

Israeli Officials In Moscow Swamped With Requests For Immigration Visas

TEL AVIV (JTA) — The wave of Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union may turn out to be far larger than Israeli officials had anticipated.

Israeli authorities are issuing invitations to Soviet Jews contemplating aliyah at the rate of 2,500 a day, officials here report.

In Moscow, the Israeli consular delegation is swamped, now that most barriers to emigration have been lifted. As many as 1,200 people wait in line outside to apply for Israeli visas.

"We are talking about an exodus. The sky's the limit," a senior official told reporters here over the recent weekend.

A total of 90,000 Jews will leave the Soviet Union in 1990, and officials expect 50,000 of them to come to Israel.

They base that estimate, in part, on the 50,000 ceiling the United States has placed on the number of Soviet refugees it will admit during this fiscal year. Of this number, 40,000 are expected to be Jews.

Jews are leaving the Soviet Union in greater numbers in part because the recent emigration reforms make it much easier to do so. But they are also leaving because Glasnost has allowed anti-Semitism to flourish.

Soviet Jews also fear that President Mikhail Gorbachev's grip on leadership is becoming shaky. They want to leave before reforms that have benefited them are reversed.

Jewish emigration also has been spurred by the ethnic unrest and the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in the Soviet Asian republics. The rapid departure of 250,000 Jews living in those areas would be given top priority, officials here said.

It is now believed here that the Jewish population of the Soviet Union has been undercounted and that there is a far larger base for emigration.

While the Soviet census estimates 1.8 million Jews, the true figure is believed to be between 3 million and 3.6 million.

Israel expects 750,000 to come to Israel in the next six years. Israeli invitations are already in the hands of 150,000.

More than 63,000

Jews left the Soviet Union so far this year. While a larger proportion have come to Israel than in past years, the vast majority has settled elsewhere, mainly the United States.

Las Vegas Israelite IDF Kills Five Infiltrators From Egypt Laden With Weapons

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Five heavily armed terrorist infiltrators on "a killing mission" were gunned down recently by an Israel Defense Force patrol in the western Negev, near the Egyptian border.

An IDF spokesman

said the gang apparently infiltrated from Sinai. There were no Israeli casualties.

Maj. Gen. Matan Vilnai, commander of the southern region, said the infiltration was probably linked to the second anniversary of

Happy Chanukah

the Palestinian uprising. He said the intruders carried no documents and therefore "we cannot know to what group they belonged."

Lethal equipment found on the bodies included five Kalachnikov assault rifles, a pistol, ammunition clips and 51 hand grenades.

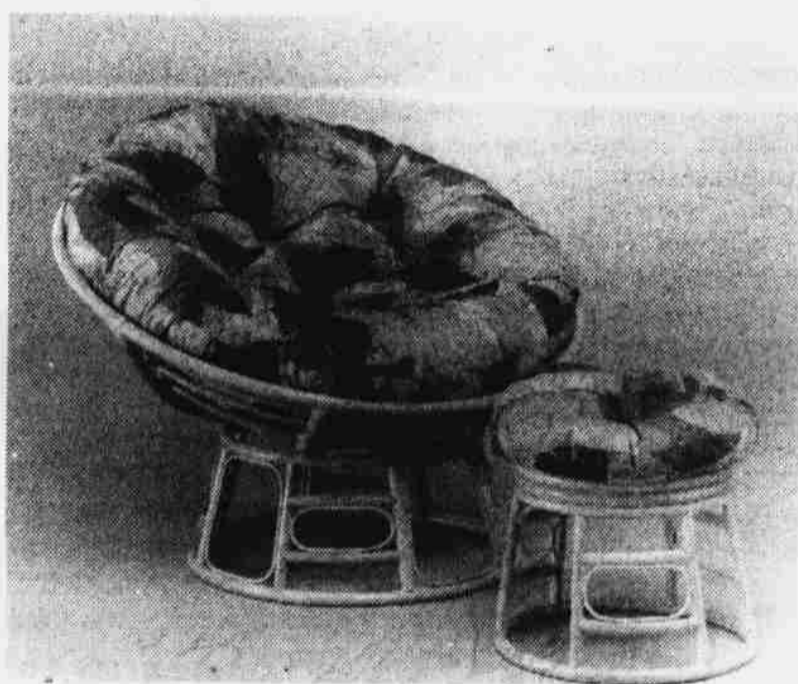
Vilnai said the large

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amount of weapons "shows they simply meant to kill — not to argue too much, not to carry out a hostage-taking operation, but a killing operation."

The last reported infiltration from Egypt occurred March 15, when two Palestinian teenagers were captured near the town of Rafah.

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