



Daily News Bulletin

Vol. 79, No. 122

Monday, July 2, 2001

84th Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Israel hits Syrian post in Lebanon

Israeli warplanes struck a Syrian anti-aircraft post in Lebanon to retaliate for a Hezbollah rocket attack last Friday that wounded two Israeli soldiers, one of them seriously.

Hezbollah gunmen answered Sunday's Israeli action by firing mortars and rockets at Israeli army positions along the border with Lebanon.

Israel's Security Cabinet issued a statement saying the warplanes struck in response to "recurrent criminal attacks" across Israel's northern border.

Last Friday's attack took place in the Shabaa Farms region that Lebanon regards as its territory, a claim both Israel and the United Nations reject.

Israel's defense minister downplayed the prospects of war with Syria. "Thank God, we are surrounded by countries that if they have anything in common, it is not to lead the Middle East into war," Benjamin Ben-Eliezer said Sunday.

Israel kills 2 as violence persists

Israeli soldiers killed two members of Hamas who were planting roadside bombs near an Israeli army base in the West Bank, the army said.

Three other Palestinians escaped capture following a lengthy gun battle Sunday. A bomb exploded Sunday near a busload of soldiers on their way to paratrooper boot camp in the West Bank, according to Israel Radio. No injuries were reported.

Meanwhile, Palestinian gunmen opened fire on an Israeli bakery truck traveling Sunday on a West Bank road. The driver, a 26-year-old Israeli Arab, was lightly wounded in the leg.

Reconstructionist leader dies

Rabbi Ira Eisenstein, one of the founders of the Reconstructionist movement, died June 28 near Washington at the age of 94.

Eisenstein was a confidant of Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan, the founder of Reconstructionism, and helped to create the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, the movement's rabbinical seminary. [Page 3]

Because of the Independence Day holiday in the U.S., the JTA DAILY NEWS BULLETIN will not be published Thursday, July 5.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Aims of U.S., Israel may clash — or they may have a different schedule

By Matthew E. Berger

WASHINGTON (JTA) — After the administrations of George W. Bush and Ariel Sharon enjoyed an extended honeymoon, the United States is nudging Israel toward resuming peace negotiations with the Palestinians much sooner than Sharon would like.

The first major disagreement between Sharon and Bush, the product of diverging interests and tactics, emerged during the Israeli premier's visit to Washington last week.

Middle East analysts say the public scrap between the two is significant — and was welcomed by the Palestinian Authority — but does not indicate a major break between Israel and its strongest ally.

At issue is whether a "cease-fire" in the nine-month-old Palestinian uprising against Israel really means a cessation of firing, or merely a reduction.

A plan brokered last month by CIA Director George Tenet calls for the two sides to declare a cease-fire, enter a "cooling-off" period — during which each side makes confidence-building gestures — and then resume diplomatic negotiations.

American officials acknowledge that violence has eased in recent days, and want to move toward the cooling-off period. Israel — which has suffered more than 100 attacks in the two weeks of the cease-fire — says it is an oxymoron to speak of reducing violence to "acceptable" levels.

Back are the familiar dilemmas of the Clinton-era peace process: whether Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat must make an intangible "100 percent effort" to curtail Palestinian terror — as the United States wants — or must produce "100 percent results," which Sharon says is the true measure of Arafat's determination.

Media reports in the United States and Israel trumpeted news of a Bush-Sharon break after their meeting in the White House last week, but analysts said the rift is not all that great.

Tom Smerling, Washington director of the Israel Policy Forum, said such differences are "par for the course."

"They are both trying to walk a tightrope that allows them to try to find a middle ground," Smerling said.

While the two parties may argue on "tactical maneuvers," he said, they still are in sync on larger issues.

The Bush administration's role in the conflict has grown in recent weeks since Tenet went to the region.

That effort, coupled with Secretary of State Colin Powell's trip last week to the Middle East, has made it more important for the United States to look successful.

The key problem is that the United States and Israel want different things, said Shoshana Bryen, director of special projects at the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs.

