



## NEWS AT A GLANCE

### Arafat extends olive branch to Jewish communal leaders

By Cynthia Mann

NEW YORK (JTA) — Palestine Liberation Organization Chief Yasser Arafat told an American Jewish audience this week that differences between Palestinians and Jews must and can be overcome because there is no alternative.

"There must be a compromise," he said Monday. "There must be a peaceful solution."

Amid extraordinarily tight security, Arafat delivered a rambling speech before roughly 150 members of the Executive Committee of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council about the common land, history and suffering of Jews and Palestinians and their problem-plagued quest for peace.

Arafat's address to the Jewish leaders came one day after joining world leaders to participate in the U.N. General Assembly's 50th anniversary celebrations.

Arafat, who last appeared at the world body in New York 21 years ago with an olive branch and a gun holster, this time told the world he had come "with the olive branch hoisted over the peace of the brave."

The Arafat-NJCRAC meeting was a reunion for some.

A top-level NJCRAC delegation met with Arafat at his Gaza beachfront office a year ago.

On Monday, the atmosphere of expectant quiet was shattered by two protesters shortly after NJCRAC Chair Lynn Lyss introduced Arafat by saying that the peace process "does not require us to forget the past," but "does require us not to be prisoners of the past."

An unidentified man and woman were swiftly ejected by police after shouting, "You are a murderer" and "Shame on you, shame on you, NJCRAC."

Sparse but loud protests against the meeting were also mounted outside the B'nai Zion building on E. 39th Street where Arafat spoke.

"Shame on you, B'nai Zion," read one banner. "Yasser Arafat still a terrorist," read another.

Arafat opened his remarks by playing down the protests.

"We can understand it," he said, making a point of setting aside his prepared text and "speaking from my heart."

"We know it is not easy to overcome all these dramatic events suddenly after two agreements in Washington and one in Cairo," he said, referring to the agreements on Palestinian self-rule reached between Israel and the PLO over the past two years.

But "we are not only cousins, we are peace partners," he said. "To accept or not accept, it's a fact."

Arafat became more focused in his remarks only in response to pointed questions from Lyss about his repeated use of the term "jihad," or holy war, in speeches to his constituents and about the clauses in the Palestinian National Covenant calling for Israel's destruction.

"You have to understand our terminology as I'm understanding Jewish terminology," Arafat said about his use of the term "jihad," which has angered and unnerved many American Jews.

#### Promise to repeal offending clause

Echoing previous explanations, Arafat said he was referring to a second type of jihad that follows the more traditional jihad on the battlefield.

"This is the grand jihad to build a state and deal with your neighbors, with civilians, with humanitarian needs," he said.

He also said the offensive clause in the covenant was "caduc," using the French term for "null and void."

When pressed, he said he would "definitely" convene the Palestine National Council after Palestinian elections to repeal the clause "if Israel is ready to let" all the members come to vote for the repeal.

Under the latest agreement on extending self-rule in the West Bank, the Palestinians will hold elections in January.

Arafat wryly observed that he envied Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin for having to contend with only one united opposition to his peace program.

■ **Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasser Arafat met with the Executive Committee of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council.** A private delegation of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations is scheduled to meet with him Tuesday. [Page 1]

■ **The House of Representatives and the Senate are scheduled to vote Tuesday on a bill to move the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem before May 1999.** In a bid to win Clinton administration support, lawmakers added a provision allowing the president to delay the move if U.S. national security interests are at risk.

■ **Negotiators plan to meet Tuesday to hammer out differences between the House and Senate versions of the foreign aid bill.** The bill includes \$3 billion in foreign aid to Israel, \$2.1 billion to Egypt and the Middle East Peace Facilitation Act, which allows U.S. foreign aid to flow to the Palestinian Authority.

■ **Jonathan Pollard petitioned Israel's High Court of Justice to grant him citizenship.** Pollard, who was convicted in the United States in 1987 of spying for Israel and sentenced to life in prison, issued the petition after the Israeli government rejected his request.

■ **Canada raised the status of Palestine Liberation Organization representatives in the country.** Although not yet possessing full diplomatic privilege and immunity, the PLO is now entitled to raise the Palestinian flag over its Ottawa mission.

