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85th Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

U.N. to drop Jenin panel

Kofi Annan said he would cancel a fact-finding mission that was to investigate the battle in the Jenin refugee camp.

The U.N. secretary-general told the Security Council on Wednesday afternoon that he planned to disband the 20-member team because of disagreements with Israel over its makeup and mandate. Israel initially gave its consent to the investigation but later reneged, charging that Annan had deviated from the Security Council mandate and stacked the panel against Israel.

Israeli troops leave Arafat HQ

Israeli forces withdrew from Yasser Arafat's Ramallah compound. The move took place Wednesday as six Palestinians wanted by Israel arrived at a prison in Jericho, where they will be guarded by a U.S. and British team.

Arafat now is free to leave Ramallah, and is expected to travel soon to Egypt and Europe to drum up support for the Palestinian cause.

Jordan's Abdullah to visit D.C.

King Abdullah of Jordan is expected to visit the White House next week. Abdullah will meet with President Bush next Wednesday, the same day Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon is expected to leave Washington after several days of meetings.

Report: U.S., Saudis strike deal

The United States and Saudi Arabia reportedly reached an agreement on how to work toward ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Under the deal, reached while Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah visited President Bush in Texas, the United States will use its influence over Israel to prod it toward compromise, while the Saudis will do the same with Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat and the broader Arab world, The New York Times reported Wednesday.

Bush blasts anti-Semitism

President Bush lashed out at those responsible for a rash of anti-Semitic attacks that have taken place across Europe. "We reject the ancient evil of anti-Semitism," Bush said during a speech Tuesday, referring to "those who burn synagogues in France."

Colleges actively seeking Jews, but not all are happy about trend

By Julie Wiener

NEW YORK (JTA) — When an admissions officer from Vanderbilt University visited Andy Stone's high school in Albany, N.Y., last year, Stone said he didn't know if he wanted to attend a college with such a small Jewish population.

The recruiter quickly told him about Vanderbilt's Hillel — which next week will open its own building, replete with a kosher cafe — and told him that the Nashville, Tenn., university was "looking for more Jewish students."

Stone is now a freshman engineering student active in the campus Hillel. The Jewish community, which makes up less than 3 percent of Vanderbilt's student body, is so small and tight-knit that Jewish students joke, "You get three Jews here, you have a convention," he says.

But Vanderbilt is energetically trying to increase its Jewish population. According to a recent Wall Street Journal article, it's one of many U.S. universities trying to boost Jewish enrollment by encouraging the growth of Hillels and Jewish studies programs.

Once locked out of top universities by quotas, Jews now are being courted by some upwardly mobile institutions, both for their high SAT averages — second only to Unitarians — and for their reputations as academic stars.

Noting that most top-ranking American universities also have large numbers of Jewish students, Vanderbilt's chancellor, Gordon Gee, who is Mormon, told The Wall Street Journal that marketing to Jewish students is part of an "elite strategy" to boost Vanderbilt's status and academic rankings.

"Jewish students, by culture and by ability and by the very nature of their liveliness, make a university a much more habitable place in terms of intellectual life," Gee told the Journal.

The article pointed to several other colleges, particularly ones in remote locations, that have stepped up recruitment of Jews.

Richard Joel, president and international director of Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life, said university administrations are increasingly "culturally friendly" to Jews.

That friendliness stems from several factors. More Jews are making campus Jewish life a factor in their decision-making process, Joel said, and Hillel has in recent years gained a reputation for fostering vibrant campus Jewish life.

Small colleges, as well as those like Vanderbilt with small Jewish populations, have been particularly eager to work with Hillel, Joel said.

"A lot of smaller schools ask what they can do to assist us," he said. "Muhlenberg College now has a strong Jewish association with the active support of the college. Williams College is trying to do more, and I think it's healthy."

Most campus Hillels and their staffs are funded almost entirely by Jewish federations and individual Jewish philanthropists, though some receive free space or other support from the universities.

