



NEWS AT A GLANCE

FOCUS ON ISSUES

CJF's funding of Hillel leaves Students Appeal seeking new role

By Larry Yudelson

■ **Leaders of Israel, Egypt, Jordan and the Palestinians will meet in Egypt on Thursday for the first-ever regional summit conference of parties committed to the peace process.** Secretary of State Warren Christopher applauded Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak's "bold initiative" to hold the summit. Official spokesmen for the parties involved said they hoped the meeting would help revive the stagnating peace process. Skeptics, however, viewed the meeting as nothing more than a photo opportunity. [Page 4]

■ **The Senate Foreign Relations Committee plans to begin the long-awaited confirmation hearings Thursday for Martin Indyk,** President Clinton's nominee to serve as ambassador to Israel. Indyk, an Australian-born Jew, would replace Ambassador Edward Djerejian, who resigned his post last summer.

■ **The World Jewish Congress welcomed the decision by the United Nations not to invite former Secretary General Kurt Waldheim to the festivities marking the 50th anniversary of the international institution.** The U.N. announcement actually said no former secretary general would be invited, but the move was widely seen as a means of avoiding a confrontation over Waldheim. [Page 3]

■ **The State Department's annual human rights report included, for the first time, an accounting of Palestinian abuses as well as those in Israel and 192 other countries around the globe.** Israel's human rights record continued to improve last year in the eyes of the State Department, but serious concerns remained. According to the report, Palestinians killed 23 Israelis in the West Bank and Gaza and 52 within the 1967 borders. [Page 3]

■ **Sixty percent of Palestinians in the West Bank approve of terrorist attacks against Israelis, according to a poll** carried out this week by a Palestinian research institute. At the same time, Israel's crackdown on suspected Islamic extremists continued as security agents arrested some 13 suspected activists from Hamas, Islamic Jihad and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. [Page 2]

NEW YORK, Feb. 1 (JTA) — These should be the best of times for the North American Jewish Students Appeal.

Founded in 1971 during the last wave of concern over dwindling Jewish identity, the Appeal helps support independent student organizations and projects.

Now, federations have again placed Jewish youth at the top of their agenda.

But instead of working with the Appeal, they are choosing to do so through Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life.

On Monday, the Council of Jewish Federations endorsed Hillel as "the central federation agency through which campus services are delivered."

CJF backed up this commitment by assigning each local federation a goal of how much to allocate for both regional campus activities and Hillel headquarters in Washington.

As for the Appeal, however, the committee that drew up the plan recommended that "the portfolio for national student projects be melded into Hillel," according to Michael Rukin of Boston.

Rukin, who headed the task force on campus life, presented the recommendations to CJF's Board of Delegates on Monday night.

The committee is recommending that federation allocations which previously had gone to the Appeal should now go to Hillel, he said.

Rukin's task force recommendation that Hillel incorporate funding for independent, grass-roots student projects did not mention the Appeal by name. But if these groups are to be funded by Hillel rather than by the Appeal, the Appeal will lose its reason for existence and will likely be forced to close down.

Rukin explained, however, that bringing the independent student groups under the Hillel umbrella is necessary in order to maintain their important role.

"It was the committee's considered judgment that in the natural course of things, funding for the grass-roots student agenda would be lost in the system and wouldn't occur," said Rukin in an interview.

The dominant Jewish force on campus

With full-time staff at more than 100 universities nationwide, Hillel has always been the dominant Jewish force on campus. In recent years, however, Hillel has undergone radical change.

Among these changes is a shift in focus from providing services to students to becoming a base for a broader campus Jewish community.

"You go to any campus today, you see from left to right, from up to down, sitting around the table, [students] representing their own groups but sitting on the Hillel board, with Hillel taking no responsibility for the statements groups make," said Richard Joel, Hillel's international director.

These changes to make Hillel more inclusive played a key role in the CJF endorsement.

With Hillel's future guaranteed and the Appeal's in jeopardy, the two groups have begun meeting to figure out the Appeal's place in the new order.

"The people involved with the Appeal feel its mission and its ideology" of promoting independent, student-led projects "is very important, and want to continue it as best as possible," said Robin Fox, president of the Appeal and a recent graduate of the State University of New York in Albany.

