



Daily News Bulletin

Vol. 79, No. 215

Monday, November 26, 2001

84th Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Israeli killed in Hamas attack

An Israeli soldier was killed in a Palestinian mortar attack. Hamas claimed responsibility for Saturday's attack near the Israeli settlement of Kfar Darom in the Gaza Strip.

Hamas officials said they were avenging last Friday's slaying of Hamas leader Mahmoud Abu Hanoud in an Israeli helicopter attack.

Israel retaliated for the mortar attack by launching helicopter missile strikes Sunday, destroying several Palestinian security posts in Gaza.

The violence took place as two U.S. envoys were expected to arrive in the Middle East on Monday. [Page 3]

Many Israelis still in U.S. custody

Dozens of young Israelis arrested after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks are still being held by U.S. immigration authorities on suspicion of working illegally in the United States.

Eleven Israelis were detained in the Cleveland area, and other arrests have been reported in Houston, Kansas City, St. Louis and San Diego, according to the Israeli Consulate in New York.

Some of the Israelis allegedly were brought to the United States to sell goods in shopping malls.

Rome gets new chief rabbi

Rome has a new chief rabbi. Dr. Riccardo Di Segni, 52, who was elected to the post last week, will succeed 86-year-old Elio Toaff.

Di Segni has served as director of Italy's rabbinical college since 1999. [Page 2]

Knesset marks Pollard conviction

The Knesset marked the 16th anniversary of the conviction of Jonathan Pollard on charges of spying for Israel.

Legislator Michael Kleiner, who initiated the Nov. 21 session, accused successive Israeli governments of abandoning Pollard.

"Our government is willing to do a lot in order to return the bodies of soldiers so they can be buried in Israel, but prefers to bury Pollard alive," Kleiner charged.

Pollard, a former U.S. Navy intelligence analyst, was convicted in 1985 of passing secret U.S. military information to Israel.

FOCUS ON ISSUES

As U.S. Jewish population ages, communities struggle to respond

By Sharon Samber

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Is the American Jewish community prepared for the aging tidal wave?

With the number of Jewish elderly expected to soar over the coming decade, leaders at the national and local levels realize they must move beyond traditional methods of caring for the elderly to develop new plans and policies.

Timing is critical. Many communities have been preparing to increase services to the elderly, but as baby boomers age and people live longer, there is an urgent need to expand services and to plan — and to do it quickly.

The problem is especially acute in the Jewish community. An estimated 20 percent of American Jewry is 65 or older, a significantly higher proportion than among the general population, where the figure is around 13 percent. The 1990 National Jewish Population Survey showed that 920,000 Jewish Americans are at least 65 years of age.

As the issue of elder care becomes more prominent, however, the nation's economic crisis is expected to make things more difficult. Funding for social services is likely to be cut as priorities shift toward funding security and anti-terror activities.

The budget surplus has gone and everything has become tougher since the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, Sen. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) told Jewish community professionals earlier this month at the United Jewish Communities' General Assembly.

There must be savings incentives, penalty-free withdrawals from retirement plans for long term care, and better ties between the public and private sectors, he said.

Looking to provide something of a road map for communities, UJC issued a guide this month that focuses on providing a "continuum of care," a comprehensive, client-oriented system of elder services.

The continuum has two parts. The first is services, including health care, mental health care, social services, transportation programs and housing for the elderly. Newer trends include allowing people to "age in place" in naturally occurring retirement communities.

The second element is to coordinate mechanisms into a system instead of a fragmentary collection of services.

Local communities are looking for a coordinated effort. Without such coordination, there will be gated communities for seniors who will have no connection to Judaism, and the poor will be left behind, said Elliot Palevsky, executive director of the River Garden Hebrew Home for the Aged in Jacksonville, Fla.

Local Jewish leaders want the issue to be a national priority, but Congress has yet to make it so.

Legislators have addressed the issue only in bits and pieces, such as regulation of nursing home care. "If we don't get lawmakers to listen, we're not going to succeed," warned Diana Aviv, vice president of public policy for UJC, the Jewish community's central fund-raising and social services agency.

