



Daily News Bulletin

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TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Israeli killed in ambush

Palestinian gunmen killed an Israeli woman in a drive-by shooting in the West Bank.

Salit Sheetrit, 28, was hit in the head by the gunfire. Sheetrit's husband, who was in the car with her, sustained minor wounds in Monday's attack.

Sharon has little hope for talks

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon held out little hope for a meeting soon between Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat.

"Arafat must stop terrorism" before the meeting will be held, Sharon told the visiting French foreign minister, Hubert Veldre. Sharon accused Palestinians of carrying out 99 "terrorist attacks" since Arafat announced a cease-fire last week.

Meanwhile, Peres said he is thinking of taking a few days' "vacation" to protest Sharon's decision to cancel a planned meeting Sunday between Peres and Arafat. Peres is reportedly angry at the cancellation and wants to take some time to ponder his next moves, according to the Jerusalem Post.

Israel sets up West Bank buffer

The Israeli army set up a closed military zone in the northern West Bank.

Israeli officials said the 20-mile-long zone was meant to stop suicide bombers from infiltrating into Israel. Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat called the move a "serious escalation."

AMIA trial begins in Argentina

A trial began Monday in Buenos Aires for 20 people accused of playing a role in the 1994 bombing of the AMIA Jewish community center in the Argentine capital. None of the defendants have been charged with involvement in the actual attack, only with supplying the stolen van used in the bombing, which killed 86 people and wounded hundreds. Argentine officials hope the trial may shed light on those who masterminded the attack.

Vandals strike Moscow shul

Vandals spray-painted Nazi graffiti and anti-Semitic inscriptions at the entrance to Moscow's Choral Synagogue on Saturday night. One of the inscriptions read: "Zhids, Get Out of Russia."

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

Israel as model for security? It's not so easy, experts say

By Matthew E. Berger

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Boarding a domestic flight in the United States could soon be as tough as boarding a flight to Israel on El Al Airlines.

But while Israel has often been mentioned as the model for domestic security ever since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, transforming America into a security-conscious land like Israel may not be so easy.

Whether traveling by air or walking into a movie theater, Israelis are accustomed to their bags being checked by professional security personnel. Ordinary civilians are on the alert for suspicious packages.

Yonah Alexander, an Israeli and professor of terrorism studies in the United States, said the United States used to view terrorism as a nuisance, and something that would go away.

"Now it seems that the super power of the United States and the international community is looking at Israel's experiment as an experiment that worked most of the time," said Alexander, director of the International Center for Terrorism Studies at the Potomac Institute in suburban Washington.

He said Americans will need to take the mundane security steps that Israel has had for years, such as frequent checks for identification, and bag and purse searches.

But he said the United States' size and open-door policy toward immigrants will make the security procedures more complex than Israel's methods.

And he noted that Israel, which has experienced its own share of terrorist assaults, knows its enemies and their tactics, in contrast to the situation in the current war on terrorism being waged by the United States.

"You cannot take the Israeli model and put it on America, it's not going to fit," Alexander said. "You have to fit the pieces of the puzzle."

Still, U.S. officials are already looking at El Al's security procedures. The Israeli airline is said to have one of the most expansive security checklists and has enacted many features to ensure passenger safety.

"Everyone knows, if you've flown on El Al, you go through a 45-minute interview," Sen. John Kerry (D-Mass.) said in a hearing last week on federal aviation security. "And there's a separation of different folks, based on the various ways in which they do their screening."

"Needless to say, it's inconvenient to business, and that's one of the reasons why it hasn't happened," Kerry said. "But I think Americans want to know they can get on a plane and be safe, and I know that there are adequate numbers of proposals already made to empower us to be able to make that guarantee to them, and we need to just embrace it and make it happen here soon."

Martin Indyk, a former U.S. ambassador to Israel, said he believes the El Al crew members are better trained than their American counterparts and that a skilled staff is a requirement for keeping the airplanes safe.

