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TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

4 Israelis killed in 2 terror attacks

A Palestinian gunman killed at least four Israelis and wounded about 40 others when he sprayed automatic gunfire on a crowd waiting at a bus stop in the coastal city of Hadera. Earlier Sunday, Palestinian gunmen shot and killed an Israeli soldier in a drive-by shooting. [Page 3]

Security Council presses Israel

The U.N. Security Council issued a statement calling on Israel to pull its troops out of Palestinian cities in the West Bank.

The council also asked Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat last Friday "to take additional specific and concrete steps to control violence" and arrest anyone defying his orders. [Page 1]

Israel issue shakes up Red Cross

The president of the American Red Cross abruptly resigned her post.

Bernadine Healy said last Friday that one of the reasons for her resignation was differences with her board over how to handle the International Red Cross' refusal to allow the Israeli relief organization to become a member of the global agency.

The ICRC has blocked admission of the Magen David Adom for years because it uses a red Star of David as its emblem.

Healy had called for withholding dues to the ICRC because of its anti-Israel stance. She described her position regarding Magen David Adom as a "controversial but principled stand."

Healy said the board also differed with her decision to keep all of the nearly \$500 million the Red Cross raised following the Sept. 11 disasters separate from the charity's main relief fund.

Mitchell: Sides will tire of war

War weariness will bring an end to Israeli-Palestinian violence, said former U.S. Sen. George Mitchell.

The leader of a panel that issued suggestions earlier this year on how to end the violence, Mitchell told the BBC on Sunday he had reached the conclusion after meeting with Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat.

During those meetings, he said, both leaders told him, "This must stop because life has become unbearable for our people."

U.N. orders Israel to withdraw, but pressure is seen as muted

By Matthew E. Berger

NEW YORK (JTA) — Israel credits the United States for preventing the U.N. Security Council from taking more forceful action against the Israeli incursion into Palestinian-ruled areas of the West Bank.

Meeting Oct. 26, the Security Council chose not to debate a resolution seeking Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank, and instead issued a news release supporting U.S. and other international pressure on Israel.

"Members supported statements in capitals calling for immediate withdrawal of all Israeli forces from Area A," Security Council President Richard Ryan of Ireland said, referring to Palestinian-controlled territory on the West Bank. "Members fully supported the important diplomatic initiatives to de-escalate the situation on the ground."

The United States may have been trying to avoid placing additional attention on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict while it pursues its war on terror in Afghanistan.

A U.S. veto of a Security Council resolution condemning Israel would not have sat well with Arab states, whom the Bush administration is courting for its anti-terrorism coalition.

The statement is considered the weakest of the options the Security Council had at its disposal — thanks, Israeli officials say, to the Americans.

The U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, John Negroponte, said he believes there is a consensus that the Security Council should speak out.

"I think this represents an endorsement of the diplomatic efforts that are being taken on the ground, in the region, and that were reported to the Council this afternoon," Negroponte said.

"So I think it is a strong endorsement of the diplomatic efforts that are under way, and we'll have to see what happens now."

If the council had voted on a resolution condemning Israeli incursions, the United States likely would have vetoed it, sources said. The fact that the process did not get that far was considered a victory for the Jewish state and a show of U.S.-Israeli unity in a week of strained relations.

A State Department spokesman had called Oct. 15 for Israel to withdraw "immediately" from all Palestinian-controlled areas, increasing pressure on Israel to retreat from portions of the West Bank it invaded after the assassination of an Israeli minister by Palestinian terrorists on Oct. 17.

Israeli forces took their first steps toward following U.S. and international pressure Oct. 18, when they left the village of Beit Rima.

"Israel said all along that it has no intention of remaining in Area A," the Israeli spokesman said.

"The reason we went in is because the Palestinian Authority did not do what it was supposed to and what it committed itself to."

On Sunday, Israeli officials decided to withdraw troops from Bethlehem despite two Palestinian terror attacks that day in which five Israelis were killed.