"We're dealing with Hillel in hopes that since the campus we're dealing with is one and the same, maybe we can work together to better serve the campus and the students," Fox said.

Fox's current roster of constituent and affiliated organizations include the Jewish Student Press Service; the Progressive Zionist Caucus; Response magazine; Yungtruf - Youth for Yiddish; and Lights in Action - Students United for Proactive Judaism and Zionism.

Additionally, the Appeal gives \$20,000 in small grants to student projects on campuses across the continent.

Although the Appeal provided a conduit for federation allocations to

such independent student projects, the amount of those allocations has declined steadily.

The Appeal's 1994 allocation from federations of \$75,000, although up from \$60,000 in 1974, reflected a 42 percent decline, after inflation, from 20 years ago. The student group raises about \$50,000 more from foundations and contributions.

Federations now collectively allocate \$10 million to local and national Hillel activities annually. As that amount rises under the new CJF plan, no one with the Appeal expects their allocations to go anywhere but down.

This concern motivated the unprecedented January meeting between the leadership of the Appeal and Hillel.

Fox, like others at the meeting, said she came away feeling positive about Hillel's attitudes toward independent student groups.

Joel "opened the door for a lot of possibilities," she said. "We're considering them very seriously."

Joel said the Appeal "and what it represents is very important for the Jewish community."

Within his organization, Joel has repeatedly spoken of the need for Hillel to be an "infrastructure" for independent student activities.

"We've learned from a lot of what was right" about independent student movements, Joel said.

At the meeting, Joel asked the students to come back with their ideas of how they can work with Hillel.

'They might limit our freedom'

The participants had no easy answers.

"There is no question Richard Joel is trying to develop this big-tent Hillel," said Jonathan Glick, national director of the Progressive Zionist Caucus. PZC is one of the constituent agencies of the Appeal, from which it receives a quarter of its \$35,000 budget.

"The real question is whether something as different as a Jewish student movement and an adult service-oriented group can come together, even with all the good will that does exist at this point on both sides," Glick said.

PZC, with active chapters on more than 20 campuses, embodies much of the original independent Jewish student movement of the 1960s. Partially supported by left-wing Israelis in the kibbutz and peace movements, PZC reaches out to "progressive" students as the only organized left-wing Jewish presence on campuses.

On some campuses, PZC and local Hillel coexist.

"I have nothing to say bad about local Hillel," said Rachel Kraft, who heads the PZC chapter at the University of Oregon.

But she worries that if PZC's national structure finds shelter under some sort of national Hillel umbrella, it would mean "we'd be monitored."

"They might limit our freedom to say certain things, do certain things, because they might make Hillel look bad," Kraft said.

Glick wondered what would happen if Likud wins the next Israeli election and PZC returns to the role it played on campus in the 1980s — a loud, Zionist opposition to the Israeli government.

"What if we couldn't get funding for our office because we are saying certain things?" he asked.

Similar concerns underlie Ilana Polyak's caution. Polyak is editor of the Jewish Student Press Service and New Voices, the press service's national student newspaper.

"We're dealing with a unique issue, which is editorial control," she said.

"In general, we are concerned that being affiliated with Hillel will alienate certain students we deal with who have never set foot in Hillel and don't hear of the press

service through the work of Hillel or its agencies," Polyak said.

In response to these concerns, Joel said in an interview that he "would expect" an organization like PZC to play a vocal, controversial role in a scenario such as the one spelled out by Glick. "Their doing so should not jeopardize their funding support," he said.

Some students worry that independent student groups are able to attract students by virtue of their independence — and that the Jewish community will suffer if they lose that independence.

Rivka Shuchatowitz, who directs Lights in Action, said, "Working under any umbrella would mean giving up some level of autonomy and therefore, integrity, in our work."

"What we're talking about doing now is figuring out how we can create a structure in which independent student initiatives can have the most functional relationship with Hillel without being subsumed within Hillel," she said.

Joel said he would "love to see national entities" under his umbrella at Hillel.

