



Daily News Bulletin

Vol. 76, No. 192

Thursday, October 29, 1998

81st Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Palestinians to submit plan

The Palestinian Authority will submit a plan to fight terrorism by Friday, State Department spokesman James Rubin announced. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu delayed indefinitely a Cabinet vote to ratify the Wye agreement until Israel receives a copy of the plan.

Rubin called the problem "manageable" and went out of his way to praise Netanyahu and express American confidence that the accord will be implemented. Meanwhile, the Israeli daily *Ha'aretz* reported that Netanyahu announced the delay because he did not believe he had a Cabinet majority to back the Wye accord. [Page 4]

Assassination attempt feared

Israeli security officials have stepped up their monitoring of Jewish right-wing extremists because of concerns there will be a political assassination in response to the Wye agreement. Security has been bolstered around Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai and Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon. Netanyahu's public appearances are being limited because of these concerns, according to Israeli news reports.

Clinton signs persecution bill

President Clinton signed into law a bill aimed at combating religious persecution abroad.

The bill, inspired by the Jewish community's successful efforts to free Soviet Jews during the 1970s and 1980s and endorsed by most Jewish groups, gives the president the option of 15 policy responses to countries that engage in a pattern of religious persecution, ranging from diplomatic protest to economic sanctions. Clinton praised lawmakers for giving him flexibility in applying the bill's sanctions provisions.

French Jews press WJC

Leaders of the French Jewish community asked the World Jewish Congress for sensitivity in pursuing Holocaust restitution in France. Educating the French people about their wartime past takes priority over monetary reparations, the community's president said during a meeting in New York. "We know you want to help us," said Henri Hajdenberg. "We thank you for your help and your support, but you have to understand — it's a French problem."

ELECTIONS '98

Incumbents in tight contests stress support on Israel issues

By Matthew Dorf

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Rep. Steve Rothman (D-N.J.) led the charge for full Israeli membership at the United Nations.

Rep. Jon Fox (R-Pa.) carried the torch for U.S. aid to Israel.

Rep. Brad Sherman (D-Calif.) fought to move the U.S. Embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

All three Jewish members of Congress wear their pro-Israel activism on their sleeves and have labored during the past two years to stake out positions favored by the Jewish community. They also have something else in common — all are among the most vulnerable incumbents heading into Election Day.

They join Rep. Sandy Levin (D-Mich.) who is facing a well-financed challenger and hindered by voter backlash against a controversial Democratic gubernatorial candidate at the top of the ticket.

The four are among the unlucky few. With all 435 seats in the U.S. House of Representatives up for election on Nov. 3, a historically low 50 seats remain truly competitive in the final days of the campaign.

Since World War II, the president's party has lost an average of 27 House seats in midterm elections. But this year Republican gains are likely to be much less. In 94 races, incumbents are facing no opposition from a major party candidate. In addition, there are only 33 seats with no incumbent running for re-election. The Republicans currently hold a 228 to 206 majority. There is one independent member.

Jewish representation in the next Congress, however, is likely to decrease, even if all the races break favorably for the Jewish candidates.

Of the 25 Jewish members elected in 1996, Reps. Sidney Yates (D-Ill.), who held the seat for 48 of the past 50 years, and Jane Harman (D-Calif.) are retiring. Rep. Steven Schiff (R-N.M.) died earlier this year of cancer. Rep. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) is running for the Senate.

The seats held by Yates and Schumer are expected to be filled by Jewish Democratic candidates, Illinois state Rep. Jan Schakowsky and Anthony Weiner, respectively.

The other best chance for a pickup appears to be in Nevada where Shelley Berkley is running strongly against Don Chairez to fill an open seat.

The national Democratic Party has launched an aggressive get-out-the-vote drive to support Berkley. Turnout in the black community, which represents more than 9 percent of the district, is believed to be the key to the race, according to local political activists.

Another Jewish candidate, veteran Rep. Martin Frost (D-Texas), showed early signs of weakness but has rebounded in recent weeks.