"Aside from bringing hundreds of thousands of dollars of free student services to universities," campus Hillels "also provide opportunities to Jewish and non-Jewish students," Joel said, pointing to community-wide programs and community service programs that Hillels offer.

Rabbi Brad Hirschfield, vice president of CLAL: The National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership, said the current trend toward colleges seeking Jews reflects the changes in Jews' position in American culture.

"When we were outsiders and were smart, we had to be kept out because we were

MIDEAST FOCUS

Palestinians die in Gaza clashes

At least three Palestinians were killed during clashes in the Gaza Strip. In one incident, Israeli troops killed two Palestinians and arrested four others who opened fire on the troops as they searched for arms-smuggling tunnels near Gaza's border with Egypt. Palestinians said a 2-year-old girl was also killed, but Israel said it had no knowledge of the death.

In another incident, the Israeli army said one Palestinian was killed and another arrested after terrorists detonated a bomb beside an army tank in the border area.

Terrorist groups intent on attacks

Palestinian terrorists are planning to carry out more attacks, according to Israel's army intelligence chief.

Briefing a Knesset committee, Maj. Gen. Aharon Ze'evi said Israel's military operation in the West Bank had strengthened the army's deterrent capability and weakened the terrorist infrastructure in Jenin and Nablus. He stressed that terrorist groups are eager to carry out attacks to prove they are still able to, but that after an initial wave, the attacks should subside as the groups struggle to rebuild.

Ze'evi said Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat's stature among Palestinians and Europeans grew during the operation, while it was damaged in the eyes of the United States, Jordan and Egypt.

Saudis support bombers' families

Saudi Arabia has been providing financial support for families of suicide bombers, according to documents seized by Israeli troops during the military operation in the West Bank.

The papers show that Saudi Arabia has transferred more than \$500,000 that was then used to give \$5,000 each to the families of suicide bombers, the Israeli daily Ma'ariv reported.

a threat," he said. "Now that we're insiders in America, the very same recognition of our abilities causes people to recruit us.

However, some view the stepped-up recruitment of Jews with suspicion.

Riv-Ellen Prell, an American studies professor at the University of Minnesota and author of "Fighting to Become Americans: Jews, Gender and the Anxiety of Assimilation," said she is "extremely uncomfortable" with Vanderbilt's strategy.

Arguing that SAT performance — on which Jews rank so highly — is more an indicator of affluence than intelligence, Prell said she is concerned that Vanderbilt is recruiting Jews primarily because of their affluence. She also questioned whether the school, once known for being unfriendly to Jews and blacks, should bolster its diversity by singling out Jews, rather than striving to recruit a full range of minorities.

One Jewish academic who did not want to be identified recalled a recent discussion at another Southern university that was considering expanding its Judaic studies program. According to the academic, several administrators explicitly stated that they wanted more Jewish students because Jews are less likely to need financial aid and are more likely to make financial contributions to the school after they graduate.

"The people at the development office made it clear that their joy in recruiting Jewish students had everything to do with fund raising," the academic said.

If Jews are being targeted, however, the effect is not being felt at all high schools with large Jewish populations.

Rabbi Philip Field, head of Akiba Hebrew Academy, a community Jewish day high school in suburban Philadelphia, said college admissions have become even more challenging for his students in recent years.

Akiba regularly sends large numbers of graduates to Ivy League and other elite schools, but the admissions process has become more competitive and selective.

Some campus Hillels at universities with small Jewish populations have promoted their schools to Akiba, but the university admissions offices have not made any special push. "We have not found that doors have opened for students" with weaker academic records, Field said. □

South African chief rabbi blasts comments from Jewish minister

By Michael Belling

CAPE TOWN (JTA) — South Africa's chief rabbi has accused a Jewish Cabinet minister of giving a green light to anti-Semitism in South Africa.

Cyril Harris particularly criticized Ronnie Kasrils for playing a prominent role at an anti-Israel rally in Durban on Holocaust Remembrance Day, standing near a banner reading "Zionism is Nazism."

