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82nd Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Terror strikes in Netanya

Israeli officials said they would fight terrorism and continue peace talks with the Palestinian Authority despite terrorist bombings in the northern coastal town of Netanya. [Page 1]

House OKs Wye aid

Israel, the Palestinians and Jordan would receive \$1.8 billion promised by President Clinton last year under a foreign aid bill compromise in the U.S. Congress.

The House of Representatives last Friday passed by a vote of 316-100 a bill that would fund a special aid package to help implement last year's Wye agreement between Israel and the Palestinians. The Wye aid would come in addition to the some \$3 billion in foreign aid to Israel.

High court backs Ohio vouchers

The U.S. Supreme Court agreed to let new students participate in a Cleveland-area school vouchers program. In a 5-4 vote last Friday, the high court agreed to a request by the state of Ohio to put a hold on a federal judge's order that had banned new participants in the program for violating the constitutional separation between church and state.

Under the program, students receive up to \$2,500 in vouchers to attend the private or parochial school of their choice.

Israel rejects probe of slaying

Israel's Cabinet is in agreement not to reopen a general investigation into Yitzhak Rabin's assassination, but is open to addressing specific questions about the 1995 murder, an Israeli government official said.

Environment Minister Dalia Itzik made the comments about a new commission of inquiry Sunday despite recent demands by Rabin's children prompted by what they say are lingering questions about the slaying.

Barak to host first lady

U.S. first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton is scheduled to be the guest of honor at a dinner at Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak's residence this week and may attend an encounter between Israeli and Palestinian teen-agers. Clinton and her daughter, Chelsea, are slated to fly to Israel on Wednesday.

Israel says pipe bomb attacks will not derail final-status talks

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Terror struck inside Israel one day before Israeli and Palestinian officials were to begin final-status negotiations.

Israeli officials said they would fight terrorism and advance peace moves with the Palestinian Authority despite a triple bombing in the northern coastal town of Netanya.

No group claimed responsibility for the three pipe bombs that exploded Sunday, lightly to moderately wounding dozens of people. A fourth pipe bomb did not detonate.

Israeli and Palestinian officials blamed the attack on Islamic militants seeking to derail the peace process.

The Israeli Cabinet was meeting to approve the next withdrawal from the West Bank when the attack occurred.

According to witnesses and police, the explosions occurred at about 10:30 a.m. in the heart of Netanya's business district. Witnesses and police said the bombs had been planted near a garbage bin at a corner near a bank.

"I was at the corner, waiting at a red light, when I heard an explosion behind us, three explosions," said an Israel Radio reporter who was at the scene.

"There was heavy smoke and fire. I looked behind and saw fire in a pile of garbage and saw six or seven people lying on the sidewalk. Police arrived in a few minutes."

"Suddenly I heard this explosion," said another witness. "I turned around. I was burned in the hand. My father was thrown back by the force of the blast."

"Everyone was running around. People were lying in the streets. It was chaos."

Police cordoned off the area as ambulance crews began evacuating the wounded to three area hospitals. Israeli police put up roadblocks around Netanya as part of a search for suspects. A local police official confirmed that suspects had been detained for questioning based on descriptions given by witnesses.

An Israel Radio reporter said police were investigating whether the same terrorist cell that planted two pipe bombs outside the Netanya police station three months ago — an incident that caused no damage or injuries — was involved in Sunday's bombing.

Prime Minister Ehud Barak soon issued a statement saying the government was determined to eliminate terrorism and that it expected the Palestinian Authority to do likewise.

The Palestinian Authority also spoke out against the attack.

Tayeb Abdel Rahim, secretary of the Palestinian Authority, said there was a clear link between the attack and Monday's scheduled start of the final-status talks. He said the Palestinian Authority had in recent weeks arrested some 25 Islamic Jihad activists and members of the Hamas military wing who were allegedly planning terrorist attacks.

The bombing followed last week's summit in Oslo, where Barak and Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat vowed to press ahead with the final stretch of the peace process.