"When you institute a cease-fire, you start a clock to getting to the next step," Bryen said. But while the United States would like to move past the cooling-off period and onto the confidence-building measures — such as a freeze on Israeli settlement-building in the West Bank and Gaza Strip — Israel wants to move more slowly.

The Palestinian Authority is demanding that peace talks and confidence-building measures begin immediately, even before violence has fully ceased.

Only by showing the public what they have gained from their uprising can Palestinian leaders convince them to lay down their weapons, they contend.

However, given Arafat's rejection of then-Prime Minister Ehud Barak's sweeping

MIDEAST FOCUS

Belgium: Sharon case to proceed

The Brussels Public Prosecutor's Office ruled that a complaint that was filed against Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon accusing him of crimes against humanity is admissible, a Belgian newspaper reported Saturday.

As a result of the decision, Belgian officials can now launch an investigation into what role, if any, Sharon played in the 1982 massacre of Palestinians by Lebanese Christians in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps.

Israeli officials downplayed the significance of the development, saying there is no reason to believe the probe will ultimately lead to a trial.

The complaint against Sharon was filed under a 1993 law allowing Belgian courts to prosecute human rights violations committed outside Belgium.

Peres blasted for meeting Arafat

Conservative Israeli officials criticized Foreign Minister Shimon Peres for meeting with Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat in Lisbon.

The officials said last Friday's meeting undermined Israel's position not to negotiate while violence continues.

Peres defended the meeting, saying, "There should be a supreme and fearless effort" to stop the killing.

During the meeting, Peres said there must be an end to violence for the peace process to proceed.

Arafat called on Israel to lift the closure on the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Two vie for Labor leadership

The speaker of Israel's Knesset, Avraham Burg, submitted his candidacy for the leadership of the Labor Party on Sunday, the deadline for doing so.

Burg and Defense Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer are the only candidates vying in a primary that will be held in September.

offers at Camp David and subsequent talks — and the past nine months of violence — most Israelis are skeptical that Arafat is serious about moving from war to peace.

Many deride Arafat's recent cease-fire call as a tactical maneuver rather than a real change of heart. Only an extended period of quiet will restore a modicum of faith, they say.

The United States, which is afraid that Israeli-Palestinian violence could destabilize the entire region, is more willing than Israel to give the Palestinians the benefit of the doubt.

"Their timelines don't mesh," Bryen said of the United States and Israel. "And we don't have the patience in the United States to wait out the problem."

An Israeli official in Washington said the differences between the two allies are only about semantics.

"Both sides believe that the current level of violence does not constitute a cease-fire," the official said. "When there is 100 percent effort, there will be concrete changes on the ground."

Some have speculated that the disagreement last week was timed to placate Arab countries — who have complained that the Bush administration is too cozy with Sharon — ahead of Powell's visit to the region.

However, just before arriving in Israel from Egypt last week, Powell said that only Sharon can decide when the level of violence has reached a point low enough to resume peace talks.

Sharon "is seeking absolute quiet," Powell said, contrasting it with Bush's call to reduce tensions to "a realistic level of violence, something that makes it clear to all sides that there has been a change, that the cycle of violence has been broken."

Some analysts believe the Bush administration is creating conditions that Arafat is more willing to accept.

Palestinian officials last week circulated a memorandum of talking points for their meetings with Powell, in which they say Israel is unreasonable to demand that Palestinian attacks cease completely.

"The United States is doing its best to seize the moment, knowing it won't last and might not come again for a long time," Smerling said.

"It's going to make it harder for the secretary to get Arafat to come on board if there is zero flexibility" from the Israeli side, agreed Edward Walker, a former ambassador to Israel and now president of the Middle East Institute.

"Being able to see different ways to getting to the same point isn't a bad thing," Walker said.

Some have speculated that Sharon is unwilling to implement later parts of American-sponsored peace programs — such as the settlement freeze — and is making stringent demands of the Palestinians to prevent the process from resuming.