"For a Jew to stand up and say Zionism is Nazism is to give credence to the deeply anti-Semitic attitude that there is no room for a Jewish nation among the nations of the world," Harris said.

Harris made the accusations against Kasrils, South Africa's minister of water affairs, in a recent news conference following a debate between the two that was televised throughout South Africa.

The debate was conducted in two separate interviews.

Speaking first, Kasrils said the present Israeli campaign was "a mad gamble," whose whole purpose was to drive the Palestinians out of the Holy Land.

Israel's right to exist should be recognized, but Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon "is the culprit and is the war criminal," Kasrils said.

Last October, Kasrils founded Not in My Name, for "South Africans of Jewish descent" to express their support for the Palestinian cause.

He also compared Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat to the leaders of South Africa's struggle against apartheid.

Harris replied there is no peace in the Holy Land because the Palestinians and their Arab neighbors had not accepted the United Nations 1947 partition resolution.

He accused Kasrils of making a "totally false" comparison between the situation in the Middle East and the apartheid era in South Africa, arguing Israel was now in the "occupied territories" because it had been attacked in 1967. □



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JEWISH WORLD

1 million: No to Le Pen

Up to 1 million people demonstrated peacefully throughout France on Wednesday against Jean-Marie Le Pen. In Paris alone, at least 400,000 turned out on May Day to call on voters to reject Le Pen's presidential bid when runoff elections are held Sunday.

More than 50,000 people gathered in the city of Grenoble, while 45,000 demonstrated in Bordeaux, police said.

The anti-Le Pen rallies came after the far-right leader held a Paris demonstration, estimated by police at between 10,000 to 12,000, to honor his National Front Party's heroine, Joan of Arc.

Israel resolutions may reach floor

Resolutions supporting Israel may be voted on this week by both houses of the U.S. Congress.

The nonbinding statements hold Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat responsible for Palestinian terror attacks and call for additional U.S. aid to Israel.

Aliyah fair draws crowd

Some 4,500 people attended an aliyah fair hosted by the Jewish Agency for Israel in France.

The Jewish Agency said that during the fair in Marseille, some 700 people filled out the questionnaire that is the first step of the aliyah process, and 40 families asked to emigrate immediately.

U.S. radio shows air from Israel

John Batchelor of WABC in New York is airing his show from Israel this week as part of an initiative by the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations to boost Israel's image.

Other talk-show hosts will be airing their shows in upcoming weeks as part of "American Voices in Israel."

The hosts will meet with Israeli officials and visit important historic sites. Radio was chosen because of its ability to influence the opinions of millions of listeners daily, said Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents.

Group to help Argentine Jews

The American Jewish Committee is planning to help Argentina's Jewish community. After a delegation visited Argentina last week, leaders of the AJCommittee are planning to meet this week in the United States to discuss ways to help Argentine Jewish schools.

"We know different organizations are helping in education. But there is more help needed, and we would like to do our small bit and be as helpful as we can," AJCommittee consultant Santiago Kovadloff told JTA.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

Hadassah tries to avert expulsion of Israeli doctors from world body

By Rachel Pomerance

NEW YORK (JTA) — The threat of an anti-Israel resolution looms over the convention of another world body this week.

A delegation at the World Medical Association may try to introduce a resolution to expel its member group, the Israel Medical Association, according to Hadassah: The Women's Zionist Organization of America.

Hadassah officials believe the resolution would blame Israeli doctors for not opposing Israel's recent military operation in the West Bank.

The conference, which begins Thursday, comes just a week after the U.N. Commission on Human Rights wrapped up its annual six-week meeting in Geneva on Friday.

That meeting blasted Israel in harsher and more numerous resolutions than ever before, according to Jewish observers.

In an effort to pre-empt any action against the Israel Medical Association, Hadassah is waging a campaign to defend the Israeli doctors, and says an anti-Israel resolution at the WMA conference would only reflect anti-Semitism.

