



NEWS AT A GLANCE

■ **Israel and Syria's chiefs of staffs reportedly agreed on three principles during their initial talks in Washington:** the need for demilitarized zones, for limitation-of-forces zones and for early warning measures. But wide gaps between the sides remained and issues connected to the talks prompted a political firestorm in the Israeli Knesset. [Page 4]

■ **Germany picked a design for its first Holocaust memorial.** The design and location in Berlin were met with approval by German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and leaders of the German Jewish community.

■ **Diaspora Jewish leaders visited victims of last week's Katyusha rocket attack in northern Israel.** The leaders, attending the Jewish Agency Assembly in Jerusalem, expressed solidarity with the victims. [Page 3]

■ **Prosecutors rested their case against Sheik Omar Abdel-Rahman and his followers** in their alleged attempt to wage a war of "urban terrorism." The defendants are accused of participating in a conspiracy that led to the fatal World Trade Center bombing in 1993 and in plots to blow up other New York sites. They are also accused of plotting the 1990 assassination of Rabbi Meir Kahane and of attempting to assassinate Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

■ **Martin Raffel, associate executive vice chairman of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council, urged freshman members of the House of Representatives to contribute to the Middle East peace process.** In an address to legislators, Raffel said Congress should keep Israel's \$3 billion in U.S. aid intact and support Jordan's debt relief as well as economic aid to the Palestinians. He also urged them to remain open to requests for assistance in implementing a peace agreement between Syria and Israel.

■ **The Jewish hospital in Riga, Latvia, was one of three Latvian hospitals awarded U.S. foreign assistance to work with hospitals in St. Louis to engage in medical cooperation projects.** In a White House ceremony, first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton praised the program.

NEWS ANALYSIS

This time, Mideast violence is accompanied by peace talks

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, June 28 (JTA) — The scenes of violence in West Bank cities this week were widely described, at home and abroad, as reminiscent of the intifada, the Palestinian uprising that lasted five years.

Israeli troops and border police clashed with stone-throwing Palestinian students on the streets of Ramallah, Nablus and eastern Jerusalem. Three Palestinians were shot dead by the soldiers in Nablus; dozens more were injured in the clashes.

And on Israel's northern border, Katyusha rockets launched from Lebanon rained down on vacationing tourists, reminiscent of earlier days when residents of northern Israel huddled for weeks in bomb shelters.

Despite the recollection of earlier images of violence, a major difference exists between now and then: This week's violence took place against ongoing peace talks with the Palestinians and Syria.

In spite — or perhaps because — of the violence, the talks continued.

The demonstrators in the West Bank took to the streets in solidarity with the 6,000 Palestinians still imprisoned in Israeli jails.

They are demanding sweeping releases to coincide with the hoped-for conclusion of the second-phase agreement between Israel and the Palestinian Authority on the redeployment of Israeli troops and on ensuing Palestinian elections throughout the territories.

The clashes were reminiscent of the uprising that lasted from 1987 to 1992 not only in their physical form and impact, but in two more profound and significant respects:

They were orchestrated, not spontaneous, and they involved supporters of Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasser Arafat protesting alongside the hard-line rejectionist factions.

For the first time since Israel and the PLO signed their Declaration of Principles in Washington in September 1993, Arafat himself apparently had ordered his supporters out into the streets.

Behind these similarities, however, lies a vast difference.

The intifada violence was an expression of the Palestinians' rage and frustration under Israel's occupation with no diplomatic movement in sight.

Hunger strike into its second week

This week's events reflected bitter resentments, too. But they took place against a backdrop of an ongoing peace process.

In fact, well-placed Israeli sources view the outbreak of street disturbances as a deliberate effort by Arafat and his close aides to affect the negotiations with Israel at this sensitive juncture.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin told his Cabinet this week that the present is "the most sensitive moment" since the negotiations with the Palestinians began nearly two years ago.

With the two sides working to reach an agreement on the next phase of self-rule by their pledged target date of July 1, the Palestinians apparently believe that the violence — with its concomitant bad publicity for Israel around the world — would help their negotiators win concessions from Israel both regarding prisoner releases and on the broader issues of redeployment.

By Tuesday, Jewish settlers in the West Bank had joined an attempt to turn up the heat.

