



Daily News Bulletin

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84th Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Israel nabs Hamas leader

Israel captured a Hamas leader who was on its most-wanted list. An Israeli special forces unit nabbed Abed Rabbo Abu Husa on Monday near his home in the Gaza Strip, Israel Radio reported. Israeli officials say Husa was a founder of the Hamas military wing.

He was believed responsible for the abduction and killing of soldier Avi Sasportas in February 1989; the kidnapping of Ilan Sa'adon in March 1989; and the abduction and murder of border policeman Nissim Toledano in December 1992.

Rabbi detained in Cuba

A rabbi said Cuban officials placed him under house arrest for three weeks. Rabbi Brian Kent, 38, arrived in Cuba on Oct. 11 on a tourist visa. He had hoped to stay in the country permanently, even though Cuban officials denied his request for a humanitarian visa to serve as a rabbi.

On the third day of his visit, Kent said, two men approached him on the street, walked him back to his hotel and searched his belongings. They accused him of spying and told him he was prohibited from meeting with more than three people at a time or presiding over Jewish services, he added. Kent returned to his home in Boca Raton, Fla., on Nov. 8.

Arab TV satire sparks outrage

An Arab TV satire portrayed Ariel Sharon as Dracula drinking the blood of Arab children. The series, being broadcast by Abu Dhabi satellite television, also had an actor who played the Israeli prime minister ordering soldiers to shoot captured Arabs.

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres called the satire "repulsive" and said he plans to file a complaint with the United Nations. Belgian Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt, who was in Israel at the head of a European Union delegation, condemned the satire as "a scandal."

Several advertisers, including Procter & Gamble, said they are pulling their ads from the series. The director of Abu Dhabi TV dismissed the criticism, saying, "Peres seems to have lost his sense of humor."

Because of Thanksgiving, the JTA DAILY NEWS BULLETIN will not be published Friday, Nov. 23.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

Powell puts burden on Palestinians in strong statement of U.S. policy

By Matthew E. Berger

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Secretary of State Colin Powell is winning cautious support for a Mideast policy speech that signals reinvigorated U.S. participation in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and outlines a vague agenda for returning to peace talks.

Delivered Monday at the University of Louisville in Kentucky, Powell's speech did not set forth any bold new initiatives or go into details on troublesome issues, such as the future of Jerusalem.

Contrary to expectations, however, Powell appeared to put less pressure on Israel than on the Palestinian Authority. Jewish analysts and activists alike said Powell had placed the immediate burden on the Palestinian Authority to stop violence and incitement.

The speech also laid down a general road map for what Israel and the Palestinian Authority must do to restore trust and return to the negotiating table — but avoided several contentious issues that could have angered each party.

"A majority of the land mines were sidestepped," a senior Israeli official said.

For the most part, U.S. Jewish leaders welcomed Powell's speech with apprehensive enthusiasm.

"It has potential," said Tom Smerling, Washington director of the Israel Policy Forum. "It laid ground work for something significant to happen, but it is not going to happen because of this speech."

To succeed, Smerling said, any initiative would need a stamp of approval from Bush and a day-by-day assessment of which side is keeping its promises.

American Jewish leaders emphasized the pressure Powell placed on Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat to control violence.

"Powell has made clear that the key to peace is in the hands of the Palestinians, who must make every effort to bring all acts of terror against Israelis to a complete halt," said Howard Kohr, executive director of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee.

However, Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, said he was concerned that Powell appeared to express a "moral equivalency" between Israeli and Palestinian actions.

"There was no mention of who walked away" from the peace process "last year," Hoenlein said, referring to Palestinian rejection of an Israeli peace offer at the Camp David summit and the subsequent launching of a yearlong campaign of violence.

Morton Klein, national director of the Zionist Organization of America, called Powell's speech "deeply disappointing," noting that America practically is recognizing a Palestinian state and asking Israel to make concessions before it sees any real change from the Palestinian leadership. "At what point will the U.S. administration understand that Arafat isn't interested in creating a civilized society?" Klein asked.