Unlike the 1996 election when Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.) became a national issue for Democrats and church-state issues galvanized Jewish voters, this year's races are proving the "all politics is local" rule.

Lacking any major national issues unifying the individual races, candidates are waging their battles for House seats largely on personalities and issues of local concern. To be sure, for some voters this means Social Security, Medicare, tax relief or education. For others it's the impeachment investigation of President Clinton.

While voters, including American Jews, have shied away from pulling the lever

MIDEAST FOCUS

Israelis fill bomb shelters

Residents of northern Israel spent Tuesday night in bomb shelters fearing the possibility of a shelling in the wake of an attack in Lebanon on the leader of the militant Islamic Jihad. Mahmoud Majzoub was seriously wounded Tuesday when his car exploded in Sidon. Israeli officials denied accusations by Islamic Jihad that Israel booby-trapped the car. The officials said that the attack was part of an internal conflict among Lebanon's Shi'ite organizations. Fighting erupted Wednesday in several sectors of the southern Lebanon security zone. An Israeli soldier was seriously wounded by mortar shells in one of the skirmishes.

Arab world to wait

The Arab world wants to wait and see if Israel implements its part of a new interim peace deal before heeding a U.S. call to strengthen its ties with Israel, Palestinian officials said. U.S. officials said earlier this week that they expected new gestures from Arab states toward Israel in recognition of the commitments Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu made when he signed the Wye accord last week at the White House.

Interest rates raised

Bank of Israel Governor Jacob Frenkel raised interest rates from 9.5 percent to 11.5 percent in a bid to head off the continued devaluation of the shekel against the dollar. Frenkel termed the step an extraordinary move needed to stem cost-of-living increases for Israelis and to stop the shekel's continued devaluation.

Officials boycott meeting

Officials from France, Holland, Norway and Canada recently boycotted an international police commissioner's conference in Israel because the proceedings were being held in predominantly Arab eastern Jerusalem. A foreign ministry official said Israel would protest to those governments if it became evident that the boycott was political.



Daily News Bulletin

Caryn Rosen Adelman, *President*
 Mark J. Jaffe, *Executive Editor and Publisher*
 Lisa Hastein, *Editor (on leave)*
 Kenneth Bandler, *Managing Editor*
 Lenore A. Silverstein, *Business Manager*

JTA DAILY NEWS BULLETIN is published five days a week, except holidays, by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency Inc., 330 Seventh Ave., New York, N.Y. 10001-5010. For information about how to subscribe by e-mail, fax or regular mail, call (212) 643-1890, or visit our Web site at www.jta.org.
 © JTA Reproduction only by previous arrangement.

based solely on foreign affairs and Israel, these issues, according to exit polls in recent elections, do contribute to their decisions.

With this in mind, candidates like Rothman, Fox and Sherman are chasing every Jewish vote.

Fox, first elected in 1994, won by only 84 votes in 1996. This year local politician Joseph Hoeffel is back with a vengeance in this traditionally Republican district in suburban Philadelphia.

Fox, one of only two Jewish Republicans in the House, has gained high marks from pro-Israel activists who hope he will emerge as a leader on their issues in the International Relations Committee where he serves.

But his 92 percent support rating from the Christian Coalition has hurt him with many moderate voters, according to local political activists. Planned Parenthood has entered the race, giving money to and endorsing Hoeffel over Fox who has a pro-life voting record in Congress.

Hoeffel has gained support from Jewish Democrats across the country and has received thousands of dollars from the National Jewish Democratic Council's political action committee. But he remains far behind Fox in fund raising. Republican party committees, which held a 3 to 1 advantage going into the final weeks of the election, have made the Fox race one of their priorities.

About 100 miles north, Rothman is battling against businessman Steve Lonegan in New Jersey.

Rothman has touted his initiative to secure a spot for Israel in a regional group at the United Nations in order to ensure full membership rights for the Jewish state, especially a rotating seat on the Security Council.

But this contest, according to local political activists, will be won or lost on the traditional issues such as taxes, education and Social Security.

