



# Daily News Bulletin

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83rd Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Israeli soldier killed in Lebanon

An Israeli soldier was killed in a Hezbollah guerrilla attack in southern Lebanon, according to reports from Lebanon.

The previous Israeli fatalities there occurred last August.

At that time, three soldiers died. Israeli military officials confirmed the soldier's death but did not release his name.

### Israelis skip D.C., too

Israel decided not to send two officials to Washington to discuss a U.S. proposal for advancing Israeli-Syrian peace talks.

A statement issued by Prime Minister Ehud Barak's office said the decision came following consultations with the Clinton administration.

Syrian delegates failed to show up for a separate round of talks with U.S. officials Monday.

### Poll: Voters oppose U.S. aid

Most American voters oppose any Israeli-Syrian peace agreement that would require U.S. financial or military support, according to a poll conducted by the Washington-based Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs.

More than half of those surveyed strongly oppose such U.S. involvement in the Middle East peace process, and 42 percent said they would not re-elect their senator or congressman if he or she voted to spend American funds or commit troops as part of such an agreement.

Also, only 19 percent said "bringing peace to the Middle East" should be America's No. 1 foreign policy concern.

### Groups back united Jerusalem

Rabbinical arms of the Conservative and Orthodox movements issued a statement reiterating their position that "Jerusalem is the united and indivisible capital solely of the state of Israel."

Tuesday's statement by the Rabbinical Assembly and Rabbinical Council of America came in response to a statement released last week calling on Israel and the Palestinians to share Jerusalem.

That statement, organized by the Jewish Peace Lobby, was signed by 300 Conservative, Reconstructionist and Reform rabbis. [Page 4]

## NEWS ANALYSIS

### Religious belief and policy:

### Assessing the candidates' views

By Michael Shapiro

WASHINGTON (JTA) — No matter who wins the race for the U.S. presidency in November, American religious institutions will likely be called on to play a larger role in dispensing social services to those in need.

All of the presidential candidates support the initiative known as charitable choice, which would provide public funding to faith-based organizations to run such programs as homeless shelters or drug abuse programs.

That is the finding of a new study assessing the positions of all the current presidential candidates on a variety of issues of concern to Jews.

The study, by the National Jewish Democratic Council, was released this week as Vice President Al Gore and Texas Gov. George W. Bush cruised to victory in the Iowa presidential caucuses, giving them new momentum for the primary season that begins next week in New Hampshire.

The NJDC, whose study lays out the views of the two Democrats, six Republicans and one Reform Party candidate with their eyes on the White House, clearly has issued the report with a partisan agenda in mind — to promote the Democratic candidates as those most appealing to Jewish voters. Despite its partisan purpose, however, the guide details — through voting records, public statements and news reports — the views of the candidates on issues from Israel to abortion.

The compilation of views on church-state issues seems particularly timely, coming during a presidential race in which personal faith and church-state issues have played a prominent role. The unprecedented discussion about religion — including the revelation that Bush views Jesus as his favorite philosopher, and how Gore proudly refers to his born-again Christian beliefs — has made many Jews uncomfortable.

But others say the personal religious beliefs of a president are irrelevant or can even say something positive about a person.

"The notion that a Christian saying he is a Christian excludes Jews or is offensive to Jews is silly rhetoric," said Marshall Breger, a professor of law at the Columbus School of Law at Catholic University. Breger, an Orthodox Jew who served as the Jewish liaison under President Reagan, said that in fact he believes that people who are more religious "would be more respectful of my religion."

What matters most, say many Jews, is how those beliefs translate into policy.

Rabbi David Saperstein, the director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, said political candidates, like all Americans, have the right to talk about their faith. But he warned that as such discussion becomes a "part of the generic public discourse," then people will increasingly ask the candidates how they are going to act on those beliefs in terms of legislative initiatives.