Walker said he doesn't think Sharon's comments are mere rhetoric — he said he has never seen Sharon take a different stance privately than publicly — but Sharon will have to make tough decisions of his own if Arafat indeed begins to arrest terrorists and destroys weapons, as the Tenet plan demands.

That opinion, however, is not universal.

"Sharon needs a real cease-fire, because he took a calculated risk by not retaliating," said Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

Sharon has come under heavy criticism from his right-wing constituents — and an unenforced cease-fire will only heighten calls for retaliation.

Given what is at stake, Hoenlein said he thinks it is very important for the United States and Israel to be on the same page.

"The United States is saying that one or two killings is not enough to stop moving forward," Hoenlein said.

"If they keep that position, they will have problems."

Indeed, Israeli right-wingers warn, if America gives Arafat wiggle room on this cease-fire — as Clinton officials admit they did on the Palestinian Authority's other peace process obligations — they will ensure that the Palestinians will never renounce violence completely.

Though the current disagreement made international headlines, it may pale in comparison to what's in store if the Bush administration concludes that Arafat has toed the line, but Sharon continues to seek a quieter front. □



Daily News Bulletin

Shoshana S. Cardin, *President*

Mark J. Joffe, *Executive Editor and Publisher*

Lisa Hastein, *Editor (on leave)*

Michael S. Arnold, *Managing Editor*

Lenore A. Silverstein, *Business Manager*

JTA DAILY NEWS BULLETIN is published five days a week, except holidays, by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency Inc., 330 Seventh Ave., New York, N.Y. 10001-5010. For information about how to subscribe by e-mail, fax or regular mail, call (212) 643-1890, or visit our Web site at www.jta.org.
© JTA Reproduction only by previous arrangement.

JEWISH WORLD

Israel rejects blocking extradition

Israel's Cabinet rejected on Sunday a proposed law that could have blocked the extradition of a 75-year-old U.S. citizen accused of defrauding the U.S. government.

The bill was prompted by the case of Chaim Berger, one of five members of the Chasidic Jewish community of New Square, N.Y., who were indicted in 1997 on charges including conspiracy, fraud and embezzlement.

Berger fled to Israel from the United States in that year to avoid facing charges for alleged fraud involving some \$20 million.

Israeli prosecutors believed the proposed law could have prompted a diplomatic confrontation with U.S. officials.

House move could help faith plan

A U.S. House of Representatives committee approved a bill opening government programs to religious charities, a major component of President Bush's faith-based initiative.

Republicans in the House Judiciary Committee rejected amendments meant to ensure that minority religions are not discriminated against and that programs cannot engage in employment hiring discrimination.

Texas court nixes religion in jails

The Texas Supreme Court declared unconstitutional a program that provided religious instruction to inmates at a county jail. The decision should serve as a warning to Congress to proceed cautiously on government funding to religious institutions that provide social services, said Phil Baum, executive director of the American Jewish Congress, which sued the facility.

U.S. group opposes tolerance

A conservative interfaith group is calling for an end to modern "tolerance," saying it has led to pornographic entertainment, hostility to faith and families, and an assault on the dignity of human life.

Toward Tradition, a national coalition of Jews and Christians, placed an ad in last Friday's New York Times urging a return to biblical morality and other core values.

Swiss Jews want case solved

Swiss Jewish leaders called on their government to show the political will to help find those responsible for last month's murder of a 71-year-old rabbi visiting from Israel.

The calls were sounded after Zurich police said they have no further leads in the case. Rabbi Abraham Greenbaum was killed while in Zurich on a fund-raising mission.

OBITUARY

Leader of Reconstructionist Jewry, Rabbi Ira Eisenstein, is dead at 94

By Daniel Fleishman

NEW YORK (JTA) — Rabbi Ira Eisenstein, one of the founders of the Reconstructionist movement, died June 28 near Washington at the age of 94.

Eisenstein was a close confidant of Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan, the founder of Reconstructionism, and was the main founder and first president of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, the movement's rabbinical seminary.