Getting the attention of state lawmakers is important as well, community leaders note. Michael Blumenfeld, who works on government affairs as executive director of the Wisconsin Jewish Conference, a statewide lobbying group, said the only way to get state funding is to work in coalitions with other groups.

"You have to show legislators creative ideas and why it's worth the money," he said. "You have to say, 'You think it's bad now, but it's only going to get worse.'"

Some community leaders are worried that their legislators cannot look past this

MIDEAST FOCUS

Israel: Terrorists funded by Iraq

Israeli security forces uncovered an extensive terrorist infrastructure in the West Bank.

Israeli officials said the network in the Ramallah and Jenin areas is supported by Iraq and the Palestine Liberation Front.

Members of the network received military training in Iraq, the officials said.

Funds for the group were sent from Iraq via couriers and via Jordanian banks that transferred the money to banks in Palestinian-controlled areas, the officials added.

Jailed Israelis leave U.S.

Israelis who were detained by the United States after the Sept. 11 attacks say they "were treated like terrorists."

Five of the Israelis returned to their homeland last week after spending more than two months in jail on suspicion of participation in terrorist activities.

They said they were placed in solitary confinement and held with Muslim and Arab prisoners who beat them, the Jerusalem Post reported.

The Israelis, who had worked for a New Jersey moving company, were arrested in a security sweep after neighbors told police they believed they were speaking Arabic, although it was Hebrew.

After no connection to terrorist activities was found, they continued to be imprisoned for working illegally and overstaying their tourist visas.

Israel's tourist numbers plunge

Tourist arrivals in Israel fell in October to their lowest monthly level since August 1991.

According to figures that were released last week by the Central Bureau of Statistics, 69,800 visitors came to Israel in October, compared with 151,300 a year earlier, which was just after the start of the Palestinian uprising.



Daily News Bulletin

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JTA DAILY NEWS BULLETIN is published five days a week, except holidays, by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency Inc., 330 Seventh Ave., New York, N.Y. 10001-5010. For information about how to subscribe by e-mail, fax or regular mail, call (212) 643-1890, or visit our Web site at www.jta.org.
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year's budget. Others are unsure of what to do next because it's still uncertain where budget cuts will be made.

In any case, a number of programs still are under way in different states to address seniors' needs, and advocates hope funding stays stable.

Leaders say the programs allow seniors to maintain dignity and a level of independence while still feeling part of the community.

Some examples of alternative programming that use a variety of funding streams include:

- The Kosher Konnection program delivers food every weekday to the campus of the Jewish Federation of South Palm Beach County. Seniors spend time there and, on Fridays, participate in Shabbat services. Clients are charged a fee, and the federation subsidizes the rest.

- Prime Time is a package of support services and educational programs provided by the Greater Hartford Jewish Community Center to seniors who have lost a spouse or experienced some other trauma. JCC allocations for this program are supplemented by a grant from the United Way and fees for programming.

- The Senior Computer Access Program, sponsored by the Jewish Family Service of San Diego, teaches basic computer skills to seniors. Participants pay class fees, but financial assistance is provided. Administrative, equipment and software expenses are covered through in-kind gifts and services and a grant from the United Jewish Federation of San Diego County.

The problem now is that budget deficits are threatening these new programs, according to Ron Soloway, managing director of government relations for UJA-Federation of Greater New York.

But even as some efforts have stalled in the short-term, the community can't afford not to seek alternative models for the long-term, Soloway said.

Communities must also take a look at changing trends — such as long-distance caregiving — and understand seniors' wide range of needs, said Jodi Lyons, president of the Association of Jewish Aging Services.

While the future may look somewhat bleak, communities vow not to abandon their elderly.

Joyce Garver Keller, executive director of Ohio Jewish Communities, said the economy eventually will turn around and revenues will increase. When that happens, she said, help for the elderly must be at the top of the agenda.

"There is no Plan B," she said. □

Renaissance man is elected to serve as chief rabbi of Rome

By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME (JTA) — A Jewish scholar who is also a medical doctor has been elected the new chief rabbi here.

