



Daily News Bulletin

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85th Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Israeli killed in ambush

An Israeli was killed and his brother wounded in a Palestinian attack Tuesday on a West Bank road.

Palestinian gunmen ambushed the brothers' car as it was traveling between the settlements of Beit El and Ofra. Medics unsuccessfully tried to resuscitate one of the brothers. The second was evacuated to a Jerusalem hospital.

Hamas terrorist arrested in Jenin

Israeli troops arrested a Hamas military leader in Jenin. Large numbers of Israeli soldiers briefly entered the West Bank city hours after a suicide bomber killed an 18-month-old girl and her grandmother in Petach Tikvah on Monday night.

Eight other Palestinians were detained during Israeli search-and-arrest operations around Hebron, Bethlehem, Kalkilya and Jerusalem.

Bush condemns bombing

President Bush condemned Monday's suicide bombing in Petach Tikvah. "We strongly deplore and condemn terrorist violence. There are people who don't want peace and therefore they are willing to kill to make sure we don't have peace," he said Tuesday during a visit to Italy. The attack killed two Israelis and wounded dozens of others.

A video received by Reuters indicated that Jibril Titi, 17, carried out the attack to avenge the killing of his cousin, a suspected terrorist killed last week by Israeli forces in the Balata refugee camp near Nablus.

Jews, Christians unite for Israel

An interfaith coalition is mobilizing Christian support for Israel.

Ralph Reed, a leading Christian activist, and Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein, president of the International Fellowship for Christians and Jews, launched the "Stand for Israel" campaign on Tuesday. As part of the program, churches will be asked to set aside the Sunday that coincides with Rosh Hashanah this year as a day of prayer for Israel.

In addition, Christian leaders will meet with Israeli representatives in Washington to learn how to lobby effectively for the Jewish state.

"Jews are only now beginning to understand the depth of support they have among conservative Christians," Eckstein said.

Student activists learn advocacy in Hillel push to be more proactive

By Jessica Steinberg

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Kfir Mordechay, a wiry San Francisco State sophomore with a sliver of a goatee on his chin, appears unruffled when discussing why anti-Israel bias has erupted on his campus.

"I think being pro-Palestinian is a leftist viewpoint. It's almost automatic at our school," he said, bouncing a blue handball on the hot Jerusalem pavement. "But the last month of demonstrations didn't help their cause."

At San Francisco State, a pro-Israel rally earlier this month turned rough as pro-Palestinian protestors hurled anti-Semitic epithets and threatened Jewish students, who needed police protection. "There's a strong anti-war movement on campus," explained Nathaniel Tishman, a junior at San Francisco State. "And anti-war rallying leads to pro-Palestinian rallying."

In response to rising anti-Semitic and anti-Israel incidents this spring on universities across the United States, the Jewish Agency for Israel and Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life sponsored an advocacy training mission in Israel.

Mordechay and Tishman were among more than 350 Jewish student leaders on the five-day mission, which included meetings with political figures and briefings from academics, journalists and military personnel.

The mission is just one aspect of Hillel's more proactive role in advocating for Israel on campus.

As part of the "Wherever We Stand, We Stand With Israel" campaign, Hillel organized 65 buses to bring students to Washington for the Israel solidarity rally in April, placed ads in campus newspapers and put together resource kits for campuses marked by anti-Israel activity.

The kits include a banner, 1,000 stickers, 400 key chains, Israeli and American flags, books and fact sheets.

The organization's new model also includes cooperative efforts and information sharing with other pro-Israel organizations, such as the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, the Zionist Organization of America's campus group and Hadassah's Hamagshimim.

"If we can be more proactive, we can accomplish a lot more," said Dikla Tuchman, an activist at San Francisco State.

At the end of the mission in Israel, 80 students will remain for two more weeks to participate in an intensive media and advocacy training retreat at Tel Aviv University's Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies.

The students each paid \$250 for the mission, \$180 of which will come from their local Jewish federation's Israel Emergency Campaign.

"I'm here to do more listening than talking," Mordechay said. "I'm here to expose my mind."

Not every campus has experienced such extreme anti-Israel bias and anti-Semitism as has San Francisco State. Then again, some campuses were better prepared than others.

At the University of Michigan, Jewish students already had shifted last fall from a "reactive to a proactive model" after the Sept. 11 terror attacks, said Eric Bukstein, 21, a Michigan senior.

During the fall semester, Jewish student activists at Michigan received weekly training in advocacy, learning how to take a big-picture look at the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. "We weren't just handing out copies of 'Myths and Facts,'" said Bukstein,

MIDEAST FOCUS

U.S. may advance timetable

The Bush administration may come up with a timetable for negotiating an Israeli-Palestinian peace accord.

