



## NEWS AT A GLANCE

■ The man believed to have recruited three of the four recent suicide bombers in Israel told Palestinian radio that the bombings were a mistake and had hurt the Palestinian people. Mohammed Abu Wardeh was sentenced by a Palestinian court to life in prison. [Page 2]

■ An Israeli Arab truck driver was arrested on charges of transporting the bomber who carried out a suicide attack in Tel Aviv. [Page 2]

■ U.S. Special Middle East Coordinator Dennis Ross scheduled a meeting with European leaders Friday in Washington to discuss global counterterrorism efforts.

■ The peace process led to improvements in the human rights situation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip last year, according to the U.S. State Department's annual human rights report.

■ President Clinton expressed his solidarity with the Jewish state at a memorial service at the Israeli Embassy in Washington. The service, held in the wake of recent attacks in Israel, was one of many held around the country. [Page 4]

■ Rep. Henry Hyde (R-Ill.) said he would unveil renamed counterterrorism legislation in an effort to win House approval. Jewish groups renewed their call on Congress to pass the bill in the wake of the suicide bombings in Israel.

■ A French appeals court opened a hearing to decide whether ex-Cabinet minister Maurice Papon should stand trial for crimes against humanity for his role in deporting Jews during World War II. In a newspaper interview, Papon said he was a scapegoat of the Anti-Defamation League, which he claimed was behind the attempt to bring him to trial.

■ The Council of Jewish Federations launched a 24-hour Washington leadership mission with a dinner honoring Jewish members of Congress and Israeli Ambassador Itamar Rabinovich. The federation leaders were to meet with Vice President Al Gore and other members of Congress, including House Speaker Newt Gingrich.

### ON THE ELECTION TRAIL

## A flat tax in the Jewish state? Forbes extends message abroad

By Matthew Dorf

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Republican presidential candidate Steve Forbes' obsession with a flat tax does not stop at America's borders: He would like to see it extended to the Jewish state as well.

Continued deregulation and a flat tax in Israel would "instantly have Israel's economy performing the way its legendary army and air force have done since independence," Forbes wrote in an editorial in Forbes magazine last spring.

As a newcomer to politics, Forbes has virtually no political record.

Therefore, obscure details such as his call for Israeli tax reform help shed light on the views of the millionaire publisher-turned-presidential aspirant.

Along the campaign trail, Forbes, on a leave of absence as publisher of the magazine bearing his name, has stuck to his single message calling for a 17 percent flat tax.

Like all presidential candidates, Forbes has compiled a book of issue papers that discuss everything from abortion to Yitzhak Rabin. (He is pro-choice and supports the slain Israeli leader's peace policies.)

But these issues, as well as his defense of immigrants and opposition to school prayer, remain on the back burner of his campaign platform.

A closer look at his writings, his philanthropic links with Jewish causes and his tenure as chairman of the Board for International Broadcasting hints at what a Forbes White House may look like from a Jewish perspective.

Some Jewish fund-raisers solely fear the impact of the candidate's tax plan.

"Forbes' plan would eliminate the ability to deduct charitable contributions from one's taxes. This savings is part of the appeal of donations to our annual campaign," one fund-raiser for a local federation said, speaking on the condition of anonymity.

Forbes, however, has defended his plan, arguing that it would bring more money to charities despite the loss of tax benefits.

"When you have a 17 percent flat rate, the tax deduction's not going to be worth much anyway. So the only way to get more is if people have more. And people will have more," Forbes told the Chronicle of Philanthropy in a recent interview.

### 'This man is a mensch'

Like all the major GOP presidential candidates, Forbes has attracted the support of some Jewish Republicans.

Supporters tout Forbes as the only viable candidate with moderate social views and a true conservative economic message.

"Put very simply, this man is a mensch," said Cheryl Halpern, a staunch Forbes supporter and a close family friend from the candidate's home state of New Jersey.

Halpern, national chairwoman of the National Jewish Coalition, the Republican Jewish organization, praised Forbes' moderate stances on issues ranging from reproductive rights to human rights.

For Halpern, Forbes "is the only individual who can be considered pro-choice. And that's important to me as a woman and a voter."

Richard Fox of Philadelphia, honorary chairman of the NJC, is also backing Forbes.