But, he added, "There are some daunting realities that national organizations on the American scene face. It's very hard to support and maintain national movements in the whole American scene, particularly in the Jewish community. But because it's hard, it doesn't mean it shouldn't be done."

"We're looking to be open to any and all possibilities."

Kraft adds a caveat of her own, a reminder of the contribution students have made in the past to the American Jewish community.

"It's important to have groups who can challenge the big structure when it needs to have its butt kicked once in a while," she said. □

Majority of Palestinians support terrorist attacks

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM, Feb. 1 (JTA) — Sixty percent of Palestinians in the West Bank approve of terror attacks against Israelis, according to a poll carried out this week by a Palestinian research institute.

Results of the survey were released a little more than a week after two terrorists set off bombs at Beit Lid Junction between Netanya and the West Bank town of Tulkarm, killing 21 Israelis.

Results of the poll came as Israeli authorities continued to crack down on suspected Palestinian extremists.

Security forces operating in the Jenin area of the West Bank on Tuesday arrested about 13 suspected activists from Hamas, Islamic Jihad and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, all of which militantly oppose the Israeli-Palestinian peace initiative.

The arrests followed a week of roundups of dozens of suspected militant activists.

Meanwhile, Palestine Liberation Organization Chairman Yasser Arafat rejected Israeli claims that Palestinian security officials are not doing enough to crack down on terrorists.

Arafat, meeting with Israeli Arab Knesset members Taleb Elsan and Abdel Wahab Darawshe on Tuesday, said Palestinian police had recently arrested a 15-year-old Hamas member who was planning to carry out a suicide attack against Israelis.

Arafat also said Palestinian police had prevented two other terror attacks from taking place prior to the Jan. 22 Beit Lid Junction bombings. □

Palestinian abuses cited in State Department report

By Matthew Dorf and Jennifer Batog

WASHINGTON, Feb. 1 (JTA) — The Palestinians are guilty of the same human rights abuses of which they often accuse Israel, according to the results of a State Department report.

For the first time, the State Department's annual human rights report includes an accounting of Palestinian abuses as well as those in Israel and 192 other countries around the globe.

Palestinian Authority police in Gaza "reportedly committed at least one extrajudicial" killing, have "mistreated detainees" and "used excessive force on occasion," according to the report, which covers 1994.

The killing referred to a July 5 incident in which a Palestinian taxi driver suspected of collaborating with Israeli security services died in Palestinian police custody, reportedly from injuries suffered during his interrogation.

According to the report, 65 Palestinians died at the hands of fellow Palestinians last year, a sharp decline from 149 in 1992 and 79 in 1993.

Overall, "there were clear improvements in the human rights situation in the occupied territories," the report states, referring to the newly autonomous Palestinian regions, the Gaza Strip and Jericho, as well as other West Bank areas still under Israeli rule.

The reports specifically singled out the reduction of large-scale confrontations and unrest as well as the end of the nighttime curfew in Gaza.

Report finds no deportations of Palestinians

The report also noted that there were no Israeli deportations of Palestinians for the second year.

The report praised Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization for having "established channels and procedures" to deal with political, economic and security disputes.

However, the report acknowledges the difficulties in assessing the Palestinian Authority's record because PLO chairman Yasser Arafat only took over Gaza and the West Bank enclave of Jericho in May.

Israel's human rights record continued to improve last year in the eyes of the State Department, but serious concerns remain.

The State Department noted that Israel released 5,477 Palestinian prisoners since the signing of the Declaration of Principles in September 1993 and that Palestinians are enjoying greater freedoms in Gaza and Jericho.

But Israel continues to hold an estimated 6,050, according to the report.

The report also cited what it termed "credible reports" that Israel "mistreated and in some cases tortured Palestinians during arrests and interrogations."

The report also accused Israel of running undercover units of army personnel disguised as Palestinians. It said these units killed at least 13 Palestinians. Last year's report attributed 27 Palestinian deaths to these units.

Meanwhile, Palestinians killed 23 Israelis in the West Bank and Gaza and 52 within the 1967 borders, according to information supplied by the Israeli government and included in the report. These killings were largely terrorist acts committed by Islamic extremists opposed to the Israeli-Palestinian self-rule accord.