Settlers reportedly widened the borders of two settlements in the West Bank, Beit Horon and Beit El, both near the Palestinian town of Ramallah. The move was part of a campaign against expanding Palestinian self-rule.

As part of their efforts, the settlers established a new yeshiva at the site of Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem.

Palestinians, meanwhile, launched a general strike on Tuesday to express solidarity with hunger-striking Palestinian prisoners.

The hunger strike is now into its second week.

Despite the high-pitched activity, however, Israeli and Palestinian officials continued negotiating virtually around the clock in various discreet venues in an effort to reach further agreement.

But wide gaps persisted and by midweek, Israel's chief negotiator

with the Palestinians was reportedly expressing doubt that an agreement would be reached by the Saturday deadline.

"I don't think next week," Uri Savir, the director-general of the Foreign Ministry, said to Israel's Army Radio.

Most of the problems will be solved, the director-general said, adding, "There is always a lot of drafting work."

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and Arafat had met in Gaza on Sunday to try to bridge some of the differences.

The unresolved issues include the extent of the proposed Israeli army pullback and Israel's commitment to set out a timetable for further redeployment in the West Bank after the Palestinian elections are held.

This analysis, the Israeli sources stress, is not to say that the Palestinians' concern over the prisoner issue is not genuine.

Indeed, a failure on Arafat's part to obtain large-scale releases as part of the second-phase agreement package could debilitate his political leadership.

But now, unlike in the old days of the intifada, the fusion of political concerns with on-the-ground tactics is evident on both sides — which many believe is a sure sign of progress.

Some Israeli observers are extending this basically upbeat logic to the other upsurge of violence that is affecting Israel at this time — the escalation on the Lebanese border.

Last Friday morning, after a South Lebanon Army artillery barrage that hit a Lebanese village, Hezbollah terrorists fired several Katyusha rocket salvos across the border.

The rockets killed one man, a 24-year-old French Jewish cook.

Several others were injured at the Club Med resort at Achziv on the Mediterranean coast just south of the border.

This was the latest in a series of attacks by the Iranian-backed fundamentalist Hezbollah, both across the border and inside Israel's security zone in southern Lebanon.

Together, the attacks are viewed as a deliberate and sustained effort by the Shi'ite fanatics to heat up the region.

Here, too, the outbreak is reminiscent of previous escalations, some of which resulted in large-scale Israel Defense Force incursions that went deep into southern Lebanon.

Overall accord may help Lebanon situation

But this time the violence must be seen in the context of the Israel-Syria peace process.

The process at this moment on the verge of a possible breakthrough with this week's resumption in Washington, D.C., of long-stalled talks between the army chief of staffs of the two countries.

Rabin told his Labor Party faction in the Knesset on Monday that he had instructed Israel's Lt. Gen. Amnon Shahak to take up the Lebanese border issue with his Syrian counterpart.

Israeli military sources said the Syrians, deployed in much of Lebanon — although at Israel's insistence, not in the south — could do much to rein in the terrorists.

But in the same speech, the prime minister insisted that Syria could not be held directly responsible for the rocket attacks.

An overall accord with Syria, he said, would bring a permanent solution to the security problem on the Lebanese border as well.

For its part, Syria has said it would do nothing to

contain the terrorists as long as Israel is occupying Lebanese territory.

This is not the first time that Israeli and Syrian negotiators have addressed each other simultaneously across the negotiating table and through the barrel of guns. In 1974, after the Yom Kippur War, former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger conducted his shuttle diplomacy against a backdrop of massive artillery exchanges between the two sides.

At that time it was Israel as much as Syria that sought to make a point: The suburbs of Damascus were within range of its howitzers.

In this region, apparently, with millennia of war and bloodshed so integral to its history, even peacemaking must be accompanied by acts of violence. □

Hundreds gather in Washington as Congress honors the rebbe

By Jennifer Batog

WASHINGTON, June 28 (JTA) — More than 700 Lubavitcher Chasidim came to Washington this week to remember their spiritual leader, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, and see him posthumously awarded the country's highest civilian honor, the Congressional Gold Medal.

His followers came from all over the world, from as close as New York and from as far away as South Africa and Australia, to join in the celebration.