Powell's address is seen as the starting point for renewed U.S. involvement in the peace process, with the appointment of a new envoy for the region who will try to hammer out a more lasting cease fire.

Powell also reversed Bush administration policy on U.S. engagement, saying that America would "push," "prod" and "present ideas" to move the process forward — a marked departure from the detachment Bush initially showed after the Clinton administration's vigorous involvement failed to produce a peace deal.

Since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, the Bush administration has placed a much greater emphasis on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict,

MIDEAST FOCUS

Man killed while planting bomb

Israeli troops killed one Palestinian and wounded another in the West Bank. The soldiers opened fire Monday as the two were reportedly planting a roadside bomb near the Israeli settlement of Shavei Shomron. Palestinian officials said the dead man, Maher Farek Daghlas, 20, was a member of the Palestinian security services.

In other violence, Israeli troops killed two armed Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. The two were killed Sunday night after they fired on the Israeli settlement of Dugit, an army spokesman said. Palestinian officials disputed the Israeli claim that the two were trying to infiltrate the settlement, saying the two were policemen patrolling the area.

As part of the incident, Israeli forces hit an American School in the area with tank shells, Palestinian officials said — a claim that Israel denied.

Palestinian gunmen wound three

Three Israelis were wounded in a West Bank shooting attack. All residents of Shavei Shomron, a father, his 18-year-old daughter, and the community rabbi were hit as they drove in the father's taxi on Monday, according to the Jerusalem Post.

The daughter sustained moderate to serious wounds to the stomach and thigh. Her father and the rabbi suffered lighter wounds.

Terrorist attacks thwarted

Israel claimed it thwarted 16 Palestinian terrorist attacks during the past month. Army Radio reported that Israeli forces killed 20 terrorists and their accomplices in the last month.

Israeli officials said the terrorists intended to carry out eight suicide bombings, as well as shooting attacks and roadside bombings in the West Bank. The government plans to use the claims in a global public-ity campaign to garner support for Israel.



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perceiving it as a threat to the stability of the international coalition in America's war on terror.

Powell called on Palestinians to end violence immediately — and said they should be held accountable when they don't live up to signed agreements.

"Palestinians need to understand that however legitimate their claims, they cannot be heard, let alone be addressed, through violence," Powell said. "As President Bush has made clear, no national aspiration, no remembered wrong can ever justify the deliberate murder of the innocent. Terror and violence must stop, and stop now."

Powell also called on Israel to end all settlement activity, road closures and occupation of Palestinian territory, for the first time describing Israel as an "occupying power." Yet he did not appear to give those issues the same immediacy as he did to Palestinian responsibilities.

The administration's goals are to put the regional conflict in context, give it a sense of direction and provide principles for ending violence and other activities on the ground. The emphasis is on getting the two sides to implement already agreed-to steps, including a process to get back to negotiations authored by former Sen. George Mitchell and details for a cease-fire brokered by CIA Director George Tenet.

Drawing on those plans, the speech provided inducements that Israeli and Palestinian leaders can use to justify a return to negotiations, while preserving their political prestige. "Both sides can take the speech as a reference point on how we are trying to take their needs into account," one senior Bush administration official said.

For the Palestinians, Powell reiterated American support for a Palestinian state and the promise of economic support. Echoing President Bush's landmark statement at the United Nations last week, Powell again used the name "Palestine" for the envisioned state. "That's an official piece of the new American vocabulary," the administration official said.

In a nod toward Israel, Powell stressed the need to maintain Israel's character as a Jewish state — an oblique rejection of Palestinian demands for refugees' "right of return" — and as a secure country not threatened by Arab violence.

Powell also offered fulsome praise for the U.S.-Israel relationship, seen as an affirmation to nervous Israelis that U.S. support for Israel has not been undermined by the courting of Arab countries for the U.S. campaign against Osama bin Laden.

