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85th Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Five Israelis killed in attacks

A Palestinian terrorist opened fire on two Tel Aviv restaurants early Tuesday morning, killing three Israelis and wounding dozens.

The terrorist also stabbed passers-by before being shot and killed by a man in the restaurant and a police officer.

In Afula, a suicide bomber blew himself up on a bus at the central bus station, killing one person and wounding 10. Near Bethlehem, an Israeli woman was killed and her husband moderately wounded when shots were fired at their car.

Missiles wound three Israelis

Three Israeli children were wounded when Palestinians fired Kassam missiles Tuesday into the Negev city of Sderot. A 1-year-old baby was moderately wounded and two other children lightly injured by the rockets, which were fired from the Gaza Strip at a residential neighborhood in Sderot.

Palestinians have recently begun firing the rockets at Israeli targets, each time with greater accuracy. Israeli officials had warned that the missiles would soon be directed at Israeli population centers.

Jewish vigilantes claim attack

A previously unknown Jewish group calling itself Revenge of the Oppressed claimed responsibility for a bombing Tuesday outside an eastern Jerusalem school.

Seven Arab students and three teachers were lightly hurt in the explosion in the schoolyard in the Tsur Baher neighborhood.

Groups protest Mubarak meeting

Several U.S. Jewish groups boycotted a meeting between Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Jewish leaders. Representatives from B'nai B'rith International, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee and the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations chose not to attend Tuesday's meeting.

They were protesting a decision not to invite officials from the Anti-Defamation League, which has blasted the Egyptian press for being overtly anti-Semitic. During the meeting, Mubarak defended the freedom of the Egyptian press and said he opposed government intervention in what the Egyptian media choose to say. [Page 3]

NEWS ANALYSIS

Sharon feels pinch as terror rises and Labor Party grows impatient

By David Landau

JERUSALEM (JTA) — A surge in violence this week cost some two dozen Israelis their lives — and placed Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's political life increasingly in peril.

A year after Sharon took office with a pledge to restore security, Israelis were besieged with terror that seemed to come from every direction and with almost every weapon — suicide bombings, sniper shots, Kassam missiles and stabbings.

Sharon's response? Hit the Palestinians again, and harder.

On Monday, Sharon said the Palestinians must be dealt a blow so withering that they will finally understand that terror damages their cause.

Only then, he said, may the Palestinians be convinced to abandon violence and return to the negotiating table.

Israelis, however, increasingly are dubious that Sharon can lead them out of the present impasse.

Public opinion polls show Sharon's approval ratings plummeting from the highs he enjoyed for most of his first year in office, with a majority of respondents now saying they do not have confidence in his leadership.

In addition, a Saudi Arabian peace initiative threatens to expose the gap between Sharon's goals and the Bush administration's vision of Mideast peace, setting up a potential confrontation between Jerusalem and Washington.

Never formally presented but gathering steam nonetheless, the Saudi initiative calls for the Arab world to make peace with Israel in exchange for a complete Israeli withdrawal from all land captured in the 1967 Six-Day War.

Washington has welcomed the initiative and is exploring it, while Sharon said this week said that a return to those borders — which leaves Israel just nine miles wide at its most populated point — would endanger the country's security.

With the death toll rising precipitously this week, an opinion poll by the influential Tami Steinmetz Center at Tel Aviv University also showed a steep drop — from more than 40 percent to just 26 percent — in the number of Israelis who agree with Sharon that "that Israel can change the situation by the use of more military force."

At the same time, however, only 27 percent believe that diplomacy can resolve the conflict, as Labor Party Foreign Minister Shimon Peres proposes.

If those messages seem somewhat hopeless, it's no accident.

After nearly 18 months, the increasingly bloody Palestinian intifada shows no signs of abating, and more people on both sides are describing the deteriorating conflict as outright war.

The second-ranking Likud Party minister demanded Tuesday that Israel oust Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat from the Palestinian territories.

Finance Minister Silvan Shalom admitted that his position was not shared by Sharon — not yet, or at least not publicly — but he warned that "the moment of decision is approaching."

Shalom spoke during a day of terror attacks that spanned the length and breadth of the country, including missiles that landed in a Negev city, a shooting attack in a Tel Aviv restaurant, a sniper attack on a main road just outside Jerusalem and a suicide bombing in the Galilee city of Afula.

Shalom's remarks came immediately after a Security Cabinet meeting where differences within the top policymaking echelon came starkly to the fore. Sharon

MIDEAST FOCUS

Israel fires missiles

Israeli helicopters fired missiles Tuesday at Palestinian Authority security targets in Ramallah and Nablus. Earlier in the day, Israel also fired missiles at the Palestinian security headquarters in Khan Yunis in the Gaza Strip.

