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TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Poland apologizes for massacre

Polish President Aleksander Kwasniewski apologized in an official ceremony for a Polish wartime massacre of 1,600 Jews.

"For this crime we should beg the souls of the dead and their families for forgiveness," Kwasniewski told about 3,000 people gathered in the pouring rain at a ceremony in the village of Jedwabne.

Relatives of those who were killed in the July 1941 massacre recited Kaddish at Tuesday's ceremony. **[Page 4]**

Gaza clashes erupt after razing

Three Israeli soldiers and five Palestinians were wounded in clashes in the Gaza Strip after Israeli army bulldozers demolished buildings in the Rafah refugee camp.

Palestinian Authority officials called Tuesday's action an incursion into their territory, but the Israeli army said the area is under Israeli security control and the buildings had been used by Palestinian gunmen to attack Israeli troops along the Israeli-Egyptian border.

Report: Bush, charity in deal

The Bush administration will exempt the Salvation Army from hiring gays and lesbians if the charity backs the White House's faith-based initiative, according to a Salvation Army document obtained by The Washington Post.

In an internal report, the charity says the White House had committed to pursue a regulation to exempt religious groups such as the Salvation Army from state and local efforts to prevent discrimination in hiring and domestic partner benefits.

But the White House says no "firm commitment" was made to the group.

Assad protested in Berlin

German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder indirectly criticized Syrian President Bashar Assad for previous anti-Semitic remarks.

"We don't agree with every declaration of the Syrian government or president," Schroeder said during a news conference Tuesday with Assad.

German newspapers and Jewish demonstrators are protesting the visit of the Syrian leader, who refused to answer a question at the news conference after learning that the journalist was Israeli.

NEWS ANALYSIS

As nature and terror besiege Israelis, hawks press Sharon on his restraint

By Amotz Asa-El

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Considering that air, water and fire are essential elements not just of life but of war, Israelis this week could hardly feel more besieged.

On Monday morning, takeoffs and traffic at Ben-Gurion Airport were severely disrupted following a bomb scare. In the evening, greater Tel Aviv's water supply was pronounced undrinkable due to a "technical" contamination that raised fears about the vulnerability of the country's water system.

And throughout it all, the fiery Palestinian uprising continued to take its toll of casualties.

Against this grim backdrop — and increasingly resigned to the idea that a major Israeli attack of some sort has become all but inevitable — few bothered even to take note of yet another Palestinian promise to "effectively" combat terrorism.

And yet that is just what Foreign Minister Shimon Peres reported, and hailed, in a Cabinet meeting Sunday, quickly eliciting hostile responses from right-wing ministers and exposing the basic ideological differences between Peres and his partner-of-convenience, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.

According to Peres, Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat on Saturday night convened a high-powered forum where — weeks after he agreed to an American plan for a cease-fire — he ordered his assorted security organizations to start arresting perpetrators of terror attacks and their accomplices.

Peres's conclusion from the report, and from the level of violence that has diminished since Arafat signed the cease-fire agreement brokered last month by CIA Director George Tenet, is that the Palestinian Authority will make a sincere effort to reduce violence.

Based on this assessment, Peres concluded that Israel should begin to implement the recommendations of the Mitchell Commission — officially halting all settlement-building activity in the West Bank and Gaza Strip — as a prelude to resuming peace talks.

Sharon reportedly has rejected Peres's approach, insisting that nothing short of a comprehensive cessation of Palestinian violence will constitute compliance with the Tenet plan.

Under the plan, a week of quiet will be followed by a period of confidence-building measures, and then peace negotiations.

The Bush administration, for its part, is trying cautiously to uphold and enhance the nominal cease-fire, while desperately trying to avoid drowning in the Mideast quagmire that sucked in the Clinton administration.

So far, Bush has refrained from inviting Arafat to Washington or even renewing the personal mediation roles of Tenet and Secretary of State Colin Powell. But Bush is sending a deputy assistant secretary of state, David Satterfield, in an open-ended effort to narrow the gaps between Jerusalem and Gaza. The move is intended to push implementation of the Mitchell Report, the Jerusalem Post reported Tuesday.