■ **The Knesset's winter session opened Monday with an address by Foreign Minister Shimon Peres.** Commentators expected the upcoming Knesset vote on Israel's 1996 budget to be one of the toughest battles of the session, as the Labor, Likud and Meretz parties geared up for internal primaries in advance of the 1996 national elections.

■ **Israel and China signed an agreement to set up a \$5 million fund for research in the areas of biotechnology, space technology and computers.**

"I have many," he said. "We face Arab opposition, Palestinian opposition, Islamic opposition, even Christian opposition."

Arafat said that despite efforts, he has been unable to secure any agreement with the fundamentalist Islamic group Hamas. The PLO and Hamas had reportedly been seeking an accord regarding upcoming Palestinian elections and curtailing terrorism.

He also talked about his people's poverty and starvation. "You don't know what that means," he said. "We live it."

In response to Lyss' call to encourage an end to the Arab boycott of Israel, Arafat called on Israel to end its economic boycott of the Palestinians when it imposes a closure between Gaza and Israel, costing \$6 million a day.

"It's a disaster for us," he said. "In spite of all the obstacles, we insist on continuing."

Arafat's appearance seemed to satisfy those in attendance, many of whom support the peace process and were predisposed to be sympathetic to him.

"The specifics of what Arafat said were less important than the fact that he appeared before the organization that represents the grass-roots of American Jewry," said Robert Lifton, a vice chairman of the NJCRAC executive.

"It is one more example of grass-roots support for the peace process," he said.

"It demonstrated in a public forum that the process of normalization continues," said Lawrence Rubin, executive vice chairman of the NJCRAC.

"Around the city people are asking, 'Does he mean it? Does he mean what he signed?'" Gail Pressberg, Washington director of Americans for Peace Now, said prior to Arafat's remarks.

"Arafat has got to convince people he's on a peace course in which he's going to do his utmost to deal with problems in his community, chiefly violence and terrorism," she said.

Asked after his remarks whether he had achieved what she believed he had to, she responded with an unequivocal, "No question."

### Several protests issued

The meeting did generate protest from several organizational quarters, however.

The Zionist Organization of America issued a written statement saying, "No Jewish groups should meet with Arafat until he retracts his jihad remarks."

The Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, a member of the umbrella NJCRAC, also issued a statement of protest and boycotted the meeting.

It charged that the NJCRAC provided Arafat "with a public forum in which to present the PLO's position and his own version of events with little or no opportunity for the representatives of the Jewish community to challenge his presentation or to ask in adequate fashion the crucial questions relating to the PLO's ongoing and serious failure to comply with its agreements."

But Martin Raffel, the NJCRAC's associate executive vice chairman, defended the meeting.

"Once the PLO became Israel's peace partners, it didn't occur to us we shouldn't meet with them," he said.

On the contrary, Raffel said, "there has to be an opportunity to enable our leadership to meet with Arafat and share its concerns directly. There has to be honest dialogue."

The ZOA and Orthodox Union are members of the Conference of Presidents for Major American Jewish Organizations, which planned to send a delegation to meet privately with Arafat on Tuesday.

That meeting was expected to focus on some of

Arafat's language, ongoing Palestinian terrorism, the Palestinian covenant and other issues of compliance with the agreement with Israel.

A recent survey by the American Jewish Committee showed that in spite of the NJCRAC's warm reception of Arafat, Jewish public opinion about the PLO is skeptical.

Some 71 percent surveyed said they do not believe that the PLO "can be relied upon to honor its agreements and refrain from terrorist activity against Israel."

A full 91 percent said the PLO is "not doing enough to control terrorist activity against Israel by Hamas and other Palestinian extremist groups." □

### **Government allows Shin Bet to use force in interrogations**

*By Naomi Segal*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — A ministerial committee has granted Israel's domestic security service a permit that allows the use of force during interrogations of suspected Islamic fundamentalist terrorists.

In a unanimous decision last week, the committee extended the permit for three months to the Shin Bet, which has been criticized frequently for its interrogation methods.

The permit allows the Shin Bet to continue using the controversial method of violently shaking detainees in an effort to get them to reveal terrorist plans.