After the killing of Israeli Tourism Minister Rehavam Ze'evi, Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat said he would arrest members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, which took credit for the assassination.

Israel said Arafat's efforts were half-hearted, however, and ceased as soon as international pressure eased.

Several Israeli diplomats were greeted warmly as they visited Washington last

MIDEAST FOCUS

Ukraine vows to pay families

Ukraine promised to compensate the families of Israelis killed in a plane crash.

Ukraine's president, Leonid Kuchma, made the promise during a telephone conversation Saturday with Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.

The vow came after a Sibir Airlines flight was accidentally shot down Oct. 4 by a Ukrainian anti-aircraft missile over the Black Sea.

The flight was on its way from Israel to the Siberian city of Novosibirsk when the plane crashed, killing all 78 people aboard, 66 of whom were Jews.

Bus to segregate men, women

An Israeli public bus cooperative agreed to inaugurate a route between Jerusalem and B'nei Brak, a fervently Orthodox enclave located near Tel Aviv, with bus service that segregates men and women.

Egged's decision drew criticism from the secular Shinui Party, which called the practice "apartheid."

Men and women will sit apart on the buses and stand separately at bus stops; men will use the front door while women will use the rear one.

Embassy in Nigeria evacuated

The Israeli Embassy in Nigeria was evacuated last Friday after Nigerian police received a report that a bomb might be in the building. The offices were reopened after police searched the premises for three hours but did not find any evidence of explosives.

Sculpture study auctioned

A bronze study for a sculpture that stands at Hadassah University Hospital in Jerusalem was sold for nearly \$17,000. The study went for nearly twice as much as expected when it was auctioned Oct. 24 at Sotheby's in London. The study for "Our Tree of Life," by sculptor Jacques Lipchitz, was bought by an anonymous European bidder.



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week, but U.S. rhetoric remained consistent — Israel should pull out from Palestinian territory.

Still, the United States was able to thwart Palestinian Authority attempts to manipulate the situation to its advantage, said Rabbi Abraham Cooper, associate dean of the Simon Wiesenthal Center.

"The United Nations' role in their game plan for pressuring Israel was to convince someone in the media that there were massacres" during the Israeli incursions, Cooper said. "They wanted to get an actual resolution with teeth, force the United States to veto, and show their political muscle." □

AROUND THE JEWISH WORLD

Latin America's first Yiddish fest is dream come true for organizer

By Florencia Arbiser

BUENOS AIRES (JTA) — When Abraham Lichtenbaum was a boy, he used to play card games in Yiddish with his Ukrainian grandmother, Elisa, sitting for hours around the kitchen table in their house in Buenos Aires.

In his early teens, Lichtenbaum had long Yiddish conversations with his father, Baruch — a graphic designer born in Warsaw — and with his high school teachers at a local Jewish school.

During his teen-age years, Lichtenbaum's family would spend Saturday or Sunday nights attending Yiddish plays at theaters.

Now 58, Lichtenbaum is the general director of the Jewish Research Institute, known here as the IWO. He teaches Yiddish both at the IWO in Buenos Aires and at a university in Vilnius, Lithuania.

To further Yiddish awareness, the IWO is holding what is believed to be the first Yiddish symposium in Latin America, "Yiddish Faces the New Millennium."

The symposium — which began Saturday and runs until Nov. 6 — is a series of open and free events in Buenos Aires supported by the Israeli Embassy's National Department for Yiddish Culture and the Buenos Aires municipality.

"In a present totally lacking in cultural values, this is the proper time to gather and give the younger generations all our Yiddish cultural knowledge, and let them decide what to do with it," Lichtenbaum told JTA.

Apart from conferences at IWO's office, the symposium plans to showcase Yiddish culture around the city.

On Sunday, organizers were slated to unveil a sculpture of author Sholem Aleichem in Palermos' Rosedal Park, an area visited by an estimated 50,000 people every weekend.