Setting a timetable would represent a shift for President Bush, who until now has said it is up to the parties themselves to resolve the conflict.

"We're talking about how to chart the way forward, and when we have something to say publicly, we will," a U.S. official traveling with Bush in Italy said Tuesday. "The idea is, at some point, to lay out how we move the way forward to a political settlement."

Peres: Barghouti next leader

Palestinian militia leader Marwan Barghouti may be the next Palestinian leader, Israel's foreign minister predicted.

Addressing students Tuesday in Eilat, Shimon Peres said Barghouti would not necessarily be any better from Israel's perspective than Yasser Arafat has been, Israel Radio reported. Nabbed during Israel's recent military campaign in the West Bank, Barghouti is currently in an Israeli jail.

Report: Arafat to trim Cabinet

Yasser Arafat reportedly promised to reform his government within 10 days.

The Palestinian Al-Ayyam newspaper said the reforms would include reducing the number of Cabinet posts from 34 to 20, Israel Radio reported. The Palestinian Authority Cabinet released a statement Monday saying elections for the Palestinian legislative council and the presidency may be held in December.

Barak advisers could be charged

Israeli police recommended filing charges against four advisers to former Prime Minister Ehud Barak for alleged campaign finance violations dating back to 1999.

referring to a pro-Israel paperback guide to the Arab-Israeli conflict. "We brought in a debate coach and a media consultant."

Arab students at Michigan also were geared for action, sending out a strong, nuanced message that carefully avoided anti-Semitic references.

"The Palestinian voice at Michigan is incredibly bright," Bukstein said. "If they write an editorial, we shoot one back. But we're trying to stay away from counter-rallies."

At George Washington University in Washington, a strong Jewish presence on campus and a supportive faculty staved off any serious anti-Israel incidents.

"We've been lucky," said Mosheh Oinounou, a Hillel activist who also is managing editor of the G.W. Hatchet, the school's biweekly paper. "We've been able to preempt with a strong presence on campus."

At the beginning of the year, Jewish students at George Washington realized there was a wellspring of support for Israel on campus; the only question was how to tap into it.

The school also has a large number of foreign Arab students, most of whom preferred to keep a low profile after Sept. 11. Much of the pro-Palestinian activity at George Washington thus fell to Arab Americans, who kept up a steady beat of rallies and editorials.

"I learned to separate my Israel leanings from my role at the newspaper," said Oinounou.

"I wanted to keep the coverage balanced, unlike many other college newspapers, which have an agenda."

But it can be tough to stick to the facts when it appears that the other side is more interested in posturing.

At Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, most of the Palestinian supporters seem to be political science students who embarked on an "angry P.R. campaign," student Dan Rosenfeld reported.

"We don't do mock suicide bombings to mimic their mock military incursions," Rosenfeld said. "We organize rallies for peace to keep the dialogue going."

At San Francisco State, a poster on campus accused Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon of slaughtering Palestinian children according to Jewish rites.

The pro-Israel activists avoid such incendiary messages, hewing to a tacit understanding that pro-Israel doesn't mean anti-Palestinian.

"In our rallies, you never hear anything about hating Palestinians," Tishman said.

Students say the anti-Israel and anti-Semitic invective has provided one benefit: There seems to be a shift in public perceptions of the situation.

"I talk to people on campus, and they don't like the pro-Palestinian movement," Tuchman said. "We're grateful they're taking note."

"Propaganda hurt the Palestinians in the long run," Mordechai agreed.

What the pro-Palestinian student activists do seem to have is a strategic network that gets their message out quickly and efficiently to campuses across the country.

"They're on each other's listservs," Tuchman said, referring to e-mail lists. "They're so networked."

In many ways, the goal of this week's mission in Israel is to knit the community of Jewish activists more tightly together.

The plan is to share, coordinate and unify the Jewish response to anti-Israel and anti-Semitic events on campus.

"We want to hear what's happening on other campuses," Tuchman said. "We're all in the same situation." □

Jewish extremists charged

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Three Israeli extremists were charged with attempting to carry out a terrorist attack on an Arab girls' school in eastern Jerusalem.

Yarden Morag, Shlomi Dvir and Ofer Gamliel, all residents of the settlement of Bat Ayin, are suspected of belonging to a Jewish terrorist cell. A leader of the outlawed Kach movement, Noam Federman, was charged Monday with supplying the cell with explosives.

A fifth Israeli is expected to be indicted in coming days. □



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JEWISH WORLD

Russian rabbi's son beaten

The son of a Russian rabbi was beaten while on his way to morning prayers in Moscow's Choral Synagogue.

Yakov Vershubsky, who was wearing a yarmulke, was attacked by skinheads Tuesday morning, according to the NCSJ.

