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TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Teen killed in drive-by shooting

A 14-year-old Israeli boy was killed in a drive-by shooting Thursday night near Jerusalem.

The boy died shortly after shots were fired from a passing car.

State Dept. may post rewards

A senior State Department official told lawmakers Thursday that the department is searching for a way to include rewards on its Web site for information leading to the arrest of Palestinian terrorists who kill American citizens.

"We will move ahead and find a way of advertising on the Web site," William Burns, assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs, told a House of Representatives panel Thursday. [Page 4]

Iran-Libya sanctions extended

The U.S. House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed a five-year extension of the Iran Libya Sanctions Act, a day after it was approved in the Senate.

The White House had advocated a two-year extension of the act, which imposes sanctions on foreign firms that invest in either country's energy sector. A White House spokesman said it is too early to tell whether the president will sign a five-year extension of the act, which expires early next month.

Senate panel passes anti-hate bill

A U.S. Senate committee passed a bill that would expand federal hate crimes laws to cover sexual orientation, gender and disability.

Many Jewish groups support the legislation. Identical provisions, which received bipartisan support from both houses in last year's Congress, were stripped out of a bill in its final stages last year. [Page 4]

Disco bombing suspect arrested

An Israeli undercover unit arrested two Palestinians in the West Bank on Wednesday night. One of the men was said to be involved in planning a June 1 suicide bombing outside a Tel Aviv disco that killed 21.

REMINDER: The JTA DAILY NEWS BULLETIN will not be published Monday, July 30.

FOCUS ON ISSUES

Jewish groups blast Vatican over its refusal to open archives

By Michael J. Jordan

NEW YORK (JTA) — Pope John Paul II is widely praised by Jews for the strides he has taken to repair Jewish-Catholic relations.

But some Jewish observers now wonder if John Paul's legacy may be tarnished by the Vatican's apparent reluctance to budge on perhaps the most contentious of remaining intercommunal issues — a thorough exploration of the church's role during the Holocaust, and especially the part played at the time by Pope Pius XII.

John Paul long has planned to beatify Pius XII — a step toward his sainthood. Because of Pius' silence in the face of genocide, some Jews accuse him of virtual complicity with the Nazi regime.

In a July 20 letter to the Vatican's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, a Vatican-approved, Catholic-Jewish panel of historians announced it would suspend its work because it had been denied full access to the Holy See's wartime archives.

In two years of activity, the five historians were provided with only 11 volumes of archives — what may be just a small fraction of the total.

The historians' latest bid for access was rebuffed recently by Cardinal Walter Kasper, president of the Vatican's interreligious commission.

The additional archives are inaccessible for unspecified "technical reasons," Kasper said.

To some observers, it seemed that Rome expected a final conclusion drawn about the Vatican's role in the Holocaust — specifically, whether it could somehow have prevented the mass murders or worked to save more Jews — based entirely on those 11 volumes.

This led the historians, who were concerned for the credibility of their research, to notify Kasper that "we cannot see a way forward at present to the final report you request, and believe we must suspend our work."

It also sparked criticism from Seymour Reich, chairman of the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations, an umbrella group known as IJCIC that includes Jewish groups working toward Jewish-Catholic reconciliation.

Reich distributed a statement Monday in which he expressed "deep disappointment" with the Vatican and revealed the historians' letter to Kasper.

That, in turn, prompted the two Catholic members of the historical commission to issue their own statement.

In their statement, the Catholic members distanced themselves from Reich and reassured the Vatican that it was not "a sense of any protest" that motivated them to sign the letter to Kasper.

As for Reich, when the Vatican established the historical commission in October 1999, "I believed then that it was a sincere effort to have some of these open issues resolved," he told JTA.

Today, though, he says he is "troubled by the lack of positive response."

Ironically, the controversy has emerged toward the end of a pontificate widely hailed as revolutionary in terms of church attitudes toward the Jews.

Among other advances, John Paul was the first pope to visit a synagogue and apologize for the church's historic role in fomenting anti-Semitism. "This pope is a good pope, and no one will ever forget his unprecedented trip to Israel in March 2000, but this represents another bump in our relations," Reich said. Some Jewish leaders were

MIDEAST FOCUS

Security meeting ends in discord

CIA officials cut short a meeting between Israeli and Palestinian security officials after each side accused the other of causing an escalation of violence.

During the meeting, the Palestinians presented a list of 50 suspected Jewish extremists they want arrested by Israel, but Israel refused to accept it.

Panel: Trainees dove in poison

Israel knowingly ordered thousands of naval commandos to dive and train in poisonous waters for decades despite health warnings, a government panel charged Thursday. The panel, investigating cancer rates among former navy divers, said the military knew of potentially dangerous chemicals in the polluted Kishon River as early as the 1950s.

