



# Daily News Bulletin

Vol. 77, No. 116

Tuesday, June 22, 1999

82<sup>nd</sup> Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### U.S. internees to get payments

Most of the Americans who were approved to receive money from the German government because they were imprisoned in Nazi camps should receive their share of about \$18.5 million from Germany by the end of the summer, according to a source familiar with the talks.

As a result of an agreement between the United States and Germany, the U.S. Treasury will make one-time payments ranging from \$30,000 to \$250,000 to about 235 survivors.

### Shells hit northern Israel

Northern Israel came under artillery fire Sunday night, when Hezbollah gunmen retaliated for the wounding of three Lebanese civilians during an Israeli operation against Hezbollah earlier in the day.

There were no reports of damage or injuries. After an alert was issued by Israeli authorities, many residents of northern Israel spent the night in bomb shelters or left the area for other parts of the country.

### Jew freed from Chechnya

A Jewish officer in the Russian army who was kidnapped last year in the breakaway republic of Chechnya has been freed in a prisoner swap.

After his release, Lt. Sergei Fishman, 25, told JTA that his kidnapers in Chechnya had tortured him, singling him out for especially harsh treatment because of his Jewish roots.

### Agency to confirm appointments

The Jewish Agency for Israel is holding its four-day annual assembly in Tiberias, where Prime Minister-elect Ehud Barak is scheduled to speak during closing ceremonies Wednesday. Several appointments are expected to be confirmed then, including Sallai Meridor as chairman, Chaim Chesler as treasurer and Alex Grass as chairman of the agency's Board of Governors. Aaron Abramovitch was approved Sunday as the agency's next director general.

Meanwhile, the agency's Board of Governors of the Jewish Agency for Israel approved Sunday an \$11 million allocation for the absorption of Jews from Ethiopia, Russia and Yugoslavia. An Ethiopian Air flight carrying 88 Jewish immigrants from the northern Kwara region is expected to land in Tel Aviv on Tuesday evening, according to agency officials.

## BEHIND THE HEADLINES

### Four years after congressional move, U.S. Embassy is still rooted in Tel Aviv

By Matthew Dorf

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Four years after the U.S. Congress overwhelmingly passed a law requiring the United States to move its embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, the mission remains firmly rooted outside the Jewish state's capital city.

President Clinton last Friday blocked the embassy move by invoking his authority to waive the law based on the "national security" interests of the United States.

Clinton refused to relocate the embassy, arguing that such a step would put at risk "a successful conclusion to the Middle East peace process."

Since Israel reunified Jerusalem after the 1967 Six-Day War, American Jews and their allies in Congress have called for the embassy move to bolster Israel's claims to the city.

Since the Israeli-Palestinian peace process began in 1993, the U.S. administration has maintained that the embassy should not move until the status of Jerusalem is determined in peace negotiations.

The congressional effort to move the embassy peaked in 1995 when Congress passed a law, the Jerusalem Embassy Act, that imposed financial sanctions on the U.S. administration's foreign policy budget if the embassy was not moved by May 31 of this year.

Clinton's action last week waives those sanctions for six months.

And while some members of Congress vow to press forward with legislation that takes away Clinton's authority to further delay the move, others express satisfaction with compromise steps by the administration to enhance Jerusalem's status in other ways.

Jewish groups had mixed reactions to the waiver.

"We're disappointed — to put it mildly," Howard Kohr, executive director of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, said of Clinton's long-expected decision.

"I am confident the embassy is going to wind up in Jerusalem. I am confident the United States will recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital," Kohr said.

"When? That's the question."

But the Reform movement said there are "understandable reasons not to force a decision on moving the embassy at this precise moment."

"This is about when, not about whether to move the embassy," said a statement by the four groups that comprise that movement.

Americans for Peace Now praised Clinton's waiver, saying, "If the relocation had gone forward, it would have poisoned the environment on the eve of final-status negotiations and compromised America's position as a mediator in the peace talks."