Vershubsky, whose father, Nosson, is a rabbi in the city of Voronezh, fought back and the assailants fled. Vershubsky, 16, was treated for a broken nose at a local hospital.

Rabbi leads Levy prayer

A rabbi addressed mourners at Chandra Levy's memorial service.

Rabbi Paul Gordon led a prayer for the more than 1,000 mourners who attended Tuesday's service in California for Levy, the former government intern whose remains were found last week in a park in Washington, 13 months after she disappeared.

On Tuesday, authorities in Washington announced that Levy's death had been classified as a homicide, but that the cause of death could not be determined.

Illinois man loses citizenship

A U.S. court revoked the citizenship of an Illinois man for participating in Nazi crimes.

The U.S. Department of Justice charged that Peter John Bernes, 79, had participated in the wartime massacre of Jews in Lithuania.

Bernes left the United States for Lithuania last January and did not respond to the complaint against him.

Booby-trapped sign to be probed

Russian prosecutors said they plan to investigate who rigged explosives to an anti-Semitic sign placed on a highway near Moscow.

Prosecutor General Vladimir Ustinov condemned the incident and said he would head the investigation.

A woman was severely burned and lost an eye when she stopped her car Monday and tried to take down the sign, which read "Death to Jews." Rabbi Berel Lazar, one of Russia's two chief rabbis, called the incident a terrorist attack.

Group ends Israel mission

More than 100 members of the American Jewish Committee ended a three-day mission to Israel.

During their mission, which ended Tuesday, members of the delegation met with Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, President Moshe Katsav, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert. Participants also met with intelligence experts and new immigrants.

Official in London mayor's office lashes out at pro-Israel demonstration

By Claire Levy

LONDON (JTA) — A member of the London Mayor's Office has condemned the recent Israel solidarity rally held here earlier this month.

Kumar Murshid, who chairs the London Muslim Coalition in addition to serving in the mayor's Advisory Cabinet, claimed in a news release that the Jewish community's May 6 rally, which drew some 50,000 people, was a show of support for "the massacre of innocent children, women and civilians."

He went on to describe the rally as an "assembly of hatred which poses a major threat to community relations."

Murshid signed the statement giving his address as the Greater London Authority, another term for London Mayor Ken Livingstone's government.

A spokesperson for the authority released a response from the mayor denying any prior knowledge of Murshid's statement.

"Ken Livingstone neither endorses nor condones the statement and would like to underline that Trafalgar Square — the site of the pro-Israel rally — "comes under his control, and he gave permission for the rally to take place," the spokesperson said.

Asked if the mayor would take any action concerning Murshid, the spokesperson declined to comment.

The Board of Deputies, the umbrella organization that represents most British Jews, wrote to Livingstone, asking him to disassociate himself from statements like Murshid's.

The board's president, Jo Wagerman, emphasized that the message of the rally was to "stop the terror and to support peace."

She also wrote that to suggest the gathering incited racial hatred was "grossly insulting for those who attended and organized the event."

Trevor Phillips, chair of the London Assembly, the body that oversees the Mayor's Office, welcomed Livingstone's response.

"It is a traditional right of Londoners to demonstrate in support of their views. This does not imply that the mayor or assembly take a position in support of, or against, any particular cause," Phillips said.

Murshid "is free to express his own views, but they should not be attributed to the assembly.

Condemning the Israeli solidarity rally earlier this month is not something which the assembly would or should do."

Among those addressing the May 6 rally were former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Britain's chief rabbi, Jonathan Sacks.

Approximately 350 buses brought tens of thousands of Jews from all over Britain, including thousands of students and members of youth groups.

Sacks called the turnout the greatest gathering in the history of British Jewry.

A small but noisy pro-Palestinian demonstration was held nearby, with protesters carrying banners supporting the intifada and denouncing the "Zionist state."

Two people at the counterdemonstration, which drew about 300 people, were arrested for disturbing the peace. □

34th Zionist Congress planned

NEW YORK (JTA) — The 34th Zionist Congress is slated to convene in Jerusalem on June 17-20.

Some 750 delegates from Israel and abroad are expected to take part.

For the first time since the First Zionist Congress was convened by Theodor Herzl in Basel, Switzerland, in 1897, 25 percent of the delegates will be below the age of 30, organizers said.

In addition to the delegates and some 1,200 alternates, an additional 300 Zionist activists will come as observers.

This year's congress will stress the theme of Jewish solidarity with Israel. □

NEWS ANALYSIS

More Israelis asking the question: Do fences make good neighbors?

By Leslie Susser

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israel may soon become a testing ground for the proposition that good fences make good neighbors.

As the Palestinians resume the pace and ferocity of their terror onslaught, Israelis increasingly are demanding that their government build a fence between Israel and the West Bank that would keep Palestinians out. Such a barrier is already springing up in some parts of the country, including in Jerusalem.