Clearly, the dispatch of such a relatively low-ranking official shows that the Bush administration has no illusions about the prospects for stabilizing the situation, let alone generating a breakthrough.

In the field, meanwhile, violence continues to rage. Israeli troops on Tuesday demolished over two dozen Palestinian structures in a Gaza Strip refugee camp, triggering some of the worst fighting since the cease-fire was declared. Three Israeli

MIDEAST FOCUS

Sharon presses U.N. on video

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon telephoned U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan Monday night and demanded that the United Nations provide all information that could shed light on the fate of three Israeli soldiers abducted by Hezbollah in October.

Israel is demanding that the United Nations provide Israel an uncensored copy of a video taken by a U.N. peacekeeper a day after the kidnapping along Israel's northern border.

But the international body reiterated that it would only give an edited copy of the video to both Israel and Hezbollah.

Settlers to get armored cars

Twenty armored Mercedes-Benz cars that served Israeli soldiers in southern Lebanon are being given to Israeli settlers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to protect them against Palestinian attacks, according to Israel's Defense Ministry.

Israeli forces had used the vehicles, some of which had Lebanese license plates, to try to blend into the local scene in southern Lebanon and avoid ambushes by the Hezbollah gunmen.

Water ban partially lifted

Some Israelis in the Tel Aviv area got the green light to drink tap water after boiling, following an earlier ban due to contamination.

An official with the Mekorot company said the cause of the contamination appeared to be ammonia that had seeped into the water system.

Mayor, Israeli Arab clash

Angry exchanges between Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert and an Israeli Arab legislator ended a Knesset committee meeting on this week's demolition of illegal Palestinian structures. Israel Radio said Olmert called Knesset member Mohammad Barakeh a "Hamasnik;" Barakeh called Olmert an "inciter."



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soldiers were wounded, one of them seriously, along with five Palestinians. Israel Radio said some 18 houses, six stores and two buildings used for agricultural purposes were torn down.

The army said the structures had been used by Palestinian gunmen to attack Israeli troops along the border with Egypt.

An army spokesman said the area where the troops operated was under Israeli security control, but the Palestinian Authority accused Israel of an incursion into P.A.-ruled areas. Speaking in Ramallah after talks in Jordan with King Abdullah, Arafat said he would seek international action against Israel.

On Sunday night, outside an Israeli army camp near Hebron in the West Bank, Capt. Shai Shalom Cohen was killed when a roadside bomb was detonated outside the jeep he was driving.

In the Gaza Strip, one day after Hamas said it was sending 10 suicide bombers into Israel, a bomber's explosives went off prematurely, killing him moments before he would have exploded a bus full of passengers just outside the Kissufim border checkpoint.

In between, grenade attacks were launched repeatedly at Israeli soldiers in the southern Gaza Strip.

In all, the Israeli army says the level of violence has declined to about a dozen incidents a day — hardly a full cease-fire, yet less than half the number of daily incidents before the Tenet plan was signed.

The Palestinian Authority said Monday it had arrested an accomplice to the suicide bomber who failed in his mission at Kissufim. The arrest, the Palestinians said, was part of a new campaign to prevent terror attacks.

While that sounded like a vindication of Peres's optimistic report, the government's dominant, hawkish element was all but losing patience this week with what many there consider Sharon's inexplicable and intolerable reluctance to order a major assault on the Palestinian Authority.

Leading the criticism was Environment Minister Tzahi Hanegbi, who said at a Cabinet meeting that the army should launch a massive attack with artillery, fighter planes, assault helicopters and elite infantry units.

"Under the current situation," Hanegbi said, according to the Yediot Achronot daily, "the Palestinians have lost all their motivation to halt the violence."

Considered a hard-liner even by Likud Party standards, Hanegbi was joined by Shas's often dovish minister of labor and welfare, Shlomo Benizri, who asked: "Just what kind of additional price should we pay before we finally respond?"

For now, Sharon's response to such swipes from his right flank remains as unexpectedly moderate as it has been since his election in February.