The report, including an annex on the territories, recounts major terrorist attacks in Israel as well as in the West Bank and Gaza, including the Hebron massacre last February, during which a Jewish settler killed 29 Palestinian worshippers.

It also cites the shooting at the Philistin Mosque in

Gaza where 16 Palestinians were killed and more than 100 wounded in a shootout between extremists and Palestinian police.

According to the report, Israeli security forces are responsible for "widespread" human rights abuses including, in some cases, torture. "Common practices reportedly include hooding; forced standing; tying the detainee in contorted positions; prolonged exposure to extreme temperatures," among others, the report said.

Officials at the Israeli Embassy here declined to comment on the report Wednesday. □

Jewish leaders welcome decision not to ask Waldheim to U.N. ceremonies

By Larry Yudelson

NEW YORK, Feb. 1 (JTA) — The World Jewish Congress has welcomed the decision by the United Nations not to invite former Secretary General Kurt Waldheim to the festivities marking the 50th anniversary of the international institution.

The announcement made by U.N. Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali this week said that none of his predecessors would be invited to the ceremonies.

But the move was widely seen as a means of avoiding a confrontation over Waldheim, who is barred from entering the United States because of his activities during World War II.

Only one other past chief of the world body, Javier Perez de Cuellar of Peru, is still alive. "It now appears that he is an additional victim of Kurt Waldheim," said Elan Steinberg, WJC executive director.

Boutros-Ghali had given private assurances to WJC two months ago that Waldheim would not be invited to the U.N. events.

In Vienna, Waldheim reacted calmly. "I can't see here neither an offense nor an intentional personal insult, considering the fact that the U.N. decided not to invite any former U.N. secretary general," Waldheim said.

Waldheim, who was U.N. secretary general from 1972 to 1981, has been the focus of controversy since his wartime activities were disclosed during his campaign for the Austrian presidency. He won that election and served as president of Austria from 1986 to 1992.

When word of efforts to secure Waldheim an invitation became known, the U.S. State Department reiterated the government's maintenance of Waldheim on the watch list.

In a letter to the WJC, a State Department spokesman wrote, "Our position is clear, and is well known to Austrians both within and outside the government."

Waldheim, who served in the Wehrmacht in the Balkans and in Greece, minimized his wartime activities after the war and lied about his knowledge of deportations of Jews.

He was listed as wanted for murder by the United Nations war crimes commission. In barring him from the United States in 1987, the U.S. Justice Department said he had "occupied positions of increasing responsibility and sensitivity, for which he was decorated, in regions where notoriously brutal actions were undertaken by the Nazi forces in which he served."

The decision of the United Nations is a personal defeat for Austrian Foreign Minister Alois Mock, who had lobbied hard on Waldheim's behalf.

Waldheim himself said that "the United Nations had currently much more urgent and important issues to take care of than fight over invitation lists for anniversary guests." □

(JTA correspondent Marta Halpert in Vienna contributed to this report.)

Israel to join Arab leaders for historic regional summit

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Feb. 1 (JTA) — Leaders of Israel, Egypt, Jordan and the Palestinians will meet in Egypt on Thursday for the first-ever regional summit conference of parties committed to the peace process.

Spokesmen from all four sides voiced the hope Wednesday that the meeting would serve to push the process forward, lifting it out of its present and dangerous stagnation.

In Washington, Secretary of State Warren Christopher applauded Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak's "bold initiative" to hold the summit.

"The summit is a powerful statement," Christopher said in a statement. "The enemies of peace must not be allowed to kill the peace."

The United States will not be participating in the summit but expects to be part of a follow-up session, a State Department spokesperson said.

But among independent observers in the region, there was much skepticism in advance of the summit, which includes the only Arab parties in the region to have agreed to make peace with Israel.

In the region and abroad, skeptics said the meeting would be a mere "photo opportunity" designed to assist Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, Mubarak, Jordan's King Hussein and Palestinian Authority leader Yasser Arafat with their various domestic political problems.

They doubted that tangible progress on the Israel-Palestinian track could emerge from this brief though dramatic encounter.

