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TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Sharon, Bush discuss terror

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and President Bush met for one hour in the White House on Sunday. A National Security Council spokesman, Sean McCormack, would not say later whether Bush asked Israel to restrain itself from retaliating for a series of weekend terror attacks.

Bush and Sharon were originally scheduled to meet on Monday, but the meeting was changed so Sharon could return to Israel quickly following the Palestinian terror attacks, which killed 25 Israelis and wounded more than 200. [Page 4]

Envoy visits terror site

U.S. envoy Anthony Zinni laid a wreath at the site of the Jerusalem terror attack. Visiting the site on Sunday, Zinni called the attack the "deepest evil that one can imagine." He also said, "This is the lowest form of inhumanity that can be imagined, and I think that it is important that we stay together to fight this."

In earlier remarks, Zinni called on Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat to make "absolutely clear that those responsible" for Saturday's attacks will be found and brought to justice. Zinni called on Arafat to "act in a comprehensive and sustained manner to root out terrorism," according to a CNN report, and said there should be "no delay" and "no excuse for not acting right away." [Page 4]

Calif. shul arsons lead to jail

Two brothers were sentenced to jail for fire-bombing three synagogues in California.

Following earlier guilty pleas, Benjamin Matthew Williams, 33, was sentenced last Friday to 30 years in prison, and James Tyler Williams, 31, to more than 21 years. [Page 3]

Sharpton to visit Pollard

Controversial black leader Rev. Al Sharpton will visit jailed Israeli spy Jonathan Pollard.

Fresh from a trip to Israel that was seen as a way to mend fences with the U.S. Jewish community, Sharpton will visit Pollard in his North Carolina prison next month, the Forward newspaper reported. Pollard's wife, Esther, told the paper the visit would be sponsored by the Israeli Consulate. A former U.S. Navy intelligence officer, Pollard has been in prison for 16 years for passing classified information to Israel.

Israel left reeling after 25 die / in weekend suicide bombings

By Mitchell Danow

NEW YORK (JTA) — All eyes are on Israel to see how it will respond to a series of Palestinian suicide bombings over the weekend that claimed the lives of 25 Israelis.

Some observers believe the United States, which has pressed for Israeli restraint after previous terror attacks, is not doing so this time around.

They cite comments U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell made during a television interview Sunday, when he said, "We're not about to tell Mr. Sharon what he should do."

A spokesman for Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon — who cut short his visit to the United States to return to Israel on Sunday — made it clear that Israel would not let the attacks pass unanswered.

Speaking to CNN, government spokesman Avi Pazner said, "Israel will certainly react. When blood is running in the streets of Jerusalem, Israel will not remain inactive."

Israel was left reeling by the weekend terror attacks, which began Saturday night in Jerusalem's Ben-Yehuda pedestrian mall. At least 10 people died and some 180 wounded when two suicide bombers about 40 yards apart detonated their explosives close to midnight. The two bombings, which were almost simultaneous, hurled victims and severed limbs through the air.

The bombs were followed approximately 20 minutes later by a third bomb in a car parked on nearby Rav Kook Street. Israeli officials said that bomb was aimed at emergency workers treating the wounded.

All of the bombs contained metal shards and screws to maximize the number of injured, police said.

The suicide bombings occurred in the Jerusalem cafe district as young people were out on the town after the end of the Sabbath.

All 10 of those killed were young men, ranging in age from 14 to 20. All but two were from Jerusalem.

On Sunday, they were identified as: Assaf Avitan, 15; Michael Moshe Dahan, 20; Israel Ya'akov Danino, 17; Yosef Elezra, 18; Sgt. Nir Heftzdi, 19; Yuri Korganov, 20, from Ma'aleh Adumim; Moshe Yedid Levy, 19; Golan Tourjeman, 15; Guy Vaknin, 19; and Adam Weinstein, 14, from Givon Hahadasha.

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres called the attack "one of the worst we have ever seen."

The next morning, another suicide bomber killed at least 15 Israelis when he blew himself up on a bus in Haifa. At least 37 people were injured, three seriously. The bus driver said the bomber blew himself up when the driver called the man back to receive his change.