On the other coast, Sherman is facing Randy Hoffman, a Republican businessman. Federal spending on education has become a key campaign issue. But like many California races, bilingual education and immigrant issues have come to the fore.

It has yet to be seen if Sherman's high profile pro-Israel activism pays as much reward at the ballot box as it has at the bank.

Two American Israel Public Affairs Committee leaders, chairman Melvin Dow and former chairman Larry Weinberg, wrote a private letter soliciting support for Sherman.

"We are writing to ask for your urgent support of one of America's most important new pro-Israel leaders," they wrote.

"Returning Brad Sherman to the United States Congress is an important means of strengthening support for the U.S.-Israel relationship. Brad has been there when we needed him. Now it's up to us to be there when he needs us!" the letter said.

In Michigan, Levin, who is not known for his abilities on the stump as a candidate, is facing a credible threat from Republican Leslie Touma.

But if Levin loses, it is less likely to be as a result of his campaign. Michigan Democrats are facing a statewide drag from Geoffrey Feiger, the Democratic candidate for governor. Feiger, who gained recognition as the attorney for assisted suicide doctor Jack Kevorkian, has put fellow Democrats on the defensive throughout the campaign. Polls show that Democrats may stay at home on Election Day.

In the heat of a Kevorkian campaign, Feiger attacked Orthodox rabbis who have come out against Kevorkian. These rabbis "are closer to Nazis than they think they are," Feiger said.

Win or lose, these candidates are likely to fare better than three Jewish challengers. Rep. Benjamin Gilman (R-N.Y.), who is Jewish and chairs the International House Committee, is facing off against Democrat Paul Feiner, who also is Jewish. Polls show Gilman with a commanding lead.

Also in New York, Rep. Peter King, who has made a name for himself in the Jewish community for his campaign against government contracting with security firms associated with Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan, is likely to trounce Kevin Langberg, who is Jewish.

Tom Roberg, a Jewish Republican, is waging an uphill battle against Rep. David Price (D-N.C.), who has represented a district where Democrats outnumber Republicans 2 to 1 for 10 of the past 12 years. □

JEWISH WORLD

Albright seeks pact's support

U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright urged American Jewish and Arab American leaders to find ways to jointly support the Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement signed at the White House last Friday and "build a constituency for peace."

During a 90-minute meeting at the State Department with 10 Jewish and 10 Arab leaders, Albright pressed the two communities to set an example for the people of the Middle East by working in concert.

"It would be quite stunning" if representatives of the two communities go to Capitol Hill to ask members of Congress to support a yet-to-be determined U.S. foreign aid package linked to the Wye River Memorandum.

She added that the next 10 days will be critical to the success of the accord.

Republicans: Keep Pollard jailed

U.S. congressional Republican leaders urged President Clinton to oppose Israel's request to release jailed spy Jonathan Pollard.

Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.), Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott (R-Miss.) and the chairmen of the Senate and House Intelligence Committees sent a letter to Clinton.

"Should Pollard be released, there is every reason to believe, based on his own statements, that he would resume his treacherous conduct," the congressional leaders wrote.

As part of the latest Israeli-Palestinian agreement, Clinton agreed to review the case of Pollard, who was sentenced in 1987 to life in prison for spying for Israel.

Report issued on vouchers

A new report reveals that low-income students who used vouchers to attend private or religious schools in New York showed a slight increase in standardized test scores compared to pupils who remained in public elementary schools.

The study was conducted by Harvard University and Mathematica Policy Research.

It showed that in math and reading, students boosted their scores on average about two percentage points above their peers.

Vandals hit Holocaust monument

Vandals overturned a monument to victims of the Holocaust in a cemetery near the village of Liaudiskes in northern Lithuania.

The vandals also laid out pieces of metal to form a swastika on the toppled memorial. Police said they are investigating the incident.

Abortion activists mobilize after Jewish doctor's murder

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK (JTA) — Dr. Barnett Slepian and his wife, Lynn, had just gotten home from synagogue where he marked the *yahrzeit* of his father's death.

A single rifle shot blasted through the kitchen window, pierced his back, penetrated his lungs, exited his body and left him to die on the floor.

