



Daily News Bulletin

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82nd Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Clinton to extend terror ban

President Clinton moved to extend a ban on financial transactions in the United States by suspected Middle East terrorists.

The presidential order, first imposed in January 1995 and renewed each year since, declares Middle East terrorism a "national emergency."

In other federal initiatives, the United States has seized the assets of suspected terrorists and banned contributions by U.S. citizens to suspected overseas terrorist groups.

Albright to discuss Russian hate

U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright will discuss the recent rise in Russian anti-Semitism during a visit to Moscow scheduled to start Sunday.

Albright told American Jewish officials that along with raising the issue during meetings with Russian Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov, she will appeal directly to the Russian people to exercise greater tolerance and oppose anti-Semitism.

Meanwhile, some 36 percent of callers to a Moscow radio station said Russia would benefit if all its Jews left for Israel. The station said more than 3,100 people replied within 15 minutes to the on-air question of whether life would be better in Russia without Jews. [Page 3]

FBI collects break-in evidence

FBI agents collected evidence, including blood, from the office of a Washington political consultant hired by Israel's Labor Party candidate for prime minister.

The office was burglarized overnight Monday for the second time in a week.

Police and FBI agents have questioned former employees of the firm during their investigation of the burglaries, in which campaign files related to Labor candidate Ehud Barak were stolen.

Source: Arafat plans new airport

Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat authorized preparations for building an airport in the West Bank town of Bethlehem, according to an Israeli security official. Israeli leaders are concerned that the Palestinian Authority will build the airport, planned to serve tourists coming for millennium celebrations, without coordinating the move with them.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Looking past impeachment trial: How productive will Congress be?

By Daniel Kurtzman

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Like everyone else with a hand in the Washington power game, the Jewish community has a clear stake in the outcome of President Clinton's impeachment trial.

The concern, however, has less to do with what happens — few anticipate he will be removed — than with how the trial ends and in what kind of spirit.

As Clinton's fate hangs in the balance, so, too, do the prospects for bipartisan cooperation in the 106th Congress.

Conventional wisdom holds that if the impeachment trial becomes a drawn-out process, replete with witnesses, the chances of bipartisan support for any substantive legislation will all but vanish.

That would not bode well for Jewish interests, Jewish activists here say, because much of the agenda they hope to see enacted depends on compromise between Democrats and Republicans.

But there is another line of thinking that paints a more optimistic picture.

Some political observers, including many in the Jewish community, believe a conclusion to the trial within a reasonable time frame could generate tremendous momentum for both parties to get important legislative work done in the months ahead.

"You have two major trends coming together — the president wanting to leave a legacy of significant positive change for America and the world, and a Republican leadership that knows the worst thing that can happen is to be perceived as a do-nothing Congress," said Rabbi David Saperstein, director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism.

"Both are powerful dynamics that mandate bipartisan cooperation to achieve the goals that each of the parties thinks are so vital."

For that reason, some political observers are predicting that the administration and Congress will be looking to work together in all areas where they can find common ground.

In his State of the Union speech, Clinton highlighted several issues in which there may be room for cooperation, including saving Social Security, fixing the education system, protecting patients' rights and strengthening hate crime laws.

All of those issues have been key concerns for the Jewish community, with Social Security now topping the legislative agenda for many groups. Most have yet to formulate positions on the retirement program, but all agree it needs to be a priority issue.

"We have a big interest in it because 20 percent of our population — disproportionate to any other community — is over the age of 65, and many are dependent on Social Security to meet costs of living," said Diana Aviv, director of the Council of Jewish Federations' Washington office.

The Middle East peace process is another area in which the Jewish community, the administration and Congress will likely be able to work together.

In the coming months, lawmakers are expected to determine how much aid to allocate to the Palestinians for economic support and to Israel for troop redeployment in the West Bank as part of the interim Wye peace accord signed in Washington in October.

In the president's speech, which aired Jan. 19, Clinton asked Congress to provide

MIDEAST FOCUS

Charges planned in Rabin murder

Israeli authorities will soon bring charges against a former undercover agent who became close with Yigal Amir prior to the 1995 assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, according to Justice Minister Tzachi Hanegbi. Prosecutors are expected to charge Avishai Raviv with knowing in advance of, but failing to prevent, Amir's plan to kill Rabin.

Reform center planned for Jaffa

A reform temple in Tel Aviv is planning to establish a community center in Jaffa. Planners hope the Beit Daniel Reform Temple project will serve as an outreach center for nearby communities. Deputy Health Minister Shlomo Benizri of the fervently Orthodox Shas Party said he expected the center to be a success among Jaffa's Christian and Muslim communities, but that "a Jew who wants to return to the fold generally goes to the source" and becomes fervently Orthodox.

