

ZIONIST WATCH

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SHAMIR'S PRIVATE VISIT

holding an international Middle East peace conference.

Although his quick tour, which included stops in Washington, New York and Miami, was described as a private visit, the Zionist leader had a two-hour meeting with President Reagan at the White House. Shamir conveyed deep concern over possible reductions in American economic and military aid to Israel.

"We expressed our worries about the coming cuts in the American budget," he told reporters afterward. "We would like this problem to be solved for the benefit of the U.S., and we also have our own worries about it because we need this very important and vital assistance that serves the interests of the free world and the U.S."

(A few days later, administration and congressional representatives agreed on more than \$53 billion in budget cuts and almost \$23 billion in tax increases over the next two years. Although some cuts in foreign aid were included, the specific reductions and countries involved have yet to be determined. However, there is already a strong movement afoot in Congress to exempt Israel from any aid reductions.)

In addition to pleading for no reduction in U.S. aid, the Zionist leader reportedly assured President Reagan that Israel has completely stopped selling military equipment to Iran. And the prime minister strongly endorsed U.S. policy in the Persian Gulf, informed sources say.

As a result of continuing intelligence reports stating that Israel is continuing to supply arms to Iran, American officials have been pressing the Israelis on the issue for some time. The Israeli leadership has now informed the U.S. that it is against government policy to sell arms to Iran. Furthermore, they claim they have investigated, as far as possible, the many independent arms dealers operating in Israel and, as far as they can tell, no private citizens are now engaging in arms traffic with Iran.

However, the Israelis said they cannot be absolutely certain that there are not some private dealers who are still providing arms to the Khomeini regime. They noted that there are some Israeli citizens who do not

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir quietly visited the U.S. for six days late last month "to talk with the average American Jews" and discuss his position against

operate with government licensing and of whom they have no direct knowledge.

Later that day, Shamir addressed a large forum of journalists, scholars and diplomats at the Washington Institute for Near Eastern Policy, a pro-Israeli think tank. He repeatedly condemned "the crazy war" between Iran and Iraq. And although he described Khomeini as "a bitter mortal enemy of Israel," he was careful to note that Israel took a neutral position in the conflict and was not involved in the war. "I don't see any reason," he said, "to take the side of one or the other."

The Zionist leader publicly professed satisfaction with the outcome of the recent Arab League summit meeting in Jordan, but privately he indicated events had not developed sufficiently to justify an international peace conference with the Arabs. President Reagan tended to support the prime minister by reportedly telling Shamir that the administration was determined to move the peace process forward through direct negotiations, "which we think is the only way to go."

Later in the weekend, in Miami before the General Assembly of the Council of Jewish Federations, Shamir called on Jordan's King Hussein to open direct negotiations with Israel. He said he was prepared to meet with the king "any time, any place."

Asked if he had already secretly met with Hussein on the West Bank—as has been widely rumored—Shamir flatly denied the report. Informed sources, however, said that the prime minister's denial was "pro forma" and that the two leaders had indeed met secretly in the recent past.

Shamir publicly rejected any suggestion of territor-

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