During a meeting Tuesday, Israel's Security Cabinet decided to intensify attacks against Palestinian targets to retaliate for the surge in Arab terror.

In another development Tuesday, one Palestinian was killed and 15 wounded following an explosion in the Shati refugee camp in northern Gaza. Palestinians at the scene said they saw no Israeli aircraft attacking and suggested the blast might have been a "work accident" — a bomb that went off as it was being prepared by terrorists.

During Tuesday's airstrikes, Israeli helicopters fired on a car near Ramallah, killing at least three Palestinian leaders. Israeli security officials said the victims were Palestinian gunmen who collectively were responsible for the deaths of at least 10 Israelis, Israel Radio reported.

Minister refuses conversion order

Israel's interior minister refused a court order to recognize non-Orthodox converts.

Eli Yishai, of the fervently Orthodox Shas Party, said he would go to jail rather than implement the High Court ruling, which ordered the Interior Ministry to register Israelis who had Reform or Conservative conversions as Jews on their national identification cards.

Pearl memorial held at Wall

A memorial service was held today at the Western Wall for Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl. Among those attending Tuesday's service were members of Pearl's family, Religious Affairs Minister Asher Ohana and Deputy Foreign Minister Michael Melchior.



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reiterated his determination to strike hard at the Palestinians, but he had to shelve a proposal to send Israeli tanks back to besiege Arafat's office at Ramallah in the face of strong opposition from the defense minister and Labor Party leader, Benjamin Ben-Eliezer.

The quarrels around the Cabinet table are compounding the worry and despair that is in evidence among broad swaths of the Israeli public.

Political commentators predict that the longevity of the unity government is in doubt as the violence spirals.

On top of the unrelenting security crisis that stalks the streets of every Israeli city, citizens this week had to assimilate the daunting prospect of political instability — and, possibly, early elections.

The inter-ministerial disputes also exacerbate a widely held concern that the politicians, both in the unity government and in the opposition, have no workable policy to offer.

Sharon himself, in a series of briefings and comments Monday, told Knesset members and journalists that there is "no diplomatic outlook at this time, only a military outlook."

The explicit denial of any diplomatic strategy could help Sharon fend off the remorseless pressure he faces from the right — led by ex-Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu — that wants him to topple the Palestinian Authority and root out the terror infrastructure it has cultivated in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

In recent weeks, Arafat's mainstream Fatah movement has emerged as the principal terrorist group in the Palestinian areas, carrying out most of the attacks in the West Bank and inside Israel proper.

That drops the pretense of moderation that Fatah cultivated during the peace process, when it routinely was contrasted to the "militants" of Hamas and Islamic Jihad that Arafat claimed he sought vainly to control.

Increasingly, the barrenness of Sharon's diplomatic field ups the pressure on the Labor Party to secede from the unity government. Ben-Eliezer is said to predict, privately, that Labor will leave within weeks or months when a suitable situation presents itself.

Ben-Eliezer believes the decision to keep Arafat confined to Ramallah has contributed significantly to the surge in terrorism against Israel.

Yet he is reluctant to leave during the current dispute over whether Arafat should continue to be besieged, given the Israeli public's near-universal loathing for the Palestinian leader.

Sharon's tough and bleak statements Monday are understood to have stirred anxiety in Washington.

The Bush administration has been loathe to intervene in the region as the violence escalated.

American admonishments of Israel have been distinctly low key, while it consistently has blamed Arafat and the Palestinian Authority for not doing enough to curb terror.

By midweek, however, there were signs of growing American unrest. The Ha'aretz newspaper reported that Secretary of State Colin Powell discussed with Sharon the possibility of sending the U.S. peace envoy, retired Gen. Anthony Zinni, back to the region.

American policymakers also want Israel to allow the Palestinian leader to travel to a late March Arab League summit in Beirut, where the Saudi Arabian proposal may be discussed.

If Israel prevents Arafat from going, his absence likely will become the focus of the summit, to the advantage of the more hard-line Arab states.

Building up its military and diplomatic forces for a possible showdown with Iraq's Saddam Hussein later this year, Washington is anxious that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict not spiral out of control and spread to other fronts. That might deter more moderate Arab states from supporting, or at least condoning, American action against Iraq.

The worsening security situation therefore could trigger some intervention by Washington ahead of the Arab summit.

Possibly, some observers here say, both bloodied protagonists want that to happen, though only the Palestinian side will admit it publicly. □

JEWISH WORLD

Florida man faces deportation

Deportation proceedings began in Florida against a Lithuanian man who turned Jews over to the Nazis.

The trial began Monday after Algimantas Dailide, 81, was previously found guilty of the wartime persecution of Jews.

U.S. lawyers argue that he should be deported because he lied on immigration forms to gain entry into the United States after the war.

The attorney representing Dailide argued Monday that the documents on which prosecutors base their case may be fakes.

