



Daily News Bulletin

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82nd Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Gore thanks U.S. Jews

U.S. Vice President Al Gore acknowledged the American Jewish community's consistent pursuit of social justice.

Speaking to the opening of the United Jewish Communities' General Assembly, he said, "I want to thank you for your daily battles for justice."

UJC merger approved

The merger of the Council of Jewish Federations, the United Jewish Appeal and the United Israel Appeal became legal Wednesday, after papers were filed with the state of New York.

Meanwhile, the governing bodies of the newly formed United Jewish Communities are approving the entity's organizational structure during the group's General Assembly in Atlanta.

Representatives of all 198 North American federations will begin to formulate UJC's bylaws at a retreat scheduled for March.

Israelis rescue woman in Turkey

An Israeli team in Turkey spent more than three hours searching through rubble before rescuing a woman who had been trapped since last Friday's earthquake.

Before finding the barely conscious woman, the team found her husband, who was dead. The Israel Defense Force unit was due to complete its work and return home by Thursday, but an Israeli field hospital will continue to operate in Duzce, Turkey.

Sides closer to slave fund accord

A second and final day of talks in Bonn brought the sides closer to an agreement on creating a fund for Nazi-era slave laborers.

An atmosphere of optimism prevailed after the German government and some 50 German companies increased their previous offer of \$3.3 billion to a reported \$5.3 billion.

Barak, Clinton meet in Turkey

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak discussed the peace process with President Clinton in Turkey, where the two are participating in a 54-nation security conference. After his two-day visit in Turkey, Barak plans to fly to Britain and the United States to meet with Jewish leaders.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

As Bradley's campaign heats up, Jewish voters take stock of his record

By Michael Shapiro

WASHINGTON (JTA) — When Bill Bradley first ran for the Senate in New Jersey in 1978, many Jewish activists backed his Republican opponent, who was seen as a strong supporter of Israel and a friend to the Jewish community.

At the time, Bradley, who had retired a year earlier from a star-studded career with the New York Knicks, said he understood the Jews' decision to support the incumbent, but stressed that he, too, would be a good friend to the Jewish community and expected the same support once he was in office. He was right. He won that year and went on to serve three terms in the Senate — with strong Jewish support — before retiring in 1996.

Now, as Bradley takes on Vice President Al Gore for the Democratic Party's presidential nomination, Jews, who make up one of the most consistent voting blocs within the party, are taking stock of Bradley's career and his relationship with the Jewish community. Many longtime Jewish activists in Washington say that although Bradley was always supportive on issues such as Israel and the plight of Soviet Jewry, he never took a leading role in sponsoring legislation.

They say this contrasts with Gore, whom they describe as a leader on Jewish issues during his 16 years in the House and Senate and during his seven years as vice president of an administration strongly supported by many Jews.

Morris Amitay, who served as executive director of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee from 1974 to 1980 and now heads a pro-Israel political action committee, said that while Bradley was "not particularly a Middle East maven," officials at the pro-Israel lobby "always considered Bradley a good friend of Israel — a solid supporter" on issues such as foreign aid to Israel.

Several Jewish activists who worked with Bradley over the years said he tended to devote more of his interest and time to issues such as tax policy.

Still, Bradley has built up considerable Jewish financial and political support. And several of his top aides are Jews: Doug Berman, his campaign chairman; Gina Glantz, his campaign manager; spokesman Eric Hauser; and Marcia Aronoff, a top adviser who worked as an aide to Bradley while he was a senator and now is working out of his West Orange, N.J., campaign headquarters.

Indeed, Aronoff disputes the view that Bradley was not a leader on issues important to Jews. In a recent telephone interview, she detailed his successful efforts to pass legislation during the oil crisis — which stretched through the 1970s — that directed the Carter administration to fill U.S. petroleum reserves as a way to wean it from its dependence on oil from the Arab countries.

There was "nothing more important at that time than being willing to stand firm and free U.S. foreign policy from being hostage to OPEC," Aronoff said.

"I don't think Bradley takes a back seat to anyone in terms of what he accomplished," she added.

She said Bradley strongly opposed the sale of AWACS, a sophisticated radar plane, to Saudi Arabia; was an early co-sponsor of 1995 legislation aimed at moving the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem; and opposed a 1986 tax reform bill that would have taxed scholarships, including those some Orthodox institutions give their students.

In a speech last month to the Orthodox Union — the first to a major Jewish group since declaring his candidacy — Bradley indicated that he would be a friend to Jewish voters on key issues: Israel and religious freedom. Bradley, in recalling Moynihan's

MIDEAST FOCUS

Pope to visit Israel in March

Pope John Paul II will visit the Holy Land in March, a Vatican official said, confirming the trip for the first time.

The papal visit will take place during the last 10 days of March, and probably include stops in Jerusalem and Nazareth, Archbishop Crescenzo Sepe said Wednesday.