Deputy Defense Minister Ephraim Sneh said Sunday that Israeli officials have long been warning that Islamic militants may try to sabotage the process.

The militants "do not want us to move forward," Sneh told Israel Radio. But, he added, "the dialogue will continue."

Communications Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer said that despite Sunday's attack, he believes Israel should go ahead with the next West Bank withdrawal.

Under the terms of the September land-for-peace agreement Israel signed in Egypt, Israel is slated to transfer an additional 5 percent of the West Bank to the Palestinians

MIDEAST FOCUS

Full Golan withdrawal seen

The man likely to become Israel's chief negotiator with Syria if peace talks resume said Israel will have to give up all of the Golan Heights to make peace with Damascus.

Former general Uri Saguy was quoted in an Arabic-language Israeli newspaper as saying that Syria would "not get less than what Jordan or Egypt got," referring to land Israel gave back to these countries after peace treaties were reached with them.

Settler outpost dismantled

Mobile homes were removed from Mitzpe Crumm, a Jewish settlement on the West Bank that is one of 12 slated for evacuation under a deal reached last month between the Israeli government and Jewish settler leaders.

Meanwhile, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak extended a deadline for settler leaders to dismantle the remaining outposts in a bid to avoid a showdown with settlers in a forced eviction. Over the weekend, about 200 people gathered at another West Bank outpost and vowed not to leave.

South Africa invites Weizman

South African President Thabo Mbeki last week invited Israeli President Ezer Weizman to pay an official visit to this country. The invitation, prompted by progress in the peace process, came in the wake of former South African President Nelson Mandela's visit to Israel and the Middle East.

Israel's AIDS response blasted

Israel is far behind Europe in accepting and treating those who have the virus that causes AIDS, a leading British AIDS activist told Ha'aretz.

Andrew Stone said he is "shocked" that some Israeli pharmacists refuse to stock drugs to treat AIDS, condoms are not readily available and there is no effective sex education in schools.



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on Nov. 15. "I see no reason to stop this process," Ben-Eliezer told Israel Radio.

In the wake of the attack, Israeli police were put on heightened alert throughout the country. Police Commissioner Yehuda Wilk said police had received no specific information of a planned attack in Netanya.

He dismissed a possible link between the nail-packed pipe bombs in Netanya and a Hamas leaflet distributed over the weekend threatening attacks against Israel.

"This is not the same" kind of attack "as the leaflet discussed. This was a pipe bomb with improvised explosives." But "that doesn't say there won't be attempts to carry out more serious attacks," he added.

Hamas leader Sheik Ahmed Yassin was quoted as telling Qatar television he could neither confirm nor deny the authenticity of the leaflet because he was not in contact with the organization's military wing.

The attack in Netanya, located about 11 miles west of the boundary with the territories, further fueled an ongoing debate over whether to create a physical separation between Israel and the West Bank.

"I think we must move forward and view the separation as a central objective when we reach a final agreement with the Palestinians," Ben-Eliezer said.

Knesset member Uzi Landau, a member of the Likud opposition, charged that Barak has adopted too soft an attitude toward the Palestinian Authority.

"It is very clear that terrorist attacks we saw this morning in Netanya are not only continuing, but will continue because the government relates with forgiveness to all of the Palestinian Authority violations," Landau said.

"Arafat was much more determined in his fight against terror" during the tenure of former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, he added. "There were hardly any terrorist attacks. But apparently Arafat is not afraid of Mr. Barak." □

British rabbi to post names on Web to help give Orthodox women divorces

By Douglas Davis

LONDON (JTA) — An Orthodox rabbi in London is preparing to name and shame estranged husbands who refuse to give their wives a Jewish divorce that would enable them to remarry according to Jewish law.

Rabbi Pini Dunner of the Saatchi Synagogue in London said the names will be posted on his shul's Web site next month.

"We want to do whatever we can to marginalize and point the finger at those who are abusing their rights within halachah to put women in this state," Dunner said.