Based in a French town just outside Geneva, the WMA is a non-governmental organization that works closely with the United Nations, but operates as an independent consortium of national medical associations.

The group denies any motion to expel the IMA on its Web site, calling the subject a "hoax" that has elicited 20,000 e-mail protests. Spokesman Nigel Duncan said the story was born in a Jerusalem Post article that he called "completely untrue."

"What is being discussed," he said, is a "proposed resolution on the assurance of medical and health services during the armed conflict between Israelis and Palestinians."

The WMA may not have been informed of the resolution, but calling the issue a hoax just avoids the issue, said Amy Goldstein, director of Israel, Zionist and international affairs for Hadassah. The American Medical Association already has pledged to help defeat such a resolution, she added.

For its part, the IMA prepared a position paper defending itself and calling on the Israeli army to balance the provision of medical services with the need for security.

Israeli physicians have "repeatedly balanced treatment of the victims with that of the perpetrators," said Bonnie Lipton, Hadassah's president.

Attacks on Israeli doctors smack of "institutional anti-Semitism, and are a continuation of the anti-Israel campaign currently being waged at the U.N. and other world bodies," Lipton said.

Indeed, that was the case at the Human Rights Commission, according to Andrew Srulevitch, executive director of U.N. Watch, a Geneva-based group associated with the American Jewish Committee.

In summarizing this year's commission, he said it hearkened back to the U.N. World Conference on Racism in Durban, South Africa, last year, which has become a codeword in Jewish circles for blatant anti-Semitism.

"It became focused almost exclusively on the Arab-Israeli conflict," Srulevitch said, estimating that fully one-third of the commission's time was devoted to the subject.

Resolutions condemning Iran, Zimbabwe and Chechnya for human rights abuses were all defeated. The commission, which typically passes five anti-Israel resolutions at its annual gatherings, this year issued eight.

This time, the language on the human rights violations was altered to refer to a previous U.N. resolution on the right to resist occupation "by all available means, including armed struggle."

That reads like a "green light" for terror, according to Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League.

Still, pro-Israel advocates counted a small victory as the United States regained a seat it lost last year for the first time since the commission's founding in 1947. □

NEWS ANALYSIS

Israel finds that world backing is a fleeting thing for Jewish state*By Leslie Susser*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — How fleeting is the world's fancy.

Less than two years ago, Israel seemed to be riding a wave of international popularity.

After years of international criticism, Israel had managed to regain the moral high ground in its struggle with the Arab world by withdrawing from southern Lebanon and making a sweeping peace offer that had "unmasked" Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat as an insincere peace partner.

Now, Israel's military success in its recent Operation Protective Wall has left it more internationally isolated than at any time since the 1982 Lebanon War.

Israel's quarrel with the United Nations over a fact-finding team seeking to investigate the battle in the Jenin refugee camp — a team whose arrival was in doubt this week — is a measure of mutual mistrust. And the fact that the team was set up in the first place shows just how isolated Israel has become.

The speed with which Israel's diplomatic position has collapsed offers a sobering lesson about the international reality — and raises serious questions for Israeli leaders who formulate policy with an eye to the international repercussions.

Just 21 months ago, it seemed that then-Prime Minister Ehud Barak had removed the twin causes of years of international reproach — Israel's occupation of a security zone in southern Lebanon and its denial of Palestinian self-determination in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. How, in less than two years, has Israel once again become an international pariah?

In May 2000, Barak pulled Israeli forces in Lebanon back to the U.N.-certified border. In July, at the Camp David summit, he offered the Palestinians a state in Gaza and virtually all of the West Bank, with eastern Jerusalem as its capital.

The Palestinians said no, and launched a terrorist campaign against Israel with no clear political agenda.

