



# Daily News Bulletin

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83rd Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Lieberman backs football prayer

Democratic vice presidential candidate Joseph Lieberman defended his emphasis on religion in his campaign, saying politicians have an obligation to make America's "moral future better by the tone we set." In an appearance on ABC's "Good Morning America," he also said he supports a grass-roots campaign for "spontaneous" prayer from the stands before high school football games.

At the same time, he said, he backs the Supreme Court's ban on school-approved prayer at games.

### Panel delays decision on 'Iran 10'

An Iranian panel will delay its decision on whether to reduce the sentences of 10 Jews convicted on charges of spying for Israel. The panel is apparently divided on how to deal with them. [Page 1]

### Talks to come on U.N. sidelines

President Clinton will try to advance the Middle East peace process when he holds separate meetings with Israeli and Palestinian leaders Wednesday at the U.N. Millennium Summit in New York.

But the White House is playing down expectations of any breakthroughs. In recent days, officials from both sides have been saying they expect the other to show the flexibility needed to reach a final peace deal.

Meanwhile, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak told U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan that Israeli-Palestinian peace talks must be concluded within a matter of weeks.

Barak's meeting with the U.N. secretary-general in New York on Monday launched a series of talks the premier will hold with world leaders during the three-day U.N. Millennium Summit, which begins Wednesday. [Page 3]

### Lack of religious freedom cited

China, Sudan, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Iraq and Iran are among the states that trample on religious freedom, according to a U.S. State Department report. The report, released as world leaders gathered in New York for the U.N. Millennium Summit, also criticized Germany for discriminating against members of the Church of Scientology, and France for discriminating against 173 groups that are "merely unfamiliar or unpopular." The report did not examine religious freedom in the United States.

## 'Iran 10' appeal ruling postponed as Jews protest president at U.N.

By Michael J. Jordan

NEW YORK (JTA) — The waiting game continues in Iran, as the judiciary there has postponed at least for another week a decision in the appeals of 10 Iranian Jews convicted on charges of spying for Israel.

The delay is ostensibly because the three judges reviewing the appeals are divided on whether the charges the Jews were convicted of actually constituted a crime.

But few observers doubt that domestic Iranian politics are at play.

If anything, they say, the delay undermines the efforts by Iranian President Mohammad Khatami — on the eve of his address to the United Nations this week — to spruce up his image as a reformer and to bolster his claim that he, not the Islamic fundamentalists, is truly in control of his country.

The delay also did nothing to defuse a flurry of street protest and behind-the-scenes diplomacy that greeted Khatami as he and 150 other heads of state arrived in New York for the U.N. Millennium Summit.

Jewish groups sponsored two media events just blocks away from the United Nations, while an Iranian exile organization held a noisy anti-Khatami demonstration within earshot of visiting dignitaries from around the world.

"We cannot tolerate a situation where it is a crime simply for being Jewish," said New York Gov. George Pataki, who headlined Tuesday's first street event, sponsored jointly by the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations and the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York.

A second event, held later, was organized by AMCHA — The Coalition for Jewish Concerns.

"Mr. Khatami, to you, your Parliament and your judiciary, human rights and dignity must be the right of every citizen," Pataki said.

"You claim to be a reformer. Show it and release these 10."

Convicted July 1, the 10 Jews have already served some 18 months in prison. Their sentences range from four to 13 years, but Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents, says his sources indicate that several more may be released, with jail terms reduced for the rest. But he wouldn't bank on it.

As delaying the appeals decision demonstrates, said Hoenlein, "the only thing predictable about Iran is that nothing is predictable."

Thus, the need to prod Khatami, both publicly and privately.

Hoenlein, who met with Iran's Parliament speaker last week, still holds out hope that he will be able to plead his case directly to Khatami this week. There was talk of such a meeting on Monday at the United Nations, when Khatami spoke with a reportedly "pre-selected" gathering of Iranian emigres, including a few Jews.

From the Jewish side, Hoenlein conceded there was internal debate on whether a meeting with Khatami would somehow be manipulated by the Iranian media for domestic consumption. Hoenlein said a meeting would only take place if Jewish leaders were guaranteed their say. In the end, that point was moot because American Jewish leaders weren't invited at all.

"We should meet with Khatami to send the right message that the appeals should succeed and security guaranteed for the entire Jewish community," Hoenlein said at Tuesday's media event.

This and similar events have been staged outside Iran's mission to the United Nations. But some wonder precisely what impact these events have, except to draw a

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Rights group blasts Palestinians

The Palestinian Authority routinely arrests those who oppose its policies, Amnesty International said in a report Tuesday.