Dr. Riccardo Di Segni, 52, who was elected to the post last week, will succeed 86-year-old Elio Toaff. Di Segni has served as director of Italy's rabbinical college since 1999.

Toaff retired after 50 years in Italy's most prominent Jewish religious post. With some 15,000 Jews, Rome's Jewish community is the largest in Italy.

Married with three children, he serves as chief radiologist at a major Rome hospital. A native of Rome, he studied medicine at the University of Minnesota.

Di Segni has long been involved in interfaith relations. He has written or edited numerous scholarly works and liturgical texts, including three editions of a guide to Jewish dietary laws.

Di Segni said he aims to be the guardian of the memory of a Jewish community that dates back more than 2,000 years. He also said he hoped he would be able to continue his medical career as well as carry out his responsibilities as chief rabbi.

"In doing so he will resume an old Sephardic tradition according to which a rabbi should also work" outside of his rabbinic duties, said Tullia Zevi, past president of the Union of Italian Jewish Communities.

"He is the best person for this post," said Amos Luzzatto, current president of the Union. □

JEWISH WORLD

Bush relays Putin promises

President Bush said Vladimir Putin assured him that "anti-Semitism has no place in a modern Russia."

The president reported on his recent meeting with the Russian president in a letter to leaders of NCSJ: Advocates on Behalf of Jews in Russia, Ukraine, the Baltic States & Eurasia. "Mr. Putin provided clear assurances that his government would take concrete actions to promote our common interest in core human rights and basic freedoms," the president wrote.

Russian Jewish leader elected

A Russian Jewish leader was elected to the upper house of the country's Parliament.

Leonid Nevzlin, the president of the Russian Jewish Congress, was unanimously elected Nov. 22 to the Federation Council by the legislature of one of Russia's regions. Nevzlin said he will work for the region's interests, as well as build interethnic relations.

Nevzlin is a former official of a leading Russian oil company.

Mass graves unearthed at Sobibor

Archaeologists found mass graves at the former Nazi death camp in Sobibor. The excavations were the first since World War II at the camp, which is located in eastern Poland.

The graves could provide valuable new evidence about the number of victims, mainly Jews, who died in the Sobibor gas chambers. According to official Polish accounts, 250,000 people were killed there by the Nazis.

Ukrainian legislator blasts Jews

A member of Ukraine's Parliament criticized what he called the "Jewish-gay mafia." According to monitors with the Union of Councils for Jews in the Former Soviet Union, Pavlo Baulin also said in his speech in Parliament that this group "holds all of the state's finances in its hands."

Baulin, a member of the Communist Party, appeared to be directing his remarks at Boris Feldman, who has been jailed since early last year on charges of engaging in shady business practices. The UCSJ has sent a letter to Ukraine's president, Leonid Kuchma, expressing its concern over possible anti-Semitic overtones in the Feldman case.

UJC Web sites win awards

The United Jewish Communities won two awards for its Web sites in the 2001 Web Award Competition.

UJC won the Outstanding Web Site award for both its home page, www.ujc.org, and its training Web site, www.ujc.org/interactivetraining. The awards, sponsored by the Web Marketing Association, honored UJC for both the sites' design and content.

Israeli-Palestinian violence rages as U.S. revives its peace initiative

By JTA Staff

JERUSALEM (JTA) — The two peace envoys President Bush dispatched to the Middle East have their work cut out for them.

Violence continued unabated for days before the slated arrival Monday of the envoys, former Gen. Anthony Zinni and the assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs, William Burns.

Over the weekend, Israel and the Palestinian engaged in a series of tit-for-tat strikes that have been a long-familiar part of their more than 14 months of violence.

On Saturday night, an Israeli soldier was killed in a Palestinian mortar attack in the Gaza Strip. Hamas claimed responsibility for the attack near the Israeli settlement of Kfar Darom. Hamas officials said they were avenging last Friday's slaying of Hamas leader Mahmoud Abu Hanoud in an Israeli helicopter attack.