"Everyone here" around the Cabinet table "thinks they are heroes, but in the end I am the one bearing the responsibility, and no one can teach me how to handle terrorism," he responded to Hanegbi and Benizri.

In a phone call Monday night with U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, in fact, Sharon called for "constant international pressure to bring about the end of Palestinian terror, violence and incitement."

However, the Israeli consensus is that a major attack is in the making, even if no one can forecast precisely the timing or method. Ironically, this state of mind was echoed by the two men possibly most frustrated by Sharon's rise to power — former prime ministers Ehud Barak and Benjamin Netanyahu.

Speaking at a Tel Aviv University conference that addressed the media's role in wars, Barak harshly attacked Arafat and, by extension, Peres.

Blaming the P.A. chairman for resorting to terror and presiding over the collapse of the peace process, Barak said Israeli leaders should no longer meet with Arafat, lest he be allowed "to once again don his mask" of peace partner.

As for conditions for a "military operation" — a euphemism for a major attack — former chief of staff Barak said one should be ordered only when there remains no other choice. However, many listeners understood Barak to be implying that the current conditions constituted such a case.

Speaking even less cryptically, Netanyahu told the same forum that military action should be "fast and strong" — a hint that he considers Sharon's response to date slow and weak. □

(JTA correspondent Naomi Segal contributed to this report from Jerusalem.)

JEWISH WORLD

Youths want hostages released

Members of Young Judaea presented State Department officials with 22,000 signatures on a petition asking for the United States to pressure Hezbollah to release Israeli soldiers and civilians.

Hadassah's Zionist youth movement members, who spent six months gathering the signatures, also met with lawmakers on Capitol Hill on Tuesday.

In a related development, Hadassah said letters written by Young Judaea to the Israeli MIAs were returned by the International Commission of the Red Cross, which said that it wanted to remain neutral in the situation.

Sharon thanks Maccabiah group

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon thanked members of the World Maccabi Union for their decision to go ahead with the 16th Maccabiah Games, which begin next week.

The American delegation, with some 380 members, arrived in Israel earlier this week.

Coalition presses for foreign aid

The American Israel Public Affairs Committee was among several groups that met with Secretary of State Colin Powell to urge the Bush administration to increase foreign affairs spending and promote U.S. global engagement in areas such as the Middle East.

The coalition, known as the Campaign to Preserve Global Leadership, pledged Tuesday to mobilize congressional support for foreign aid.

Temple Mount probe sought

A U.S. congressman called on the State Department and the United Nations to investigate the destruction of Jewish archaeological sites on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

Rep. Henry Waxman (D-Calif.) noted in letters to the organizations that the Muslim religious trust that maintains the area is permitting construction crews to dig on the Mount — and is denying access to the Israel Antiquities Authority.

"The Waqf appears to be participating in a calculated assault on Jewish heritage, Jewish history and Jewish culture," Waxman said.

Paper clip principal visits Israel

The principal of a Tennessee school where students collected a paper clip for each of the 6 million Jews killed in the Holocaust is visiting Israel for a series of lectures about the Holocaust.

In the three years since the project began, Linda Hooper's students have exceeded their goal, collecting 21 million paper clips. The clips were chosen because Norwegians wore them during World War II as a protest against the Nazis.

Eight decades after his death, Zionist finally makes it to Israel

By Jessica Steinberg

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Professor Israel Friedlander was brutally murdered 81 years ago in Ukraine, but it wasn't until this week that his remains reached the Promised Land.

Friedlander, murdered with a colleague while on a mission for the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, was reinterred Tuesday on Mount Scopus in Jerusalem.

In 1920, Friedlander and his colleague, Bernard Cantor, a Reform rabbi, were sent to Poland by the JDC to offer relief to Jewish families destroyed by the fighting and pogroms that followed the 1917 Russian Revolution.

At the time, the JDC was collecting \$30 million to build orphanages and hospitals for Jewish communities. They also were looking for Jewish emissaries to send to cities and villages where Jews were at risk.

As part of their mission, the two men made their way to a Ukrainian village, where they were murdered by soldiers reportedly wearing Red Army uniforms, although details of the killings remain unclear.