Any woman whose husband refuses her a get will be invited to tell the rabbi of his name, address and synagogue affiliation, and after the appropriate legal checks have been conducted, his details will be posted on the Web site. Dunner anticipates requests from "several dozen women" who are classified as agunot, or chained women, who are prevented from remarrying in an Orthodox ceremony.

Any children born to an agunah are classified as mamzerim, or illegitimate, and may marry only other mamzerim, according to Jewish law.

No such provision applies to a husband who fathers children without first completing the Orthodox requirements for divorce.

About 100 men and women chained themselves outside the office of British Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks last month to protest the divorce laws. Sacks announced earlier this year that another person would be named to his Beit Din, or religious court, in a bid to find a solution to the problem, but no answer has been found.

At least one Orthodox rabbi in London is expressing a willingness to follow Dunner's example: "If somebody submitted to me a list of men who refused to grant their wives religious divorces, I would certainly be prepared to hang that list up in my synagogue," declared Rabbi Yitzhak Schochet of Mill Hill United Synagogue.

Public humiliation was likely to be more effective than seeking a change in the law, he added. "There are all these madames in Hollywood who threaten to name their clients.

"This is the same idea and I think, to a certain extent, it will work." □

JEWISH WORLD

Progress seen in slave labor talks

U.S. and German mediators said progress last Friday in talks regarding a German compensation fund for World War II-era slave laborers justified a new round of talks next week.

But U.S. Deputy Treasury Secretary Stuart Eizenstat and German mediator Otto Lambsdorff said they do not believe an agreement on the size of the fund will be reached at the talks, scheduled to begin Nov. 16 in Bonn.

J.P. Morgan said ready to settle

An American bank reportedly agreed to settle a lawsuit over its Holocaust-era dealings for \$2.75 million. In the agreement involving J.P. Morgan, the bank does not make any admission of guilt.

Bush backs creationism

The leading Republican candidate for the U.S. presidency said he wants creationism to be taught alongside evolution in the country's public schools.

Texas Gov. George W. Bush also said last week that he believes the decision over how to teach the origins of the world should be left to local school officials.

Papon moved to prison cell

A French Nazi collaborator jailed last month after he fled to Switzerland was moved from a prison hospital to an ordinary cell. The lawyer for Maurice Papon said he has appealed to prison authorities to move Papon back to a hospital room.

Papon was sentenced to a 10-year term last year after he was found guilty of helping deport some 1,500 Jews to Nazi death camps during World War II.

Action urged on genetic testing

Conservative Jewish congregations in North America should educate their members about the issues surrounding genetic testing and communicate their concerns to politicians, according to a vote taken by Conservative delegates.

The delegates, who met last week at the biennial conference of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, also voted to support the passage of the Hate Crimes Prevention Act, which President Clinton recently vetoed after congressional Republicans stripped it of tougher hate crimes provisions.

Survivor dies at 101

A Holocaust survivor who lived to 101 died last Friday in New York.

Pepi Deutsch, who was in her 40s when she arrived at Auschwitz from Hungary, was assigned to hard labor instead of being sent to the gas chambers because she looked younger than her years.

Ukrainian Jews likely to support president against Communist rival

By Lev Gorodetsky

MOSCOW (JTA) — In the runoff for the Ukrainian presidency, most Jewish voters are expected to support the status quo, as they did the first time around.

But some older voters may cast their votes for nostalgia and support the Communist candidate.

In the Nov. 14 voting, the country's nearly half-million Jews will join the rest of the 38 million voters in the former Soviet republic in choosing between incumbent President Leonid Kuchma, who in the Oct. 31 first round won 36.5 percent of the vote.

His closest rival, Communist leader Pyotr Simonenko, came in second with 22.5 percent.

Despite the substantial gap in the first round, the results of the runoff, part of Ukraine's second presidential election since it became independent in 1991, are not easily predictable.

Kuchma, 61, will find it difficult to add substantially to his vote total, while the 47-year-old Simonenko is forming alliances in a bid to become the candidate of a united opposition. Some 13 candidates split the vote in the first round.