Women's rights party formed

A newly formed women's rights party registered to participate in Israel's May elections for the Knesset. Yesh, a Hebrew acronym for "equal representation" includes activists from several women's groups.

Wolf Prize winners named

A professor at Columbia University and a professor at the University of Alberta were recently awarded 1999 Wolf Prizes in medicine and chemistry, respectively.

Eric Kandel won the Wolf Prize in Medicine for his research into the brain mechanisms by which learning occurs and memory is stored, while Raymond Lemieux was honored for his contributions to the study of sugar-like molecules. The Wolf prizes were established in 1975 by Ricardo Wolf, a German-born diplomat who served as Cuban ambassador to Israel. The prizes are awarded annually in Jerusalem in seven fields.

resources to implement the Wye agreement, "to protect Israel's security, stimulate the Palestinian economy and support our friends in Jordan.

"We must not, we dare not, let them down," he said. Despite the listless response on the Republican side of the aisle to those remarks, many believe that if the pro-Israel lobby, namely, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, and Israel appeal to Congress for that funding, they'll get it.

The White House, however, has indicated that it would not deliver the aid until the peace process is back on track.

In other legislative arenas, the battles are likely to shape up along more traditional lines.

Since the Republicans took control of Congress in 1994, most Jewish activists have been devoting a majority of their energies to damage control, trying to block or mitigate various policy initiatives.

More of the same can be expected in the months to come.

After successfully countering a school prayer amendment to the Constitution in the last Congress, for example, church-state watchdogs in the Jewish community are regrouping for round two. Lawmakers have indicated they may bring out a second incarnation of the controversial proposal, this one perhaps dealing more directly with funding for sectarian organizations.

Similar debates over school voucher initiatives — an issue that has split the Jewish community — are likely as well, as Republicans again look for ways to permit families more choice in where their children attend school.

In another fight with which the community has become well acquainted, activists expect to devote considerable time to protecting the rights of immigrants, particularly as Congress again takes up the issue of restructuring the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

Clinton highlighted this issue in his State of the Union, saying, "Our new immigrants must be part of our one America. After all, they're revitalizing our cities, they're energizing our culture, they're building up our economy."

At the same time that Jewish activists are countering various measures, they are determined to be proactive as well, with an emphasis on crafting a new law to restore protections for religious practice and a separate law guaranteeing religious freedom in the workplace.

Strengthening the nation's hate crime laws will also be a central focus.

Securing federal funding for social services remains another major concern, with Jewish nursing homes, hospitals and local federation agencies dependent on social service block grants funding made available to the states.

The funding battle is also a familiar one, but with one important difference this year:

For the first time in years, Congress has come into session with a federal budget surplus, which enables lawmakers to shift away from the budget-cutting mode that had plagued previous sessions.

"We're not operating within the same constraints as we had in past," said Aviv of CJF.

Most concede that the central challenge to getting anything done will be the relatively compact legislative calendar.

With Congress still focused on impeachment, only a few months remain before lawmakers must begin working on the budget for 2000, which must be completed by this October.

By then, the presidential election cycle will have kicked in. As both parties begin jockeying for position for the 2000 campaign, everything risks becoming a function of presidential politicking, and compromise is almost certain to become elusive.

"The window of opportunity to get anything done" this year "is diminished, and the need to ratchet up and amplify our voices is greater," said Michael Lieberman, Washington counsel for the Anti-Defamation League.

"It's going to be harder to get legislators' attention for the progressive side of our agenda because there's a lot of background noise from impeachment, there's a lot of ill will and there's a lot of people who almost immediately will begin to think about the 2000 election." □



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JEWISH WORLD

ADL blasts CNN's Farrakhan spot

The Anti-Defamation League lashed out at CNN's use of Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan as a spokesman against racism. The spot, which ran on Jan. 14, is an "outrageous insult," said ADL National Director Abraham Foxman, who called Farrakhan "one of our nation's most notorious racists." Foxman called on CNN to discontinue the "outrageously inappropriate segment."

HIAS named to advisory board

The Immigration and Naturalization Service recently named the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society to an advisory board helping guide the agency as it splits its law enforcement and customer service operations. HIAS, the only refugee resettlement agency appointed to the board, said, "We understand INS customers' concerns and have a lot to offer to the discussion."