The explosion created a fireball that sent the bus careening into another bus traveling behind it. The second bus was damaged, but there had been no bomb planted on it, as some bystanders initially believed.

The roof of the first bus was torn off by the force of the explosion, which left bodies strewn across the street.

The Haifa suicide bomber was a 21-year-old plumber who had gotten engaged six weeks ago and was preparing for his wedding, his father told The Associated Press. Palestinian well-wishers told the family they should be proud of the young man.

In another attack Sunday, an Israeli driver was shot dead in the Gaza Strip. The motorist and five others were wounded while driving between the Jewish settlements of Nisanit and Elei Sinai in the northern Gaza Strip, Israel Radio reported. The shooting

MIDEAST FOCUS

Israel tightens grip on West Bank

The Israeli army tightened its closure of West Bank cities. Following a series of weekend suicide attacks that left 25 Israelis dead, the Israel Defense Force on Sunday tightened blockades around Jenin, Tulkarm and Nablus.

In addition, Israel ordered Palestinian drivers to stay off West Bank roads until further notice.

Hamas planned to kill minister

Israeli officials said they uncovered a Hamas cell planning to kill Israel's defense minister.

Benjamin Ben-Eliezer, who is vying for leadership of the Labor Party, later said he tops the list of Israeli leaders the Palestinians want to assassinate.

Law of Return backed

Israel's Law of Return should not be tightened, a leading official with the Jewish Agency for Israel said.

Sallai Meridor said Nov. 28 that tightening the law, which currently recognizes as Jewish anybody with at least one Jewish grandparent, would "close the door on those who wish to be part of the Jewish people, particularly to immigrants from the former Soviet Union." Some called for tightening the law because it accords the right of Israeli citizenship to tens of thousands who are not Jewish according to Jewish law.

P.A. accused of torture

Human Rights Watch accused the Palestinian Authority of torturing prisoners. The human rights organization says that about 450 Palestinians are being held without trial, mostly on suspicion of collaboration with Israel, and that several people have died in prison.

The report also backed the Israeli charge that Arafat conducts a "revolving door" policy with suspected militants, arresting them, holding them briefly without trial and releasing them.

was carried out by two Palestinian gunmen in Israeli army uniforms. Israeli officials believe the terrorists later were killed by Israeli forces.

Hamas claimed responsibility for the attacks in Jerusalem, Haifa and Gaza.

Hamas officials had vowed revenge after one of the group's leaders, Mahmoud Abu Hanoud, was killed Nov. 23 in an Israeli helicopter attack.

In another weekend terror attack, a bomb blew up near a bus early Sunday morning in the Jordan Valley. There were no injuries.

The weekend attacks were preceded by another bus suicide bombing on Nov. 29. Three Israelis died when that bus, which was traveling from Nazareth to Tel Aviv, blew up near Hadera.

Islamic Jihad and the Al Aksa Brigades, a faction of Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat's Fatah Party, claimed responsibility for that attack.

Under intense pressure from the United States, including visiting U.S. envoy Anthony Zinni, to crack down on terror, Arafat convened an emergency leadership meeting on Sunday, after which the Palestinian Authority gave its security forces new powers to rein in terrorists.

At that meeting, Arafat issued an order to arrest terrorists involved in attacks on Israelis. A P.A. statement said this was not the appropriate time to carry out attacks against Israel, and the leaders banned all armed demonstrations and any public display of arms.

Powell later said Arafat had to issue the order "if he was to remain in a position of authority."

Powell told CNN on Sunday that a statement by the Palestinian Authority promising to arrest terrorists was insufficient. "Words are not enough any longer. Now we need to see action." □

At Ground Zero, Sharon says democracies will beat terror

By Julie Wiener

NEW YORK (JTA) — The memorial wall for victims of the Sept. 11 attacks on the World Trade Center now includes condolences from the leader of the country that has suffered more terror than any other.