Many Jewish activists believe that the embassy will not move until Israel reaches an agreement with the Palestinian Authority, which claims the eastern half of Jerusalem as the capital of a future state.

"Obviously if there is a final-status agreement, that will pave the way for immediate implementation," said Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

Publicly activists continue to call for the immediate implementation of the law, which in addition to requiring the embassy move declares that the United States "should" recognize a united Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

But privately, Hoenlein and others have led negotiations to compromise with the

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Iran denies plans for talks

Iran denied a report in the Israeli daily Ha'aretz that President Mohammad Khatami wants to open secret talks with Israel.

The report is part of a "baseless disinformation campaign by the Zionist propaganda machine," a Foreign Ministry spokesman was quoted as saying Monday by the Iranian state news agency IRNA.

### Passage route could cost billions

An elevated highway linking the West Bank and Gaza Strip would cost \$2 billion and take years to build, the Israeli daily Yediot Achronot reported Sunday, quoting Finance Ministry officials.

Prime Minister-elect Ehud Barak proposed the 29-mile highway last week as a way to keep unauthorized Palestinians from entering Israel.

Palestinian officials called on Barak to allow Palestinians to use Israeli roads until the highway is built.

### Statehood meeting delayed

The Palestinian Central Council delayed a meeting to discuss statehood until after the new Israeli government is formed, the council's chairman said Monday.

In April, the council delayed a declaration of statehood, fearing it would affect the Israeli election campaign.

### Israel facing drought

Israel is facing a water crisis that officials describe as worse than that experienced during the 1990-1991 drought, the Israeli daily Ha'aretz said in an editorial Sunday.

"For the first time, there is an imminent threat to the supply of drinking water, which is liable to be realized as early as next year," the newspaper said, adding that the shortage will also have a "severe effect" on the ecology of Israel.

Clinton administration on interim steps to help solidify Israel's claim to the city.

One such compromise has led the United States to quietly expand its diplomatic presence in Jerusalem, where the United States had maintained only a consulate in the eastern part of the city.

Until recently, the U.S. ambassador to Israel maintained a suite of offices at a Jerusalem hotel.

Last year, the embassy took a larger space in condominiums at Jerusalem's Hilton Hotel, where the level of public activities has increased and official U.S. functions have taken place.

Despite his continued opposition to move the embassy, Clinton signaled his willingness to discuss proposals to further expand and publicize the ambassador's activities in Jerusalem.

In a carefully negotiated exchange of letters between the president and Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-N.Y.), Clinton wrote, "Your ideas are thoughtful, constructive and can serve as a useful basis for discussion and for possible future action."

But such nuanced approaches have not satisfied many of the administration's critics on Capitol Hill.

"It is deplorable that the administration has not fulfilled the law and has not acted in good faith to move the American Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem," said Sen. Jon Kyl (R-Ariz.).

Kyl, one of the most outspoken opponents of Clinton's failure to implement the law, is working on legislation that would in effect take away the presidential waiver.

"There will be legislative action," said Douglas Feith, a Washington attorney who is a close adviser to Kyl on foreign policy issues.

A new bill is necessary to remedy the "scofflaw behavior of the president," he said. Israel's outgoing government also wants to see the embassy moved.

"Israel regrets that the transfer of the U.S. Embassy to its historic capital Jerusalem was delayed once again," said Zalman Shoval, Israel's ambassador to the United States. Shoval said in a statement that he hopes "this would be the last postponement."

Israel's Prime Minister-elect Ehud Barak has taken no position on the legislation. For Moynihan, the key now is to avoid a fight on Jerusalem.

"The last thing we need is a divisive battle in Washington over Jerusalem, that will suggest to" the Palestinians that American support for a united Jerusalem is wavering, said David Luchins, a senior Moynihan aide.

With AIPAC and the American government preparing for a visit to Washington next month by Israeli Prime Minister-elect Ehud Barak, some of Barak's supporters want to see the embassy issue placed on the back burner.