Observers say that in the first round a large majority of Jews, who cast their votes in numbers much larger than their proportion of the Ukrainian population, voted for Kuchma.

The former head of a rocket plant and cautious politician has maintained good relations with the Jewish community.

Their desire to support Kuchma comes despite accusations that he financed his re-election campaign with state funds and denied other candidates fair access to the media. "The impression was," said one observer, "that all the media worked for one candidate."

The allegations involving Kuchma's campaign bear a striking resemblance to those that surrounded Russian Boris Yeltsin in his 1996 runoff with Communist leader Gennady Zyuganov.

There is another striking commonality between the two campaigns.

Victor Pinchuk, a business and media tycoon, is reported to have access to Kuchma through the president's daughter.

In the Russian election, Jewish business and media tycoon Boris Berezovsky reportedly influenced Yeltsin through his daughter, Tatiana.

Simonenko, a former mining engineer and a Communist Party functionary in the strongly pro-Russian Ukrainian East, can't be discounted.

While Jews in Ukraine usually associate Communist symbols and ideology with the notorious state anti-Semitism of the Soviet era, Simonenko has not used any anti-Semitic slogans or anti-Zionist rhetoric.

Therefore, says Arkady Monastirsky, a Ukrainian Jewish leader, "many Jewish voters in the east, in Crimea and in small cities will vote for Simonenko, especially the older generation with its many former party members."

Many older voters, Jews among them, are attracted to Simonenko and his talk of a "united empire," which he is feeding by calling for a referendum on whether Ukraine should join Russia and Belarus in a Slavic union. □

Protest dropped against extremist runner

NEW YORK (JTA) — Jewish groups in Brooklyn agreed to drop their protest against the participation of an Austrian extremist in the New York City Marathon after the politician agreed to meet with them.

Jörg Haider, who was expected to meet with Jewish leaders Monday after participating in Sunday's marathon, said at the National Press Club in Washington last week, "We are aware of the cruelty of the Holocaust, and therefore I think it's necessary to make clear that my party especially abhors totally what Hitler and his Nazi regime has promoted and done." □

NEWS ANALYSIS

**As Hungary moves rightward,
old lie about Jews gets new life***By Michael J. Jordan*

BUDAPEST (JTA) — Hungary is the newest battlefield in a century-old war against a pamphlet that has incited anti-Semitic hatred the world over.

“The Protocols of the Elders of Zion,” first penned in the 1890s to expose a supposed Jewish conspiracy to dominate the world, is viewed by most as a great hoax. It has also been a deadly one, as it led directly to the killings of Jews.

Yet the notorious tract is still a popular weapon for anti-Semites, despite various attempts to prohibit its publication outright and to confront it head on, debunking it libel by libel.

In August an obscure publisher released the first Hungarian edition of the “Protocols” since the Holocaust. Jewish leaders here — usually reticent to make waves — sprang forth in protest. Describing it as a “disgusting pamphlet,” they accused the publisher of inciting hatred against Jews.

As a result of the publicity, book sales soared, reportedly from an initial press run of 3,000 into the tens of thousands.

Still, leaders of the 100,000-strong Jewish community felt compelled to speak out. Only two years ago, Hitler’s “Mein Kampf” reappeared in kiosks.

Now, as the Hungarian government drifts farther to the right, there’s word that an even more venomous prewar rant, “The Jewish Question in Hungary,” is set for re-release.

The “Mein Kampf” and “Protocols” cases are under review by state prosecutors, as post-Communist Hungary dawdles in drawing the line between unfettered freedom of expression and blatant efforts to whip up anti-Jewish hatred.

Meanwhile, the Jewish community is trying to help draw that line: On Oct. 15, it forwarded to the Prime Minister’s Office a legislative proposal that would criminalize the act of fomenting intercommunal hatred. The proposal is based on German and Austrian models, said Jewish officials.