Following a ceremony last Friday with New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani in front of the wreckage at Ground Zero, Israel's prime minister wrote "Shalom From Jerusalem, Ariel Sharon," and signed his name in Hebrew and English.

Later, taking questions from reporters, Sharon said peace is impossible as long as Palestinian Authority President Yasser "Arafat directs a policy of terror, violence and incitement."

"We can live in peace with the Arabs — it's not an easy thing — but it can only be done when the terror stops," Sharon said.

That time seemed farther away than ever after a particularly bloody weekend, with at least 26 Israelis killed in terror attacks.

The Ground Zero event marked the beginning of Sharon's visit to the United States — a visit that was shortened by one day after the attacks.

On Sunday he met with President Bush in Washington. The meeting was held a day earlier than planned so Sharon could return to Israel to deal with the escalating security situation.

On Friday morning, Sharon presented Giuliani with a Jewish National Fund certificate announcing the dedication of 5,000 trees in American Independence Park, near Jerusalem, in honor of the victims of the Sept. 11 attack on the World Trade Center.

"Others destroy; we plant," Sharon said.

Also present were members of the New York Fire Department, New York Police Department and Port Authority Police Department.

Sharon also greeted Mor Levenhar, sister of Shai Levenhar, and Segal Shefi, widow of Hagai Shefi, both of whom died in the Sept. 11 attacks.

Sharon praised the courage and leadership of New Yorkers in the aftermath of the tragedy, and said, "Terrorism will be defeated. Democracies will win this war." □



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JEWISH WORLD

Two brothers sentenced to jail for arsons at California synagogues

By Tom Tugend

Israel hires U.S. consultants

Two famous American political consultants will work with Israel's foreign ministry to improve the country's image.

James Carville and Stanley Greenberg, who masterminded Bill Clinton's 1992 campaign for president and worked for former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, met with foreign ministry officials in Israel and are preparing a campaign to appeal to young Americans. The consultants have been hired by American Jewish philanthropists.

"I'm not working for any politician here, I am working for Israel," Carville said on Israeli television. "The wonderful thing about this country is that it's the only country in the Middle East that changes governments every once in a while."

France vows to back Jews

French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin expressed his "determination" to combat anti-Semitism. Speaking at a dinner Saturday hosted by CRIF, the umbrella group of secular French Jewish organizations, Jospin said he had instructed his interior minister to be "especially vigilant" about the threat of anti-Semitic acts.

CRIF President Roger Cukierman said tensions in France's 600,000-strong Jewish community have worsened since a series of attacks on synagogues last year.

Ukrainian Jews fight missionaries

Ukrainian Jews formed an anti-missionary organization. Dozens of rabbis from across the country joined other Jewish leaders to form the Magen League last week in Kiev.

One of the group's first resolutions warned that Jews "who systematically participate" in events organized by "messianic Jews" such as Jews for Jesus would be denied any help from Ukrainian Jewish communities. The group also called on the Israeli Embassy in Kiev to deny these people the right to make aliyah to Israel. Russian Jewish leaders formed a similar group in May.

Latvia marks WWII killings

Latvia marked the 60th anniversary last Friday of mass killings of thousands of Latvian Jews. Only about 1,500 Latvian Jews out of 75,000 survived after the Nazis invaded Latvia in 1941.

President Vaira Vike-Freiberga urged her country last Friday to study and understand the events of the Holocaust, a subject that was not discussed during the 50-year Soviet occupation that followed World War II. Nazi hunters have accused Latvia of dragging its feet in pursuing locals who collaborated with the Nazis and later fled to the West, but Vike-Freiberga said Latvia will prosecute them.

LOS ANGELES (JTA) — Two brothers, both self-proclaimed anti-Semites and white supremacists, have been sentenced to lengthy prison terms for the 1999 firebombings of three synagogues near Sacramento, Calif.

Following their guilty pleas, Benjamin Matthew Williams, 33, was sentenced last Friday to 30 years in prison, and James Tyler Williams, 31, to 21 years and 3 months.

They were ordered to pay more than \$1 million in restitution to the three synagogues.