Halpern worked with Forbes on the Board for International Broadcasting in the early 1990s during a protracted fight to build a U.S. radio transmitter in the Negev Desert.

Forbes' passion for the U.S.-run radio transmitter in Israel's Arava Valley in the early 1990s serves as a backdrop to his pro-Israel leanings, Halpern said.

As chairman of the BIB, the government body that oversees Radio Free Europe and Liberty, Forbes took on Israeli environmentalists and U.S. bureaucrats who had sought to derail the multimillion dollar project.

Although the United States and Israel eventually agreed to scrap the project, Forbes' supporters point to the episode as an example of his resolve,

political savvy and pro-Israel leanings. "The man has a tremendous sense of commitment to any project that he takes on," Halpern said.

While supporters point to his experience with BIB as an indication of his views on Israel, campaign officials say Forbes' philanthropic links demonstrate his commitment to Jewish causes.

Last year, the Forbes Foundation, which he oversees, gave at least \$10,000 to Jewish charities.

Following in the footsteps of his late father, Malcolm, Forbes continued to contribute money to the Jewish National Fund, the Appeal for Conscience Foundation, B'nai B'rith and Yeshiva University.

Montefiore Medical Center in New York also received funds.

Forbes, who has used his magazine column and editorials to condemn anti-Semitism, has distanced himself from extremists loyal to his campaign, officials from the campaign say.

Officials say he has particularly distanced himself from an informal campaign adviser, Thomas Ellis, who served as director of the Pioneer Fund. However, they could not make clear whether Ellis is still involved with the campaign.

Known for its anti-Semitism and white supremacy, the fund, for example, gave grants to a professor who argued that whites are smarter than blacks and advocated paying blacks to be sterilized.

Forbes has yet to respond to a letter from the Anti-Defamation League questioning his ties to Ellis.

At the same time, Forbes this week attacked opponent Pat Buchanan during a candidates' debate in Atlanta for Buchanan's past outbursts against Israel and his defense of Nazis.

With wins in Arizona and Delaware and virtually unlimited resources, Forbes has vowed to stay in the race until the party chooses its nominee in August.

For Halpern, that's good news. "He has as good a chance of winning the nomination as any of the other men in the race today," she said. □

### **Palestinian sentenced to life for planning suicide bombings**

*By Naomi Segal*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — A Palestinian court has sentenced a West Bank man to life in prison with hard labor on charges of recruiting three of the four suicide bombers who have recently struck in Israel.

The man was identified as Mohammed Abu Wardeh, 21, a second-year student at the Ramallah Teachers Training College.

A court in the West Bank Jericho enclave conducted a hasty trial Tuesday night that Abu Wardeh did not attend.

The swift sentencing, approved by Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, was apparently carried out in an effort to stave off an extradition request by Israeli authorities.

Palestinian police said Abu Wardeh recruited the suicide bombers responsible for carrying out the Feb. 25 attacks in Jerusalem and Ashkelon in addition to Sunday's attack in Jerusalem.

A fourth bomber who carried out an attack Monday in Tel Aviv was reportedly from the Gaza Strip.

The suicide bombers claimed the lives of about 60 innocents in the four attacks and wounded more than 200 others.

Abu Wardeh received his instructions via coded messages from Hamas leaders abroad, Palestinian security sources reportedly said.

Israel Television reported that Abu Wardeh acted under the instructions of handlers based in Damascus.

Abu Wardeh said in an interview Tuesday with Palestinian radio that he regretted his actions.

"We did not make a correct assessment of the situation," he said during the interview, which appeared to be orchestrated by Palestinian officials.

"I appeal to all our brothers to stop these activities immediately and to stop any military action."

The Israeli government gave Israeli security forces the go-ahead Wednesday to deport members of the Hamas fundamentalist group.

The Israeli daily Ma'ariv reported that the government had decided to use deportations — where necessary and in accordance with the law — against Hamas leaders and their families.

The controversial measure has not been applied since December 1992, when the Israeli government deported 415 Islamic militants to southern Lebanon. They were allowed to return a year later.

Meanwhile, Israeli security forces Tuesday sealed Hebron's Islamic College and closed five other institutions affiliated with the fundamentalist group Hamas, which has claimed responsibility for the four terror bombings.