Newspapers cheer Suha Arafat

Several Palestinian newspapers are applauding the wife of Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat for accusing Israel of poisoning the Palestinian population.

She made the comment last week in the presence of U.S. first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton.

According to the Washington-based Middle East Media and Research Institute, one newspaper, the Palestinian Authority-affiliated Al-Hayat Al-Jadida said the main reason the White House condemned Suha Arafat was its "wish to make New York Jews happy in order to get a few votes supporting Hillary Clinton's candidacy" in next year's Senate race in New York.

Netanyahu's plane evacuated

A plane carrying former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was evacuated and searched on Wednesday after a bomb threat was received at Chicago's O'Hare Airport.

An Israeli official said the threat was not directed at Netanyahu, who was in Chicago giving a speech.

Scientists take meteor shower

Israeli and American scientists are flying over the Mediterranean Sea to observe a meteor shower Tuesday and Wednesday.

The scientists with the Israel Space Agency, NASA and the U.S. Air Force are producing three-dimensional images of the meteors.



Daily News Bulletin

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ideals and accomplishments, seemed to imply his own goodness by association with the veteran New York senator, who had just weeks before endorsed Bradley's campaign.

Alluding to Moynihan's sponsorship of the 1995 Jerusalem Embassy Relocation Act, which requires the U.S. to move its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, Bradley praised Moynihan's support of Israel's right to choose "the capital of its choice" as the recognition of "a simple truth translated to the law of the land."

Bradley also stressed in his remarks the need for more legislation to protect religious freedom in America.

Rabbi Menachem Genack, head of the kashrut division of the Orthodox Union and a New Jersey Democratic Party activist close to both President Clinton and Gore, said both Bradley and Gore would make good presidents, but he thinks Gore would be better.

"I know where his heart is," Genack said of Gore, expressing the view of many Jewish Democratic activists. He added that he believes that "there is no comparison" between Gore and Bradley's leadership on Israel and other key issues.

While many of those who have worked with Bradley said he often left "Jewish issues" to his fellow Democrat from New Jersey, Sen. Frank Lautenberg, Aronoff, Bradley's adviser, disputed that view.

Other Bradley activists said they are supporting him because he addresses social and domestic issues dear to many Jews. June Fischer, a longtime Jewish and Democratic activist from Scotch Plains, N.J., said Bradley "addresses the pluralistic issues I was weaned on," noting that he opposes school prayer, backs reproductive freedom and supports minority and gay rights.

Although Bradley as a senator supported various experimental programs that would give money or tax credits to parents who send their children to private or parochial schools — a position long anathema in most Jewish Democratic circles — his aides have said he does not believe vouchers are the "answer to curing public schools."

However, Aronoff said Bradley is "willing to look at any reasonable ideas" that will help students learn.

Rep. Jerrold Nadler, (D-N.Y.), a Jewish legislator who represents parts of Manhattan and Brooklyn, said that he believes both Bradley and Gore are good on issues of Jewish concern. But he is supporting Bradley because he believes he is a "much more electable candidate" against the eventual Republican nominee, who at this point appears to be Texas Gov. George W. Bush.

Recent polls show Bush easily beating either Gore or Bradley in a two-person race.

Nadler said in a recent interview with JTA that he thinks Bradley "is articulating a more progressive and forward-looking vision than anyone else in the campaign." He cited Bradley's proposals for universal health-care coverage and public financing of political campaigns.

"I think Bradley will have a lot of support" from Jews, Nadler said in a recent interview.

Some other prominent Jews who have thrown their support behind Bradley include Sen. Paul Wellstone (D-Minn.); Abe Pollin, owner of the NBA's Washington Wizards; Howard Schultz, CEO of Starbucks; and Louis Susman of Solomon Brothers.

It is difficult to assess Jewish financial giving to Bradley because he does not accept political action committee contributions or "bundled" contributions, which is money that is given to a group that in turn passes the money to the candidate earmarked by the contributor.

But Ira Forman, the executive director of the National Jewish Democratic Coalition, said Bradley "has gotten very significant support from the Jewish community."

And although Gore easily leads Bradley in various national polls, recent polling of the Jewish Democratic vote in New York — where Jewish voters make up 25 percent of Democratic voters — indicates that the two candidates will be battling for the Jewish vote there.

In surveying 375 Jewish Democrats over the course of seven to eight months, pollster John Zogby's numbers show Bradley leading Gore 40.5 percent to 32.4 percent. Those figures fell within the margin of error for the poll, which was plus or minus 5 percent. □

JEWISH WORLD

Swiss banks accept audit

The Swiss Bankers Association said it accepted the findings of a team of auditors probing dormant accounts from the Holocaust era in the Alpine nation's banks.