Last Friday night's murder of Slepian, an obstetrician-gynecologist in the Buffalo, N.Y., area who also performed abortions, has mobilized the reproductive rights community, including some Jewish groups that have long supported a woman's legal right to obtain an abortion.

Hadassah, the National Council of Jewish Women and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations participated in a Capitol Hill vigil for Slepian on Wednesday.

Slepian was the seventh abortion provider to be murdered in the last five years, according to Nan Rich, national president of the National Council of Jewish Women.

On Monday, the rabbi who had sat with him chatting in synagogue minutes before the murder, spoke to the hundreds who had gathered at his funeral about the man who everyone called Bart and who was widely liked in his community.

"Forget the politics and ideological statements. This was a man who loved his wife, was devoted to his kids, and if you met him on the street you'd think he was just a lovely guy," Rabbi Robert Eisen said in an interview with JTA.

Slepian, who personally performed the *brit milah*, or ritual circumcision, on each of his four sons "with a smile on his lips and a tear in his eye," Eisen said, "never saw what he did [in his work] as being special, but he knew he had to do what was right."

Eisen is rabbi of Temple Beth El, a Conservative congregation in Tonawanda, N.Y.

"This has touched a powerful chord in our community because this doctor was Jewish and a member of a Reform congregation," said Mark Pelavin, associate director of the Reform movement's Religious Action Center.

"It's a feeling of sadness, compassion for his family and a feeling of anger directed at those who would resort to such brutally violent tactics, especially and audaciously in the name of preserving life."

The Reform movement is planning to send out a packet of information — including sermon materials for rabbis and suggestions for congregational activity — to the denomination's 870 temples.

NCJW, which helped organize a national vigil in Washington on Wednesday, is also helping to organize vigils in other communities across the country.

The NCJW has long been at the forefront of lobbying to protect the legal right of women to obtain an abortion, filing *amicus curiae* briefs in every case that has come before the Supreme Court since the landmark 1973 ruling known as *Roe v. Wade*, said Sammie Moshenberg, director of Washington operations for the NCJW.

"I know people will use and abuse this event politically, but we're just trying to focus on what's really important, which is getting them through the next days and weeks," said Eisen.

"They were lovely, vibrant people. They were human, they were a family, with all the quirks and idiosyncracies that go along with that. Hopefully some of that will be retained as life goes on."

The Slepian family and their four sons, ages 7 to 15, had recently joined a local Reform congregation, Temple Beth Am, in nearby Williamsville, N.Y.

They had previously been members of Temple Beth El, which they still attended occasionally as they did on the night of the murder.

The rabbis of both congregations officiated at Slepian's funeral, at the Amherst Memorial Home, which was filled with about 600 distraught family members and friends along with clients whose babies he had delivered.

People crowded into the chapel, which seats about 250 people, in the hallways and in other parts of the funeral home.

The mood there was "numb and number," Eisen said. □

Netanyahu appeals to Likud to support the Wye agreement

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, lobbying for support of the latest Israeli-Palestinian accord, has appealed to his own Likud Party to back the deal.

The Wye River Memorandum calls for an Israeli pullback from 13 percent of the West Bank in exchange for Palestinian measures to prevent terrorist actions.

No vote was taken at Wednesday night's meeting of the Likud's central committee, which convened amid an evolving crisis that could delay the scheduled Nov. 2 implementation of the Wye agreement.

Earlier this week Netanyahu postponed indefinitely a Cabinet vote on the Wye accord, fueling speculation that he believes a majority of his ministers would reject it. Netanyahu sought to divert attention from his own domestic political challenges by accusing the Palestinian Authority of failing to deliver a security plan on time, according to Israeli media reports.

In Washington, State Department spokesman James Rubin announced that the Palestinian Authority will submit by Friday a plan to fight terrorism. He called the delayed Israeli Cabinet vote a "manageable" problem and went out of his way to praise Netanyahu, and express confidence that the accord will be implemented.