"It's having trained people simply interrogating passengers until they are satisfied," Indyk said. "It's a very thorough process."

The airline is also believed to employ armed marshals on its planes and lock the cockpit so that passengers cannot hijack it.

An El Al spokeswoman said the airline would not discuss its security features.

Some terrorism experts have their doubts about U.S. airlines emulating El Al.

"El Al has only 20 aircraft and loses \$30 million a year," L. Paul Bremer, a former

MIDEAST FOCUS

Bin Laden blasts Jews

A statement believed sent by Saudi terror suspect Osama bin Laden to a TV station based in Qatar lashed out at a "Jewish campaign" against him while expressing sympathy for Muslims killed in Pakistan in anti-U.S. demonstrations.

"We hope that they are the first martyrs in Islam's battle in this era against the new crusade and Jewish campaign led by the big crusader Bush under the flag of the cross," the statement said.

In another development, the leader of Afghanistan's Taliban said capturing bin Laden will not help prevent future terror attacks against the United States.

If U.S. officials really care about staving off future acts of terrorism, they should pull their forces out of the Persian Gulf and support the Palestinians in their uprising against Israel, Mullah Mohammad Omar said Monday.

Gulf states want anti-Israel move

The leaders of six Gulf Arab states announced their support of an American-led coalition against terrorism, provided action is also taken against what they described as Israel's terrorism against Palestinians.

Analysts say the countries — Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Oman and Qatar — must strike a balance between Washington's demands and significant grass-roots support for both the Palestinians and Osama bin Laden.

Israel falls back an hour

Israel turned back its clocks by an hour over the weekend.

Eastern Daylight Savings Time is now six hours earlier than in Israel, but there will again be a seven-hour time difference between the two zones once clocks are turned back an hour in the United States at the end of October.

chair of the U.S. National Commission on Terrorism, said last Friday at a terrorism conference sponsored by the U.S. Institute for Peace. "It's not a good model."

Indyk said that if the El Al model is utilized in the United States, major civil liberties questions will arise.

Israel has always treated Arabs with more scrutiny than Israelis and American Jews, because historically they have posed the largest threat.

"It gets very much into the question of racial profiling," Indyk said. "The trade-off between security and civil rights is going to be a difficult one to manage."

He said Israel has a lot it can teach the United States about other homeland defense matters, including border control.

"Israel has experience in controlling its borders, particularly at the crossing points," he said. "The United States has a very large population and very long borders and controlling those borders is going to be a real challenge."

He also said the Israeli system of giving civilians a security detail in crisis situations could be duplicated in the United States, as could the way Israelis work to break up terrorism cells in their own land.

But he noted that Israel's security situation is unique, and it is not in America's best interest to emulate all of its security features.

"Israel faces a highly different threat," Indyk said. "There is not a potentially hostile population on America's borders that present an immediate challenge to deal with." □

Czech who fed Jew a Christmas meal among 15 honored as Shoah rescuers

By Magnus Bennett

PRAGUE (JTA) — On Christmas Eve, 1941, Czech farmer Frantisek Kytlic left his home in Zamberk to scour the local woods for a Christmas tree.

During his search, he stumbled across two men in hiding and learned that one was a Polish soldier and the other a Jew.

Kytlic immediately took them home and shared his Christmas dinner with them. His Jewish guest, Jan Hostovsky, spent the rest of World War II in hiding with the farmer and his wife, helped by three local women who were also prepared to share the risk of discovery.

The story was one of several moving accounts given at a special Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial awards ceremony in Prague when the Israeli ambassador to the Czech Republic, Erelly Hadar, presented Righteous Among the Nations certificates, most of them posthumously, to 15 citizens of the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

Hadar told the assembled guests, who included the ambassadors of Slovakia and Slovenia, that those people who had put themselves in great danger to save Jewish lives during the war had acted out of "human kindness."

She said Israel continued to keep and cherish the names and lives of the millions who perished during the war.