Why the “Protocols” has endured can be only partly attributed to anti-Semitism, says Hadassa Ben-Itto, a leading expert on the subject and the first woman appointed to the Israeli Supreme Court. “It’s also a useful tool in the hands of politicians — not against Jews” specifically, “but to cover up for their own failures,” said the retired judge.

“Economic crisis, wars, disasters, famine. They say, ‘Everything can be explained by the Jewish conspiracy: Just read the ‘Protocols!’” All they have to do is point a finger and around the corner is the most available scapegoat — Jews.”

Ben-Itto was speaking at a news conference last week in Budapest to launch the Hungarian version of her book, “The Lie That Wouldn’t Die.” She had two aims in writing the book: first, to inform Jews, who often dismiss the “Protocols” as too far-fetched to warrant serious debate; and second, as a rapid reaction to “Protocols” proliferation.

Open-minded, intelligent people must be armed with the facts, she says, and encouraged to speak out against it.

However, the onus to do so actually rests on non-Jews, said Ferenc Glatz, president of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, which hosted Ben-Itto’s news conference. “I’m against censoring

or abolishing certain books, but I am for raising your voice and speaking out against them,” said Glatz, a Lutheran widely regarded as philo-Semitic. “And it is not the obligation of Jews to speak up, but for non-Jews to say we don’t agree with these views.”

Regardless, the Hungarian comeback of the “Protocols” is a major concern for Jewish leaders. It reinforces the hand of those already obsessed with Jews.

The country’s leading far-right parliamentarian, Istvan Csurka, routinely makes veiled and not-so-veiled references to Jewish influence. He refers darkly to “global financial circles” tightening the noose around Hungary and “cosmopolitan” liberals who corrupt the national character.

Csurka also articulates what many ordinary Hungarians find uncanny: how a Jewish minority that constitutes just 1 percent of Hungarian society is overrepresented in the media, in the leading symphony orchestras and in the recent Hungarian delegation of authors to the Frankfurt Book Fair.

What worries Hungarian Jews more than the views of the masses is the official response. Prime Minister Viktor Orban and his Cabinet have made no public declarations to condemn or distance themselves from a rising tide of incidents.

“We are now approaching an era where there are hints of political anti-Semitism,” said Peter Tordai, president of the Hungarian Federation of Jewish Communities.

“I don’t know if it depends on political interests, but government officials are either not hearing, or ignoring, these things. It would be a good idea for Mr. Orban to speak out against them.”

Some Hungarian Jews, joined by a few church leaders, instead called for certain books to be banned.

In response, one government official said the rapid growth of the Internet may render all censorship futile. On the other hand, she criticized Jewish leaders for drawing attention to the “Protocols” and boosting its sales.

“If someone in a book shop sees a title that begins with ‘Protocols,’ it will sound boring, so why would they buy it?” said Maria Schmidt, a historian and key advisor to Orban. “But if there’s a scandal over a book, they’ll run to buy it.

“I would have taken” money and “bought most of the copies in a very discreet way,” Schmidt said. “But I wouldn’t have gone on television and had a press conference to say it should be prohibited.”

As for Hitler’s writings, Schmidt said, “I think ‘Mein Kampf’ is an important book. It moved all of Germany. It moved the world. It was a fundamental work of the Nazi movement.”

The government, rather than speak out against “Mein Kampf” or the “Protocols,” made a token gesture through the Ministry of Cultural Heritage: It helped sponsor Ben-Itto’s trip to Budapest and contributed some funds to publish her book.

Among the cynical and anti-Semitic in Hungarian society, an Israeli-authored book might just be viewed as “more” Jewish propaganda, to be taken with a large grain of salt.

So it’s an uphill struggle. But the truth about the “Protocols” must prevail, said Ben-Itto, who is also president of the International Association of Jewish Lawyers and Judges.

“This book is in libraries, it’s on the Internet, it’s sold by Amazon. All you need to gain access to legitimate society — and into the minds of people — is to put your ideas in a book.

“There is no way we can stop it. The only way we can fight this libel is with the truth and with the facts.” □