The auditors for the Volcker Commission found some 44,700 accounts that may have belonged to Holocaust victims in addition to the 5,570 already published.

The auditors also found nearly 2,000 accounts that may have belonged to senior Nazi officials.

Ad creates college controversy

Protesters sharply criticized the editors of a student newspaper at a New York college for carrying a 27-page advertisement denying the Holocaust.

Controversy erupted at Hofstra University over the appearance of "The Revisionist: A Journal of Independent Thought," which included a piece called "Gas Chamber Skepticism" and ran last month as an insert in The Chronicle.

The creator of the ad, Bradley Smith, has previously run similar ads in other college papers.

Russia charging extremist bloc

Russia began criminal proceedings against an extremist political bloc, charging that it had forged its registration documents.

The Spas bloc, Russian for "Savior," had forged the documents to register for December's legislative elections, according to the Interior Ministry.

Spas is headed by Alexander Barkashov, who also heads Russian National Unity.

Russian National Unity is the nation's largest neo-Nazi movement.

Bosnian leaders thank U.S. Jews

Bosnia's three presidents thanked the American Jewish community for its humanitarian support during the country's civil war earlier this decade.

"We cannot forget La Benelolencija," the humanitarian group run by the Sarajevo Jewish community with help from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, said the nation's Croatian president, Ante Jalevic.

The three leaders of Bosnia spoke at a luncheon Tuesday hosted by the American Jewish Committee and the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

Film sweeps Israeli Oscars

A film on the Russian immigrant experience through the eyes of a young girl in Israel swept the Israeli Oscars on Tuesday night.

"Yana's Friends" won 10 awards, including best director, actor and actress.

AROUND THE JEWISH WORLD

French Jews orphaned during war will get \$500-a-month compensation

By Lee Yanowitch

PARIS (JTA) — The orphans of Jews deported from France to Nazi death camps will receive compensation from the French government, Prime Minister Lionel Jospin has announced.

Addressing Jewish leaders over the weekend, Jospin said the orphans would receive either a lump sum or a monthly pension of about \$500 under a program to be put in place in the coming weeks.

"My belief is that the unique situation of the children orphaned by the deportations, who suffered from the loss of one and often two parents and lived under the threat of arrest and deportation, calls for a response worthy of the republic 50 years on," Jospin said Saturday at the annual dinner of CRIF, the umbrella group of secular French Jewish organizations.

"We feel it is fair that France assume its responsibilities toward those who were mistreated and ruined," said Jospin, the guest of honor at the CRIF dinner, which was attended by several Cabinet ministers, religious leaders and dozens of foreign ambassadors.

The measure represented a triumph for famed Nazi-hunter Serge Klarsfeld, who has been campaigning for decades on behalf of Holocaust orphans, particularly the children of foreign Jews deported from France, who have never received any kind of restitution.

Most of the 76,000 Jews deported from France during World War II were immigrants from Eastern Europe.

"The French state of 1940 helped the Nazis deprive thousands of Jewish children of their parents, stole their childhood and plunged their entire existence into mourning," Klarsfeld said. "The French state of 1999 appeases at last the orphans in their old age through this moral and material compensation, which will help many of them escape poverty," he said.

Klarsfeld added that some 3,000 to 5,000 people would be eligible for the compensation.

CRIF President Henri Hajdenberg praised the initiative but urged Jospin to act quickly because of the advanced age of most of the survivors.

"This measure must be implemented very rapidly so that those concerned can still benefit from it," he said.

At the CRIF dinner, Jospin spoke out on behalf of 13 Iranian Jews who were detained by Tehran earlier this year on charges of spying for Israel.

"It is clear for the French authorities that there can be no return by Iran to the international community if that country executes these 13 people," Jospin said.

"That is why I express the wish that the changes under way in Iran lead to the acquittal of the 13 Iranian Jews as a first symbolic act."

On Monday, Iran responded to Jospin's remarks by accusing France of meddling in its internal affairs.

Jospin and President Jacques Chirac discussed the fate of the 13 last month with visiting Iranian President Mohammed Khatami.

At the time, Khatami promised that the detainees would be given a fair trial.

Jewish groups staged protests during Khatami's Oct. 27-28 visit to demand the release of the 13.

Human rights groups also demonstrated to protest Iran's human rights abuses. □

Israeli team caught in call-girl scandal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Members of Israel's national soccer team reportedly caroused with call girls the night before a game against Denmark last week.

The coach of the team, Shlomo Sharf, said he is looking into the matter, adding that hotel maids might have mistaken the players' girlfriends and wives for call girls.

Denmark defeated Israel in the game by a score of 5-0. □

China-Israel deal has Congress worried about sale of technology

By Michael Shapiro

WASHINGTON (JTA) — The initial furor over Israel's sale of a radar system to China appears to have quieted, but the issue has renewed worries in Congress that U.S. allies are selling advanced military technology to Beijing.