At the time, the murders shocked American Jewry. The JDC continued its activity in the Soviet Union until 1938, when Stalin expelled the organization from the country.

It was a scandal for the Soviets, said Asher Ostrin, director of the JDC's operations today in the former Soviet Union. The authorities felt so badly that they invited the JDC back to Russia — in 1992.

Now the organization spends some \$70 million each year on Jewish communal activities there.

Two years ago, JDC researcher Michael Beizer discovered photos and documents that identified the location of the gravesite. JDC staffers found the two graves in a small, neglected Jewish cemetery in what is now Chelmnieceki, Ukraine.

The inscription on their tombstone read, "Israel Friedlander and Bernard Cantor, Jewish emissaries from the United States who died martyrs' deaths."

On Tuesday afternoon, with his remains wrapped in a tallit and guarded by members of the Jewish burial society, Friedlander finally was bid farewell by family, friends and colleagues.

Friedlander was an ardent Zionist, said Rabbi David Golinkin, president of the Schechter Institute in Jerusalem, the Israeli branch of the Jewish Theological Seminary.

A prolific writer on Jewish and Zionist subjects, Friedlander was one of the early leaders of the JDC when it was founded after World War I. However, he never made it to Israel, then known as Palestine.

Friedlander traveled to Palestine in 1918 but the British refused him entry because of his writings, said Attorney General Elyakim Rubinstein, who spoke at the memorial service. Nevertheless, later generations of his family settled in Israel.

Friedlander was married to Lilian Bentwich, daughter of the prominent British Zionist Herbert Bentwich, a major force in pushing forward the Balfour Declaration that helped anchor the Jewish return to the Land of Israel.

One of their children, Carmel, married Simon Agranat, the American-raised former chief justice of Israel's Supreme Court. Their son, Yisrael Agranat, named for his grandfather, now is a chemistry professor at Hebrew University.

The scholarly tradition ran in the family. A teacher of Bible at JTS, Friedlander came to the United States from Poland after completing his education in Germany and France. He joined the JTS faculty in 1904.

His brother-in-law, Louis Finkelstein, became JTS chancellor, and was credited with helping to make Conservative Judaism popular in the United States.

As for Friedlander, he was known as a teacher who believed in providing for his fellow Jews. He also was a scholar of Semitics, said Rabbi Bernard Raskas, whose father-in-law studied with Friedlander.

Friedlander could read Maimonides in Arabic, Raskas said. He was the first to say that Arabs and Jews could only work together through dialogue.

An idealist and an intellectual, said those who eulogized him, Friedlander was a proven leader who was able to combine East and West — in both his studies and his public service. □

AROUND THE JEWISH WORLD**Leaders seek pardon at Jedwabne, but some Poles are still in denial**

By Ruth E. Gruber

BUDAPEST (JTA) — Sixty years after hundreds of Jews in a Polish village were slaughtered by their neighbors, Polish President Aleksander Kwasniewski offered an apology and asked forgiveness.

"For this crime we should beg the souls of the dead and their families for forgiveness," Kwasniewski told about 3,000 people gathered in the pouring rain at a ceremony in the village of Jedwabne.

"This is why today, as a citizen and as the president of the Republic of Poland, I beg pardon," he said. "I beg pardon in my own name and in the name of those Poles whose conscience is shattered by that crime."

Joined by government officials, Jewish leaders and survivors and relatives of Jedwabne victims, Kwasniewski walked in silence from the village center to the site of the barn in which as many as 1,600 Jews were burned to death on July 10, 1941.

Other Jews already had been butchered in a murderous frenzy of violence. At the site, New York cantor Joseph Malovany said Kaddish. Jedwabne-born Rabbi Jacob Baker led prayers.

In addition, a new wood and concrete monument to the victims was unveiled.

For decades, a smaller monument on the site had attributed the slaughter to German Nazis and the Gestapo.

This was removed in March after a book titled "Neighbors" by Polish-American scholar Jan Gross — followed by a documentary film and other on-site research — revealed that the massacre was carried out by local Poles. The revelations sparked what has been the most open, widespread and wrenching debate in Poland about that nation's role in the Holocaust.