The shaking method came under intense scrutiny after Abdel-Samad Harizat, 29, a suspected member of the Islamic fundamentalist Hamas movement, died after being interrogated in April in connection with a series of bomb attacks against Israel.

The committee's decision came as the Shin Bet was sharply criticized by Attorney General Michael Ben-Yair for misleading Cabinet ministers in its efforts to win approval for the permit.

In an interview published last week, Ben-Yair said a video demonstration he had viewed of the shaking method "was completely different from what was outlined" by the Shin Bet.

"I am not willing to see every Palestinian youth with a black beard who is detained for questioning end up brain-damaged," Ben-Yair added.

He was also critical of the Shin Bet for its handling of Hamas suspects who had been detained prior to the Aug. 21 suicide bus bombing in Jerusalem that killed four people and injured more than 100.

After the bombing, the head of the Shin Bet revealed that the planner of the bombing was in the agency's custody two days before the blast.

But the Shin Bet head said government officials had tied the hands of interrogators with too many restrictions, preventing them from learning of the bombing in advance.

Ben-Yair said that the Shin Bet interrogators had all the means at their disposal for learning of the planned attack.

He blamed the failure to prevent the terror attack on poor judgment by the agency. □

### **2.5 million move to Israel since '48**

*By Naomi Segal*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Some 2.5 million immigrants have arrived in Israel since 1948, when the state was established, the Central Bureau of Statistics said this week.

Of the total figure, some 59 percent came from Europe, 19 percent from Africa, 15 percent from Asia and 7 percent from the Americas and Oceania. □

**Cost of IDF redeployment in West Bank could double***By Naomi Segal*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — As government and army officials continue to prepare for an Israel Defense Force redeployment in the West Bank, senior Israeli army officers have told the Cabinet that they expect the complete redeployment plan to cost double the planned amount.

Briefing ministers at the weekly Cabinet meeting Sunday, Maj. Gen. Ilan Biran, commander of a sector that includes the West Bank, estimated that the total cost of the redeployment, expected to be completed by the end of 1997, to be \$1 billion.

The revised estimate drew a sharp reaction from Finance Minister Avraham Shohat.

"I totally reject the amount of money that he talks about," Shohat told Israel Television, adding that the government and army had previously agreed that the cost of the redeployment would be \$500 million.

In his efforts earlier this year to gain Cabinet approval of his 1996 budget, Shohat had engaged in marathon negotiations with the Defense Ministry and Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin over the cost of redeployment, called for under the terms of the recently signed agreement for extending Palestinian West Bank autonomy.

Meanwhile, Biran and IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Amnon Shahak told the Cabinet ministers Sunday that the redeployment plan was set to move ahead and that Palestinian elections would be held in the territories Jan. 20.

The redeployment from West Bank towns "will be completed at the end of December, with one exception in the case of Hebron," Environment Minister Yossi Sarid told reporters after the Cabinet session.

Some ministers expressed doubt that the timetable would be kept.

Housing Minister Binyamin Ben-Eliezer said the redeployment would be delayed if Palestinian landowners attempted to prevent the expropriation of land needed to build the bypass roads. The roads would allow Jewish settlers in the West Bank to avoid driving through population centers under the control of the Palestinian Authority.

Agriculture Minister Yakov Tsur told Israel Radio that keeping the redeployment on schedule depended on a number of factors, including the Palestinian Authority's ability to live up to its commitments to curb terrorist activities in areas under its control.

"It will also depend on [completion] of the bypass roads," Tsur said, "and making sure that the Palestinians prepare what is needed to run the elections."

Meanwhile, the army was preparing for a pullback Wednesday from Jenin, the first of six West Bank towns from which the Israeli army will redeploy completely by year's end. The completion of the pullout could take until Nov. 10, Israel Radio reported.

A team of Palestinian liaison officers were scheduled to begin joint patrols with their Israeli counterparts this week in order to get to know the Jenin area and to prepare to take over internal security responsibilities after the Israeli pullback. □

 **Hamas escapee from PLO jail turns himself in to Gaza police***By Naomi Segal*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — A terrorist who escaped from a Gaza jail along with two other members of the Islamic fundamentalist group Hamas has given himself up to Palestinian police.