Reform head seeks Kosovo trials

The world community should try those responsible for the recent killings of 45 Albanians by Serb forces in the Yugoslav province of Kosovo, said the president of the Reform movement's Union of American Hebrew Congregations. The world will have to atone for its "complicity in these acts if they permit the slaughter to continue," said Rabbi Eric Yoffie.

Chretien plans Auschwitz visit

Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien invited officials of the Canadian Jewish Congress to accompany him on a visit Sunday to Auschwitz. Chretien will become the first sitting Canadian prime minister to visit the former Nazi death camp.

Pope calls for more dialogue

Pope John Paul II renewed his appeal for continued dialogue between Christians and their "brothers and sisters of the Jewish religion." The pope's call came during his weekly Sunday address to the faithful gathered below his window in St. Peter's Square.

Israeli misses training camp

An Israeli basketball player who had been negotiating with the New York Knicks during the NBA lockout did not appear for the start of the club's training camp. A spokesman for the Knicks said he did not know whether Oded Katash, who currently plays for Maccabi Tel Aviv, would be signed by the team.

Airline plans new Israel route

Continental Airlines plans to launch daily non-stop service between Newark Airport and Ben-Gurion Airport. Pending Israeli government approval, flights will begin in August, company officials said.

36 percent of Russian callers in favor of emigration of Jews

By Lev Krichevsky

MOSCOW (JTA) — Many Russians believe life here would be better were it not for the Jews.

Some 36 percent of recent callers to a Moscow radio station said Russia would benefit if all Jews left for Israel.

The radio station said a record number of 3,100 people called to voice their opinion on the issue Thursday during a show on the Moscow Echo radio station.

The station posed the question about Jewish emigration after Israeli Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon, who visited Russia this week, urged Jews from Russia and other former Soviet states to immigrate to Israel.

Concern about Russian attitudes toward Jews has prompted American Jewish activists to bring the issue to top U.S. officials. U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright told American Jewish officials Thursday that she would discuss the recent rise in Russian anti-Semitism during a visit to Moscow that was scheduled to start Sunday.

In addition to raising the issue with Russian Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov, she said she will appeal directly to the Russian people to exercise greater tolerance and oppose anti-Semitism. Albright also told the group that while she is planning discussions with opposition lawmakers, she will not meet with Communist Party leader Gennady Zyuganov because of his recent anti-Semitic remarks.

Last fall, two other Russian legislators from the Communist Party made a series of anti-Semitic comments. Drawing international condemnation as well as criticism from President Boris Yeltsin's government, the Russian Parliament failed to condemn those remarks.

At a meeting in Washington on Thursday, the National Conference on Soviet Jewry and the Anti-Defamation League presented Albright with a paper on anti-Semitism detailing specific steps Russian leaders should take to combat the phenomenon. The ADL plans to conduct a poll on anti-Semitic attitudes among Russians in the coming weeks.

In Moscow, meanwhile, Sharon discussed the Middle East peace process with Primakov.

Primakov told Sharon that Russia wanted to play a more active role in the region.

Primakov, a longtime Middle East expert who is known as an Arabist, said Russia strongly supported the land-for-peace formula to settle the Israeli-Palestinian peace conflict.

Sharon welcomed Russia's desire to revive its influence in the region and said Moscow should use its close ties with the Palestinians to prevent the Palestinian Authority from taking unilateral steps, such as declaring independence.

Sharon and his Russian hosts also discussed bilateral relations, the rise of anti-Semitism in Russia and security issues, including international terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

In talks with Primakov and Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov, Sharon touched on the sensitive issue of Russian help for Iran's nuclear and missile programs.

Last week, the United States imposed sanctions against three Russian scientific institutes, accusing them of helping Tehran with dual-use technologies. Last July, the U.S. imposed sanctions on seven Russian research and manufacturing enterprises for the same reason. Russian officials categorically denied the accusations.

Moscow says it is helping Iran to build a nuclear plant but that the program has no military purpose and does not violate any international non-proliferation agreements.

Concerning the recent surge of anti-Semitic incidents, Sharon said his hosts strongly condemned anti-Semitism. He especially praised Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov for his "firm stand" on the matter.

Sharon said, however, that he did not believe Russia was doing everything possible to curb anti-Semitism. "I told [Russian leaders] that it is not enough to voice protest. Concrete acts should be performed." □

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

Despite unanswered questions, Berlin's Jewish museum to open

By Deidre Berger

FRANKFURT (JTA) — After six years of construction, a prolonged debate about administrative control and numerous delays, Berlin's Jewish museum will be officially dedicated this weekend.

As of Feb. 5, visitors will be able to tour on weekends the unusual zigzag-shaped building — designed by Polish-Israeli architect Daniel Libeskind — which has been praised as an architectural masterpiece.