One of them, Lieba Rudolph of Pittsburgh, brought perhaps the gathering's youngest participant: her 3-week-old son, named Menachem Mendel for the rebbe, who died last year at the age of 92.

"It's a wonderful way to commemorate what he did for the world," Rudolph said of the award bestowed on the rebbe.

Rudolph expressed the sentiments of many of the Lubavitchers at the ceremonies. Although the rebbe is physically gone, they all said, his work and his legacy continue.

The first anniversary of Schneerson's death, which falls, according to the Hebrew calendar, on July 1, is being marked with tributes and ceremonies around the world.

"While the rebbe is not physically present, his spiritual presence is very much felt," said Emily Sherwinter, who came to Washington, D.C., from Atlanta with her mother, Anne Fried.

"It's our responsibility to carry on the work of the rebbe," Sherwinter said.

Throughout the day, congressional leaders, including Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.) and Rep. Benjamin Gilman (R-N.Y.), chairman of the House International Relations Committee, paid tribute to Schneerson.

Gingrich, who helped spearhead legislation to honor the rebbe with the medal, praised Schneerson for not only believing in his ideals, but for living them.

Gilman, who sponsored an international lunch for the gathering, said the medal "honors the life and teachings of the rebbe."

Gilman spoke at the lunch, while Gingrich addressed a breakfast gathering.

A banquet featuring a musical tribute by violinist Itzhak Perlman and the presentation of the medal was scheduled to cap off the day.

Nearly 60 members of Congress, along with Nobel laureate Elie Wiesel and 700 Lubavitchers, were set to attend the gala.

At the gala, Rabbi Abraham Shemtov of Philadelphia, the national director of the Friends of Lubavitch, was to accept the award for Schneerson. □

Leaders express solidarity with Katyusha attack victims

By Michele Chabin

NAHARIYA, Israel, June 28 (JTA) — There are few places more idyllic than the Club Med resort in northern Israel. Simple thatched huts hug the beach, the sand is a creamy white, the water a deep turquoise.

But last week this tranquility was shattered by a flurry of Katyusha rockets fired from Lebanon. More than a dozen shells, sent by the fundamentalist Hezbollah movement, came crashing down in northern Israel, killing one person and injuring nine.

Eight of the injured, as well as the young French Israeli who died in the attack, worked at Club Med. Four remain at the hospital in Nahariya, just south of the Lebanese border.

On Tuesday, the Jewish Agency for Israel sent a delegation of Diaspora Jewish leaders on a visit of solidarity with the Katyusha victims. The two dozen visitors, in Israel for the 25th Jewish Agency Assembly, flew to the north in a chartered jet. During their first stop, they met with the hospitalized patients, all French citizens.

All four of the injured suffered leg injuries and relatively minor burns. Wrapped in bandages, but surrounded by friends and flowers, all said they felt lucky to be alive.

Franck Etienne, 28, an art teacher at the resort, recalled the 6 a.m. attack in detail. "I was asleep and then heard a big noise. Then I felt a sharp pain in my leg. I heard several other explosions and ran for cover," he said.

Although he will return to France for physical therapy, Etienne said, "I won't be afraid to come back to Israel. I'm still a bit shocked by what happened, but everyone has been great, and I appreciate the visits."

Eric Marty, a 25-year-old sound engineer, also faces months of rehabilitation. "This is my third stint in Israel, and my feelings haven't changed since the attack," he said. "I'll go back to France for awhile, but I'll be back soon, to be with my friends here. You can bet on it."

'I feel like I'm living in a war zone'

The men, all sharing a single hospital room, seemed surprised — but pleased — by all the attention.

"It's very nice that [the delegates] have come to visit us. We're touched by the way everyone wants to know how we're feeling," said Eli Fargeon, a sailing instructor who came to Israel less than two years ago.

Martine Elsaes, a hospital spokeswoman of French descent, noted that "French people are not as warm as Israelis."

"Israelis are much more open in their concern for others," she said.

After departing from the hospital, the delegates visited Kibbutz Geshar Haziv, located next to the Club Med. Kibbutznik Bonnie Kunick, who made aliyah from the United States in 1970, told the group, "Sometimes I feel like I'm living in a war zone. We are at the mercy of terrorists. There have been so many times over the years when I've slept in the shelter with my kids, my husband doing army reserve duty."