Pressing the issue now is "disingenuous and not helpful to the Barak government," said Seymour Reich, former chairman of the Conference of Presidents. "Whether we like it or not, Jerusalem is an issue to be discussed" at the peace table. □

## Controversial Cousteau letter found

LONDON (JTA) — The biographer of Jacques Cousteau has uncovered evidence that the late underwater explorer harbored anti-Semitic attitudes.

A letter written 58 years ago by Cousteau during the wartime rule of France's pro-Nazi Vichy government was published last week in the French daily Le Monde after being found by the biographer.

The letter was published on the day Cousteau was eulogized at the Academie Francaise and immortalized in French cultural history.

Cousteau, then a 31-year-old naval officer, wrote to a friend on May 1, 1941, to say that he and his family could find nowhere suitable to live in Marseilles.

"There will be no decent apartment available until we have kicked out all these ignoble yids who are burdening us," wrote Cousteau, who died two years ago.

Biographer Bernard Violet noted that Cousteau often made racist remarks in private, while writer Erik Orsenna, who delivered the Academie Francaise eulogy, told Le Monde that while the letter was "clearly ignoble," it reflected its times.

If all French correspondence from the era were to be reread today, he said, "one would find a great deal of anti-Semitism of this kind." □



## Daily News Bulletin

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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](http://www.jta.org).  
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## JEWISH WORLD

### Reward posted in shul action

The North American Board of Rabbis is offering a \$10,000 reward for information leading to the arrest of those responsible for last Friday's arson attacks on three synagogues in the area of Sacramento, Calif.

Private individuals have offered similar rewards totaling \$35,000.

### Moscow children's center opens

A children's center housing close to 30 Jewish boys and girls was dedicated last week in Moscow.

The Passin-Waxman Center was established with a \$250,000 grant from Anita Waxman, a successful Broadway producer.

The home, believed to be the first such center to open in Russia in 65 years, is also supported by a number of local donors.

### Coalition calls for inquiry

Christian Coalition President Pat Robertson asked Senate Republicans last week to launch an inquiry into the Internal Revenue Service for what he said was its "selective enforcement" in granting tax-exempt status.

The IRS recently denied the conservative Christian lobby's application for tax-exempt status, concluding that the group's political activities were too partisan. Robertson also promised a major push to elect Republicans next year, saying the IRS ruling will "only be a hiccup in our operation."

### Poland releases Catholic activist

A Catholic activist who led a campaign to erect hundreds of crosses near the site of the Auschwitz death camp was released from jail last Friday, a day after Pope John Paul II ended his trip to Poland.

Kazimierz Switon was arrested in late May for placing explosives near the crosses in an unsuccessful attempt to prevent their removal. He was freed after a regional court overturned a lower court's ruling that he could be detained pending trial.

### Extremists march in Moscow

Some 100 Russian ultranationalists gathered in Moscow on Sunday to demand the repeal of a law that imposes fines on those who incite ethnic hatred.

The protesters, members of several extremist groups, claimed the law restricts freedom of speech.

### Grant goes to Jewish education

Steven Spielberg's Righteous Persons Foundation awarded a \$200,000 grant to the Jewish Community Center Association to develop a new preschool curriculum for Jewish children.

The curriculum will bring highlights from Pirke Avot, or Ethics of the Fathers, using such media as music, computers and storytelling.

## Display of Ten Commandments gets Congress' nod, Jews' rebuke

By Daniel Kurtzman

WASHINGTON (JTA) — The U.S. House of Representatives has passed legislation that many observers say takes a sledgehammer to the wall separating church and state.

In a frenzy of activity last week regarding legislation to deter juvenile crime, lawmakers passed a series of amendments they said were aimed at instilling children with traditional values and addressing what House Republican Whip Tom Delay (R-Texas) called "the abandonment of God on the public arena."

The most controversial measure, passed by a 248-180 vote, permits states to allow the display of the Ten Commandments in schools and other public places.

The largely symbolic move drew swift condemnation from church-state watchdogs, as did the House's approval of amendments promoting prayer in public schools, approving religious symbols or language for memorials in public schools and bypassing existing rules governing federal funding of juvenile programs run by religious institutions. None of the measures, however, stands a realistic chance of becoming law because the Senate is not likely to approve them and President Clinton is likely to veto any such legislation.