Exhibitions are scheduled to open in the fall of 2000, but no one seems to know just which artifacts the museum will display.

The museum's opening comes amid the ongoing dispute regarding the proposed national Holocaust memorial in Berlin. A new plan unveiled this week to combine the memorial with a research center failed to end more than a decade of dicker over the memorial.

German officials are now questioning whether there will be enough political consensus to move forward.

The compromise plan — which was negotiated by former U.S. Treasury Secretary Michael Blumenthal, the head of the soon-to-be-opened Jewish museum — adds the research center and a giant wall of 1 million books to the monument, which was designed by American architect Peter Eisenman.

The compromise, which was agreed to by Eisenman, Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder and his cultural minister, Michael Naumann, both of whom originally opposed the monument, would also reduce the size of Eisenman's memorial from 2,700 to about 1,800 stone slabs.

After discussions with members of all parties, the president of Parliament, Wolfgang Thierse, said this week that continuing objections by different legislators means that the issue is not yet ready for parliamentary discussion.

A major stumbling block to the project may be its cost: Instead of its original \$9 million price tag, the latest plan has become a \$54 million dollar project.

At a time when the German government is straining under the costs of moving its administration from Bonn to Berlin, the project's high construction costs could torpedo its chances altogether.

The agreement on the memorial, meanwhile, appears to pave the way for an arrangement between the Jewish museum and the memorial, although exactly what the relationship will be remains unclear.

The museum itself has not been free from controversy.

The city of Berlin fired the museum's previous director, Israeli curator Amon Barzel, in part because he wanted the museum to project a more universal and contemporary approach to Jewish art and history.

The dispute between Barzel and Berlin government officials became so intense that the officials began referring to the building as "the Libeskind Building," stripping it of the designation "Jewish museum."

At one point, the Berlin city museum also threatened to take over large parts of the exhibition space for displays on non-Jewish themes, thereby reducing the Jewish museum to a wing of the

building. After Blumenthal was hired to direct the museum, the museum gained administrative autonomy to determine the content of its exhibitions without interference from city officials.

At a news conference earlier this week, Blumenthal, who was born near Berlin, said the museum would focus on the Holocaust and German Jewish history, particularly in Berlin.

Assistant Director Tom Freudenheim said the main exhibition will depict the history of Jews in Germany from Roman times to the present. In addition, there will be temporary exhibitions displaying Jewish art, history and culture.

Critics say the museum does not own enough objects to begin to fill the large museum.

Members of Berlin's Jewish community, who fought to keep it as a Jewish museum when its future was uncertain, say they have not been informed about current plans.

"There has been no contact with us until now about the concept of the museum," said Julius Schoeps, a member of the community and the director of the Moses Mendelssohn Center for Jewish Studies at the University of Potsdam.

Hermann Simon, director of Berlin's Centrum Judaicum, an archive and exhibition hall, says he also has not been informed of museum plans.

Still, he said he assumed the two institutions would continue to cooperate on certain exhibitions, especially those on Berlin Jewish history.

The two institutions have jointly presented several exhibitions in past years while the new Jewish museum space was being completed.

According to the museum, its main exhibition will highlight relations between German Jews and non-Jews, the assimilation and integration of German Jews, the role and influence of Jewish citizens in Germany, anti-Semitism, Nazi persecution, the Holocaust and contemporary Jewish life.

The new museum does not yet have adequate financing, officials say. Blumenthal estimates that its annual operating costs will be about \$11 million. Fund-raising efforts were being kicked off at a gala dinner for 500 guests on Saturday evening, which cost cosponsors up to \$15,000 a table.

Honorary guests include Chancellor Schroeder, cultural minister Naumann and Berlin Mayor Eberhard Diepgen. Sponsors include corporations such as Bosch, Mercedes, Siemens and Krupp, as well as unions and private contributors.

The building's shape is based on a Star of David that is intersected by a straight line.

In a brochure about the museum issued for the opening, Libeskind says he had three goals when designing the building: the enormous contribution to Berlin history made by its Jewish citizens, the necessity of integrating Holocaust memory into the consciousness of the city and the acknowledgment of the erasure and void of Berlin's Jewish life.

Libeskind has dubbed the project "Between the Lines" because of the two main lines in the building.

"One is a straight line, but broken into many fragments; the other is a tortuous line but continuing indefinitely," Libeskind has written.

In a recent interview, Libeskind admitted it will not be easy for curators to work with the unusual jagged spaces he has created. "To tell the story with appropriate objects in an adequate manner will be the task of gifted curators." □