"Last Friday's attack was the worst we've had in a long time," she said. "It's important that people come and see how we live, what we do — despite the pressure of Katyushas. I want them to see where their money's going."

During the plane ride back to Jerusalem, Martin Kraar, executive vice president of the Council of Jewish Federations, said, "I think it's important for Jews everywhere to know that when something happens to any of us, all of us feel the pain."

Joel Tauber, president of the United Jewish Appeal, voiced a similar sentiment.

"Part of our campaign is to support Jews in need, whether they be in Israel, Argentina, Kiev or Chechnya," he said. "By identifying with people who are going through the strain, we become more motivated as fundraisers."

Jewish Agency Chairman Avraham Burg stressed that visits such as this help to keep Jewish leaders in touch with the community. "Sometimes, when you sit in an office and you hear about projects, you allocate money and deal with crises, and you get the feeling that you are a virtual reality organization," he said.

"The Katyusha victims are in need; not so much for money, but for sympathy," Burg said. "It's important to let people know that we care." □

Paper claiming gas chambers a hoax gets chemist prison time

NEW YORK, June 28 (JTA) — A chemist in Stuttgart, Germany, has been sentenced to 14 months in jail in connection with his "scientific" paper claiming that the Auschwitz gas chambers were a Jewish hoax.

Germar Scheerer had been convicted for incitement to racial hatred.

According to news reports, former general and Hitler loyalist Otto Ernst Remer had paid Scheerer to test brick in the death camp's gas chambers for Zyklon B, a deadly cyanide compound used to kill hundreds of thousands of Jews during the Holocaust.

Scheerer wrote a report in 1991 asserting that because he found none of the compound, it could not have been used to kill Jews.

Scientists said the cyanide compound decomposes and disappears quickly. Also, some gas chambers at former camps have been rebuilt with new bricks in restoration efforts.

After publishing his report, Scheerer was fired from the prestigious Max Planck Institute.

In his ruling, Judge Dietmar Mayer called Scheerer an anti-Semite "fanatically committed" to denying the Holocaust, it was reported.

Remer rounded up dozens of people involved in the July 1944 assassination attempt against Hitler. In 1992, he was sentenced to 22 months in prison for incitement to racial hatred. He reportedly lives under house arrest in southern Spain. □

Father of missing soldier says son may be in Lebanon

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM, June 28 (JTA) — Thirteen years after the Lebanon war, the father of a missing soldier has said his son and two other missing servicemen could be alive, held by Lebanese villagers working for Syria.

Yona Baumel, father of Zachary Baumel, said some of the information was less than a month old.

Baumel spoke recently at a news conference in Jerusalem, marking the anniversary of the battle in which his son and two other soldiers, Zvi Feldman and Yehuda Katz, were believed to have been captured.

"According to our information, the boys are being held by the Lebanese, in Lebanese villages, but under the supervision of the Syrians," Baumel said. He would not elaborate, saying he did not want to endanger the sources.

He added that for the first time, a Jordanian witness to the capture of the Israel Defense Force soldiers has agreed to come to Israel and talk about what he saw. Baumel said the witness is a Jordanian journalist. □

Cordiality, even substance prevail at Syrian-Israeli talks*By David Landau*

JERUSALEM, June 28 (JTA) — Handshakes and cordiality were the order of the day as Israeli and Syrian military officials sat down in Washington this week to discuss security arrangements for the Golan Heights as part of a potential peace deal between the two countries.

But while cordiality apparently characterized the meetings in Washington, a political firestorm erupted in Jerusalem.

The firestorm was sparked when Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu purportedly disclosed a document of instructions given by the government to Lt. Gen. Amnon Shahak, the Israel Defense Force chief of staff, in preparation for his Washington discussions with his Syrian counterpart, Lt. Gen. Hikmat Shihabi.

During their first day of talks Tuesday, the two military men agreed on three principles: the need for demilitarized zones, for limitation-of-forces zones and for early warning measures, according to reporters, who were kept at arm's length from the principal negotiators meeting at Fort McNair in Washington.

Beyond that, according to reporters, wide gaps remain.