On Nov. 1, the Golden Room at the impressive Colon Theater will be flooded with Yiddish music as the symposium holds a tribute to Jascha Galperin, a music teacher who trained a generation of Argentine singers.

The symposium expected some 5,000 visitors, mainly from Israel, the United States, Germany and Argentina. Audience members were expected to be mainly in their 50s, Lichtenbaum says.

"We want to show that Yiddish is much more than the language of the elderly," he said.

Lichtenbaum's academic goal is to see about 20 young local researchers concentrating on Yiddish at a high academic level. There are now 120 people studying Yiddish at IWO, many of them younger than 25.

In order to preserve Ashkenazic culture, Lichtenbaum said, "sharing a Jewish song is more educational than playing tennis with Jewish friends."

Already, some people in Buenos Aires do just as Lichtenbaum proposes. Artist Jorge Schussheim — whose work touches on Jewish roots in music, humor and food — meets every Saturday with 14 friends to exchange Yiddish cassettes.

They call themselves "the blimalach," which means "little flowers" in Yiddish.

Lichtenbaum is just as proud of his personal achievements as his professional ones: His two sons — electrical engineers aged 25 and 29 — understand and speak some Yiddish, he says. □

JEWISH WORLD

Groups laud new anti-terror law

President Bush signed a new anti-terrorism bill into law last Friday, claiming it protects civil liberties and is carefully drafted. Jewish groups support the legislation, which calls for wiretapping suspected terrorists, sharing intelligence information about them, tracking their Internet movements and prosecuting those who knowingly harbor terrorists.

Poll: 75 percent support Israel

A new poll shows that almost three quarters of Americans continue to support Israel and 56 percent have a favorable opinion of the Jewish state.

The poll, conducted by McLaughlin & Associates for the Jerusalem Post and the Chicago Sun-Times, also found that American support for Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat is low, with 62 percent of respondents viewing him unfavorably.

Pittsburgh cemetery vandalized

Almost 100 gravestones were taken out of their bases and smashed in a Jewish cemetery outside Pittsburgh. The vandals also took flags off the graves of war veterans and burned them on a hill at the top of the Beth Hamedrish Hagadol-Beth Jacob Orthodox congregation's cemetery.

Hadassah plans N.Y. mission

Hadassah is bringing about 100 women from across North America on a solidarity mission to New York. It is estimated that the group will pump some \$50,000 in the city's economy, which has suffered in the aftermath of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, a spokeswoman for Hadassah said.

N. Korea added to State Dept. list

The United States added North Korea to a list of countries that limit religious freedom. Five countries put on the list last year — China, Iran, Iraq, Myanmar and Sudan — remained on the annual list, which the U.S. State Department issued last Friday.

Jewish center in Paris vandalized

Vandals painted swastikas and the slogans "Death to Israel" and "Support the Palestinians" on the front door of a Jewish community center in Paris' heavily touristed Montmartre area. A complaint has been filed about the attack, which took place Oct. 20.

Philip Roth wins Kafka Prize

Philip Roth was awarded the first Franz Kafka Prize. The prize was awarded in Prague for Roth's lifelong contribution to literature.

The American Jewish author will receive \$10,000 and a small bronze sculpture of Kafka.

Israel withdraws from Bethlehem although terrorists kill five Israelis

JTA Staff Report

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israeli officials have decided to withdraw troops from the West Bank city of Bethlehem, despite two Palestinian terror attacks in which five Israelis were killed.

In one attack Sunday, a Palestinian gunman killed at least four Israelis and wounded about 40 others when he sprayed automatic gunfire on a crowd waiting at a bus stop in the coastal city of Hadera.

The attack took place as Israel was poised to begin withdrawing from Bethlehem.

According to witnesses, a Palestinian gunman got out of a car and began firing at random.

Israeli police shot and killed the gunman and another Palestinian who had remained in the car.

Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility for the attack, which it said was a reprisal for the slaying of its leader, Fathi Shakaki, in Malta in October 1995. That attack was blamed on the Mossad, but Israel declined to comment on whether it was behind the shooting.