Legislation on such issues, said Saperstein, will ultimately lead to dividing Americans along "sectarian lines" when questions arise as to whose prayers can be said, whose symbols can be posted or which religious groups will get federal funding.

When it comes to public policy on issues such as charitable choice and vouchers, the Jewish community is engaged in its own debate. Once widely viewed as opposed to any programs that penetrated the strict constitutional barrier between religion and state, the community is no longer so monolithic.

The issue of school vouchers, for instance, long opposed by most Jewish organizations on the grounds that it violates church-state separation, has emerged as a

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Impeachment effort launched

A Likud Knesset member launched an effort to impeach President Ezer Weizman. Yossi Katz is trying to obtain the required signatures of 20 legislators to convene a special impeachment committee.

Meanwhile, despite his public comments to the contrary, Weizman plans to refrain from carrying out judicial duties, such as considering clemency requests and swearing in judges, while the police probe continues. This is according to a letter from Weizman's attorney, Ya'acov Weinrot, to Justice Minister Yossi Beilin.

### Indyk hopeful about Syrian talks

Despite the ups and downs in the Israeli-Syrian negotiations, the United States hopes the two sides will be able to conclude a peace accord this year, said the new American ambassador to Israel.

Martin Indyk, who presented his credentials to President Ezer Weizman in Jerusalem on Tuesday, said the United States is in touch with both sides and expects to hear responses regarding the approach the United States has proposed for advancing the process.

### Knesset to honor feminists

Leading American and Israeli feminists are to be honored in a Knesset ceremony Wednesday as part of an American Jewish Congress gathering under way in Israel. American women being honored include author Betty Friedan, Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, former congresswoman Elizabeth Holtzman and author Letty Cottin Pogrebin.

### Winter's grip descends on Israel

Israel's winter weather frenzy continued with meteorologists predicting below-freezing temperatures at the end of the week and snowfall on Mt. Hermon, the Galilee hills and Jerusalem. A television forecaster even speculated a dusting in Tel Aviv, which last had an accumulated snowfall more than 50 years ago.



## Daily News Bulletin

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hot-button issue as the Jewish community wrestles with assimilation and how to help Jewish families afford day schools.

Jewish groups are also split over charitable choice, which was included in legislation for the first time in the welfare reform legislation of 1996.

The United Jewish Communities, the umbrella fund-raising and social service organization of the Jewish community, decided in the fall of 1998 to oppose all current charitable choice programs and any attempts to expand them from the welfare bill to other social services.

Orthodox groups, such as Agudath Israel of America, support the expansion of charitable choice, saying the program "protects both the religious character of faith-based social service providers and the religious liberty of service recipients."

The Jewish Council of Public Affairs, an umbrella body of national Jewish organizations and community relations councils, however, has taken a more nuanced approach. In its 1999 policy statement, the group said it would support legislation on charitable choice only when there are provisions protecting the religious freedom of those receiving the services and of the employees working for the providers.

The stance of the JCPA reflects the positions being advocated by both Gore and Bradley, who have said that safeguards need to be put in place to prohibit proselytizing and maintain a strict separation of church and state, according to the 55-page NJDC report. Under Gore's proposal, religious institutions could receive federal funds for drug treatment programs, services for the homeless and initiatives to combat youth violence "without having to alter the religious character that is so often the key to their effectiveness." But he has said that secular alternatives should always be available and that people in need must not be required to participate in religious observances.

Despite his call for safeguards, Gore, in announcing his "New Partnership" plan last year, said, "Freedom of religion need not mean freedom from religion."

For his part, Bush has pledged to funnel \$8 billion in public funds into faith-based organizations and set up an office at the White House to deal with the issue.

John McCain (R-Ariz.) also backs expanding charitable choice and has said he supports Bush's approach.

Bush has not spoken about maintaining safeguards in the manner of Gore and Bradley, saying religion is fundamental to the success of the programs.

Last week, Bush talked about his decision in 1986 to stop drinking at Teen Challenge, a Christian treatment center for drug and alcohol abusers.