Accompanied by Palestinian police in some of the raids, Israeli forces also arrested dozens of activists in Nablus and in West Bank refugee camps.

As part of its own crackdown on Hamas, Palestinian security forces raided the Islamic University in Gaza, a hotbed of fundamentalist activity. □

### **Israeli Arab accused of driving terrorist from Gaza to Tel Aviv**

*By Naomi Segal*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israeli officials have arrested an Israeli Arab after accusing him of smuggling from the Gaza Strip into Israel the terrorist who carried out Monday's suicide bombing in Tel Aviv.

Security officials announced the arrest, which took place the night of the bombing, but released neither the suspect's name nor hometown, fearing reprisals by Israelis.

"It is a very grave matter that an Israeli Arab cooperated with terrorists and smuggled a man into the State of Israel," Deputy Defense Minister Ori Orr told Israel Radio.

"The question for [the driver] and the Israeli Arab community is whether he knew or not what he was smuggling," Orr added.

Israel has some 805,000 Arab citizens, the Central Bureau of Statistics reported last September, or 14.4 percent of the country's total population.

Orr cited a failure on the part of Palestinians and Israelis who carry out security checks at the Gaza border.

But, he added, "I am most angry with the Israelis."

The Israeli Arab reportedly told investigators that he had agreed to smuggle the Palestinian terrorist into Israel for \$1,100, a sum police doubted given the nature of the task.

The suspect said he drove the Palestinian in his truck to Dizengoff Street in Tel Aviv, where he dropped him off.

Minutes later, an explosion took place, claiming 13 lives and wounding more than 100.

The suspect claimed that he did not know what his Palestinian passenger was planning to do.

The Tiberias Magistrates Court, which charged the Israeli Arab with having contacts with an enemy organization and with being an accomplice to murder, extended his detention by 14 days. □

## U.S. officials show resolve with efforts to assist Israel

By Matthew Dorf

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Israel has entered its war against Hamas with much more than American arms in its arsenal.

In the wake of this week's terrorist attacks, President Clinton has authorized U.S. intelligence agencies to send long-sought sensitive information about Hamas activists to Israeli officials.

Although the United States has a mixed history in assisting Israel in times of crisis, this time there can be little doubt about the American resolve.

From the White House to the State Department to the Congress, U.S. officials are working to help Israel.

While critics charge that the measures are mere "window dressing," Israeli officials and American Jewish leaders maintain that any assistance is helpful.

"There is no one silver magic bullet that will in an instant end suicide bombings," said Neal Sher, executive director of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, the pro-Israel lobby. "But the United States' actions can only help."

For its part, the Clinton administration is hoping to send a strong signal that it will stand with Israel in its battle against Muslim extremists.

In addition to the intelligence sharing, the administration has authorized — and already begun to send — bomb detection equipment and technical personnel to assist the Israelis.

According to Israeli officials, soldiers will use the bomb detection equipment to search for explosives at checkpoints in the West Bank and on Israel's borders with the Palestinian self-rule areas. The most advanced sensors, similar to those used in airports to search for weapons, are en route to Israel as well.

Israeli officials refused to provide details about intelligence sharing, but welcomed the administration's support.

"The United States has a definite role and this equipment can only serve to help us," said an Israeli official here.

Members of Congress also praised the administration's move.

"I believe we have accurate information of who these people are, where they are and what they are doing," said Rep. Eliot Engel (D-N.Y.).

"In the past Israel has felt that the United States ought to be more forthcoming with its intelligence," he said, adding, "Now is the time for the U.S. to be as forthcoming as humanly possible."

### 'Like an air conditioner to Eskimos'

At least two counterterrorism experts, however, criticized the Clinton administration's plan as falling short of the necessary steps needed to wage a successful war against terrorism.

"Sending a terrorism team to Israel is like sending an air conditioner to Eskimos," Larry Johnson, a former director of counterterrorism at the State Department, told CNN.

Johnson called Clinton's plan "window dressing."

Terrorism expert Steven Emerson also criticized Clinton's plan, saying that it would have "a marginal effect."

But these assessments are clearly in the minority.

Clinton has signaled his intention to support Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres if Israel needs to enter Palestinian self-rule areas to root out terrorists.