Lawyers hired for Belgian case

The Prime Minister's Office has hired a Belgian lawyer to handle a war crimes lawsuit filed in Belgium against Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, Israeli media reported Thursday.

The suit was brought against Sharon over his role in the 1982 Sabra and Shatila massacre in Lebanon. The judge involved in the case began hearing testimony Thursday, according to the Israeli daily Ha'aretz.

Bereaved mother gives birth

The mother of Shalhevet Pass, the 10-month-old Israeli infant killed by Palestinian sniper fire in Hebron four months ago, has given birth to a girl.

Israel accused by journalist group

A Paris-based press watchdog group said Thursday it believes the Israeli army has wounded 30 journalists since the Palestinian uprising began and called for urgent steps to protect journalists. Reporters Without Borders said 10 of the journalists had been hit by live rounds, and the rest were wounded by rubber-coated steel bullets or other projectiles.



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more scathing in their criticism. "One must conclude that they are engaged in a cover-up," said Elan Steinberg, executive director of the World Jewish Congress, which is a member of IJCIC.

"The documents already available in the U.S. indicate that Pope Pius XII was well aware of the enormity of the atrocities against the Jews, and the record is clear that the pope never once spoke out against these Nazi acts. I have no doubt that the documents in the archives will confirm this moral failure," Steinberg said.

Eugene Fisher, a U.S. spokesman for the Catholic Church, denied any attempt to stonewall.

Fisher warned that any overheated rhetoric may seriously damage Catholic-Jewish relations.

Steinberg's charges involve "strange, conspiratorial language and, frankly, I resent it. We should be well beyond such dangerous, groundless language about each other," said Fisher, who directs Catholic-Jewish relations for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

"This was never a question of whether the archives will be available, but a question of when," he continued.

"They've got hundreds of boxes containing tens of thousands of documents from a very long pontificate" — Pope Pius XII served from 1939 to 1958 — "and there are only two archivists working on preparing the material. They've got to go through it, bind it, register it and move it."

Fisher declined to estimate when the task would be completed.

When the historical commission was first formed, there was no guarantee the Vatican would allow open perusal of its archives.

But Reich and others embraced the notion of a commission as a "useful first step" that they hoped would lead to the opening of all archives.

The original panel of six historians — there now are just five, following the unrelated resignation of a Catholic historian half a year ago — forged ahead with its research based on the 11 volumes.

They came up with a list of 47 questions, but answering them required access to the rest of the archives, the historians said.

Then came the stalemate.

"This is a setback in the story of improved Catholic-Jewish relations, and the way forward is transparency and to fully come to terms with the past," said Michael Marrus, one of the Jewish historians on the team and the dean of graduate studies at the University of Toronto.

It's unclear if the research will resume.

"The ball's in the Vatican's court," Reich said.

Jewish leaders note that while every European state, including Russia, has now opened its archives, the Holy See has not.

They want the pope to fulfill what they see as the Vatican's moral obligation — especially while Holocaust survivors are still alive.

"If the archives are released 100 years from now, I'm really not interested," said Abraham Foxman, a Holocaust survivor and national director of the Anti-Defamation League, another member of IJCIC.

"This pope has gone so far and has spoken out against the Holocaust and gone to Auschwitz, but this remains one of the most painful questions. We're living under the shadow of that time," Foxman said.

"Now is when it's important to know, not four or five generations from now, when the Holocaust could become like Genghis Khan — a footnote in history," he said.

Even if the archives are opened, some questions about Pope Pius XII and the Vatican may never be resolved, said Rabbi David Rosen, international director of interreligious affairs for the American Jewish Committee.

"We're dealing with a hypothetical question," Rosen said. "If Pope Pius had done all he could on behalf of the Jews, would the history of the Holocaust have been different?"

"Even if all the archives are available, then there probably will still be a difference of opinion between the Jewish community and the church," he said. "There are certain issues we will have to learn to agree to differ on, and the way we view historical memory is one of those." □

JEWISH WORLD

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

Jewish relations with Arabs, Muslims have shaky present, uncertain future

By Sharon Samber

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Agreeing to disagree is a way of political life in Washington.

But in light of recent incidents where Jewish organizations withdrew from coalitions because of the participation of extreme Muslim groups, some Jewish groups are concerned about the future of Jewish-Muslim and Jewish-Arab relations.

The American Jewish Congress, the American Jewish Committee and the Anti-Defamation League withdrew their names last week from a legal brief to the U.S. Supreme Court after the Council on American Islamic Relations signed on to the brief.