"The reaffirmation of the special relationship was the most explicit we've heard in a long time," Hoenlein said.

By all accounts, Powell threaded thin needles very carefully. He called for international monitors — something Palestinian have sought and Israel has opposed — but only if approved by both parties. He mentioned the future of Jerusalem and the "right of return" for Palestinian refugees, but only as examples of the need for understanding and negotiation.

In addition, noted Rep. Gary Ackerman (D-N.Y.), Powell did not discuss Israel's assassination of suspected Palestinian terror leaders. The State Department has criticized that policy, which Ackerman and others defend.

Powell also avoided discussing whether Israel should waive its demand for a week without violence before it approaches the negotiating table, as Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon insists. Powell agreed to Sharon's condition when it was first made last summer, and Sharon has said that he will not budge.

The question remains, however, whether the speech will finally catalyze the two parties to action. Powell is dispatching a team of negotiators to the region, including a new envoy, retired Marine Cmdr. Anthony Zinni, who will work with Israeli and Palestinian committees toward a cease-fire.

A senior administration official said he believes U.S. involvement will be "more sustained" than in previous years.

However, Martin Indyk, a former U.S. ambassador to Israel and one of the architects of the Oslo peace process, said the crucial part will be not Powell's speech, but its follow through. "Left to their own devices," Israel and the Palestinian Authority "can't do it," said Indyk, now a senior fellow at Brookings Institution. "We've seen that time and time again."

Indyk also said Powell should have made the address earlier in the year, placed more onus on the Arab states, and demanded more political and economic reforms from the Arab world. □

(JTA Staff Writer Sharon Samber in Washington contributed to this report.)

JEWISH WORLD

Slovakia may pay survivors

Slovakia may approve payments to Holocaust survivors. According to the Jerusalem Post, which quoted the leader of that nation's second most popular political party, a Slovak government commission studying the issue is likely to make a positive recommendation before the end of the year.

"Though we are a poor country, and have some limits economically, it is our duty to compensate victims of the Holocaust just as we compensated victims of the Communist era," Robert Fico told the newspaper during a visit to Israel.

18 groups launch volunteer effort

Jewish organizations are combining to form a coalition promoting volunteerism. Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life and the American Jewish World Service are among more than 18 groups planning the volunteer effort in North America and around the world.

Members of the Jewish Coalition for Service are sharing a Web site — www.jewishservice.org — and discussing the possibility of teaming up on recruitment, marketing, alumni communications and educational activities for their work with volunteers.

British party names treasurer

A Jewish businessman was named treasurer of Britain's opposition Conservative Party. Sir Stanley Kalms, founder of the electronics retailer Dixon's, is one of the party's largest donors, and opposes British economic integration into the European Union.

Wallenberg honored in Slovakia

A monument to Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg was unveiled in Bratislava. Sunday's ceremony was held in the courtyard of the city's Jewish Museum and was organized by the International Council of Christians and Jews.

The monument to Wallenberg, who saved tens of thousands of Jews from the Holocaust in wartime Hungary by providing them with false passports, will stand in the courtyard temporarily until a permanent home can be found in the center of Bratislava.

Activist rabbi dies at 90

Rabbi Harold Saperstein, known for his work in political causes, died last Friday at the age of 90. The rabbi of Temple Emanu-El in Lynnbrook, N.Y., from 1933 until 1980, Saperstein was wounded by an Arab sniper during a 1939 visit to Palestine.

In the 1960s, Saperstein was active in the civil rights movement, helping lead a voter registration drive in the South.

His son David is the director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism.

B'nai B'rith's move to new digs is also a chance to reinvent itself

By Julie Wiener

NEW YORK (JTA) — For years, many observers have compared the Washington-based B'nai B'rith International organization to parents whose children have all left the nest.