"That is why we cherish and respect so much those very noble people who took upon themselves the responsibility to save somebody, even one person, from certain death," Hadar said.

Jaroslav Homolka was one of the few rescuers able to attend the ceremony. In 1942, when he was 20 years old, his parents hid a Jewish couple, Ruzena and Frantisek Ehrmann, at their farm near Pilsen, even though they barely knew them.

The Ehrmanns spent the rest of the war in a tiny shelter hidden behind a wardrobe. The Homolka family brought them food and regularly took them to the nearby woods at night for fresh air.

They narrowly escaped detection when the police raided their home after the 1942 assassination of Reinhard Heydrich, the highest Nazi official in wartime Czechoslovakia.

"We were terrified of being found out at first because we knew what would happen to us if the Nazis discovered the Ehrmanns," Homolka told JTA. "But after a while we got used to it, and it didn't really worry us anymore."

Others who received awards included a Slovak couple who gave sanctuary in Bratislava, Slovakia, to three Jews, including a member of the Jewish underground, and three friends who hid a young Jewish man in their apartment in Prague. □



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JEWISH WORLD

Babi Yar massacre remembered

Some 2,000 people gathered Sunday at the Babi Yar memorial in Ukraine to mark the 60th anniversary of the Nazi massacre of nearly 34,000 Jews during three days in September 1941. Later that day, a requiem commemorating the massacre was performed at the Kiev Opera Theater, where Ukrainian government officials were in the audience.

Radio hosts blast Israel

Hosts of a popular sports radio program in New York suggested that American Jews take a loyalty oath to either the United States or Israel, in light of the recent terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, according to the New York Post.

Mike Francesca and Chris Russo, hosts of the "Mike and the Mad Dog" show on WFAN, said on the air that they felt U.S. support for Israel was responsible for the terrorist attacks.

Woman knew pilot from training

The FBI and Scotland Yard interviewed a British woman who took the same pilots course as one of the terrorists involved in the Sept. 11 attack on the World Trade Center.

Anne Greaves told the BBC that Mohammad Atta "was fixated on achieving something, but without the pride and pleasure of doing something you enjoy" during the six-month course in Florida last year.

Arson at Tacoma synagogue

An arson attempt at the only synagogue in Tacoma, Wash., resulted in only minor damage after a neighbor reported suspicious activity to police.

Firefighters found two fire-starting logs, one burning under a main gas line next to the synagogue, and the other near the building. The attempt early Sunday was the third apparent hate crime at Temple Beth El in recent weeks.

Airlines: Israel flights to continue

Continental and Delta Air Lines denied an Israeli newspaper report that they would permanently end flights to Israel in light of the Sept. 11 attacks on the United States. The Globes daily financial newspaper's Web site had reported that Continental would end its daily flights to Israel, while Delta would make its current temporary suspension of flights a permanent move.

Envoy to Czech Republic retires

Erilly Hadar plans to retire next month as Israel's ambassador to the Czech Republic, after serving two years in the post. She will be replaced by Arthur Avnon, who spent five years during the 1990s as Israel's Consul General in Chicago.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

Israelis worry that they too have reason to fear bin Laden

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israel has not been a prime target on Saudi billionaire Osama bin Laden's terrorist agenda, but Israeli officials worry that could soon change.

Israeli terror experts such as Maj. Gen. Amos Malka, the chief of army intelligence, said recently that bin Laden is gearing up for action against Israel by sending members of his terror organization to the West Bank and Gaza Strip, or by recruiting followers in the Palestinian territories.

If Israel until now has not figured prominently on bin Laden's terror map, these experts say, it is not because he doesn't want to hurt Israel, but simply because the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not his first priority.

But that situation could soon change, according to Israeli security officials cited by the Israeli daily Ha'aretz. These officials say bin Laden may become increasingly motivated to strike Israel because of growing criticism from within his fundamentalist Muslim organization regarding his failure to support the Palestinians in their struggle against the Jewish state.

