



# Daily News Bulletin

Vol. 80, No. 148

Thursday, August 8, 2002

85th Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### 'Gaza First' plan OK'd by P.A.

The Palestinian Cabinet gave preliminary approval Wednesday to an Israeli plan for a troop withdrawal from some areas of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Under the plan, Israeli soldiers would withdraw from parts of Gaza and the West Bank city of Bethlehem in exchange for Palestinian guarantees that no attacks would be launched from these areas. Further withdrawals would take place if peace holds in these first areas.

Defense Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer presented the "Gaza First" plan during a meeting with Palestinian officials earlier in the week. The development came as Palestinian officials left for talks with Secretary of State Colin Powell in Washington.

### Rumsfeld: Israel should be wary

Israel should be wary of turning over land to Palestinian leaders it can't trust, U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld said.

"If you have a country that's a sliver and you can see three sides of it from a high hotel building, you've got to be careful what you give away and to whom you give it," Rumsfeld said Tuesday in a question-and-answer session with Pentagon employees.

"If you're giving it to an entity that has some track record, that has a degree of accountability, that has the ability to enforce security," that's "one thing. If you're making a deal and yielding territory to an entity that cannot or will not do that, and there is no question but that the Palestinian Authority have been involved with terrorist activities, so that makes it a difficult interlocutor."

### Israeli troops kill 6 Palestinians

Israeli forces killed at least six Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip on Wednesday.

Soldiers killed four Palestinian gunmen during a clash in the West Bank city of Tulkarm. Palestinian residents said one of those killed was a local militia leader. In the Gaza Strip, an Israeli sniper killed Hussam Hamdan, 27, a senior Hamas member.

REMINDER: The JTA DAILY NEWS BULLETIN will not be published Friday, Aug. 9

## BEHIND THE HEADLINES

### Hebrew U. experience provided inspiration for many American Jews

By Joe Berkofsky

NEW YORK (JTA) —When a Hamas bomb killed seven people at Hebrew University last week, Michelle Richmond sent her former colleagues at MSNBC a message.

Richmond, now a senior producer at Court TV, had seen a CNN news report describing the campus as disputed territory and told her friends at MSNBC's "The News With Brian Williams" what she could about the campus setting and its history.

In the spring of 1987, Richmond spent part of her junior year at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, studying international relations and Israeli politics.

Ever since, she said this week, she's done what she can to educate her media colleagues about media balance in covering Israel.

Like thousands of Americans who have spent a semester or a year abroad at Hebrew University or at other Israeli universities, Richmond feels the experience changed her life.

She has remained friends with many Hebrew University colleagues, and to this day "Israel is always at the forefront of my thoughts."

For many, Hebrew University marked a turning point in their lives, providing the inspiration for careers as rabbis, Jewish educators and communal leaders.

But with last week's attack at the Frank Sinatra cafeteria striking many American Jews particularly hard, even after nearly two years of Palestinian violence, fewer young American Jews are following in Richmond's footsteps.

All of the Israeli universities' overseas programs report a precipitous drop in enrollment over the past few two years.

While some students persevere — 17 departed for Ben-Gurion University's overseas program on Tuesday — most who might have ordinarily participated in such programs are choosing other options these days.

Steven Cohen, a professor at the Melton Centre at Hebrew University, calls this a "lost Jewish generation."

"The people who we lost and the people who will not show up in Israel are, frankly, the most idealistic, most committed to Israel, most dedicated to Jewish life," Cohen said.

"We're now going to experience a lost Jewish generation that won't have the benefit of a Jewish education with others of their kind, and this will be with us for the next 50 years."

Already two theories about this problem are emerging, Cohen said. "One is that we've already hit rock-bottom in terms of the numbers of students who have come here, knowing full well the risks and all the dangers associated with living in Israel," he said.

"The other theory is that the cafeteria bombing is an element of danger that these students hadn't anticipated. Some may leave, some who enrolled may not show up and those who applied for next year may be dissuaded from coming."