The Reconstructionist movement, which now has about 100 congregations in North America, says the Jewish experience is based on more than tradition.

Reconstructionism, as defined by Kaplan and Eisenstein, sees Judaism as a civilization that is constantly evolving.

Mark Seal, executive vice president of the Jewish Reconstructionist Federation, called Eisenstein a man of "extraordinary vision" who "believed that the ideas of Mordechai Kaplan would transform modern Jewish life, and by extension, everything around it."

Eisenstein had an active sense of humor and kept in touch with the Jewish world throughout his life, Seal said.

In his last years, Eisenstein taught a religion class for adults at his home in suburban Maryland — and he mastered the computer at the age of 90.

Eisenstein held a doctorate in philosophy from Columbia University and was ordained by the Conservative movement's Jewish Theological Seminary.

In 1945, he succeeded Kaplan as the chief rabbi of Manhattan's Society for the Advancement of Judaism, the first Reconstructionist synagogue, where he served until 1954. He was president of the Jewish Reconstructionist Foundation from 1959 to 1970 and editor of the journal *The Reconstructionist* from 1935 to 1981. He is the author of the books "Creative Judaism," "What We Mean by Religion," "The Ethics of Tolerance" and "Reconstructing Judaism: An Autobiography."

His wife, Judith, who died in 1996, became in 1922 the first woman to have a Bat Mitzvah. She was Kaplan's daughter.

Eisenstein is survived by three children and a grandchild. □

New Czech fund allows payments to claimants from around the globe

By Magnus Bennett

PRAGUE (JTA) — A new property restitution fund in the Czech Republic is offering fresh hope to thousands of Jews around the world who have been unable to claim compensation for the loss of property seized by the Nazis.

The Prague-based Endowment Fund for Victims of the Holocaust is now accepting applications from those seeking restitution from the \$2.5 million fund.

Representatives of the Czech Federation of Jewish Communities, which is operating the fund, said they expect up to 3,000 applications before the Dec. 31 deadline.

The compensation payments were made possible by Czech legislators, who last year voted to provide the money for victims of property seizure as a humanitarian gesture.

Unlike claims made directly to the Czech state, whose own property restitution laws bar claims from non-Czech citizens, the fund will pay out money to people of all nationalities.

The terms of the compensation plan state that claimants must establish that the original owner of real estate was the victim of racial persecution by Nazi authorities between September 29, 1938, and May 8, 1945.

Those entitled to claim are original owners and their rightful successors, which include husbands, wives, children and other descendants. People who have already received compensation for property loss from another source will not be entitled to claim, but the fund will consider applications from claimants who are still involved in court proceedings. □

BEHIND THE HEADLINES**Despite concerns, American team eager for July's Maccabiah Games***By Sharon Samber*

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Running faster or being stronger won't be the only things on the minds of U.S. athletes at the Maccabiah Games in Israel later this month.

Maccabiah organizers in Israel had considered postponing the games until next summer following a number of cancellations from athletes worried about security because of the ongoing violence in the Middle East.

In the end, the Games will take place — and while the threat of terrorism still looms, nearly two-thirds of the U.S. team will compete in the "Jewish Olympics" despite concerns about their safety. Cautious but upbeat, U.S. athletes are looking forward to an event they hope will attract only sports records, not political headlines.

Now the games are even getting some star play: U.S. Olympic gold medalist Lenny Krayzelburg said he will swim in the Maccabiah Games despite the violence.

Krayzelburg, who won three gold medals in the 2000 Sydney Olympics, said he never considered dropping out.

"I want to come close to my heritage," said Krayzelburg, who was born in the Soviet Union and will be visiting Israel for the first time. "It's important to show support for Israel."

Some 2,000 athletes are expected to compete in this year's Maccabiah, down from the 5,000 who originally registered for the competition.

Latest indications are that about 360 U.S. athletes will compete — slightly more than half of the 600 Americans originally scheduled to take part in the 10-day event.