Quoted by Reuters as saying that "government should not frustrate or be worried" about such programs, Bush added, "We should welcome Teen Challenge and the commonplace miracles of renewal that take place."

The differences between the leading candidates, Gore and Bush, on charitable choice are interesting in light of how they have talked about their own personal faith during the campaign. Both have spoken about their born-again Christian beliefs, just as all of the candidates, except for Bill Bradley, have discussed their religious beliefs.

Bush has often spoken about how turning to Jesus has changed his life and he raised eyebrows when he picked Jesus as his favorite philosopher during one of the Republican debates.

When asked by NBC's Tim Russert during a later debate if religious minorities in the United States should "feel excluded from George W. Bush because of his allegiance to Jesus," Bush said no. He then added: "It doesn't make me better than you or make me better than anybody else, but it's a foundation for how I live my life. Some may accept the answer and some may not. But Tim, I really don't care."

However, Bush has also said that he is "staunchly committed to the principles of religious freedom, tolerance and diversity that are embodied in the First Amendment." That remark came in a 1998 letter to the Anti-Defamation League in which he tried to clarify an earlier statement that only Christians have a place in heaven.

Gore, during a recent meeting with Jewish leaders in New York, said that while he will not back away from discussing his beliefs, he said he would not actively push those beliefs as part of the campaign.

Gore also has said that he tries to affirm his faith "in a way that communicates absolute respect, not only for people who worship in a different way, but just as much respect for those who do not believe in God and who are atheists." □

## JEWISH WORLD

### Haider enters coalition talks

Israel should immediately withdraw its ambassador from Vienna if Austria's far-right Freedom Party is included in the new government, according to two Israeli politicians.

The remarks by Justice Minister Yossi Beilin and Likud Knesset member Danny Naveh came amid reports that the Freedom Party, led by Jorg Haider, has begun coalition talks with the People's Party.

### Holland told to pay restitution

Holland should pay some \$114 million to the nation's Jews for the restitution of property looted during the Holocaust era, a state-appointed commission on Jewish assets reportedly recommended. The recommendation, reported Tuesday by the Dutch news agency ANP, came after the panel researched for three years the treatment of Jewish assets.

### Rabbis back same-sex unions

Some rabbis and Jewish leaders joined with religious leaders of other faiths in calling for the ordination and the blessing of same-sex unions.

In a "religious declaration on sexual morality, justice and healing" printed in a full-page ad in Tuesday's New York Times, the religious leaders also supported sex education in schools and a faith-based commitment to sexual and reproductive rights, along with access to voluntary contraception, abortion and HIV/STD prevention and treatment.

### Groups want census on religion

Two Canadian Jewish organizations are calling on Canada's census bureau to include questions that ask respondents to self-identify on the basis of religion and ethnic ancestry.

Officials with the Canadian Jewish Congress and the United Jewish Appeal Federations Canada are urging the government to retain these questions because they will help the organizations plan, raise money, and provide programs and services.

### Billboard reaches toward heaven

Several religious leaders, including rabbis, are sponsoring a pro-prayer billboard in Los Angeles. The billboard reads "I Think, Therefore I Pray."

### Lights, camera, war

The 1973 Yom Kippur War is being re-fought on the Golan Heights — as camera crews capture the fighting on film. "Kippur," directed by Israeli filmmaker Amos Gitai, is believed to be the first feature-length film about the war. The film's Israeli producer, Shuki Friedman, was quoted by The New York Times as saying that it is remarkable that the film is being shot "while we're talking peace with Syria."

## President Clinton expected to appoint leading rabbi to head Holocaust council

By Julie Wiener

NEW YORK (JTA) — Rabbi Irving Greenberg, an influential scholar and religious leader, is about to take another national position.

President Clinton is expected to appoint Greenberg to head the voluntary council overseeing operations at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, according to White House sources.