A senior officer in the Israel Defense Force told Army Radio on Sunday night that the two terrorists who carried out the Hadera attack were members of the Palestinian police force and of Islamic Jihad.

Hadera, located north of Tel Aviv, is at one of Israel's narrowest points. Only seven miles from the West Bank, it has been a frequent target for attacks by Palestinian terrorists.

Earlier Sunday, Palestinian gunmen shot and killed an Israeli soldier in a drive-by shooting in Israel.

The attack took place near the West Bank city of Tulkarm, where a suspected terrorist who belonged to Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat's Fatah movement was killed a day earlier.

The terrorist was one of the Palestinian gunmen who carried out the abduction and cold-blooded murders of two Israeli restaurant owners last January, according to Israeli security officials quoted by the Jerusalem Post. The man had also been involved in many shooting attacks on Israelis near Tulkarm, the officials said.

An anonymous caller told The Associated Press that the Al Aksa Brigade, which is affiliated with Fatah, killed the Israeli soldier.

Following the two terror attacks Sunday, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon convened his Security Cabinet to discuss how to respond.

At that meeting, Sharon, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and Defense Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer agreed to continue with plans to withdraw Israeli troops from Bethlehem and from the neighboring town of Beit Jalla.

According to Israel Radio, Ben-Eliezer believed that despite Sunday's terror attacks, the IDF should withdraw from Bethlehem and Beit Jalla because the Palestinians had maintained quiet in those areas.

Soon after the meeting, the first tanks began leaving Bethlehem.

Israel agreed to the withdrawal last Friday, when U.S. officials hosted a meeting of Israeli and Palestinian security officials.

Israel had planned to withdraw from Bethlehem on Saturday, but delayed the move, charging that the Palestinians had not fulfilled their part of the agreement to stop all gunfire and attacks against Israelis.

In its biggest operation in areas under Palestinian control since the two sides signed their first interim peace accords in 1993, Israel took up positions earlier this month in and around six of the largest Palestinian-controlled cities in the West Bank — in Bethlehem, Ramallah, Jenin, Nablus, Tulkarm and Kalkilya.

The operation was launched the Oct. 17 assassination of Tourism Minister Rehavam Ze'evi.

President Bush and a host of other U.S. officials repeatedly criticized the Israeli thrust into the Palestinian cities in the West Bank and called for an Israeli withdrawal.

The United States has been urging the two sides to reach a cease-fire to prevent Arab states from abandoning the U.S.-led international campaign against terrorism. □

If 'Kill the Jews' isn't incitement, British Jews wonder, then what is?

By Richard Allen Greene

LONDON (JTA) — The leaflets made their message perfectly clear: "The final hour will not come until the Muslims kill the Jews."

The last three words were printed in larger type than the rest of the sentence, so from a distance, it looked as if the pamphlets simply read: "Kill the Jews."

Placed on car windshields and plastered to walls, the pamphlets appeared in London's fervently Orthodox Jewish neighborhood of Stamford Hill in October 2000, just after the beginning of the Palestinian uprising.

Police caught five men in the act of distributing the leaflets early one Sunday morning, but British officials recommended that no legal action be taken against them.

Britain's Jewish leaders are furious.

"This is a perfect example of the lack of political will to prosecute for incitement," said a spokesman for the Community Security Trust, an organization dedicated to protecting the Jewish community. The political authorities are "backing away from the problem."

The spokesman, who asked not to be named, added that the authorities are more reluctant to prosecute Muslims than far-right white extremists. "There is a history of failing to get to grips with incitement on the part of the Muslim community," he said.

The Board of Deputies, the umbrella organization that represents most British Jews, is particularly upset that word of the prosecutions being dropped came just as the government proposed widening anti-incitement legislation.

Incitement to racial hatred already is illegal, and the government has proposed banning incitement to religious hatred as well. Under British law, Jews are considered a "race."