Describing what it called an "established pattern," the London-based human rights group said the self-rule government has "detained dozens of human rights defenders" and others "solely for exercising their legitimate rights to freedom of expression."

### Strike may ground airlines

Workers at the company that distributes oil products throughout Israel began a strike Tuesday that could ground airlines and close power plants.

Protesting government plans to split the state-owned Infrastructure and Energy Company into two firms, the workers blocked fuel supplies to Ben-Gurion Airport and the Israel Electric Corp.

### Minister meets Morocco's king

Israel's acting foreign minister discussed the Middle East peace process with Morocco's King Mohammed VI during a meeting at the monarch's palace in Agadir.

Shlomo Ben-Ami told the king that the moment of truth has arrived for Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat and that decisions by statesmen are required, not the continuation of an endless process.

### Lebanese downplays return

Former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri downplayed the possibility that he would return to power.

"I have to insist that talk about my return to the premiership is premature," said Hariri, who held the post from 1992 until 1998.

Hariri moved a step closer to returning to office when election results indicated he has the support of at least one-third of the 128 legislators who won seats in two recent rounds of voting.

hoard of media. Soon after Pataki had left the event, more than a dozen speakers from across the political and religious spectrums followed him to the podium.

They firmly but politely intoned about human rights, the rule of law, sanctions against Iran and the country's continued isolation from the world. Yet their voices rarely rose above the din of roaring buses and trucks nearby.

The glaring exception was Max Saatchi, an Iranian emigre who stood beside the podium and held high a placard of the 10 imprisoned Jews — sitting in the Iranian courtroom, heads bowed, in prison-issue grey flannel uniforms.

After each speaker, Saatchi, whose father is Jewish and mother Muslim and says 17 relatives have been executed for anti-regime activities, thrust in hand in the air and repeatedly shouted, "Terrorist Khatami out of U.N.!" or "No appeasement with mullahs!"

Before his arrival in New York, Khatami had met with members of Iran's Jewish community, which numbers 27,000 and is steadily shrinking; sent the Jewish member of parliament in Iran's official delegation; and planned to host a "Dialogue on Civilizations" panel later this week. Saatchi was unimpressed.

"Khatami is a terrorist, like the rest of them," said Saatchi, a middle-aged man of medium height, dark features and a black moustache. "He's a wolf, but they present him as a lamb."

Saatchi blended in better at the protest of Iranians in exile, held an hour later. Billed as the largest-ever rally by Iranian Americans, several thousand marched through the streets, banging drums, chanting through bullhorns and waving the green, white and red flag of Iran. The marchers settled into a designated area alongside anti-China protesters from Taiwan, who shouted and clanged cow bells in support of U.N. recognition. The Iranians quickly drowned out the Taiwanese.

The Iranians seemingly have been champing at the bit to vent at Khatami.

Last week, posters began appearing around the city, depicting Khatami "the terrorist" with fangs and bulging eyes. Four Iranians were reportedly arrested over the weekend in separate incidents for throwing yellow paint, at Khatami's entourage and elsewhere. Yellow, said activists, is "the color of dismay, the color of disapproval."

On the arrests and trial of the Jews, however, non-Jewish Iranian Americans have been notably silent.

In part, they say, it's been due to a lack of organization and the fact the community has yet to find its political voice, like, say, the Cuban-exile community. One activist even says she was unaware of the rallies of American Jews.

Nevertheless, Tuesday may have marked a watershed moment. Several at the protest, organized by the Paris-based National Council of Resistance of Iran, spoke out about the trial, describing it as a transparent attempt to frighten the masses and impose conformity on all Iranians.

They also noted Iran's financial support and training for terrorist groups like Hamas and Hezbollah.

Charges of espionage are a "typical punishment for those the regime wants to discredit," said Mitra Bagheri, a member of the council's foreign relations committee, who recently relocated from Paris to New York to help organize Iranians here.

"I don't think people in Iran believe anything the government says, because it tells big lies, and the truth is always the other way around."

Says Anahita Sami, 18, the move against Iran's Jews is part and parcel of the campaign against all of Iran's minorities.

"It's so obvious the Jews were not guilty of anything," said Sami, a student at George Washington University. "This is happening to innocent Iranians all the time. They want to control people through the word of God, and to keep the pressure cooker from exploding by brainwashing them."

Another activist cautioned Americans not to judge all Iranians by the current regime.

"One thing has to be made clear," said Kasra Nejat, president of the Iranian American Cultural Association of Missouri.

"The Iranian government, the supreme leaders — the whole system is corrupt. It has nothing to do with the Iranian people. That's why we're here, because this government doesn't represent real Iranians." □



## Daily News Bulletin

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## JEWISH WORLD

### Church slams religious relativism

The Vatican rejected what it described as ongoing attempts to depict all religions as equal.