A longtime council member, Greenberg is an Orthodox rabbi best known in the Jewish community for his writings on the Holocaust and his leadership at two organizations that promote Jewish pluralism and learning: the Jewish Life Network and CLAL — National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership.

Reached by phone at his home in Riverdale, N.Y., Monday night, Greenberg said it would be "inappropriate" to comment on the expected appointment at this point, but added, "For anybody, it would be an honor and privilege" to be named to such a position. This is an extraordinary institution and it obviously has accomplished a certain standing in American life," said Greenberg.

The 66-year-old Greenberg would replace Miles Lerman, who — saying the organization needed "young blood" — recently resigned after six years as chairman of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council.

Since 1978, Lerman — who is a Holocaust survivor and nearly 80 years old — was a driving force behind the museum's creation.

Under his tenure the museum enjoyed a great deal of success. In its six years of operation, it attracted nearly 14 million visitors, 80 percent of whom were not Jewish.

But it also experienced a number of well-publicized controversies that tarnished the federal institution's reputation. The museum came under fire two years ago for Lerman's on-again, off-again invitation to Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat to visit the museum.

The subsequent ouster of the museum's director, Walter Reich, proved to be another public relations disaster and was quickly followed by a barrage of criticism over the museum's decision to hire Holocaust scholar John Roth to head its Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies. Roth was assailed for controversial writings about Israel and ultimately turned down the post.

A study conducted last year, which had been ordered by a congressional subcommittee, concluded that the museum has been stifled by "excessive involvement" of the museum's governing council in day-to-day operations and specifically criticized what it called Lerman's tendency to "act unilaterally," suggesting that he and others let go of the reins and allow the director to assume greater responsibilities.

The current director is Sara Bloomfield. According to the New York Jewish Week, Lerman recommended Greenberg as his successor. However, Lerman declined to comment on the appointment until it is officially announced, which is expected to be made official after a background check.

Although unwilling to speak of his own vision for the Holocaust museum before the appointment is official, Greenberg was full of praise for Lerman, saying that "the focus on controversy in the past year has obscured his contribution to the museum."

Greenberg is not a survivor himself, but said the Holocaust has played a large role in his thinking. He is the author of "Clouds of Smoke, Pillars of Fire" as well as other writings on the theological implications of the Holocaust.

Like other American Jews, he lost members of his family who had remained in Europe. He vividly recalls a time when he was a teen-ager and his parents got a visit from distant cousins, a mother and daughter who had survived Nazi mass killings known as Einsatzgruppen shootings — mass shootings of Jews in the early 1940s — by falling into a pit with corpses then climbing out later.

"I remember my parents going to the other room to talk, and when they came out my mother clearly had been crying," he said.

The fact that the museum attracts such a large number of non-Jews is a tribute to the "wisdom" of the American people, said Greenberg. □

## American rabbis join debate over future status of Jerusalem

By Michael Shapiro

WASHINGTON (JTA) — As Israel and the Palestinians continue to inch toward a final peace deal, American rabbis are debating one of the most explosive issues yet to be resolved — the status of Jerusalem.

The debate was sparked by the Jewish Peace Lobby, which announced last week that more than 300 American rabbis had signed a statement calling on Jerusalem to be shared by Israel and the Palestinians.

In response, the Rabbinical Assembly, representing 1,500 Conservative rabbis and the Rabbinical Council of America, representing 1,100 Orthodox rabbis, put out a statement on Tuesday reiterating their “previously declared organizational policies that Jerusalem is the united and indivisible capital solely of the State of Israel.” The rabbinical organizations, in their statement, said they view “with great dismay the statement released by 300 unnamed rabbis, which wishes to promote a ‘shared Jerusalem,’ ” and added that “only Israel and her neighbors should determine conditions for peace.”

Highlighting the sensitivity of the subject, Jerome Segal, the president of the Jewish Peace Lobby and a longtime peace activist, said he did not want to release the list of all of the 314 rabbis who signed the statement because he was concerned that they would be targeted for harassment.