Imad Akel, who participated in planning a suicide attack near the Jewish settlement of Netzarim in the Gaza

Strip, turned himself in to Palestinian intelligence agents Monday, one day after the breakout.

The search was continuing for the other two men, a Palestinian official said. All three men belong to the military wing of Hamas, and have participated in terrorist attacks against Israelis.

They apparently broke out of a jail run by the Palestine Liberation Organization after cutting through wires in their cell, Israel Television reported.

Moussa Arafat, the Palestinian intelligence chief, ordered the arrest of the five prison guards on duty at the time of the escape, Israel Television reported.

Meanwhile, Israeli security forces Sunday arrested six Hamas and Islamic Jihad activists in the West Bank town of Jenin.

Jenin is scheduled to be the first of six West Bank towns to be handed over before the end of the year to the Palestinian Authority under the terms of the interim-phase agreement for extending West Bank autonomy.

The Israel Defense Force's withdrawal from Jenin was slated to begin later this week. □

**Israeli, Jordanian air forces join in salute of peace treaty***By Naomi Segal*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israeli and Jordanian fighter planes took to the skies together Sunday to mark the first anniversary of the two countries' historic peace treaty.

Six planes flew in mixed formation in a 40-minute flight that went from Tiberias, north to Haifa, south to Tel Aviv, then east to Jerusalem and the Jordanian capital of Amman, before turning back toward Tiberias.

Helicopters from both countries also took part in a flyby over Tel Aviv and Amman, trailing Israeli and Jordanian flags and a banner reading "shalom," which means "peace" in Hebrew.

In New York on Sunday, Jordan's King Hussein referred to the flyover during his remarks before a special U.N. session commemorating the world body's 50th anniversary.

While in New York, Hussein held talks with Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, with whom he signed the Israeli-Jordanian peace treaty Oct. 26, 1994.

Following through on some of the terms of their peace treaty, Israel and Jordan were expected to sign a number of agreements this week in the areas of police cooperation, trade and agriculture.

Police Minister Moshe Shahal and the Jordanian interior minister are scheduled to sign the police cooperation deal in a ceremony Tuesday at Beit Gabriel, on the shores of the Sea of Galilee.

The trade agreement is due to be signed Wednesday and the agriculture agreement is to be signed Thursday.

The agriculture accord would allow Israel to import annually from Jordan some 50,000 tons of fruits and vegetables, 30,000 sheep, 2,000 tons of cheese and 500 tons of olive oil.

A transportation agreement, scheduled to be signed next week, would make it possible for Israelis to drive into Jordan in their private cars. Bus lines would also operate between the two countries as a result of the accord.

In a related development, Jordan reportedly rejected a proposal to make its Aqaba port a joint harbor for tourism and trade with the neighboring Israeli resort of Eilat.

The Jordanian trade director was quoted as rejecting the idea, saying that the Jordanian port can operate alone and compete with any other facilities in the area. □

**Palestinians can raise flag at mission in Canadian capital***By Bill Gladstone*

TORONTO (JTA) — Canada has raised the status of Palestine Liberation Organization representatives in the country.

Although not yet possessing full diplomatic privilege and immunity, the PLO is now entitled to raise the Palestinian flag over its Ottawa mission, which it reopened in August after being closed for two years.

Canada also warmed diplomatic relations with the Palestinian Authority earlier this month by recognizing Palestinian-issued travel documents.

The move comes in the wake of the agreement for extending Palestinian autonomy in the West Bank signed by Israel and the PLO Sept. 28 in Washington.

Previously, Palestinians needed Israeli papers to be admitted to Canada. France, Britain and the United States have already recognized the Palestinian documents.

In a related development, Canada's foreign affairs department has committed \$1.2 million to help relocate 191 Palestinian families to the Gaza Strip. The families are from Canada Camp, a refugee camp in the Sinai.

That aid is part of a total package of \$55 million pledged by Canada to the Palestinian people, supporting programs that deal with water-related issues, technical assistance and youth centers for troubled Palestinians, particularly girls.

Most of the assistance is intended to improve the living conditions of Palestinians.

No Canadian government funding has been provided directly to the Palestinian Authority.