The groups did not want to work with or lend legitimacy to CAIR, which has defended terror attacks against Israel.

They since have filed their own brief in support of the plaintiff, a Muslim woman subjected to employment discrimination.

Also last week, the Orthodox Union stepped down from the advisory board of the Alliance for Marriage because a representative of the American Muslim Council was a board member.

The Muslim Council supports Hamas and Hezbollah, two Middle East-based extremist groups that participate in terrorist attacks against Israel.

These two incidents exemplify the dilemma facing Jewish groups — the desire to cooperate on issues of common concern to American Jews and Muslims is countered by fears that some U.S. Arab or Muslim groups hold extremist views on Israel or other issues important to the Jewish community.

American Jews share many interests with American Arabs and Muslims — such as immigration policy, religious freedom and civil rights — so that Jewish groups often find themselves on coalitions with groups like the American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee or the Supreme Islamic Council.

These more mainstream groups do not support terrorists. But the ADL has found it difficult to work even with the more mainstream groups over the past five years, according to Ken Jacobson, the organization's associate national director.

It is hard to know where to draw the line given the increased violence and rhetoric related to ongoing Israeli-Palestinian violence, said Hannah Rosenthal, executive director of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, an umbrella organization of 122 local councils and 13 national agencies.

But her decision appears to be clear for now. "Would we join a coalition with AMC or CAIR tomorrow?" Rosenthal asked. "No."

Hyman Bookbinder, a retired AJCommittee official and a longtime activist in Washington, worked during the "golden age" of civil rights alliance-building in the 1960s and 1970s.

Bookbinder recalls "having to swallow hard about what the groups did to Israel" in order to work with them on human rights issues.

While groups must be willing to take chances, Bookbinder says some positions or people — such as Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan, who repeatedly has made anti-Semitic comments — are beyond the pale.

Some local Jewish cities with large Arab and Muslim populations have felt some tension lately.

Despite the tension, the Jewish Community Council of Metropolitan Detroit continues to work with Arab and Muslim groups on issues of immigration and racial and ethnic profiling.

"There have been instances where we've felt uncomfortable, but we've never left a coalition because another group joined," said David Gad-Harf, the Detroit council's executive director.

Gad-Harf predicts that Jewish groups will refrain from expanding relationships with Muslim and Arab groups as long as there is instability in Israel, and as long as certain Muslim and Arab groups continue to project an antagonistic tone.

Nevertheless, Gad-Harf believes that local Arab groups still want to maintain ties with the Jewish community because of their shared concerns. □

Groups agree on restitution

The Polish Jewish community and representatives of world Jewry declared an end to their longstanding differences and pledged to work together to reconstitute some 1,500 communal properties from the Polish state.

Poland's government established a deadline of May 2002 for claiming properties, but Jewish officials expect the deadline to be extended. About 760 properties have been recovered so far.

Austria: Payouts may begin soon

Austria's chancellor said the nation's \$450 million compensation fund for Nazi-era slave laborers could begin making payments by the end of the month.

Thursday's announcement came after a U.S. judge said she would dismiss claims in lawsuits against the Austrian government and Austrian companies.

Papon sympathizers blasted

The umbrella group representing France's 750,000 Jews expressed outrage at a petition signed by two former prime ministers and other senior figures calling for the early release of a jailed Nazi-era war criminal.

Former premiers Pierre Messmer and Raymond Barre were among signatories to a petition sent to President Jacques Chirac on Wednesday urging that Maurice Papon, 90, be released on grounds of age and his frail condition.

"This use of a humanitarian alibi to rewrite one of the most somber chapters in French history is outrageous," CRIF, the umbrella group of secular French Jewish organizations, said in a statement Thursday.

Papon began serving a 10-year jail sentence in October 1999 after he was found guilty of helping deport some 1,500 Jews to Nazi death camps.

Monastery issues racist pamphlet

A monastery in Ukraine that is considered an important center of the Russian Orthodox Church recently published a brochure accusing Jews of being devil worshippers.

One passage in the brochure, published by Kiev's Monastery of the Caves, reads: "Russian Orthodoxy is called upon to preserve the wholeness of the Church's teachings, as opposed to the kike religion of Satan."

Congo arrests diamond dealers

Congolese security officials arrested one Belgian and two Israeli diamond dealers as they prepared to board a flight from Kinshasa, Congo, to Belgium. Congolese authorities gave no reason for Wednesday night's arrests of the three, who work for an Israeli diamond company that is one of five authorized to export diamonds from the war-torn African nation.

U.S. envoy: We may offer rewards for info on terrorists

By Matthew E. Berger

WASHINGTON (JTA) — The State Department is close to publicizing rewards for information leading to the arrests of Palestinians who kill American citizens, according to the U.S. Middle East envoy.