"The remarkable characteristic of anything to do with Jews in Poland is its intensity," said British Jewish scholar Jonathan Webber, who attended the Jedwabne ceremony. "Poles are examining themselves when they examine Jewish issues."

Some 3 million of prewar Poland's 3.5 million Jews were killed in the Holocaust, but Catholic Poles also suffered deeply under the Nazis.

The official formulation was that 6 million Polish citizens were killed by the Nazis — 3 million Catholics as well as the 3 million Jews.

Under communism, the ideal of Polish martyrdom, resistance and heroism in fighting the Nazis was bolstered.

What historian Marta Petrusiewicz called a "myth of Polish innocence" was encouraged.

In this construct, dishonorable deeds and shameful historical events were covered up to prevent conflicts with the official version of history. Disgrace, shame and dishonor, however, could fester privately as dark secrets "protected" by taboos.

This is what happened in Jedwabne itself.

"I learned about the massacre as a 'Big Secret' as a child," recalled Marta Kurkowska-Budza, a young social historian at Krakow's Jagiellonian University who was born in Jedwabne. "You know — once Poles burnt alive Jews in a barn and robbed them."

Gross's book — and the ensuing debates and media attention — exploded these taboos.

For some, it was a cathartic relief. For others, it was a valuable

key to rethinking history. For still others, it provoked further denial.

"To contemporary Jedwabne inhabitants but also Poles in general, the murder of Jews is this kind of traumatic, undomesticated history; the public debate is painful but was inescapable," Kurkowska-Budza has stated. "Public discourse is a battleground."

The intensity of feeling, both positive and negative, could be seen at Tuesday's ceremony.

Many participants came from around Poland to the village more than 100 miles northeast of Warsaw.

But missing from the delegations and mourners were the local Jedwabne priest as well as other Roman Catholic officials.

"These are all lies. I am spending the day quietly at home," Rev. Edward Orlowski told reporters. "It is Holocaust business. It is not my business. Germans are responsible, so why should we apologize?"

Many local villagers in the rundown town of 2,000 also stayed home.

Taped to the door of at least one shop was a defiant notice, signed by the "Committee for the Defense of the Good Name of Poland," reading: "We do not apologize. It was the Germans who murdered Jews in Jedwabne. Let the slanderers apologize to the Polish nation."

Indeed, opinion polls show that about half of Poles refuse to accept shared responsibility for the killings.

Senior Polish officials, in fact, said Kwasniewski was careful not to make his apology on behalf of the entire nation because the country was not responsible for the massacre.

The wording on the monument also reflected this view, to the dismay of Jews. The new inscription removes reference to the perpetrators as having been German Nazis — but it does not say who actually did the killing.

It reads, in Polish, Hebrew and Yiddish: "In memory of the Jews of Jedwabne and surrounding areas, men, women and children, fellow dwellers of this land, murdered and burned alive at this site on 10 July 1941. Jedwabne, July 10, 2001."

It was unclear whether this inscription might be changed again once a final report from an investigation into the Jedwabne massacre and a similar slaughter carried out three days earlier in the nearby village of Radzilow is published. The government's Institute of National Remembrance began the inquiry in September, and to date its findings bear out Gross's account.

"The said crime has been committed by burning the Jewish victims — men, women and children — in a barn located at the outskirts of the Jedwabne town," the institute stated recently.

"During the investigation currently conducted, 42 witnesses have been heard, including a group of eyewitnesses of the events," the institute said.

"In the light of their accounts, it can be assumed that Polish inhabitants of Jedwabne actively participated in the crime. These were mainly young men in the number of about 40, acting jointly with eight German gendarmes present at the site." □

Files could reveal Nazi info

NEW YORK (JTA) — The Simon Wiesenthal Center urged Germany's interior ministry to continue allowing researchers unrestricted access to the Berlin archives of the Communist secret police.

Germany apparently is considering making access to the files — many of which contain information on alleged Nazi war criminals — dependent on the subjects' agreement. □