At the time of the historic signing of the Declaration of Principles between Israel and the PLO in September 1993, Canada had already pledged \$45 million in assistance during a five-year period.

Shortly after the signing, Canada increased its aid by \$10 million in the form of new programs. □

**Top German parties demand compensation for Baltic Jews***By Gil Sedan*

BONN (JTA) — Germany's two major political parties have formed a coalition to demand financial reparations for Jewish survivors of the Holocaust now living in the Baltic nations.

Members of the ruling Christian Democratic Union Party and the oppositionist Social Democratic Party recently held a news conference here, calling for the Baltic nations to take action. The Greens also joined in the initiative.

The number of Jews who survived concentration camps during World War II and are now living in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia is estimated at 300 to 400.

Like other Nazi victims in the former Soviet bloc, they have received no compensation for their suffering.

The German government has refrained from compensating these Jews because of a concern that it might spur demands from non-Jewish victims and Jews from other countries.

The future of the initiative is seen as bleak, because many German parliamentarians oppose further compensation of Holocaust survivors.

Germany also has offered the governments of the three Baltic states funds for the construction of elderly homes for Holocaust survivors. Estonia is the only country to accept the offer.

Recently, Germany returned four pieces of property in Berlin to the city's Jewish community. □

**Italian mayor blasted for plan to rename park***By Ruth E. Gruber*

ROME (JTA) — The mayor of Latina, a city south of Rome, has stirred controversy with his plan to rename the city park in honor of the brother of wartime Fascist dictator Benito Mussolini.

Mayor Aimone Finestra is a member of the right-wing National Alliance Party, which grew out of the now defunct, neo-fascist Italian Social Movement party.

He wants to rename the city park, currently undergoing a major clean-up operation, in honor of Arnaldo Mussolini, a journalist who died in 1931.

"It is proper to name the park for a man of culture and considered counselor of his illustrious brother," Finestra was quoted as saying by the Milan daily *Corriere della Sera*.

*Corriere della Sera* published a sharp editorial on the affair, saying that moves such as that of Finestra hampered the attempt by National Alliance leader Gianfranco Fini to rid the party of its old neo-fascist associations and place it within the mainstream right.

"For heavens sake, let's not cry that there's a black [ultra right-wing] danger, let's not raise alarms out of time and out of place," the editorial said. "Let's limit ourselves to recall that every Aimone in bloom, however little, is a blow to the difficult process of transforming the National Alliance into a force of the democratic, modern, European right." □

**U.S., Canada launch proceedings against accused ex-Nazi officials**

NEW YORK (JTA) — The U.S. Justice Department has launched proceedings to strip an Illinois man of his citizenship.

Juozas "Joe" Naujalis, 74, is accused of taking part in Nazi-sponsored acts of persecution while serving in a Lithuanian mobile killing unit during the war.

The complaint, filed in Chicago earlier this month, also charges that Naujalis gave false testimony and concealed his wartime activities when applying to immigrate to the United States in 1949.

The move comes as a Lithuanian prosecutor announced that two officials from Canada's Justice Department will go to the Baltic nation to collect evidence against four accused Nazi war criminals.

The Canadian officials, from the department's Crimes Against Humanity and War Crimes Section, will go to the Lithuanian capital of Vilnius next month to look at archives in connection with four Lithuanian emigres in Canada, Aristidas Pestininkas, Lithuania's prosecutor in charge of war crimes, was quoted as saying Monday.

"The cases involve the murder of Jewish citizens during the war," said Pestininkas, who did not offer specifics. The prosecutor added that his department would cooperate with Canadian and U.S. officials.

However, Lithuania appears to be putting aside the possible extradition of at least one man in the United States accused of war crimes.

The Lithuanian government said in a cable filed in U.S. District Court on Oct. 2 that even though an extradition treaty between the United States and Lithuania signed in 1924 is in force, it is not legally effective in the case of 88-year-old Aleksandras Lileikis.

Lileikis, the former head of the Vilnius Gestapo during World War II, is accused of signing orders that sent as many as 40,000 Jews to Nazi death camps.

At least 55,000 Vilnius Jews and 220,000 Lithuanian Jews were killed during the Holocaust. □