B'nai B'rith helps Argentina

B'nai B'rith International is sending medicine to Argentina.

The shipment, valued at more than \$1 million, was a joint venture of B'nai B'rith with Brother's Brother Foundation, an international charity.

The two groups previously worked together to ship medical supplies to earthquake-ravaged Central American countries.

Minsk Ghetto murders marked

The 60th anniversary of a Nazi massacre in Belarus was commemorated.

Some of the 1,000 mourners laid flowers and wreaths Tuesday at a memorial to the 5,000 residents of the Minsk Ghetto who were killed on March 2, 1942.

The memorial known as "The Pit" sits on top of the site where the murders took place. Among those attending the ceremony were Belarusian officials, ghetto survivors and representatives of international Jewish groups.

Money raised for Russian shul

A Maryland synagogue raised money to protect a Russian synagogue. Congregation Beth El of Montgomery County, Md., collected \$7,500 to pay for a security system to protect a synagogue in the city of Kostroma.

The sum will cover the cost of an alarm system and half the cost of a fence that will surround the synagogue's property.

The victim of an unsolved arson attack in July 2001, the synagogue repeatedly has been vandalized in recent months.

Nuclear engineer dies at 86

Alvin Radkowsky, who was instrumental in creating the first nuclear submarines for the United States, died at 86.

An observant Jew, Radkowsky also developed a new type of nuclear fuel designed to decrease the amount of dangerous plutonium in nuclear waste from power plants.

Jewish meeting with Mubarak boycotted by some organizations

By Matthew E. Berger

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Several American Jewish organizations boycotted a meeting Tuesday with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak after the head of the Anti-Defamation League was not invited.

Representatives from the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations and B'nai B'rith International chose not to attend the meeting, protesting the control the Egyptian Embassy tried to exert over what has become an annual encounter.

Tuesday's meeting, which went ahead despite the flap, came as Mubarak was preparing to meet with President Bush and push forward his idea for an Egyptian-hosted summit between Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat. Mubarak frequently meets with Jewish leaders during his visits to Washington in an effort to seek support for his agenda.

The ADL has been a vocal critic of anti-Semitism in the Egyptian press, and releases a packet of anti-American and anti-Semitic articles and editorial cartoons to coincide with Mubarak's annual trip to Washington.

"I think it's sad that they continue to dodge the issue of anti-Semitism," ADL's national director, Abraham Foxman, told JTA on Tuesday.

"It's also sad that they preach democracy and interest in hearing views, but blackball organizations that ask them questions."

The American Jewish Committee, which hosted the event this year along with the Israel Policy Forum, said the ADL was included on a list of attendees submitted for approval to Egyptian officials prior to the event. But Egyptian officials told the AJCommittee they did not want the ADL at the event, even though the organization has been represented at similar meetings in past years.

"They wanted a meeting with people who would listen to them," Jason Isaacson, the AJCommittee's director of government and international affairs, said of the Egyptian position. "We said we would listen to you but also ask tough questions."

The ADL contends its Washington director, Jess Hordes, was not invited originally, but was given a belated invitation, once other organizations said they would not attend as a sign of solidarity.

When the ADL sought an invitation for Foxman, the ADL was told the meeting was for lay leaders only.

The national chairman of the ADL, Glen Tobias, was eventually invited but declined, along with the lay leaders from the other groups that chose not to participate.

In addition to the AJCommittee, those attending included lay leaders of the Israel Policy Forum, the Jewish Council on Public Affairs, Americans for Peace Now and several independent Jewish leaders, including former Deputy Treasury Secretary Stuart Eizenstat. Several of the organizations say they did not know about the flap when they chose to attend.

Richard Heideman, president of B'nai B'rith, said he was "very disappointed" in Mubarak's decision. "If you're a peace partner of Israel you don't attempt to divide Israel and the Jewish people, you don't divide Jewish organizations," said Heideman, whose organization helped found the ADL in 1913.

This year's meeting came as American Jewish leaders were raising concerns over a proposed shipment of Harpoon missiles from the United States that some fear could hurt Israel's strategic advantage.

The Bush administration has forwarded the plan to Congress, who has 30 days — or until March 14 — to veto it. The administration says it has modified the package to ensure Israel's protection. Some Jewish leaders have also been striving to alter Egypt's nearly \$2 billion annual foreign aid package, adding more economic aid from the United States while minimizing military aid.

In his meeting with the Jews, Mubarak did not address the concerns about anti-Semitism, according to participants in the meeting. They said he claimed that the Egyptian press is free, and government control would only make matters worse. He told the American Jewish groups that there would be no problem sending an Egyptian ambassador back to Israel, but made clear it would not happen immediately. □

Federations respond to Argentina, saying it's 'why the system exists'

By Rachel Pomerance

NEW YORK (JTA) — The United Jewish Communities has pledged more than \$40 million this year for the rescue and relief of the Jews of Argentina.