Bin Laden's launching pad for Holy War is Al Qaida — Arabic for "the base" — his own private, highly effective terror organization.

Al Qaida's primary goal is "to unite all Muslims and establish a government that follows the rule of the caliphs," according to the group's own words. The group's fight, therefore, is not specifically against Israel but the entire non-Islamic world.

Like other Islamic fundamentalist leaders, bin Laden perceives the Western powers as successors to the Crusaders. He perceives himself as the successor to the great Muslim warrior Saladin, who conquered Jerusalem from the Crusaders in October 1187 and kicked the "infidels" off holy Muslim soil.

Several months ago, the Israeli press came out with banner headlines disclosing that bin Laden followers were trying to establish a foothold in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

In June 2000, according to recently released details, Israeli security agents arrested a Palestinian, Nabil Ukal, 27, a resident of the Jabalya refugee camp in Gaza.

Ukal, who left Gaza in October 1997 to study religion in Pakistan, returned to the region the next year as Al Qaida's first agent in the territories. Under orders from a senior member in the organization, he was sent to the territories to set up a paramilitary infrastructure for operations that were to include Israeli Arabs.

Upon his return to Gaza, Ukal is known to have met with the spiritual leader of Hamas, Sheik Ahmed Yassin. Yassin gave Ukal \$10,000 for his activities.

When Israel brought charges against Ukal after his arrest, he was indicted for planning to carry out a large-scale attack in the center of the country.

This was not the first time that bin Laden operatives were arrested in the region.

At the end of 1999, Jordan arrested a number of fundamentalist activists, graduates of bin Laden's training camps in Afghanistan, who allegedly plotted to attack Israeli and American tourists visiting Israel and Jordan for the millennium.

Only a few, carefully selected journalists have so far been given the opportunity to meet with bin Laden in his hideout somewhere in the mountains of Afghanistan.

Al Jazeera Television, the popular Arab television network that broadcasts from the Persian Gulf emirate of Qatar, recently was granted a lengthy exclusive interview with bin Laden that sheds light on the psychology of one of the most wanted terrorists in history. In the best Arab tradition, the interview was held in a tent, with both interviewer and interviewee sitting on carpets. With his rifle nearby, bin Laden enunciated his belligerent world view in a soft-spoken manner.

"There are two sides to this conflict," he said, with a half-smile. "America, Israel, and 'Crusader' countries like England that want to rule the world, on one hand — and Islam on the other hand."

As his words made clear, bin Laden's world is conveniently divided into "us" and "them." Because, according to his view, the West wants to control the rest of the world, it is legitimate to hate westerners and fight them.

By extension, according to his own statements, "Every American who tries to hurt Islam is a legitimate target." □

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

Jews join thousands in prayer as New Yorkers begin healing*By Julie Wiener*

NEW YORK (JTA) — Eli Wohl had just finished morning prayers at his yeshiva when people ran in to say the World Trade Center was on fire.

Wohl, 22, went outside to watch — the avenue where the Brooklyn yeshiva stands enjoyed an unobstructed view of the twin towers — and saw the second plane hit Sept. 11.

Twelve days later, Wohl and several of his friends — with peyos, or sidelocks, and traditional black dress — were among the thousands of New Yorkers at Yankee Stadium for a multifaith "Prayer for America."

"I came basically to show we're all together," he said. "Chasidic Jews, Jewish, we're all humans."

Part-rally, part-memorial service, part-worship service and part-concert, the Sunday afternoon gathering drew a diverse and multiracial crowd.

The lineup, emceed by talk show host and actress Oprah Winfrey, included politicians, rabbis, priests, Muslim, Protestant and Sikh clergy — and such singers as Placido Domingo, Bette Midler and the Boys and Girls Choirs of Harlem.

Among the rabbis to speak and offer prayers were Joseph Potasnik, Jewish chaplain to the New York Fire Department; Haskel Lookstein, spiritual leader of Congregation Kehilath Jeshurun in Manhattan; Marc Gellman, president of the New York Board of Rabbis; Arthur Schneier, president of the Appeal of Conscience Foundation; and Joy Levitt, director of programming for the Jewish Community Center in Manhattan.