The brothers will go on trial next April in the slaying of a homosexual couple two weeks after the torching of the synagogues and an abortion clinic. State prosecutors said they will seek the death penalty.

Hardest hit by the arson attacks was Congregation B'nai Israel, a Reform temple that sustained more than \$1 million in damages. Last year, the temple celebrated its 150th anniversary.

Substantial damage also was suffered by Congregation Beth Shalom, also Reform, in suburban Carmichael, Calif., and Keneset Israel Torah Center, an Orthodox synagogue.

At two of the synagogues, the perpetrators left leaflets proclaiming that the "International Jew World Order" and the "International Jewmedia" started the war in Kosovo.

In an emotional two-and-a-half hour hearing in a Sacramento federal court room before the sentences were given, rabbis and other Jewish leaders confronted the convicted arsonists and told them their crimes had strengthened the Sacramento residents' determination to fight bigotry.

After receiving permission from U.S. District Judge Garland E. Burrell Jr. to address the defendants, Rabbi Brad Bloom of Congregation B'nai Israel told them, "Your hatred and anti-Semitism will never prevail. Ironically, it strengthened the determination of the entire community to make no room for bigotry."

Following the synagogue attacks on June 18, 1999, a unity rally of all faiths and races in Sacramento drew 5,000 people and raised hundreds of thousands of dollars to repair the shuls.

Bloom said the Williams brothers represented "a continuum of anti-Semitic perpetrators" from Babylonian and Egyptian times through Russian pogroms and Nazi atrocities.

"Yes, we have known the Williams brothers for a long time," media reports quoted Bloom as saying.

Len Feldman, vice chairman of Sacramento's Jewish Community Relations Council, said the firebombing "forced me to explain to my two children a world I had hoped had been left behind."

Rabbi Yosef Etzhasadeh of the Keneset Israel Torah Center lamented the trial's failure to explore all the evidence, which, he said, might have exposed the brothers' accomplices.

The elder Williams smirked though part of the admonitions.

Both he and his brother declined the judge's invitation to talk about their crimes or express remorse.

While being held in prison, the voluble elder Williams initiated a series of media interviews in which he declared his readiness to be executed as a "Christian martyr" whose death would spur increased attacks on Jews, gays and various minority groups.

Matthew and Tyler Williams — they are known by their middle names — worked as landscapers in northern California.

In a search of their home, investigators found a "hit list" with 32 names, mostly of Sacramento Jewish leaders but also including Marc Klein, editor and publisher of the San Francisco-based Jewish Bulletin of Northern California.

The Williams' arson attacks were the opening shots in a "summer of hate," which included a shooting spree that wounded five at the North Valley Jewish Community Center in suburban Los Angeles and a white supremacist's killing rampage in the Midwest. □

NEWS ANALYSIS

**After deadly weekend in Israel,
U.S. tells Arafat to prove himself***By Matthew E. Berger*

WASHINGTON (JTA) — The deadly attacks in Jerusalem and Haifa have caused the United States to put the onus for curbing terrorism squarely on the Palestinian leadership, and the White House for the first time is not publicly telling Israel to restrain itself.

President Bush met Sunday with Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and called on Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat to make immediate arrests and take decisive action against the organizations responsible for the attacks in Jerusalem and Haifa over the weekend. Hamas claimed responsibility for the attacks, which killed at least 25 people.

"Chairman Arafat and the Palestinian Authority must immediately find and arrest those responsible for these hideous murders," President Bush said in a statement Saturday, following the attacks in Jerusalem. "Now more than ever, Chairman Arafat and the Palestinian Authority must demonstrate through their actions, and not merely their words, their commitment to fight terror."

A senior Israeli official said Israel does not expect that Arafat will ever comply with American and international calls for a crackdown against terrorism.

"Arafat sits at the head of an empire of lies and the head of a coalition of terror," the official said. "The Americans understand that the Israelis have to act."

In a break from precedent, administration officials did not call on the Israeli government to restrain its reaction.