At this point, it remains unclear whether the ongoing Mideast strife will continue to hurt Hebrew University and other overseas programs in Israel, Cohen said.

Currently there are 126 American students at Hebrew University's Rothberg International School.

A decade ago, more than 1,000 participated each year. That program has been the largest of the Israeli-based university programs.

Regardless of the numbers, every student who stays home represents someone who has missed an experience many American Jews considered central to their lives. Lisa

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Israel wary of 'mega-attack'

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon is holding meetings to discuss Israeli preparedness for a possible "mega-attack." The discussions are part of ongoing deliberations and study tours Sharon participated in this week to formulate a national security policy for the near future, the paper said.

### Bomb blows up fuel truck

A bomb blew up a gasoline truck in the central Israeli city of Rishon le-Zion on Wednesday, lightly wounding the driver.

Police said it was not immediately clear whether terrorists were behind the bombing of the tanker.

### 2 Israeli Arab women arrested

Israeli police arrested two young Israeli Arab women who allegedly got off a bus, but did not inform anyone else, after a suicide bomber warned them of an impending attack. The bomber set off the explosion Sunday 20 minutes after the two students got off near the northern Israel town of Safed.

### Hamas urged to halt attacks

A leading human rights group urged Hamas and other Palestinian terror group to halt attacks on Israelis. "There is no justification ever for attacking civilians," Human Rights Watch said in a letter to Sheik Ahmed Yassin, the spiritual leader of Hamas. "International humanitarian law explicitly prohibits reprisals against civilians."

### Execution at Arafat HQ

A Palestinian firing squad executed a convicted killer and rapist in the courtyard of Yasser Arafat's Ramallah compound. Wednesday's execution took place as Palestinian Cabinet ministers were arriving for a meeting. Reporters covering the Cabinet heard the burst of gunshots, The Associated Press reported.



## Daily News Bulletin

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JTA DAILY NEWS BULLETIN is published five days a week, except holidays, by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency Inc., 330 Seventh Ave., New York, N.Y. 10001-5010. For information about how to subscribe by e-mail, fax or regular mail, call (212) 643-1890, or visit our Web site at [www.jta.org](http://www.jta.org).  
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Magnas, a descendant of Hebrew University founder Rabbi Judah Magnes and president of the greater New York chapter of the Hebrew University Alumni Association, calls her year abroad in 1986-1987 crucial.

Magnas had been to Israel as a child with her parents, and found herself in the Jewish state in the years following its war in Lebanon, when the first Palestinian uprising broke out.

It was the first time she was living on her own, and Magnas dove into courses she couldn't find at her U.S. college — biblical archaeology; Islamic civilization; oil and politics.

She made friends with Jews, Christians, Muslims and Greek Orthodox students, with whom she would engage in an "ongoing dialogue" about Israel, their home countries and their travel plans.

As one of the few modern Orthodox women on campus who came from the world of Jewish day schools, the experience "made me feel like I was really in the world," she recalled.

And as a fluent Hebrew speaker, she studied the Israeli media and discovered a new take on the Mideast conflict.

"It opened my eyes," she said.

After working in the banking industry, Magnas decided to act on her passions about the media, and is now executive producer of a feature film in the works about "liberal media bias" that is called "Amnesia Jam."

Just a few years after Magnas attended Hebrew University, the Gulf War broke out.

That year, 1990-1991, was when Paul Arberman attended Hebrew University.

In the years since, Arberman earned a degree in government from Wesleyan University, worked for then-Rep. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.), spent another year in Israel — and made aliyah three years ago.

Arberman is due to be ordained this December as a Conservative rabbi after attending the Jewish Theological Seminary-affiliated Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem, and he draws a direct line from his time at Hebrew University to today.

His decision to become a rabbi "was largely due to my happy year there," when he studied political science, debated politics with other students, went Israeli dancing, frequented cafes and went on historical and nature tours of Israel.