The idea that "one religion is as good as another" endangers the Roman Catholic Church's message, according to a declaration by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

### Russian governor knocks Zionists

A governor of a Russian region who is known for his anti-Semitic views said he would not seek a new term in elections scheduled for December.

But two Russian newspapers warned that Nikolai Kondratenko, who warned followers not to be swayed by the "Zionist media," may run anyway.

### Neo-Nazi music confiscated

German police said they have confiscated more than 7,500 compact discs of neo-Nazi music as well as other far-right paraphernalia.

Authorities in the eastern state of Saxony-Anhalt said 11 sites were raided on Aug. 30, but did not publicize the operation until Tuesday.

### Y.U. appears on top college list

For the fifth consecutive year, Yeshiva University was ranked as one of the top 50 U.S. universities in the annual U.S. News and World Report survey. The survey ranked Y.U. tied for 45th place.

### Jews urged to emigrate

Pamphlets believed to be anti-Semitic were distributed in Riga, Latvia, last week calling on Jews to emigrate to Israel to escape from growing anti-Semitism, according to the Jewish Agency for Israel. It is not known who distributed the pamphlets, which end with the words: "May God bless you on your way! Have a good journey!"

The composers of the pamphlet also emphasized that emigration to Israel is funded by the Jewish Agency, and included the address of Jewish Agency offices and the Israeli Embassy in Riga.

### Winnipeg Jews bury tombstones

Winnipeg's Jewish community recently helped rebury several dozen tombstones that were vandalized last year. Five people are being charged in the vandalism, which reportedly damaged 300 stones.

### Memoir: Author married a Nazi

Reclusive author J.D. Salinger married a Nazi Party bureaucrat during World War II, according to a new memoir written by his daughter. According to "Dream Catcher: A Memoir," the marriage between Salinger and Sylvia did not last long.

## On the sidelines of U.N. meeting, Israel, Palestinians, U.S. try again

By Mitchell Danow

NEW YORK (JTA) — Few Middle East watchers are expecting that President Clinton will be able to achieve this week what he failed to accomplish at July's Camp David summit.

The future of Jerusalem remains as difficult an issue for Israel and the Palestinian Authority to resolve, nor has the rhetoric emanating from each side been a source of optimism.

In recent days, officials from both sides have been saying they expect the other to show the flexibility needed to reach a final peace deal.

But those same officials gave no indication that they themselves were ready to take such a step.

Two days before Clinton was to hold separate meetings with Israeli and Palestinian leaders Wednesday at the U.N. Millennium Summit in New York, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak spoke of the need to come up with an agreement soon.

Israeli-Palestinian peace talks must be concluded within a matter of weeks, he told U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan on Monday.

"It does not have to be a matter of days, but it cannot be a matter of months," said Barak, who is one of more than 150 world leaders visiting New York this week for the summit.

A deadline for a final Israeli-Palestinian peace treaty comes next week, when the Palestinians have threatened to declare an independent Palestinian state.

Palestinian officials, however, have indicated that the statehood declaration will be postponed.

But more significant for Barak than the Sept. 13 date is the end of October, when the Knesset reconvenes from its summer recess.

At that time, the viability of the prime minister's already-weakened coalition will be put to the test.

While in New York, Barak was expected to meet with numerous world leaders, including British Prime Minister Tony Blair, French President Jacques Chirac and Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Officials in Barak's delegation were pessimistic that Clinton would be able to reach a breakthrough during his meetings with Barak and Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat.

One senior official traveling with Barak was quoted by the Reuters news agency as saying that Israel had launched a secret diplomatic effort to overcome the Jerusalem obstacle.

Meanwhile, an adviser to the Palestinian leader said this week's talks will prove decisive.

"Either we reach a formula that we can build on and negotiations resume, or we reach a deadlock," said Nabil Abu Irdeineh.

If such a formula is found, he added, there could be a three-way meeting involving Clinton, Barak and Arafat.

Since the failure of the Camp David summit, both sides have accused the other of intransigence and sought international backing for their positions.

During his meeting with Annan on Monday, Barak thanked the secretary-general for his support of Israel's withdrawal from its security zone in southern Lebanon in May.

According to a U.N. statement, he also thanked the U.N. secretary-general for helping Israel get membership in a regional grouping — the Western European and Others Group — a move that could ultimately give Israel more of a role in U.N. activities.

When it comes to prospects for the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, Barak is cautious.

As he was entering the U.N. on Monday, he was asked about the prospects for a peace accord.

"I do hope, and I pray," he replied. "But I don't know."