When asked whether Israel should show restraint

and not retaliate, Clinton said, "We have to stand with the proposition that those who are responsible for this should be held accountable."

While the administration has the greatest role to play in the short term, Congress, with the power of the purse, can lead the charge to prod Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat to crack down on Hamas.

And that is exactly what congressional leaders are doing.

Congress will take a "hard look at assistance to the Palestinian Authority," said Senate Majority Leader and presidential candidate Bob Dole (R-Kan.).

"Unless and until serious anti-terrorist actions are implemented by Chairman Arafat, it is difficult to justify continued U.S. assistance to the Palestinian Authority," Dole said this week at a campaign rally in New York.

The United States has pledged \$500 million over three years to the Palestinians. Legislation known as the Middle East Peace Facilitation Act ties continued funding for the Palestinians to the end of terrorist attacks.

In a report released last week, Clinton found that the Palestine Liberation Organization is in compliance with its accords with Israel.

However, the report also found that the "Palestinian security services need to act more expeditiously about information they receive" about terrorist activities.

The overall finding of compliance allows funding to continue for another six months.

In the House of Representatives, meanwhile, Rep. Benjamin Gilman (R-N.Y.), chairman of the House International Relations Committee, is circulating a letter that puts Arafat on notice that Congress will closely scrutinize his actions in the coming weeks.

Gilman reminded Arafat in the letter that there would be no U.S. assistance unless the forces of the Palestinian Authority "resolutely apprehend, prosecute, convict and imprison terrorists, and cooperate with Israel in the pre-emption of terrorist actions" and the "disarming of civilians."

Gilman has scheduled hearings for March 12 that will investigate PLO compliance and its efforts to combat terrorism.

The House was expected to overwhelmingly pass a resolution this week that condemns the bombings and calls on Arafat and all elected representatives of the Palestinian Council to "take all possible actions" against terrorists.

### Beefing up security a possibility

On another front, Congress has pledged to cooperate with the White House in its effort to elicit the support of America's allies to pressure Arab states into condemning terrorism and shutting down terrorist bases, specifically in Syria and Iran.

Congress is also scheduled to take up a measure that "goes a long way towards cutting off Iran's access to foreign investments," Sher said. The legislation would ban American trade benefits for and investments in foreign firms that do business with Iran.

Congress is also working to stop terrorist groups from raising hundreds of thousands of dollars in the United States. The House is expected to begin consideration of the long-delayed counterterrorism bill this month. The Senate passed a weaker version of the measure last summer.

Meanwhile, as the war against Hamas rages in Israel, American officials are considering beefing up security at U.S. installations such as government buildings and airports.

U.S. officials have expressed concern that as they step up their efforts to assist Israel, the United States could once again become a target for Muslim extremists. □

**Clinton expresses resolve at embassy memorial service***By Daniel Kurtzman*

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Pledging to “step up the struggle for peace” and to “counter the threat of terror with unshakable resolve,” President Clinton joined Washington’s Jewish community at a memorial service for the victims of recent terror bombings in Israel.

“Our faith may be shaken, but at times like this, it is all the more important to persevere,” Clinton told an overflow crowd of about 500 people at the Israeli Embassy. The Washington gathering was one of many memorials held across the country this week.

“These fanatical acts were not aimed simply at killing innocent people, they were clearly aimed at killing the promise of peace,” Clinton said, adding, “We must not allow them to prevail. The best way to defeat them is to first restore security, and then to bolster the peace they fear. That will take away their very reason for being.”

Clinton stood with Israeli Ambassador Itamar Rabinovich and leaders of Washington’s Jewish community as a local rabbi read the names of the nearly 60 people killed in four bombings over the last two weeks.

“Sixty is an awfully large number,” Rabinovich said. “It must not blur the individual identity of each man, woman and child who lost their lives this past week.”

In New York, a memorial gathering organized by the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations included speakers Sen. Alfonse D’Amato (R-N.Y.), Gov. George Pataki of New York and Israel’s consul general in New York, Colette Avital.

“At no time have we lived through a terror campaign of this magnitude and scope,” said Avital, but “we cannot allow the terrorists to set our agenda.”

Avital read a message from Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres, who thanked Clinton for U.S. assistance to Israel and pledged that his “government will not shy [away] from any means to ensure the personal security of all its citizens.”