"You form a relationship with the land that runs deep," he said. "The national dialogue becomes your dialogue."

Among the more well-known alumni of Hebrew U. programs are the U.S. ambassador to Israel, Daniel Kurtzer, and his predecessor, Martin Indyk. Top media figures such as CNN's Wolf Blitzer and Pulitzer Prize-winning New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman also attended Hebrew University.

Thousands of others less visible returned from studying at Hebrew University intent on making an impact on the Jewish community.

One such student was Andrea Weiss, who spent her spring semester, 1986, studying there.

Her Hebrew University experience was the first time she'd been to Israel, and she took Jewish studies courses and studied Hebrew literature. She returned to Berkeley, Calif., thinking she was going to law school.

But in Israel, she said, "my Jewish education really came alive."

She returned to Jerusalem in 1988 as part of her studies at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion and became a Reform rabbi.

"To people who knew me, it seemed like the most natural thing I could have done with my life," said Weiss, who lives outside of Philadelphia.

Today Weiss, the second cousin of Marla Bennett, who was killed in last week's attack, teaches Bible at the HUC in New York.

She was inspired by Bennett's devotion to the Jewish state.

Weiss also has a 4-year-old daughter, Rebecca, whom she "prays" she can take to Israel one day soon.

Some remain equally hopeful that terrorism and the Mideast conflict will not prevent U.S. students from going to Hebrew University and Israel in the future.

"Almost three generations of American Jews have studied there," said Scott Lasensky, who studied at Hebrew University in the early 1990s.

"That kind of connection is not so easily wiped out." □

## JEWISH WORLD

### Belgian proposals worry Israel

Israeli officials are concerned by two proposed laws that could permit Belgian courts to try Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and other Israelis for war crimes. One of the bills would allow Belgian courts to try individuals for war crimes in absentia.

The other would grant Belgian courts jurisdiction in cases that cannot be brought before the newly formed International Criminal Court, The Associated Press reported.

Relations between Israel and Belgium have been strained over efforts in Brussels to try the Israeli prime minister on war crimes charges over his role in the 1982 Lebanon war.

A Belgian court recently ruled that Sharon could not be tried because he was not in Belgium.

That ruling is being appealed, the report said.

### Survivors to get Austrian money

Holocaust survivors reportedly will receive payments soon from a settlement reached three years ago with Austrian banks.

Lawyers involved with the \$40 million settlement with Bank Austria and Creditanstalt said more than 1,000 survivors will begin to receive checks this month for assets seized from Jews by the Nazis, according to The Washington Post.

The lawyers said the most elderly will be paid first, adding that all recipients will get at least \$5,000 apiece.

After the Nazis seized the two banks in 1938, they kept asset lists of tens of thousands of Jewish citizens. Decades later, these lists helped Jews prove their claims.

### Estonia plans Holocaust day

Estonia has decided to establish an annual Holocaust memorial day.

As in other European countries, the commemoration will be held on Jan. 27, the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

The Simon Wiesenthal Center welcomed Tuesday's decision by the government of Prime Minister Siim Kallas.

But the Wiesenthal Center urged officials to renew their efforts to bring Estonian Nazi war criminals to justice.

### Hungarian Jews undercounted?

The number of Jews living in Hungary is "drastically higher" than the 13,000 reported in last year's census, according to Hungarian Jewish leader Peter Tordai.

A Hungarian newspaper also reported that a sociologist estimated that the number of Jews living in Hungary is between 100,000 and 120,000.

## Prague Jewish leader unveils plans to shore up finances, help survivors

By Magnus Bennett

PRAGUE (JTA) — Prague's top Jewish official has unveiled plans designed to secure his community's long-term future.

Tomas Jelinek, a former economics aide to Czech President Vaclav Havel, said the plans will shake up the community's administration and develop its real estate.

Jelinek also told JTA that the proposals are designed to expand the short-term care facilities for Holocaust survivors, who make up half the official community's membership of nearly 1,600.