Now it's up to the local federations to foot the bill.

By and large, federations across the country say they are committed to meeting the goal their umbrella organization has set to aid Argentine Jews, whose country has taken an economic dive in recent months.

"There is a broad recognition that responding to the crisis of the Jewish community in Argentina is precisely the reason why the federation system exists — to be able to make certain that people have food and medicine and to make certain that those who want to leave can do so," said John Ruskay, executive vice president of the UJA-Federation of New York.

Of the \$40 million slated for this year, \$35 million will be allotted to the Jewish Agency for Israel to manage aliyah, or immigration to Israel.

Those figures are based on an estimated 5,000 Argentines making aliyah to Israel this year.

The remaining funds will be directed to the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee to provide food and medicine on the ground, where some 200,000 Jews live, thousands of them now in poverty. But "the entire situation is very fluid," according to Richard Bernstein, co-chair of the UJC's Argentinian Response Task Force.

An increase in dollars to meet an increase in demand is entirely possible, he said. The task force will monitor the situation to adjust the budget accordingly and create new budgets each year for at least the next few years.

"If we do the job right with the first families that come to Israel, more will come because the situation in Argentina isn't going to get better for a very long time," said UJC's president, Stephen Hoffman.

Despite the situation in Israel, Hoffman said, "aliyah is a real viable alternative for people to consider."

Local federations have until the end of the calendar year to turn over what has been designated as their "fair share" of the total.

Each federation's percentage is determined by the size of their annual campaign as it relates to the sum total of all of the federations' campaigns — a figure that totals roughly \$900 million.

Chicago, for example, based upon a campaign last year that raised \$67.2 million, is expected to contribute nearly \$3 million to the Argentine crisis.

Around the country, federations are just beginning to determine how to raise the money. Some say they will conduct separate campaigns for the Argentine Jews, while others will take the money from their regular campaign funds.

Chicago, which is being asked to contribute the second largest amount after New York, plans to fold the Argentina package into its annual campaign drive, which this year is called the Israel Terror Relief campaign.

Michael Kotzin, the executive vice president of the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago, described a "very strong response" by the community "for being in a position to address these needs."

Chicago is already 15 percent ahead of its mark last year in its annual campaign, according to federation officials, and plans to dedicate all the funds that top its goal to "all the special needs Israel is encountering," which includes the Argentine aliyah.

While most federations expressed full support for the amount pledged by the UJC, some had questions.

Martin Abramowitz, vice president for planning and agency relations of the Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Greater Boston, expressed some concern over the UJC calculation.

Although Abramowitz said his federation "will respond in some positive way" to the request and expressed deep respect for the work of the UJC's overseas partners— the Jewish Agency and the JDC — he said Boston required a "better understanding of the Jewish Agency's prediction" of costs.

He specifically questioned the Jewish Agency's projection that it would cost \$7,000 for each person to arrive and be absorbed — and how that figure squares with the package of benefits that the Israeli government is offering a family of four.

He also wondered how the Jewish Agency is using its savings from a lower-than-projected immigration to Israel from the former Soviet Union.

David Sarnat, executive vice president of the Jewish Agency, North American section, said, "These were not numbers that were taken out of the air."

Sarnat, who is based in Atlanta, cited some specific costs, including \$1,950 for employment training, \$1,630 for transportation to Israel and \$235 for health care.

By comparison, he said, it cost \$6,000 to bring each Ethiopian to Israel 10 years ago, when Israel conducted a major operation to bring thousands of Ethiopian immigrants.

Sarnat said the UJC approved the numbers after a fact-finding mission to Argentina last month and much deliberation over the costs.

"It's a satisfactory accounting that leaves no questions unanswered," Hoffman said.

The Jewish Agency submitted its analysis of past and future funds, and the UJC will be sharing those details in the coming weeks, he said.

"I believe it is crystal clear and appropriate, and I believe the people in Boston will see that" as well as the rest of the Jewish community, he said.

Abramowitz said he didn't know whether Boston would have to dip into funds designated for other purposes to pay the tab for Argentina, which he estimates will come to slightly under \$1.25 million.

For Ruskay, this year's request — which will cost the New York federation nearly \$7 million — is a substantial but moderate one.

The real test will be if the numbers continue to grow, which would suggest that the requests for aliyah in January and February were only a "blip" after December's economic dive, he said.

"If the numbers increase substantially, our leadership will seriously consider a second-line campaign during the summer to raise the needed resources," Ruskay said.

For now, the immediate request will be met by additional fund-raising efforts and turning to reserves.

In Cleveland, federation officials have already built the Argentine crisis into their campaign, which is also ahead of schedule, and they are exploring how else to come up with the funds. □