Now, with an agreement in hand to sell its eight-story building, the 158-year-old fraternal organization — like many aging parents — is giving up the longtime family home for smaller quarters.

The Human Rights Campaign Foundation, a national gay rights organization, bought the building for \$9.8 million. B'nai B'rith is seeking rental space in the Washington area.

Once among the most influential of American Jewish institutions, B'nai B'rith is now best known for the groups it founded: the Anti-Defamation League, Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life and B'nai B'rith Youth Organization.

In recent years, the ADL and Hillel have become independent organizations that outgrew B'nai B'rith.

BBYO is in the process of becoming a separate nonprofit, although it will move to new quarters with B'nai B'rith and will continue to receive free office space and in-kind services.

B'nai B'rith officials said the sale will give the organization needed cash, free it of debt and relieve it of the hassles of being a landlord.

Several Jewish organizations currently rent space in the building.

But the building's largest tenant, Hillel, recently announced it has purchased its own building.

The B'nai B'rith structure, which is more than 40 years old, also had become burdensome because it is in need of extensive renovations — \$10-12 million worth according to its new owners.

It is not clear what will happen to the B'nai B'rith Klutznick National Jewish Museum, which recently was renovated.

Richard Heidemann, B'nai B'rith's international president, said the museum "will remain as an arm of B'nai B'rith."

But he said the group has not yet decided if the museum also will move to the organization's new location or elsewhere.

Despite the move to smaller digs and the switch from landlord to tenant, Heidemann said the group continues to be vital.

B'nai B'rith has expanded its programming in Latin America, its advocacy for Israel at the United Nations and — through outreach projects in various cities in the United States — has gained new members, Heidemann said.

The group also manages a network of Jewish senior homes funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

B'nai B'rith officials report more than 110,000 members and donors in the United States and thousands of members around the world.

Heidemann said that since 1998 the average age of board members has dropped from 70 to 45, and that there are more women involved now than "at any time in B'nai B'rith history."

However, critics both inside and outside the organization for years have said the group lacks a clear mission and has failed to adapt to modern American trends, particularly the demise of chapter-based groups in which Jews get together to socialize, volunteer and raise money.

Evan Mendelson, former director of the Jewish Funders Network and a consultant for Jewish organizations and family foundations, said B'nai B'rith has had difficulty making the change from an old-fashioned fraternal organization to something more appealing to younger Jews.

However, she said, now "it's possible they can regroup once they focus and take the money they have and reposition themselves.

"To me the issue is whether they can take risks, find out what they're about and market it to the next generation," she said. □

BEHIND THE HEADLINES**Volunteers find that kind words, smiles lift spirits at Ground Zero***By Amy Sara Clark*

NEW YORK (JTA) — In the days after the Sept. 11 terror attacks, David Ripps wanted to volunteer.

Aside from donating blood, however, it didn't seem there was anything he could do.

"I'm not a grief counselor, not a physician, no EMS training," Ripps said. "They needed people with construction skills and I'm a computer programmer."

But when the chance came nearly two months later, Ripps didn't hesitate. His opportunity came through the American Jewish World Service, which asked synagogues for volunteers to work at St. Paul's Chapel, located close to where the World Trade Center once stood.

On a recent Thursday evening, Ripps joined 10 other volunteers in an all-night effort providing support for the workers clearing rubble at Ground Zero.

Volunteers came from two Manhattan synagogues — the Society for the Advancement of Judaism and Congregation B'nai Jeshurun — as well as from the AJWS staff.

Even after two months of work, the scene is disturbing. White-gray ash still floats in the air — and stores around the perimeter of the fenced-off area are closed, their goods still covered with a thick layer of dust. One relief worker said that when the wind picks up, it feels like it's snowing.

Some relief crews are still working 12-hour shifts, seven days a week. For them, St. Paul's Chapel serves as a place to rest and regroup.

