, when the camp will be handed over to the United Nation's High Commissioner for Refugees to run.

The relief project is sponsored by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee with the support of 35 American Jewish organizations. The kibbutz movement in Israel and the Israeli Magen David Adom also donated funds toward the effort.

Bukavu, where 450,000 Rwandan refugees have fled, lies just across the border from Rwanda, on the southern tip of the giant Lake Kivu.

Once an attractive city, Bukavu is now little more than a crowded, seething town of dirt and disease. Thousands live in mud in makeshift huts.

Chaos reigns in this part of Zaire. The army has not been paid for nine months, and many soldiers earn their living by demanding bribes from the local population.

To decrease the overcrowding and improve the sanitation and security conditions, the United Nations is moving refugees to new sites such as this one, which will house up to 40,000 refugees.

"It's very important that the Jewish people are involved here," Nathan said of the effort.

**'This Is Something I Need To Do'**

"Every child should not be allowed to sleep on the ground," Nathan said, becoming angry and overwhelmed with emotion. "Refugees must be given more humane treatment. I want everyone to eat from a plate instead of from a rusty can. I want to give them tents, water, and, for God's sake, proper toilet facilities," he said.

Nathan has a compelling explanation for his efforts over the years to participate in humanitarian efforts.

"I did a lot of killing in my time in the wars of Israel. I made a lot of people homeless," he said. "I feel this is something I need to do to pay back. But no matter what I do, I'll never feel that I have made up for what I have done."

Throughout the Rwandan crisis this year, there has been both an Israeli and an American Jewish component to the massive international relief effort.

In July, the government of Israel dispatched a fully equipped Israel Defense Force field hospital, complete with operating theater and special emergency child care unit, to Goma, Zaire, to treat refugees. In two months, four medical teams

performed over 100 operations and treated tens of thousands of people.

Israel has spent over \$7 million in what has been the largest non-sectarian relief effort in its history and has sent an emergency planeload of vaccines to immunize refugees in infected areas.

JDC, on behalf of a coalition of American Jewish organizations, sent two medical teams in July to provide care in Goma. Today, three doctors and two nurses continue that care there.

JDC, which received close to \$1 million in special funds for this crisis and is still receiving thousands of dollars a week for Rwanda, is also planning another project to help children orphaned during the April massacres.

Four of the volunteers now in Bukavu have come from the United States.

"I became very concerned about the situation when I saw bodies being thrown into pits on TV," said David Markovich, 32, an Australian living in New York. "It feels important that the American Jewish community has taken an active role in providing relief, and it feels good to be working together with Israelis."

"What we're doing is very unique," said Douglas DeJohn, 34, a refugee worker. "We are going to build a model camp that can really accommodate refugees so they can live well."

**The Opportunity To Make A Connection**

This project is unique in that it brings Israelis and Americans together to contribute to the international relief effort. In addition, "this project gives us the opportunity to make a keshet -- a connection -- in a way that we never could by visiting Israel," said Steve Gamer, who works at Atlanta's Jewish Federation and is, at 27, the youngest volunteer in the group.

Keeping kosher and observing Shabbat are not easy here in Bukavu.

"I keep Shabbat and I keep kosher," said David Jaffe, 29, a social worker from New York who wears a yarmulke. "But you need to be flexible about things here. Before I came, I spoke with a rabbi about the importance of the project and saving lives, and I made a decision to come and do this work."

As they go about providing relief, the volunteers have had the unenviable experience of witnessing the horrors of refugee life.

"I've seen a lot of refugees, but today I saw something that hit me deep in my heart," said Itzik Itzhaki, one of the Israeli volunteers who works with Ethiopians in Israel for JDC.

"I saw a child of 7 or 8 in the marketplace carrying a little baby on his back, about a year old," he said.

"I saw he was weak, and a refugee from Rwanda and alone. I took a banana and handed it to him. He grabbed it and whirled around really quickly. He mashed up the banana and stuck it in his brother's mouth."

"I could tell he was afraid that some of the other children would grab the banana from him before he could get it to his brother," he said.

"I couldn't believe that in the vegetable market, where there are so many people and so much food, that no one would give this child anything," Itzhaki said.

"After he finished eating, he just looked at me and said nothing, but his eyes said 'thank you.'"