The State Department said it does not believe Israel sold U.S. technology to China, and several Jewish activists said they believe the issue will fade because no laws were broken.

But U.S. lawmakers are still worried.

Rep. Porter Goss (R-Fla.), chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, said he is concerned about China acquiring advanced radar technology, and Rep. Sam Gejdenson (D-Conn.), the ranking member of the House International Relations Committee, said he is worried that the technology could wind up in the hands of countries like Iran.

Rep. Marty Meehan (D-Mass.), a member of the House Armed Services Committee, told C-SPAN last week that "hearings might be appropriate on the subject in general on technology transfers and potentially specifically this case with radar technology from Israel to China," according to a top aide, Bill McCann, who said no hearings have been scheduled.

The controversy comes at a time of U.S. concern over Beijing's intentions toward Taiwan, which China regards as a renegade province. While the Clinton administration has sought to engage China — he supported a deal to allow Beijing into the World Trade Organization — many Republicans and Democrats in Congress are leery of China's human rights record.

The announcement of the deal also comes several months after a congressional report alleged that Chinese spies engaged in a 20-year campaign to steal U.S. military secrets.

Meanwhile, China denied on Tuesday that it planned to buy the radar system, despite Israel's announcement of the deal.

"We don't have defense cooperation with Israel," China's Foreign Ministry spokesman, Sun Yunxi, said when asked to comment on the reported \$250 million deal, according to Reuters.

The Israel-China relationship was mentioned in a major report released earlier this year by a House committee investigating Chinese espionage and acquisition of U.S. technology.

The report, spearheaded by Rep. Christopher Cox (R-Calif.), said Israel has been one of China's leading suppliers of American technology during the 1990s.

"Significant transfers of U.S. military technology have also taken place in the mid-1990s through the re-export by Israel of advanced technology transferred to it by the United States, including avionics and missile guidance useful for the F-10 fighter," the report says. "Congress and several executive agencies have also investigated allegations that Israel has provided U.S.-origin cruise, air-to-air, and ground-to-air missile technology" to China. The declassified sections of the Cox report do not provide any details about these "significant" transfers allegedly made by Israel. A large piece of the report remains classified after a vetting by the Clinton administration's security officials.

The Bush administration investigated whether Israel illegally transferred Patriot missile launch systems technology to China, but the investigation did not confirm that such a transfer occurred.

The United States barred the sale of U.S. military equipment to China since Beijing crushed the 1989 pro-democracy protests in Tiananmen Square.

Shoshana Bryen, the director of special projects for the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs, said problems arise between the United States and Israel concerning such deals because of the close working relationship the countries have in developing weapons technology.

"The Israelis tinker with everything they buy from us," she said, noting that there are differences on where American technology stops and Israeli technology begins.

Mark Regev, the Israeli Embassy's spokesman, said in a prepared statement that "Israel has an elaborate system of checks and controls in regard to defense related exports by Israeli corporations which, of course, takes into very high consideration the special strategic and political relationship with the United States."

Israeli and Jewish officials have noted that the radar system is defensive.

"We are not giving [China] missiles or nuclear technology," an Israeli source said. □

Jew's death in Iranian custody mystery to his family in the U.S.

By Tom Tugend

LOS ANGELES (JTA) — The mysterious circumstances surrounding the death of an Iranian Jew from Los Angeles after his arrest in Tehran are baffling his family and community leaders here.

Sepehr Ebn Yamin, 44, died Nov. 7 while in the custody of Iranian authorities, and his body was turned over to the Jewish community in Tehran and buried there.

Initially, Iranian authorities said Ebn Yamin had died of a heart attack — but they revised the story later to say that he had committed suicide. The deaths of political dissidents in Iran are frequently attributed to heart attacks or suicides, a source said.

Sources do not believe that there is any connection between the death of Ebn Yamin and the case of the 13 Iranian Jews who were arrested earlier this year in Tehran on charges of spying for Israel. Ebn Yamin had returned to his native Iran about six years ago to take over a small bicycle factory near Tehran run by his father and a Muslim partner, said Sam Kermanian, secretary-general of the American Iranian Jewish Federation in Los Angeles.

Ebn Yamin apparently had previous heart problems, according to his wife and two daughters in Los Angeles.

They initially accepted that he had died of a heart attack, but became suspicious when the diagnosis was changed to suicide.

They refused to permit an autopsy on religious grounds.

The reason for Ebn Yamin's arrest is also not clear, but sources here speculate that it was based on a business dispute with his Muslim partner.

Pooya Dayanim, a spokesman for the Council of Iranian Jewish Organizations in Los Angeles, noted that a dispute with a Muslim partner may also have triggered the death of another Iranian Jewish businessman, Mansur Nejathaym.

Nejathaym was killed in his Tehran home in August, but his death remained unknown here until this week. □