Located on the perimeter of the trade center site, the chapel is open to Ground Zero workers 24 hours a day. Modern buildings collapsed all around it during the attacks, but the 235-year old church sustained almost no damage. Even its stained-glass windows remained intact.

"You've heard of 'the little engine that could,'" said Susan Weinman, one of St. Paul's volunteer coordinators. "I like to call this 'the little chapel that stood.'"

The chapel quickly became a supply depot for rescue efforts, and evolved into the full-service comfort station it is today.

"This is the Hilton of comfort stations," Weinman said in an orientation speech for volunteers at the beginning of their shift.

It's not easy to volunteer there — groups have to sign-up months in advance.

"Getting to volunteer at St. Paul's is like getting tickets to 'The Producers,'" Weinman joked, referring to the hit Broadway musical.

Besides offering a hot meal and supplies ranging from flashlight batteries to saline solution to razors, St. Paul's has a rotating, 24-hour volunteer staff of chiropractors, podiatrists and massage therapists available to workers.

Above all, it offers workers a kind of refuge in the storm.

The smell of acrid, burning material still fills the air outside, jack hammers roar and searchlights illuminate the area 24 hours a day, but the inside of St. Paul's is calm, restful and comforting.

The pastel pink walls and the backs of the pews are covered with homemade banners and cards from well-wishers across the country.

One boy included his picture in a card, and a note urging firefighters to "keep up the good work."

At night the lights are dimmed so workers can sleep on the narrow cots or on the blanket-covered pews. Candles and, sometimes, live jazz piano add an almost romantic air to the space. Some workers come for lip balm, others for warmth and conversation, and many to pray.

The volunteers do a variety of tasks: checking identity cards at the restricted work area, providing cheer to the workers and going on food runs.

Volunteers bring cups of coffee, snacks and assorted supplies such as lip balm and tissues to the workers. Cigars are the most popular item. At about 4 a.m., volunteer Emily Silverman brought coffee to some electrical workers.

"They were so happy," she said. "They really appreciated having the human contact."

"I felt like we were bringing them exactly what they needed."

"One guy told us he hadn't been home in four days," Amy Schrage said. "Our showing up gave them the opportunity to take a five-minute break and take their minds off their work."

Coordinating domestic volunteering was something new for the American Jewish World Service. The 16-year-old development and relief organization usually focuses on disaster relief overseas.

Schrage, an AJWS staffer, said it felt good to volunteer so close to home.

"We do disaster relief all around the world, so it was a little bit of a shock to us to be doing a project in our own community," Schrage said. But she said the project fit in well with AJWS's mission. "At our organization we talk about *tikun olam* all the time," Schrage said, referring to the Jewish concept of "fixing the world."

Ripps also was inspired by that vision.

"Tikun olam is always in the back of my mind," he said. "Certainly the disaster was an example of brokenness in the world, and it's our obligation to try to repair some of it — to show that there are not only people who are trying to tear the world apart but that there are many more people who are trying to put it back together."

Ruth Messinger, AJWS's president and executive director, spearheaded the effort, which came after the group received calls from several people looking to volunteer.

The volunteers aren't the only ones still drawn to the site.

The chapel also maintains an 8-foot high, wrought-iron fence where passersby cry, reflect and write messages on muslin banners. The fence holds an assortment of American flags, bouquets of flowers and memorial candles.

It also offers messages from visitors around the world, such as a T-shirt that says "Holland Loves New York" or a supportive banner from the Czech Republic.

One petite blond woman who appeared late in the evening asked for help hanging a laminated poem she had brought from Ontario, where she works as a firefighter. The chief of her ladder company had written the poem to memorialize his New York counterparts, and it drew tears from onlookers.

What struck many volunteers was how much their small efforts were appreciated.

"It was very humbling," Cindy Wachenheim said. She had come to volunteer just one night, she explained, but for the workers "it's night after night. They were thanking us and I was, like, 'No, thank you.'"

□