Yet it is Israel that finds itself denounced and isolated in much of the world, with the Europeans considering economic sanctions, the United Nations voting to send a mission to probe Israel's moral conduct and the international community contemplating the dispatch of armed forces to impose a peace. In effect, Israel's effort to court world opinion has backfired dramatically.

After years of U.N. hostility toward Israel — including a 1975 resolution denigrating Zionism as racism — Barak carefully won U.N. confirmation that Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon was complete to the last inch.

That, Barak believed, would form the basis of Israel's new deterrent policy against Syria, Lebanon and Hezbollah: If they violated the internationally recognized border, Israel would have the world's backing for tough retaliatory measures.

Israel's hopes for fair treatment have been dashed, however: The international community has been largely silent as Hezbollah has continued to stage cross-border attacks and has kidnapped and killed Israeli soldiers — yet Israeli retaliation has been condemned for escalating the situation.

Barak also believed he had gained the moral high ground in the conflict with the Palestinians by making an unprecedentedly generous peace offer, which was rejected and repaid with violence.

Barak was sure the world would see who wanted peace and

who didn't, but it didn't work that way: Ironically, by resorting to terror, Arafat was able to recapture the moral high ground. Palestinian violence seemed to imply a legitimate and desperate struggle for national liberation, no matter what Israel had offered and Arafat rejected.

When the Israeli army took counter-measures, the perception around the world was of the Israeli Goliath persecuting the Palestinian David.

Yet the sea change in international opinion came with the election of Ariel Sharon as prime minister in February 2001. Almost immediately there were moves to initiate a lawsuit against Sharon for his alleged role in the 1982 massacre of Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps by Maronite Christian forces, when Sharon was Israel's defense minister.

The subliminal message from Sharon's adversaries was that Israel was now a "war criminal."

Israel's position was further undermined when Sharon made it clear that he would not go as far as Barak to placate the Palestinians. Israel could now be portrayed as power-driven, unwilling to compromise and willing to use force to maintain its occupation.

There also was an inherent contradiction in Sharon's strategy against the intifada: His initial tactic was to exert as much diplomatic and military pressure as he could on Arafat to get him to stop the violence. But the more military pressure Israel exerted, the more international criticism it drew. Diplomatic pressure on Arafat dissipated, as many argued that he couldn't be expected to meet his anti-terror commitments when his regime itself seemed to be under Israeli attack.

Israel received some international sympathy when it restrained itself in the face of terrorist attacks, but at the untenable cost of ever-increasing civilian casualties.

After the terror attacks of Sept. 11, America tends to see the conflict in terms of Israel struggling for survival against nihilistic terror. Europe, under the weight of a heady combination of Holocaust guilt, colonial history and acute sensitivity to individual rights, tends to see Israel using force to maintain occupation.

The Palestinians have been able to exploit their portrayal of Israel as a cruel occupying power to the hilt — and Israeli officials charge that the United Nations has been a willing accomplice.

Literature and rhetoric at the U.N.-sponsored World Conference Against Racism in South Africa last summer was reminiscent of the 1975 resolution denigrating Zionism as racism — and even of the Nazis' anti-Semitic propaganda.

According to Israel's deputy foreign minister, Rabbi Michael Melchior, it is not only Israel's presence in the West Bank and Gaza Strip that is being delegitimized, but the Jewish state's very right to exist. That feeling now underlies some of the virulently anti-Israel — and occasionally anti-Semitic — coverage in the European media.

Israeli officials are convinced that the Jenin fact-finding team, if it does come, will not give them a fair hearing. They point to other U.N. missions in the last two years that criticized Israel, while making virtually no mention of the Palestinian role in the crisis.

Can Israel do anything to turn the tide?

Barak thinks it can. He argues that Sharon now must put forward a convincing peace plan, or "face the risk of losing legitimacy." Barak advocates dismantling remote settlements and withdrawing unilaterally from more than 80 percent of the West Bank and Gaza Strip in order to regain the moral high ground. □

(Leslie Susser is the diplomatic correspondent for the Jerusalem Report.)