Rabbi David Saperstein, director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, called the House's action an "insidious" effort to erode church-state separation "under the guise of advancing protection for our children."

The amendments passed as lawmakers debated the causes of youth violence and proposals for stricter gun control laws and a ban on the distribution of violent entertainment.

During heated debate over the Ten Commandments measure, Rep. Robert Aderholt (R-Ala.), its main sponsor, said he understood that "simply posting the Ten Commandments will not instantly change the moral character of our nation. However, it is an important step to promote morality and an end of children killing children."

One supporter of the amendment, Rep. Bob Barr (R-Ga.), recently said that the Columbine massacre in Littleton, Colo., would not have occurred if the Ten Commandments had been posted in the school.

Nathan Diament, director of the Institute for Public Affairs of the Orthodox Union, said that the organization has not directly addressed the question of posting the Ten Commandments in schools, but "from a sincere religious perspective that takes the Ten Commandments and what they stand for very seriously, it's hard to see how posting the Ten Commandments on a wall has much value."

"I do not think that Dylan Klebold would have stopped in his tracks if he saw 'Thou shall not kill' hanging on the wall," he said, referring to one of the two Columbine High School gunmen who killed 13 people in addition to themselves on April 20.

Not everyone agreed with the reactions expressed by Jewish groups. Pat Robertson, head of the Christian Coalition, hailed the vote as a "courageous move toward bringing values back into our public schools after decades of banishment by the courts."

Rep. Jerrold Nadler (D-N.Y.), who joined with other Jewish Democratic lawmakers in voting against the measure, raised constitutional questions: "Whose Ten Commandments? Which version? The Catholic version? The Protestant version? Or the Jewish version?"

In 1980, the Supreme Court struck down a Kentucky law requiring the posting of a copy of the Ten Commandments in public school classrooms, ruling that it violated the constitutionally mandated separation of church and state.

Both chambers of Congress have previously adopted resolutions supporting an Alabama judge's defiance of an order to remove a posting of the Ten Commandments in his courtroom. But neither of those actions carried the force of law.

For his part, President Clinton told reporters he would speak to lawmakers about "another option" that would avoid imposing one religion on students, but provided no specifics. □

**BEHIND THE HEADLINES****Yugoslav Jews decide whether it's safe to go home, fear backlash***By Michael J. Jordan*

BUDAPEST (JTA) — With peace coming to Yugoslavia, now comes the tough part for many of the roughly 500 Yugoslav Jews who fled the country during the three-month conflict over Kosovo: Return home or settle abroad?

For some of the 130 refugees in Budapest, the decision was a no-brainer. Once it became apparent that peace would indeed stick, 40 headed back to Yugoslavia last Friday — most aboard a rented bus; others on their own. They were desperate to check in on their families, their property — and to return to their normal routines.

Their decisions came despite concerns about the country's tense political climate and dire economic situation — or how they would be received after leaving their homeland in its darkest hour.

"We wanted to see if peace had really been established, or whether it was for one day and would change overnight," said one woman from Belgrade, the Yugoslav capital.

"After all we've been through, we wanted to feel some sparkle of certainty. No one's talking about politics. We're just emotionally tied up with going back to our homes."

As for the remaining Yugoslav Jews still in Budapest, both the Federation of Jewish Communities in Yugoslavia and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee are urging them to go home by the end of the week.

The JDC has covered most of their costs in Budapest, including accommodations at the \$37-per-night Park Hotel.

"The Joint's basic position is that the bombing has stopped, and unless there is a very good reason for staying, they shouldn't," said Yechiel Bar-Chaim, the JDC representative for Yugoslavia.

Of the remaining 90 here, another busload of 40 was slated to leave for Belgrade in the coming days. Thirty-five more are scheduled to fly this week to Tel Aviv.

Meanwhile, 35 to 40 Yugoslav Jews already in Israel have decided against aliyah. They will fly back to Budapest this week, then go on to Belgrade. Israel had taken in up to 250 Jewish refugees during the crisis.