This week's talks in Washington were the first substantive talks between Israel and Syria since last December, when Syria demanded symmetry in any security arrangements.

Syria has demanded full withdrawal from the Golan Heights, while Israel has based any pullback on the nature of security arrangements and the extent of peace.

But officials in Jerusalem are apparently encouraged by the atmosphere as well as by the rare positive comments that seem to have crept into the official — and closely monitored — Syrian media.

Tishrin, the official Syrian newspaper, said Wednesday that the Washington round "could be a breakthrough."

Although the paper dutifully reiterated Syria's demand for total withdrawal from the Golan, it seemed to take pains to assure Israelis that there was "no danger" for Israel in withdrawing from the strategic plateau, because Syria was well-known to honor the accords it concludes.

The question, in the Syrian paper's view, was: Did Israel have the courage and foresight to conclude peace and security accords with Syria?

In Jerusalem, Netanyahu brandishes paper

The chiefs of staff were scheduled to wind up their session Thursday, probably with a meeting with President Clinton.

In addition to Shahak, the Israeli delegation includes Israel's ambassador to the United States, Itamar Rabinovich, and the prime minister's military secretary, Maj. Gen. Danny Yatom.

Talks are scheduled to continue in mid-July between the Israeli and Syrian ambassadors.

Lower-ranking officers will also attend the talks in July.

Back in Jerusalem, stormy scenes erupted in the Knesset when Likud leader Netanyahu brandished a paper that he asserted was a document containing instructions to Shahak.

He said the document represented a government retreat from its earlier security conditions.

Netanyahu refused to disclose the source of the document or to say who had signed it. He said it was written on June 19.

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, replying to

opposition motions of no confidence, said Netanyahu was bluffing.

Rabin, in curt comments to reporters, said: "Gentlemen, you remember 'the torrid tape?' Well, this is another torrid tape."

The premier's reference was to Netanyahu's dramatic televised allegation in early 1993 that aides to his Likud rival, David Levy, were blackmailing him over an extramarital affair he had had.

Netanyahu accused the blackmailers of threatening to disclose an illegally obtained tape recording.

But the entire story proved false and baseless — to the Likud leader's grave embarrassment.

The Knesset vote was defeated by a comfortable 54 to 48 margin in favor of the government.

Behind the scenes in the Knesset, however, things looked less bright for the prime minister and his peace policies.

A group of 13 Labor Knesset members, among them four ministers, gathered discreetly to create a new hawkish group within the party.

They were determined "to stop the slide towards Meretz," they said, referring to the left-wing party that is part of the government coalition.

The group put forward three demands: that the government hold firm for a defensible border line on the Golan; that it hold firm for full normalization with Syria; and that it hold firm for Israeli sovereignty over the Jewish settlements around Jerusalem.

Included in the new group are several Cabinet ministers: Shimon Shetreet, minister of economics; Michael Harish, minister of commerce and industry; Ephraim Sneh, minister of health; and Binyamin Ben-Eliezer, minister of construction and housing. □

Holocaust monument attacker gets 100 hours of public labor*By Ruben Vis*

AMSTERDAM, June 28 (JTA) — A man convicted for destroying a glass monument to the victims of Auschwitz here in January 1993 has been sentenced to 100 hours of public labor.

Judge F. Salomon said the man, identified as J.R.S., should complete the sentence in the field of art, a positive way to make up for the destruction of the monument.

The glass structure was destroyed the night before an Auschwitz commemoration was to take place.

The district attorney had asked for two months imprisonment for J.R.S., who was an employee of the company that produced the broken, mirrored plates for the monument.

The monument is made up of six huge mirrors on the ground.

A plaque at the top reads in Dutch, "Auschwitz never again."

Jan Wolkers, one of Holland's foremost writers, created the monument.

Wolkers designed the cracks in the mirrors, which face heaven, to express that Auschwitz violates the heavens forever.

J.R.S. had claimed that his employer offered him money to destroy the monument.

There were mistakes in construction in the windows, which would have been obvious at the remembrance, J.R.S. had said.

No proof for this claim could be found.

J.R.S. attacked the mirrors with a pickax so intensively that afterward, the glass mirrors looked like damaged car glass. □