The remarks of Leonard Eisenfeld, the father of Matthew Eisenfeld, the 25-year-old rabbinical student from Connecticut who was killed in last month’s Jerusalem bomb attack, were especially poignant. “We need you, our people,” he said, “for your strength and support, and we wish to offer you courage and solace.”

He spoke of the telephone call he received from Peres the day his son was killed. He said he told Peres that he “had loved him [Peres] for many years” and “wanted him to have courage in the days to come.”

The families of two other recent American bombing victims, Sara Duker and Alisa Flatow, were also present.

New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani also addressed the crowd of several hundred and said he was planning to visit Israel in the coming days. □

*(JTA staff writer Cynthia Mann contributed to this report.)*

**Yet again, Costa Rica implored to expel accused war criminal***By Brian Harris*

SAN JOSE, Costa Rica (JTA) — The Simon Wiesenthal Center in Jerusalem has formally asked the Costa Rican government to expel an accused war criminal.

The presence of Bodhan Koziy, 73, a Ukrainian police official during World War II, “brings shame on Costa Rica,” Efraim Zuroff, director of the center’s Israel office, said in a recent letter to Juan Diego Castro, the Costa Rican minister of public security.

Zuroff also said in the letter that Koziy’s presence in Costa Rica is a “source of frustration for Jews the world over” and urged Castro to “end the disgrace of having this murderer of children continue to reside in your country.”

Castro said he had asked for a report on Koziy’s immigration status, adding that Koziy could be expelled if he is in Costa Rica illegally and if Costa Rica receives a request for extradition.

The letter comes one month after Zuroff was in Costa Rica to meet with government officials and members of the Jewish community. During that visit, Zuroff went to Koziy’s home — with a BBC television crew in tow — to approach the accused man, who turned out not to be home at the time.

Koziy apparently has been living in a suburb of San Jose for the last decade.

In 1982, Koziy, the owner of a Florida motel, was stripped of his U.S. citizenship. The U.S. Justice Department obtained a court order to deport him in 1984, but he fled to Costa Rica.

Zuroff, then an investigator for the Office of Special Investigations of the Justice Department, had taken part in the investigation that led to the revocation of citizenship.

Koziy was accused by the Soviet Union of killing Jewish children and their parents.

He was never extradited there by Costa Rica because the Soviet Union, which said it had no influence over Ukrainian courts, could not promise Costa Rica that Koziy would not face the death penalty.

In August, Rep. Michael McNulty (D-N.Y.) handed a letter — signed by 60 other congressmen — to Costa Rican President Jose Figueres that said, “Judges in the United States and prosecutors in Germany affirmed that Koziy was a Nazi policeman in Ukraine, where he shot and killed — amongst others — a 4-year-old.”

In September, Sonia Picado, the Costa Rican ambassador to the United States, said she was “hopeful” that the extradition of Koziy would take place soon. □

**France rebukes Iran, Libya for lauding attacks in Israel***By Lee Yanowitch*

PARIS (JTA) — France has canceled a visit by Iran’s deputy foreign minister to protest Tehran’s praise for the recent suicide bombings in Israel.

In addition to the cancellation of Mahmoud Vaezi’s planned visit later this month, French officials summoned the ambassadors of Iran and Libya to “confirm our disapproval of the Iranian and Libyan reactions to the attacks carried out in Israel,” a spokesman said.

A day earlier, Prime Minister Alain Juppe had warned that there would be “diplomatic consequences” to the two countries’ statements supporting the terror attacks.

Government spokesman Alain Lamassoure said after the weekly Cabinet meeting that France wanted to take diplomatic measures against Iran in coordination with the European Union.

On Wednesday night, 11 of France’s 32 Cabinet ministers, along with the leaders of all the major political parties, joined 5,000 demonstrators on the streets of Paris to show their support for Middle East peace.

Foreign Minister Herve De Charrette was scheduled to visit Jerusalem to convey the French government’s condolences for the victims of the four suicide bombings.

Iran, which has denied financing the activities of the militant Hamas and Islamic Jihad movements, praised the four suicide bombings as “divine retribution.”

In reacting to the attacks, Libyan leader Muammar Gadhafi said Palestine was a “tomb for Jews.” □