Jelinek says Prague is one of the wealthiest Jewish communities in Central Europe, but argues that essential expenses in maintaining the community's 177 cemeteries and running educational and care facilities have been weighing heavily on its \$4.7 million in annual revenues.

"The Prague Jewish community has basically three main sources of income — rent from real estate, revenues from tourism and subsidies from the state from the ministries of education and culture," he said.

"We still have some real estate which has not been developed properly and does not bring in significant income," he added. "The price of real estate here is going down. Expenses and inflation are growing faster than the revenues coming in, so we need to think in the long term about the money, so we will be looking at possibilities to invest."

That move will involve preparing a business plan and borrowing millions of dollars from banks over several years.

In addition, much of the community's holdings cannot serve as money-makers for religious reasons.

"The biggest amount of wealth we have is in the cemeteries. According to the market it has a value, but according to Jewish law you cannot do anything," he said.

The community's real estate arm, Matana, has identified three of its properties in prime Prague locations that could provide long-term financial benefits if sufficient funds are spent on renovation and upgrades.

They include the site of a well-known nightclub, an apartment block, and an office and shopping complex.

Talks may be opened with real estate companies with a view to embarking on joint developments.

A fourth property, a hospital in the Hagibor district of Prague, has been earmarked as a new facility for Holocaust survivors.

"The other three projects will bring a return in the next 15 years or so, but that would not help Holocaust survivors now," Jelinek said. "The Hagibor facility would substantially increase the number of beds we can provide."

Jelinek also wants to introduce a more professional approach to the community's handling of business.

"The organizational structure here previously was not formalized," he said. "Also, I didn't inherit any archive," and "papers were only kept in an ad-hoc way. With business decisions, sometimes you don't know what was agreed on five years ago."

Jelinek, who is studying ways to improve the community's administrative structure, points to one step already taken — the introduction of more professional home-care services — that should result in greatly improved care for the elderly.

The community's handling of its 50 or so blocks of real estate has drawn interest from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, Jelinek said.

The Prague Jewish leader said he was told recently by members of the JDC that the approach adopted in Prague could provide a self-sufficiency model for other Central and Eastern European Jewish communities.

Meanwhile, Jelinek is still working on plans, announced through JTA shortly before Jelinek visited the United States earlier this summer, to re-establish Prague as a world center of Jewish academic excellence.

Jelinek would like to see distinguished scholars use the community's rich archives on Judaica in the regions of Bohemia and Moravia, and said he has received a very positive response to the proposal. □

## NEWS ANALYSIS

**With terror up, Sharon faces pressure for harsher measures**

By Leslie Susser

JERUSALEM (JTA) — As Palestinian terrorism takes an ever-increasing toll, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon is seeking to walk a fine line: taking tougher measures to deter terrorists without escalating the situation further.

The volume of terror continues apace — 13 people died and more than 80 were wounded in a series of attacks on Sunday alone — despite the fact that the army has been in West Bank cities for seven weeks, keeping nearly 2 million Palestinians under curfew.

Figures released this week show that more than 600 Israelis, most of them civilians, have been killed since the Palestinian intifada began in September 2000, and more than 4,000 wounded.

Right-wing critics now are demanding harsher action against Palestinian leaders and the Palestinian population as a whole.

Avigdor Lieberman, leader of the National Union-Israel, Our Home bloc in the Knesset, says the army should have no compunction about targeting political leaders like Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat or Hamas leader Sheik Ahmed Yassin, who he says are behind the terrorism.

“They don’t send their children to be” suicide bombers, Lieberman said in an early August radio interview. “They send their children overseas. And if they knew their own lives were in danger, the terror would stop.”

Hard-liner Michael Kleiner goes further: He says Israel should kill 1,000 Palestinians for every dead Israeli.

But Sharon is showing no sign of responding to the right-wing demands. On the contrary, he continues to distinguish between the Palestinian population, whose suffering he says he wants to ease, and the terrorist organizations.