With Jewish settlers and other right-wing groups demonstrating against the deal outside the Tel Aviv auditorium where the Likud leadership met, Netanyahu appealed to the party members' sense of unity, reminding them that the Likud had campaigned in 1996 promising peace and security — and that this was what the Wye agreement achieved.

"We have one objective, and even when we differ over how to achieve it, we must not forget the unity in this purpose," Netanyahu said.

Rather than focus on the schism within Likud, Netanyahu blasted what he described as the Labor Party's position on the peace process. He painted the Wye agreement as a major achievement that maximizes Israeli security and interests in contrast to the kind of accord Labor would reach.

Netanyahu stressed that the negotiators had fought hard to make the best out of the inherent problems in Oslo — and brought home an accord which conceded far less to the Palestinians than one a Labor-led government might have achieved.

"The Palestinians told us that they understood from the previous [Labor-led] government, that after the three further redeployments," stipulated in the Interim Agreement, they would receive "more than 90 percent of the territory," Netanyahu said.

Calling the Oslo accords "an accordion which expanded in three further redeployments to 90 percent of the territory," Netanyahu said he took that accordion and "retracted it until it went to 10 percent and three percent."

Netanyahu declared that Israel made clear to the Americans that his Cabinet would determine the scope of the third phase of the further redeployment, which would not exceed 1 percent.

Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon, who has called the 13 percent troop withdrawal "dangerous," backed Netanyahu at the Likud meeting, saying the Israeli leadership had no alternative. "No one

else could bring a better situation. We could not have gone [to the Wye summit] and said we are against the entire process. In my view, our situation would have been worse," Sharon declared.

Sharon dismissed rumors that Netanyahu postponed a Cabinet meeting to ratify the accord because of concern that it lacked a majority. He backed the premier's declaration that it was because the Palestinians had yet to present a plan to fight terrorism.

The most virulent attack on the prime minister came from Likud legislator Ze'ev "Benny" Begin, who resigned from Netanyahu's Cabinet after the Hebron Agreement was signed nearly two years ago.

Begin said the Israeli negotiators were "wrapped around Yasser Arafat's finger."

He called the agreement "nonsense and lawlessness." Begin said Netanyahu had returned from Washington with an unprecedented achievement — for the Palestinians.

He charged the prime minister with activating a campaign to defraud and deceive the public from knowing the real details of the agreement.

Netanyahu retorted later that Begin had quoted the accord out of context and that it had important achievements for Israel. □

Playboy to publish excerpts of Orthodox rabbi's book on sex

By Douglas Davis

LONDON (JTA) — Rabbi Shmuley Boteach, who has deployed his considerable gifts for self-promotion in his adoptive British home, has sold an extended extract from his latest book — "Kosher Sex" — to Playboy magazine for a reported \$200,000.

Boteach, whose fellow Chabadniks in Britain found his brash, hard-sell style too rich for their taste after publication of his first book, "The Jewish Guide to Adultery," was asked to resign as rabbi of an Orthodox synagogue in London following publication of "Kosher Sex" earlier this year.

Boteach eschews pornography, masturbation and premarital sex, but he counsels a liberal approach to sex, including oral sex, between consenting married adults.

"Every modern form of lingerie, mirror on the ceiling or plastic object that helps to break a pattern of monotony is kosher," he writes.

Boteach is now anticipating a fresh outcry from Orthodox Jews over his deal with Playboy, which will publish the excerpts in its December issue.

While reiterating his opposition to pornographic magazines, he said he was delighted to use the pages of the magazine to communicate his "serious message" that married couples should strive to become more sexually intimate in order to stay together.

Boteach, 32, said his contract with Playboy ruled out the publication of pornographic photographs near the 5,000-word excerpt.

Boteach insists that his approach to sex is deeply traditional and that he is motivated solely by a desire to strengthen marriage.

"There is no way anyone can misconstrue my appearance in Playboy as an endorsement of the magazine," he said. "My views are conservative and this extract in Playboy is significant because it represents the infiltration of religious ideas, which were once dismissed as antiquated, into the popular culture." □