The Board and the Trust have both charged that existing hate crimes legislation is adequate to protect Jews, but that the laws are not used effectively. There were 41 prosecutions for incitement between 1990 and 1997, or less than six per year.

Nagler compared the case of the five men arrested for distributing the leaflets to that of two others being prosecuted for passing out similar leaflets several days before.

"The Jewish community is extremely concerned at the failure to take action against the five men who were arrested for distributing identical material," Nagler wrote to the attorney general. "We would request an explanation," he said.

The five men who were arrested early on Oct. 8, 2000, on "suspicion of distributing anti-Semitic literature" — they were caught with the leaflets in their car, a police spokesman said — were released on bail and told to appear in court on Nov. 3, 2000.

They never appeared, and police did not pursue the matter.

The Crown Prosecution Service, the body that advises police whether there is enough evidence to prosecute, recommended in April against legal action.

The Service does not publicize its decisions, however, so the issue languished until a reporter for the London-based Jewish Chronicle remembered the case and made some inquiries.

A police spokesman said that because the leaflets were distributed in a predominantly Jewish area and would be seen mostly by Jews, the Service ruled that the leaflets were unlikely to stir up racial hatred against Jews. □

S. African Jewish Cabinet minister blames Israel for Mideast violence

By Michael Belling

CAPE TOWN (JTA) — A Jewish member of South Africa's Cabinet is blaming Israeli policies for the ongoing conflict with the Palestinians.

"The fundamental cause of the conflict is Israel's occupation of Palestine and the suppression of the Palestinian struggle for self-determination," said the nation's water affairs minister, Ronnie Kasrils, who also equated Israel's policies toward the Palestinians with South Africa's era of apartheid.

Kasrils' stand is being seen by some political observers as a possible hardening of the government's self-proclaimed "carefully balanced" position on the Middle East.

The ruling African National Congress has had close ties with Yasser Arafat and his Palestine Liberation Organization since the days of the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa.

The only Jewish Cabinet minister, Kasrils was addressing Parliament last week on behalf of the ANC in a debate about a report by a South African fact-finding mission that visited the Middle East in July. The report was severely critical of Israel.

The South African government does not dispute that sectors of the Palestinian people resort to terror, and "we condemn indiscriminate killings of civilians from whatever quarter," he said.

"Yet this is not the root cause of the ongoing violence."

Kasrils also said recognition of the causes of the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian violence does not constitute anti-Semitism, nor does it amount to a denial of Israel's right to exist. After Jewish suffering under the Nazis, he said he was appalled at the "ruthless security methods" used by Israel against Palestinians, including "bulldozers, machine guns, tanks and helicopter gunships," as well as the "targeted assassination of opponents."

"These intolerable strategies, together with the growing number of provocative Jewish settlements in the West Bank, undermine the legitimacy of the Israeli government and its negotiating position and give rise to intensified resistance."

Kasrils urged fellow South African Jews to join the ANC campaign to support "justice for Palestine" and seek peace and security for everyone in the Middle East.

Russell Gaddin, national chairman of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, criticized Kasrils' statements.

Gaddin said he believes Kasrils is not properly informed about the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and was using his Jewish background to add credibility to the pro-Palestinian stance of the ANC. Gaddin said the Board, like Jews all over the world, wants a peaceful resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but he pointed out that Israel is not committing acts of terror.

Contrary to claims of "excessive force" being leveled at the Israelis, all Israeli actions had to be seen either as defensive or as responses to previous attacks by the Palestinians, Gaddin said.

A day before the debate was held in Parliament, the Board circulated a letter to all legislators that was critical of the government's stance toward Israel. "The past few months have witnessed a number of disturbing developments, which have seriously undermined the confidence of South African Jewry in the future of the country and of their place within it," the letter said.

The Board urged legislators to distance themselves from "biased and unfair" comments against Israel and asked them to enforce the constitutional provisions outlawing hate speech. □