Despite the broad appeal of the idea, questions are being raised as to whether a fence really would solve Israel's security problems — and whether it would justify the expected diplomatic fallout if Israel sets a de facto border with the Palestinians.

The push for a fence is gaining impetus with each passing day and each new terror attack.

Many Israelis, including reserve soldiers called up for Operation Protective Wall and those deployed along Israel's border with the West Bank, believe that only a fence can stop the bombers.

Israeli intelligence sources seem to bear this out.

They note that the bombers plan everything in meticulous detail, except transport from the West Bank to their targets in Israel proper.

That's because of the ease with which bombers can steal into Israel and then simply hail a taxi to their chosen attack site.

For example, the Palestinian city of Jenin and its refugee camp, from which nearly 30 suicide bombers have come during the Palestinian intifada, is just four miles from a virtually unguarded border. It is just a few miles more from there to the main highway leading from Tel Aviv through Hadera, to Israeli Arab areas and to Afula and Tiberias.

The heads of Israeli regional councils near Jenin and other Palestinian cities along the border currently feel so vulnerable that they are threatening to build a fence themselves.

"If the government won't do it, we, the regional council heads, will," says Dani Attar, head of the Gilboa Regional Council, which represents an area near Jenin.

"We have the legal authority to grant permits for building fences. All we need is the money."

Building a fence similar to those along the Lebanese and Jordanian borders would cost about \$1 million per kilometer, or about \$350 million total, Attar estimates.

As for the efficacy of the fence, Attar points out that the Gaza Strip is fenced, and few if any suicide bombers have been able to get through from the strip — though the topography of the West Bank would make it much more difficult to enclose than the Gaza Strip.

His plan is for each regional council to build its own fence along the border, fencing off the entire West Bank roughly along the pre-Six Day War border known as the Green Line.

After initially opposing the fence idea, Defense Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer now is trying to pre-empt the regional council heads. He has set up a special "seam-area administration" charged with erecting a fence and was presenting a plan to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon this week.

Critics, however, say that Ben-Eliezer intends to build only 50

miles of fence. That will be virtually useless, Attar says. The terrorists simply will circumvent the fenced-off areas and enter via open areas.

One way or another, the idea is to cut the Palestinians off from Israel proper, thus putting an end to Palestinian terror.

Or so the theory goes. Skeptics, however, note several shortcomings.

For one thing, Palestinians could fire mortars or rockets over the fence. In addition, it's unclear what message a fence would send to the Arab world or the larger international community.

Israeli officials say the location of a fence would be determined solely by geographic factors, but many believe it would constitute a de facto border between Israel and a future Palestinian state that would assume more permanence over time.

Much would depend on where Israel positions the fence.

If it corresponds to the Green Line, the dilemma arises over whether to protect or dismantle Jewish settlements on the other side. If the fence runs inside the West Bank and around most of the settlements, the international community might well dismiss the new line as an Israeli land grab and support Palestinian violence against it.

In contrast, many on the right in Israel worry that such a demarcation would cut Israel off from land they believe should be part of the state.

In addition, if Israel acts unilaterally to erect a fence, some worry that the Palestinians would react by unilaterally declaring a state, circumventing the restrictions on their sovereignty that likely would result from an agreement with Israel.

That would include limits on the size of the Palestinians' armed forces, the nature of their weaponry and the availability of their air space to Israeli planes in case of threat.

Given the difficulties, what seems to be happening in lieu of a clear government decision is a creeping, ad hoc — and largely ineffective — fence- and wall-building by default along the Green Line.

Some of the fence-building is being done by the government, some by regional councils and some by the border villages themselves. But the security problem masks a deeper issue that many believe would be resolved by a fence — the demographic "time bomb."

There now are about 9 million people between the Jordan River and Mediterranean Sea, including 5 million Jews and 4 million Arabs. Within the next decade, there is likely to be an Arab majority.

Unless Israel reaches a political agreement to separate from the Palestinians by then, the Palestinians might well resurrect their old demand for a single, binational state, in which they would be the majority. Chances for a two-state solution, one predominantly Jewish and the other Palestinian, would evaporate.

The irony is that the Oslo process, which gave Israel an unprecedented opening to what had been a monolithically hostile Arab world, could end with Israel physically closing itself off from the Arab world behind an electrified fence and a security wall.

After the Six-Day War, the peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan and the Oslo accords with the Palestinians, many Israelis felt they had broken the Arab siege and could breathe more freely.

Soon, if pinned between the sea on one side and a fence against hostile neighbors on the other, they may feel a deeper sense of claustrophobia than ever. Unless, one day, good fences do indeed make good neighbors. □