Segal did release the names of a number of the prominent members of the list and made available to local Jewish papers around the country names of rabbis from their areas.

Segal said it was his decision not to release a full list of the names at this time, adding that rabbis who sign such a statement “know they are taking some risks.” Segal said he plans to take out ads discussing the statement which will list all of the signatories.

The statement, a “Rabbinic Call for Shared Jerusalem,” came after a year of reaching out to 1,200 Reform, Reconstructionist and Conservative rabbis, Segal said. He said that no Orthodox rabbis were asked to sign the statement. Segal, a research scholar at the University of Maryland’s Center of International and Security Studies, expressed concerns that the rabbinical groups did not read the full statement or share it with its members before issuing their statement, which he said was a “knee-jerk reaction.”

Segal’s statement said that given the more than 180,000 Palestinians living in eastern Jerusalem, the question is “whether the pursuit of both justice and lasting peace requires that, in some form, Jerusalem be shared with the Palestinian people. We believe it does.” Representatives of the two rabbinical organizations could not immediately be reached for comment. □

## Former slaves say Germany is reneging on compensation

By Toby Axelrod

BERLIN (JTA) — Although Germany agreed to create a \$5.2 billion compensation fund for Holocaust-era slave laborers late last year, some difficult bargaining still lies ahead.

Representatives of the former slave laborers charge that the

German government has reneged on an agreement that the laborers would still receive payments even if they had previously received other forms of compensation from Germany. The issue is certain to come up in the latest round of negotiations next week in Washington.

The first three drafts of German legislation that would enact the agreement state that “any prior compensation would count against any payment made out of this fund,” said Alissa Kaplan, spokeswoman for the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, which was among the groups negotiating on behalf of the laborers.

Gideon Taylor, the group’s executive director, has said he is “very concerned about the implications if this draft goes forward.”

Supporting this view, New York City Comptroller Alan Hevesi sent a letter Monday to German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, expressing his concern about the proposed legislation.

Hevesi wrote that the pending German legislation “should both reflect the negotiations that led to the December 17 agreement and should be acceptable to all the major parties to those negotiations. “Holocaust survivors deserve no less.”

Ratcheting up the pressure, the World Jewish Congress has reportedly sent letters to U.S. officials involved in the talks — Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and Deputy Treasury Secretary Stuart Eizenstat — saying that if the German legislation remains as it is, Jewish groups would call for sanctions against German companies.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers, in Tokyo over the weekend for a G-8 summit meeting, also brought up the subject in a meeting with his German counterpart, Hans Eichel. Eichel reportedly told Summers that a final decision about the legislation would not come until after German mediator Otto Lambsdorff returns to Germany from the next round of negotiations.

Meanwhile, pressure has been building for more German companies to come forward and contribute to the fund. So far, about 130 companies have said they will help fund the \$2.6 billion contribution from German industry. The other half of the fund is being paid by the German government.

The American Jewish Committee plans to release later this week a new list of German firms that have not contributed.

“There are still far too few companies in the fund, and we hope that by maintaining pressure we will encourage more to join,” said Deidre Berger, managing director of the Berlin office of the AJCommittee, which released its first list in December.

The list will be available on the group’s Web site, <http://www.ajc.org>.

Earlier this week, Germany’s largest labor union also increased the pressure by publishing a list of some 140 firms that have not pledged money so far. “Instead of paying 1 or 2 percent of their turnover to compensate forced laborers, many firms are denying their complicity and are scorning victims a second time,” IG Metall said in a statement Sunday.

The head of the trade union, Klaus Zwickel, said at the time that recalcitrant firms should not be granted any legal protection against lawsuits from former slave laborers. Such protection was promised in the agreement worked out in December.

About \$1 billion has been collected so far from German firms. In order to raise more funds, representatives of German industry plan to begin contacting some 200,000 companies nationwide next month to ask for their support. □