William Burns, assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern Affairs, said the Bush administration has heard complaints from lawmakers and the American Jewish community that Palestinians are the only ones left off a Web site that offers rewards for information on people who have killed American citizens throughout the world.

"The administration shares the concern of many members of Congress and many Americans about the importance of finding a way to address this on the Web site, and we are going to do that," Burns said Thursday to the House of Representatives' International Relations Committee's Middle East panel. "We're looking now at exactly how we do that on the Web site, but we will move ahead and find a way of advertising on the Web site."

He noted that rewards are available for any information that leads to an arrest, whether the accused is listed on the Web site or not.

State Department policy has been to not offer rewards for the death of Americans killed in the West Bank and Gaza Strip because it "would be detrimental to ongoing efforts to capture" suspects "and could increase the danger to American citizens and facilities overseas," according to a department report released in March.

But a State Department spokesman said the policy has led to a "misconception" that the United States is uninterested in the capture of these terrorists.

"We are looking for a way to address the misconception," the spokesman said.

Morton Klein, president of the Zionist Organization of America, said he was pleased by the decision.

"It's the most explicit and direct answer we've ever gotten to the question of rewards," said Klein, who has been the driving force on the issue in the Jewish community. "It's the first time there has been a clear and public declaration that rewards will soon be offered for the capture of the several dozen Palestinian Arabs who have murdered 18 American citizens."

Klein said it is still unclear whether the administration is going to offer rewards or just post the information on the Web site.

In his first appearance before the House panel, Burns said he has seen some effort by Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat to rein in violence and incitement, but that a lot more needs to be done.

"It is absolutely clear that more needs to be done, and the focus of our efforts has been to press the importance of, particularly, the Palestinian side doing more to rein in violence," Burns said.

Burns acknowledged that members of the Tanzim — the militia of Arafat's Fatah Party — and Force 17, his presidential guard, are involved in the violence against Israel.

"It's a question that's not only a serious concern, but it's also something that we're very seriously reviewing as we look at the possible designation of particular groups as foreign terrorist organizations," he said.

Burns was asked repeatedly whether U.S. funds sent to the West Bank and Gaza go to the Palestinian Authority. He said they

do not, but are dispersed by the U.S. Agency for International Development directly to humanitarian projects.

Noting the poor economic conditions in the Palestinian areas, Burns said those funds were "appreciated" by the Palestinians.

Burns also downplayed the possible role of third-party monitors in the Middle East, as were recommended last weekend by officials from G-8 nations meeting in Italy.

Burns said any such force would be not of a military nature but rather a "more modest mechanism which would help the two parties to implement their commitments" made in agreements earlier this year. □

Hate crimes legislation closer after Senate panel gives it the OK

By Sharon Samber

WASHINGTON (JTA) — The prospects for passing national hate crimes legislation just got a little brighter.

The Senate Judiciary Committee passed a hate crimes bill Thursday by a vote of 12-7.

It is likely that the full Senate will pass the bill sometime this fall. Last year, senators voted 57-42 to enact identical hate crimes provisions — but the measures later were stripped out of a defense bill.

In the House of Representatives, 195 legislators are on record so far in support of similar provisions — still short of the number needed to pass a bill.

The legislation that passed the Senate committee Thursday would authorize federal prosecution of crimes motivated by sexual orientation, gender, or disability, expanding current laws that protect victims of crimes motivated by race, color, religion or ethnicity.

Under the legislation, state and local law enforcement agencies still would have primary responsibility for investigating and prosecuting hate crimes, but would receive assistance from the federal government.

Most Jewish groups support national hate crimes legislation. In recent years hate crimes targeting Jews caught the national spotlight, such as last April's shooting in Pittsburgh that killed a Jewish woman, a white supremacist's shooting rampage in Illinois last July and the 1999 shooting at the North Valley Jewish Community Center in Los Angeles.

Some congressional Republicans oppose hate crimes legislation because, they say, they don't want to create special classes of victims.

There also is concern that the federal government might overstep its bounds and interfere with state and local officials in their investigations of hate crimes.

Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) said he disagrees with his colleagues who believe any crime is a hate crime, saying hate crimes deserve a "broader response."

But an alternative bill that Hatch offered, which failed to pass through the committee, called for more study on hate crimes and more evidence that state and local law officers are not enforcing state hate crime laws already on the books.

Sen. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) said local police are reluctant to enforce the law. Schumer also accused some lawmakers of being reluctant to include sexual orientation as a new category of hate crime in the legislation.

"That's the little rotten secret of this bill," he said. □