Israeli newspaper leaks word of meeting

Word of the meeting was first leaked in the Israeli daily Yediot Achronot on Wednesday morning, prior to a short visit to Cairo by Foreign Minister Shimon Peres.

The report was subsequently confirmed by all parties as the day wore on.

Peres and his Egyptian counterpart, Amre Moussa, told reporters in the Egyptian capital about the arrangements for the meeting. It is scheduled to take place in the evening after the Muslim attendees, currently marking the Muslim holy fast month of Ramadan, have finished their daily meal.

Israeli sources speculated that Peres was the key figure in initiating the summit.

Peres told reporters that the Egyptians had informed Syria of the summit and had asked Damascus if it wished to attend or have any specific issue raised. But the reply had been negative.

Analyzing the various protagonists' interests in the summit meeting, seasoned observers here offered the following assessments of what the four leaders have to gain from the summit:

- Yitzhak Rabin finds himself at his lowest level of popularity since becoming prime minister in 1992. This is due mainly to growing public disenchantment with his peace policies, primarily because of repeated terror attacks on Israelis by groups opposed to the peace process.

His sagging standing with the Israeli public has seemed to sap the 72-year-old Rabin of his self-confidence, and has certainly weakened his authority within the Cabinet and within his own Labor Party.

The summit could give him points in the public relations arena. But it is difficult to believe that Rabin and his aides would undertake this diplomatic mission solely for its transient effect as a photo opportunity.

As a result, some are predicting that the summit could provide an umbrella under which Rabin and Arafat

might agree on new, concrete steps forward in their stalled negotiations.

Lending some credence to this view, Rabin's spokesman at the Defense Ministry, Oded Ben-Ami, was quoted Wednesday night as saying the meeting would be "more than a photo-op."

- Arafat's domestic political position is hardly better than Rabin's. In fact, the two men are widely seen as inextricably linked — to each other and to their common peace process. Its failure would in all probability spell the political demise of both of them.

Israeli-Palestinian negotiations were suspended following the Jan. 22 suicide bombings near Netanya, which claimed the lives of 21 Israelis. The two sides are scheduled to resume autonomy negotiations next week.

At the same time, Arafat's recent and surprisingly successful rapprochement with Hussein, culminating in the signing of a series of bilateral accords last week between Jordan and the Palestinian Authority, provides a positive backdrop for their participation in Thursday's meeting.

- Jordan's Hussein, for his part, has run into domestic opposition over his peace treaty with Israel. His response has been to urge even faster implementation of certain clauses of the peace treaty signed with Israel last October.

Jordan and Israel reached an agreement on the delimitation of their southern border at a modest ceremony this week. But other areas of their incipient normalization are still bogged down in committee work and have required the intervention of the two leaders to resolve disputes.

- Mubarak clearly has the most to gain and the least to lose from this gathering. It portrays him as a central element in regional peacemaking, the party to whom all the protagonists eventually turn to for help in breaking their deadlock.

Mubarak lost points, especially in American opinion, when he held a recent minisummit with Syrian President Hafez Assad and King Fahd of Saudi Arabia. The summit was interpreted as a means of putting a brake on the Arab world's normalization of ties with Israel.

Thursday's encounter, it is believed, will enable him to put right that damaging interpretation and again portray himself as a leading force for regional peace. □

(JTA correspondent Matthew Dorf in Washington contributed to this report.)

Construction plans approved for disputed area in Jerusalem

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM, Feb. 1 (JTA) — After years of dispute, plans for construction of a new Jewish neighborhood in Jerusalem's southern limits have been given the go-ahead.

The Jerusalem municipality's planning committee this week approved the building of some 6,500 housing units in Har Homa, on lands annexed by Israel after the 1967 war. Public protest from both Jews and Arabs about land ownership had held up development of the area for years. The site of the new neighborhood is near an Arab one, Tsur Bahur.

Jerusalem council members from the left-wing Meretz party protested the plans, saying it could threaten the peace process.

But Deputy Mayor Shmuel Meir said he did not mind facing that threat. "Meretz is always looking for how to solve the Arabs' problems. We're looking to solve the Jews' problems," he told Army Radio.

The development plan had been approved by both Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Housing Minister Binyamin Ben-Eliezer. □