Lookstein blew a shofar several times, after saying, "Today we sound the shofar in pain and anguish. With God's help, we will again sound it in happiness and joy."

Schneier began his speech with the first few lines of the Kaddish, the Jewish mourning prayer.

Gellman spoke of the talmudic teaching that to destroy one person is to destroy an entire world, and to save one person is to save an entire world.

It is important, Gellman said, not to numb ourselves to the event by viewing the victims as statistics.

He urged people instead to remember that each person had his or her own stories.

"On that day 6,000 people did not die," Gellman said. "On that day one person died 6,000 times."

As people flowed into the stadium, some wearing shirts emblazoned with photos of family members lost in the attacks on the World Trade Center, Red Cross volunteers distributed roses, American flags and packets of tissues.

One of those volunteers was Rabbi Stephen Roberts, chair of New York's Red Cross Spiritual Care Committee and the Jewish chaplain at New York-Presbyterian Hospital.

Roberts has been working virtually nonstop since the attack, setting up "compassion centers," offering counseling and helping to obtain free High Holidays tickets for Jews affected by the attacks.

However, he did take time off for Rosh Hashanah and Shabbat, he said.

"All I did during services was cry," Roberts said. "Going to

services was like going to a gas station — I've been filling up spiritually."

Standing outside the stadium waiting to get in, Ethan Isenberg, 25, said he was there "to express my solidarity with the American people."

He had been planning to spend the day expressing a different kind of solidarity at a national rally for Israel, but that rally was canceled shortly after the attacks.

Isenberg was still shaken from discovering that a woman who lived down the hall from him, in an Upper West Side apartment building, had been killed in the attack.

"This definitely gives a new immediacy to the words, 'Who will live and who will die,' " in the High Holidays liturgy, he said grimly.

Despite the widespread anxiety over flying, Isenberg said he flew to Los Angeles last week to spend Rosh Hashanah with family members.

He was scared, he said, but "it was like the vigilance I have when I get on a bus in Jerusalem," a place he visits at least once a year.

Coming out of the Yankee Stadium service, which she described as "inspiring," Sandi DeGeorge, 28, said it was her first chance to "be with people" since the Sept. 11 terror attacks, because she has been traveling for work and missed Rosh Hashanah services.

"I hope someone from the terrorist groups was watching, so they could see they didn't win," said DeGeorge, of Westchester County in suburban New York.

Her cousin, Charley Gabarini, a New York firefighter, is missing, and the family "didn't know when to tell" Gabarini's young children and "when to give up hope."

Wearing matching Star of David pendants, Barbara Lass and her mother, Dorothy Lass, both of Manhattan, also praised the service.

"I never thought I'd be a flag-waver," Barbara Lass said. "I protested Vietnam, and I'm up there waving flags now."

For Rosh Hashanah, she said, she lit an extra yahrzeit candle, and is planning to do the same for Yom Kippur.

The tragedy "intensified my kavanah" during Rosh Hashanah, Lass said, using the Hebrew word for purposefulness during prayer.

Her friend, Rhoda Gruen, praised the service for being "a bringing together of people of all faiths, which I hope persists for New York and the nation."

"I was thinking of all the broken glass at the World Trade Center, which evoked memories of Kristallnacht," Gruen said, referring to the night of Nov. 9-10, 1938, when Nazi thugs ransacked Jewish-owned shops and set synagogues ablaze across Germany and Austria.

"I hope the world doesn't come to as dark a time as then," she said.

The attack was also conjuring up World War II memories for Dorothy Lass, who remembered Pearl Harbor and losing friends in the war.

Lass, who worked as a pharmacist during the war, recalled doctors frequently having her prepare prescriptions of sedatives for them to bring to women who had just learned their sons were killed.

"The thought of having to go through that again is terrifying," Lass said. □