"We're not about to tell Mr. Sharon what he should do as a freely elected leader of a democratic nation," Secretary of State Colin Powell said Sunday on CBS' "Face the Nation." He added, however, that Israel should consider the consequences of any action it takes.

Neither Bush nor Sharon spoke to reporters after their meeting. Sharon had been scheduled to meet with Bush on Monday, but the discussion was moved forward to allow Sharon to return quickly to Israel.

He is expected to meet with his Security Cabinet on Monday to formulate a retaliation plan.

The lack of a U.S. call for restraint emphasizes the significance of the attacks over the weekend, and the fact that America believes it is up to Arafat to take real action.

"If Chairman Arafat is going to be a leader, it is time to step up," National Security Council spokesman Sean McCormack said.

Powell outlined steps Arafat must take to demonstrate his leadership, including arresting terrorists and actually keeping them in prison and dismantling the terror organizations' infrastructure.

Israel has pointed out that it is not only militant groups such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad that are carrying out terror attacks, but mainstream organizations such as the militias of Arafat's own Fatah Party, Palestinian Authority policemen and even members of Force 17, Arafat's presidential guard. In an appearance on CNN, Powell said Arafat must act against those groups, too, if evidence shows that they are involved in terror.

On Sunday, the Palestinian Authority gave its security forces extraordinary powers to arrest terrorists and began making some arrests, according to media reports.

But it remains unclear whether the actions will be substantive

or sustained enough to forestall Israeli retaliation.

Israeli spokesman Ra'anana Gissin said that the United States, which suffered its own devastating terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, now has a better understanding of Israel's plight, and is acting accordingly.

"After Sept. 11, the United States understands what it's like to be at Ground Zero," said Gissin, referring to the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington. "Today we are at Ground Zero."

Numerous Israeli leaders drew analogies to the U.S. war in Afghanistan and said Israel must defend itself against terrorism in the same manner as the United States.

They also are asking the Bush administration to make Hamas and other groups that threaten Israel targets of the U.S.-led coalition against terrorism.

One Middle East analyst said that if he is to avoid a strong Israeli retaliation, Arafat will have to reprise his crackdown of spring 1996, when he arrested more than 1,000 terrorists and confiscated weapons in the wake of a series of bus bombings.

"If he doesn't do it, he is going to lose with the U.S. diplomatically, and Israel will make sure the P.A. loses physically," said David Makovsky, senior fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

Makovsky said the Bush administration may threaten to downgrade the Palestinians' diplomatic status in the United States — which was upgraded after the Oslo peace process began — if Arafat doesn't take action.

American presidents for years have signed waivers postponing congressionally mandated sanctions on the Palestinians for failing to comply with their peace process obligations, and Bush could now refuse to waive the sanctions as a punishment.

But the U.S. administration seems to be losing faith that Arafat even can control the Palestinian terrorists.

"He is not a particularly strong leader, and I don't know that he has good control over the Palestinian situation," Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said of Arafat on NBC's "Meet the Press."

"He has not ever delivered anything for the Palestinian people throughout history."

Former U.S. Marine Gen. Anthony Zinni, working as an envoy in the Middle East, is expected to have an increased role in trying to calm violence, including monitoring Palestinian actions against terrorism.

Zinni, who visited the scene of the Jerusalem attacks Sunday, has issued some of the strongest denunciations of the attacks.

"These despicable actions can only be prevented if the Palestinians act in a comprehensive and sustained manner to root out terrorists and bring them to justice," Zinni said in a statement.

"Only a comprehensive and sustained effort by the Palestinian Authority against the individuals responsible for these acts and the infrastructure of the groups that support them, as well as effective cooperation between Palestinian and Israeli security organizations, will lead to the end of such actions."

Zinni has said the attacks of the past week may be intended to thwart his mission to bring about a cease-fire, but said he would not be deterred from his goal.

Bush echoed those comments on Sunday.

"Clearly, there are some in the world who do not want us to achieve peace in the Middle East," Bush said. We must not allow them to succeed. We must not allow terror to destroy the chance of peace in the Middle East." □