Only a handful of those now in Budapest have asked the JDC to stay on longer, mostly to arrange for visas.

The JDC's priority now, said Bar-Chaim, is relief for the 3,000-plus Jews in Yugoslavia. The JDC plans to provide cash grants for the elderly, maintain a pharmacy, operate soup kitchens and possibly create a small-business development project.

The JDC will also pay for 100 Yugoslav Jewish children to attend the Szarvas summer camp in Hungary, giving preference to those who endured the 78 days of NATO airstrikes.

Then there's the coming winter, and the likelihood — for Serbs, Albanians and Jews alike — of confronting harsh conditions with insufficient heating, electricity and water.

However, among all the uncertainties facing Yugoslavs, one is specific to the Jewish community: whether there will be a backlash of domestic anti-Semitism for the role in the U.S.-led airstrikes played by American policymakers of Jewish origin, such as Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, National Security Adviser Sandy Berger and Secretary of Defense William Cohen, whose father is Jewish, although he is not.

Jews in Yugoslavia and Macedonia — another country profoundly affected by the conflict — fear there will be a backlash.

This makes last Friday's arson attacks on three synagogues in Sacramento, Calif., even more ominous. Leaflets left by those responsible blamed the "International Jew World Order" and the "International Jewsmedia" for triggering the NATO attack against "Slavs" and "Serbian Christians."

While Yugoslav Jews report no official anti-Semitism, they note a tendency in their homeland to blame all Americans, or all Britons, for the air campaign spearheaded by their governments.

So it would be logical, they say, that all Jews would be blamed for the actions of Albright and her colleagues.

"It's possible that Serbs and others would make that connection because everyone knows they're Jewish," said one Yugoslav Jewish woman, who arrived in Budapest only earlier this month.

"It's something my parents and I have talked about a lot, though my mother may be a bit paranoid about it because she was in a concentration camp during the Holocaust."

"People in Yugoslavia are angry, they want to blame someone," added the woman, a primary school teacher. "A colleague of mine said, 'Why are you wearing Levi's and those Nikes? They're American.'"

Still, if this 35-year-old woman decides to emigrate, it will have been economics that weighed more heavily than anti-Semitism in her decision. Right now, she's leaning toward Israel. And considering her finances, it's clear why.

As a teacher, she earns the equivalent of only \$60 a month. Half goes for utilities for the apartment she owns, such as heating, water and electricity. The rest is for food, which forces her to rely on the financial support of her parents and boyfriend.

"The economic situation was already terrible before the war, especially for teachers," said the woman, who has an older sister already in Israel. "Now we're at the very bottom. If it can get worse than now, I cannot imagine."

Other Yugoslavs are already saying their last goodbyes.

A young Jewish woman and her Serbian husband at the Park Hotel are awaiting word on their visa applications for Australia. The husband has a cousin there. The woman will soon head to Belgrade to pick up the visas.

"There's no future for us in our country," said the woman, 25. "Financially, my parents cannot help us, and we cannot help them. They know we won't meet again for a long time, but we can't do anything about that. They know it's the only solution.

Indeed, many parents — Jewish and non-Jewish — are urging their children to seek opportunities outside Yugoslavia.

Among them is Ljiljana Kararo, 52, a Serb woman who rents an apartment in Budapest but often visits the Park Hotel to chat with her Jewish friends from Belgrade. Kararo's daughter, a 28-year-old lawyer, recently emigrated to Israel with her Yugoslav Jewish husband, and is in the process of converting to Judaism.

Meanwhile, her son, 22, is with her husband in his hometown of Dubrovnik, Croatia. Kararo herself plans to stay in Budapest indefinitely — as long, she says, as Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic maintains his destructive grip on power.

"This situation is very, very difficult, and every day I cry in my room," said Kararo, an economist and local political activist.

"But never mind emotions, because rationally, I'm thinking about what's best for my children. And I'm very happy that they are living in safety and will be working for a regular salary." □