Hanoud, who was killed along with his deputy and another man, was atop Israel's most-wanted list for allegedly planning terror attacks that killed dozens of Israelis.

Israel charged that Hanoud was behind the June suicide bombing outside the Dolphinarium disco in Tel Aviv and another suicide attack in August at the Sbarro's pizzeria in Jerusalem.

Hanoud, considered the No. 1 Hamas fugitive, had evaded two Israeli attempts on his life earlier this year.

A Palestinian court sentenced him to 12 years imprisonment for his involvement in Hamas' military wing, but he escaped from a Palestinian prison last May.

Some 50,000 turned out Saturday in the West Bank for his funeral, which was punctuated by vows from Hamas to avenge his death.

On Sunday, Israel retaliated for the Saturday night mortar attack by launching helicopter missile strikes, destroying several Palestinian security posts in Gaza.

The strikes reportedly demolished intelligence, navy and police positions of the Palestinian Authority, as well as offices used by Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat's Fatah faction.

Hanoud was killed a day after an incident that created yet more Palestinian anger and that prompted Israel to call for an investigation.

On Nov. 22, five Palestinian children were killed in Gaza when an Israeli tank shell exploded. Palestinian police reported that one of the children kicked the shell, causing it to explode, but Palestinian leaders charged that Israel had deliberately planted the shell as a booby trap. The five children were of the same Palestinian family, and ranged in age from 6 to 14.

Faced with widespread criticism from abroad, including from the United States, Israeli officials said they would investigate the incident.

At the boys' funeral last Friday, a 15-year-old Palestinian was killed in Gaza after Palestinian youths hurled stones at Israeli troops and the troops returned fire.

In another incident, two members of Fatah died in an explosion near the West Bank city of Nablus. Israeli officials said the two were preparing a bomb. Palestinian officials said the two had stumbled on an unexploded Israeli tank shell.

In yet more violence, Israeli troops shot and killed a 13-year-old Palestinian boy during clashes Sunday in Bethlehem. The clashes erupted following a Hamas demonstration. The violence began when protesters began throwing stones at Israeli soldiers guarding Rachel's Tomb on the outskirts of the city.

In a speech last week at the University of Louisville in Kentucky, U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell announced that Zinni and Burns were being sent to the Middle East.

On the eve of the two envoys' arrival, Israeli and Palestinian officials said it was up to the other side to ensure the success of the U.S. peace mission.

"We will make every effort to reach a cease-fire," Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon told his Cabinet on Sunday. "This is a test of Arafat and of the Palestinian leadership to demonstrate if indeed they intend to advance the peace process."

Palestinian Information Minister Yasser Abed Rabbo told Voice of Palestine Radio, "I cannot forecast whether these efforts will succeed because Sharon is trying to drown these efforts in a sea of blood." □

Pan-Arab recognition of Israel key to peace, says Jordan's king

By Simon Carroll

LONDON (JTA) — In a radical new peacemaking initiative, King Abdullah of Jordan has called on the Arab world to recognize Israel's right to exist.

Such a move will be necessary in return for the creation of a Palestinian state, Abdullah recently told *The Times* of London.

The king also told the paper that the collective Arab guarantee is part of a peace plan being discussed by countries trying to forge an Israeli-Palestinian peace accord, including the United States, Russia, the European Union, Egypt and Jordan.

President Bush full endorsement of the plan would be crucial to the king's strategy.

Abdullah claimed he has received pledges from Bush to back the initiative, but only if its broad acceptance by the Arab world is assured.

If accepted, the proposal would mean that for the first time Israel would get collective guarantees for its security from 22 Arab nations, stretching from northwest Africa to the Arabian Gulf.

It also would constitute a dramatic shift in the overall Arab position. To date, only Egypt and Jordan have recognized the legitimacy of the Jewish state through peace treaties.

Most Arab states have acknowledged Israel's existence only implicitly — as a result of endorsing two U.N. Security Council resolutions after the 1967 Six-Day War that demand an Israeli withdrawal to secure and recognized borders.