Sharon’s aides say the prime minister hopes to drive a wedge between the overwhelming majority of the civilian population and the terrorists — a strategy that so far has been singularly unsuccessful.

Opinion polls show that the Palestinian public overwhelmingly supports suicide bombings, despite the harsh Israeli countermeasures they provoke.

Sharon also has another reason for rejecting the right-wing pressure: He does not want to jeopardize major political gains, like strong U.S. support for Israel and international pressure on the Palestinians to replace Arafat and reform the Palestinian Authority’s political, financial and military institutions.

Still, the pressure from the right, and the new tone in the public debate, raises the fundamental question of how far a democracy can or must go to defend its citizens. Are actions permissible in a state of war that would not be acceptable in peacetime?

In other words, can a democracy win the war against terror while maintaining the full gamut of democratic values? And if not, just how much can it reasonably suspend?

In July, the government sought to deter would-be suicide bombers by making it clear that their close relatives would suffer for their actions: houses would be demolished and families expelled from the West Bank to the Gaza Strip. On Sunday alone, for example, the government destroyed nine homes.

Israeli human rights organizations were sharply critical of the

new policy, arguing that it violated a cardinal principle of jurisprudence: that only the guilty can be punished for their actions.

In early August, the Ma’ariv newspaper sprang to the government’s defense. Reflecting a hardening mood in Israel, it wrote: “It is high time people realized that we are within our rights to try various methods of punishment and deterrence to reduce the volume of the vicious and murderous terrorism we are facing. There is nothing immoral about this, and those who claim that there is are indulging in attempts to be ‘holier than the pope.’ In order to save lives we are proposing not to kill anyone, perish the thought, not to torture or imprison the relatives of the terrorists, but to transfer them from one place of residence to another.”

Ma’ariv also predicted that the terror would continue despite the new measures, and that soon Israelis would “reach a moral crossroads where we will face far more difficult choices.”

Within days the moral spotlight had turned from the Palestinians to Israeli Arabs, after Arabs in the Galilee were suspected of aiding a suicide bomber who blew up a bus on road to Safed, killing nine people and wounding more than 40.

Police Chief Shlomo Aharonishky called for a thorough investigation of the connection between Israeli Arabs and terror. In a controversial move, Interior Minister Eli Yishai announced that he was revoking the citizenship of two Israeli Arabs accused of aiding terrorists.

Cabinet ministers from the Labor Party challenged the move. While they agreed that Israel must clamp down on terror wherever it can, they warned that they would only support measures approved by law.

That suggests that the Israeli Supreme Court will have a lot to say over the next few months on whether proposed punitive and deterrent measures are compatible with fundamental human rights.

In the meantime, grass-roots pressure for more radical action could grow. Boaz Ganor, a counterterrorism expert at the Interdisciplinary Center in Herzliya, argues that a democratic country’s greatest commitment is to protect the lives of its citizens, and that it is only natural for those citizens to demand that the government take radical measures.

This, he says, leads to what he calls the “democratic paradox” in fighting terror: If a government fails to adopt radical measures it will be voted out of office; but if it does, it undermines liberal democratic values and begins to look like the terrorists want it to, illegitimate and undemocratic.

“A responsible government must find the golden mean,” Ganor says, adding that, in his view, Sharon is succeeding in this.

“There are aberrations here and there, but on the whole I think he deserves high marks,” Ganor asserts.

The bottom line is that despite the pressure for harsher actions, neither Sharon nor his generals want to escalate the situation. In late July, the Israel Defense Force presented its latest working plan to Sharon.

It is based on the assumption that the next six months will see Arafat’s decline as a decision-maker and an American strike against Iraq to remove Saddam Hussein from power.

These two events, the generals believe, will tip the terror equation in Israel’s favor and lead to a political process with a new Palestinian leadership.

Until then, their strategy is to control terror as best they can, without adopting radical measures that could lead to escalation □

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