The pre-camp cultural program for U.S. athletes — which includes educational seminars and tours to the Dead Sea, Caesarea the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial and other sites — will take place as planned, officials say.

The major change concerns the athletes' free time, said Alan Sherman, national vice president of Maccabi USA/Sports for Israel. Rather than trying to supervise athletes in public places, entertainment will be brought to the games compound, and athletes from other countries will be invited to watch with the U.S. team.

The Opening Ceremonies of the Games, which are held in Israel every four years, will take place at Jerusalem's Teddy Stadium on July 16.

Some participants, like Scott Rosen of Pittsburgh, waited until the last minute to decide whether to compete. Security issues were a concern for Rosen, but he said he was willing to trust the organizers.

The problem really was whether there would be enough members of the softball team to compete. In the end there were not, and Rosen had to bow out. "You can compete anywhere, but the Maccabiah is more than just a sports competition," said Rosen, who has never been to Israel.

Maccabi USA had planned to push to postpone the games, but reconsidered after consulting with Jewish organizations and Israeli officials, said Bob Spivak, the group's president. It would have been the first time the games were postponed since World War II.

Spivak said officials discussed security and how the reduced number of athletes would affect the quality of the competition. The U.S. team was then notified of the decision to go ahead.

"The major response was 'Yes, let's go,'" Spivak said.

But Maccabi USA organizers have encountered a fair amount of criticism from the U.S. delegation — the second largest after Israel's — for not keeping participants well informed.

Some coaches have pulled out of the competition because of security concerns. In addition, many coaches and athletes were frustrated by the alleged lack of communication with organizers.

Nevertheless, those planning to compete are eager to get on a plane already and let the games begin.

Ed Rossier and Jacob Israelow, recent graduates of Williams College in Williamstown, Mass., who are competing in track and field, are excited to go.

Rossier said that as long as he can interact with other athletes, he doesn't mind the restrictions on his free time.

While concerned about possible terrorist attacks, Israelow believes it is important that the competition go on and that Jews worldwide show solidarity with Israel.

"These games will take on their own historic significance," he said.

The last Maccabiah Games, in 1997, was marred when a footbridge collapsed, killing four Australians and injuring 70 other athletes. The first Maccabiah Games, featuring 13 countries and 300 athletes, were held in 1932. □

Canadian city can't stop Jews from putting up Shabbat boundary*By Bram Eisenthal*

MONTREAL (JTA) — A Canadian judge has ruled that residents of a Montreal suburb have a religious right to put up a type of fencing that allows Orthodox Jews to carry objects within a boundary during the Sabbath.

A large number of Orthodox Jews, including many Chasidim, live in the suburb of Outremont and had asked their City Council for permission to build the eruv, which is generally a thin wire erected high above the ground.

The Outremont City Council — led by Mayor Jerome Unterberg, who is Jewish — rejected the request, saying an eruv would disrupt the city's efforts to remain secular. It was the municipality, in fact, that brought the matter before the courts.

Orthodox Jews won a temporary court injunction last spring that permitted them to hang eruvs just prior to Passover.

Late last month, Quebec Superior Court Justice Allan Hilton ruled that Outremont, where about one-quarter of the 24,000 residents are Jewish, must allow the eruv.

"Outremont will continue to be a community of communities that cannot ignore the needs of thousands of its residents," said Allan Adel, Quebec regional chairman of B'nai Brith Canada's League for Human Rights.

B'nai Brith Canada also stepped into the fray, asking the council to show good faith and stressing that "residents in cities like Westmount, Montreal or Cote Saint-Luc are not even remotely aware of the eruv, which is virtually imperceptible to the naked eye."

In his ruling, Hilton noted that other municipalities in Canada and elsewhere do not prevent the installation of eruvs. Furthermore, the judge said, the Canadian Charter of Rights of Freedoms guarantees that religion can be practiced openly.

There is no indication yet whether Outremont will appeal the judgment. □