In a recent briefing to foreign correspondents in London, and in a radio talk show, Abdullah outlined a strategy that would constitute the Arab world's most dramatic shift toward peace with Israel since Arab armies marched on the fledgling Jewish state in 1948.

The king's descriptions of the current Israeli-Palestinian violence appeared to distance him from the anti-Israel stances taken by other Arab leaders.

They also were in marked contrast to the vitriolic criticisms of Israel expressed recently by Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

Abdullah said dismissed any links between the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Sept. 11 terror attacks on the United States, and called on fellow Arab leaders to recognize the new global reality that now makes the Arab-Israeli dispute secondary to the fight against international terrorism.

He also took issue with the usual Arab accusation that Israel, rather than the Palestinians, is to blame for the ongoing violence that has made the possibility of an Israeli-Palestinian peace accord more remote than ever.

"We have to get the violence removed from both sides and get them back around the peace table," he said.

The two sides have become so bogged down in their cycle of violence, Abdullah added, that a bold initiative and a major Arab gesture are needed to break the stalemate.

Abdullah, who succeeded his father, King Hussein, in 1999, said measures to bring about a Palestinian state would not succeed unless Israel received formal Arab assurances of its security.

The idea of integrating Israel into the region has been anathema to most Arab countries.

Even Egypt, which signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1979, has blocked the development of extensive trade and cultural links, leading Israel to claim that Cairo favors only a "cold peace."

Syria and Iraq are the two states most likely to oppose the "two-basket" deal — the creation of a Palestinian state in return for strong security guarantees for Israel.

Libyan leader Muammar Gadhafi, once considered the most radical Arab leader, recently surprised an Arab summit in Cairo by proposing a similar pan-Arab declaration — but he tied it to Israel's acceptance of eastern Jerusalem as the capital of a future Palestinian state.

Even Iran, long one of Israel's most stalwart foes, may be willing to accept Israel's right to exist.

In an interview that appeared recently in *The New York Times*, Iranian President Mohammad Khatami said the Palestinians should have the final say on whether to accept the Jewish state.

"It is the people of Palestine that have the last word, and naturally when the Palestinians themselves accept an issue, the rest of the world will accept it too," Khatami said. "We will respect the wishes of the Palestinian nation." □

Protests are heard as mayor plans to honor Benito Mussolini

By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME (JTA) — A plan by the mayor of a town in Sicily to name a street in honor of Italy's wartime fascist dictator Benito Mussolini is drawing protests.

The Simon Wiesenthal Center condemned the proposal, launched by Mayor Guido Costa of the town of Tremestieri Etneo.

In a letter to Interior Minister Claudio Scajola, the Wiesenthal Center's director for international liaison, Shimon Samuels, called on the Italian government to prevent what he termed a "horrific proposal."

"Such an action is not only an offense to the victims of Italian fascism, but also an encouragement to neo-Nazis all over Europe," Samuels wrote. "Italy must not set this model for the younger generations."

Wrote the left-wing Italian paper *L'Unita*: "Italy is returning to fascism."

Costa is a member of the right-wing National Alliance Party, which is a part of the ruling center-right coalition government of Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi.

The National Alliance traces its roots back to Mussolini's fascists and the postwar neo-fascist party, the Italian Social Movement.

During the past decade, National Alliance leaders have sought to distance the party from its fascist origins.

Critics, however, have warned that many rank-and-file members remain loyal to a far-right ideology.

In an interview last week, Costa in fact described himself as a "fascist" and called Mussolini a "great man."

Costa's decision to name a street for Mussolini "is only the latest in a series of similar initiatives taken at the local level by members of the National Alliance who have evidently remained at heart militants" of the Italian Social Movement, the Milan daily *Corriere della Sera* wrote Sunday.

The newspaper termed these initiatives "mistaken and provocative" and called on the National Alliance leadership to condemn them, rather than maintain an "embarrassing silence."

There have been several recent attempts in various parts of Italy to name streets for leading fascist officials.

At least some of these were aborted after public protests. □