□

## Religious Affairs Ministry's demise could encourage pluralism in Israel

By Avi Machlis

JERUSALEM (JTA) — The decision by Israel's government this week to dismantle the Ministry of Religious Affairs could promote pluralism by making the delivery of religious services more locally accountable.

The ministry is an institution that has been notorious for overpoliticization.

But it remains to be seen whether the end of the ministry — possibly in one month — will make a big impact on religion-state relations in Israel or the quest for equality in religious services by Israel's non-Orthodox movements.

At the Cabinet meeting in which it was decided to dismantle the ministry, Ehud Barak, Israel's prime minister, said the decision was not intended as a blow to the Orthodox parties that have controlled the ministry in the past.

The services and funding of yeshivas that used to flow through the ministry will now be transferred to other ministries and local municipalities.

Shaul Yahalom, a Knesset member from the National Religious Party, said he did not expect any "big changes" from the move.

"We must differentiate between the dismantling of the ministry and maintaining religious services in Israel," said Yahalom.

"If the services will be transferred to other offices and municipal religious councils will be kept intact, there should be no problem."

Supervised by the Religious Affairs Ministry, the local religious councils have jurisdiction — including the allocation of public funds — over issues relating to marriage, kashrut, burial and other religious matters for Jews living in Israel.

But Rabbi Uri Regev, director of the Reform movement's Israel Religious Action Center, said he believed that in the long term, the decision would pave the way to more accountability — and therefore more pluralism in Israel.

"It could form the basis for greater pluralistic application of religious services," he said, "because municipal government is more diversified both in terms of its policies and the democratic composition."

The move was initiated by Yossi Beilin, Israel's minister of justice, in light of harsh reports by the state comptroller about the operations of the ministry.

Beilin will head a committee to discuss how to take apart the ministry, which will also consider the possibility of disbanding the municipal religious councils as well. □

David Duke recently began his one-month trip to Russia by telling a crowd at a downtown Moscow museum that they should take action against "the Aryan race's main enemy — world Zionism" and that "the Jews have brought us to our knees," according to the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews.

Duke apparently came to Russia for a one-month visit on the invitation of Aleksander Prokhanov, the editor in chief of *Zavtra*, an ultranationalist newspaper, and Konstantin Kasimovsky, the head of an anti-Semitic organization called Russian Action.

Prokhanov, who is influential in nationalist circles and whose paper is heavily tainted with xenophobia and anti-Semitism, was invited recently to a meeting of Russian President Vladimir Putin with the editors of some newspapers.

At the museum, Duke also called for all dark-skinned people to be forced out of Moscow.

The crowd responded with cries of "Glory to Russia!" and "White Power!"

The national director of a group that monitors anti-Semitic acts and other human rights violations in Russia, said Duke's visit was throwing the spotlight on Russian President Vladimir Putin's flirtation with Russian extremists.

"Coming just two weeks after President Putin granted a meeting to Mr. Prokhanov, in effect legitimizing his anti-Semitic publishing activity, Prokhanov's open affiliation with a despicable character like Duke brings into even greater focus how wrong it was for the president to meet with him in the first place," said Micah Naftalin.

This is Duke's second trip to Russia. Last year he met with Gen. Albert Makashov, a former Communist lawmaker known for his anti-Semitic statements.

In May, Jean-Marie Le Pen, leader of France's xenophobic National Front, visited Ukraine and signed a collaboration agreement with the Ukrainian National Socialist Party, a leading extreme-right organization in western Ukraine.

Lev Krichevsky, director of the Moscow office of the Anti-Defamation League, said extreme Russian nationalists are stepping up contacts with their counterparts in the West, including the sharing of Internet resources.

"It is amazing to see how fast these guys, with all their anti-Western rhetoric, find common language and organize multi-language Web sites together with their colleagues from the West," Krichevsky said.

There are also signs of cooperation between Muslim extremists and nationalists across the former Soviet Union.

Even in Russia, despite the anti-Muslim feelings caused by the country's war against Muslim insurgents in the Chechen war, some Russian nationalist groups are teaming up with the Muslim extremists in a "common struggle against Zionist conspiracy" in Russia, the Middle East and elsewhere. □

## Russians split on peace process

MOSCOW (JTA) — Only 5 percent of Russian citizens believe Russia should help Palestinians create an independent state as soon as possible, according to a poll taken recently in Russia.

Some 36 percent believe Russia should support the peace process.

Thirty-eight percent of the respondents said Russia should not interfere in the conflict. □

## Duke's message to Russians: Anti-Semites of the world, unite

By Lev Gorodetsky

MOSCOW (JTA) — A former Ku Klux Klan leader is spreading his anti-Semitic message across Russia.

But the real message is that there appears to be increasing cooperation between Russian extremists and their ideological counterparts abroad.