



Daily News Bulletin

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85th Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Quartet drawing up peace plan

A team of international diplomats outlined a roadmap for ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The roadmap, which calls for Palestinian reforms and Israeli troop withdrawals, envisions a final agreement within three years.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan on Tuesday unveiled some details of the plan still being drafted by officials from the so-called Quartet — the United States, European Union, Russia and the United Nations.

According to a statement, progress toward a final agreement would be based on the sides' compliance with specific performance benchmarks that the Quartet would monitor and assess.

The outline also calls for an Israeli withdrawal based on U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 to "secure and recognized" borders, not the complete withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza Strip that the Palestinians have demanded.

Peres: U.S. may still hit Iraq

The United States may still take action against Iraq, despite Saddam Hussein's offer to allow weapons inspectors to return, Shimon Peres said.

"The United States' commitment is far-reaching, very clear, and I almost don't see how it will retreat from it," the Israeli foreign minister told Israel Radio from New York on Tuesday.

5 Palestinians wounded in blast

Five Palestinian youths were lightly wounded Tuesday in an explosion in a school near Hebron. A second bomb was found in the schoolyard and defused. Israeli officials are investigating the cause of the blast, which occurred in an area under Israeli security control.

The explosion went off in the courtyard of the Ziff secondary school south of Hebron, said the principal, who accused Jewish extremists.

Nearly all 380 students were in class when the bomb went off.

Because of the Sukkot holiday, the JTA DAILY NEWS BULLETIN will not be published Monday, Sept. 23.

Despite community's small size, German Jews courted by politicians

By Toby Axelrod

BERLIN (JTA) — Who cares what German Jewish voters think?

The answer, on the eve of national elections here, is that all the major candidates do. Some 67 million Germans — among them only 30,000 Jews — are eligible to vote on Sept. 22.

Polls indicate that the incumbent, Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder of the Social Democratic Party, has a slight edge over his challenger, Edmund Stoiber of the Christian Social Union.

But that edge was hard-won, and the race remains too close to call.

So it may be surprising that the leaders of Germany's top parties took the time recently to answer questions posed by Germany's main Jewish newspaper, the *Judische-Allgemeine Wochenzeitung*.

But some observers say it should not be shocking at all. The small Jewish population has a large moral voice, whether they want to or not, they add.

The very presence of Jews here — there are 100,000 in all, two-thirds of whom emigrated from the former Soviet Union since 1990 — reminds non-Jewish Germans of a role that some willingly embrace, others begrudgingly accept, still others vehemently reject and virtually no one can ignore: the duty to remember the crimes of the Nazi era.

And though many Jews resent being turned into symbols, this special relationship can pay off.

Judith Hart, editor in chief of the *Judische-Allgemeine Wochenzeitung*, was virtually assured of getting a response to her query, despite the closeness of election day.

"I am not sure that all of the politicians were so interested in answering our questions, but it is hard for them to say no," Hart said. "And I have to say, in general, we have a good relationship with them."

The responses to her questions were predictable. From the conservatives to the Communists, all condemned anti-Semitism, pledged to help in the integration of Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union and swore loyalty to Israel while supporting the Palestinians' right to a homeland.

Ultimately, the Jewish vote will be neither monolithic nor influential, said German Jewish journalist Richard Chaim Schneider, who nevertheless enjoyed speculating on "What is 'good for the Jews' on Sept. 22" in a recent column for the *Suddeutsche Zeitung* newspaper.

Definitely not the Free Democratic Party, he said, because of Mollemann's controversial statements.

Schroeder, he added, is problematic for Jewish voters.

The chancellor, playing to anti-war sentiments, refuses to stand with the United States on Iraq, yet is willing to consider sending German peacekeepers to the Middle East, regardless of how this might resonate with Holocaust survivors, according to Schneider. Then again, he added, Jewish voters remember how Schroeder "rushed to Dusseldorf after the arson attack on the synagogue" in the summer of 2000.

Ultimately, Jewish voters have come to the same conclusion as everyone else, Schneider said: "Our parties are all incompetent."

Does it really matter to the Jewish community who wins?

"It turns out not to be so dramatic," said Henryk Broder, columnist for *Der Spiegel*

MIDEAST FOCUS

Israel raids Gaza camp

The Israeli army raided a refugee camp in the Gaza Strip and destroyed nine workshops it says were used to manufacture mortars and rockets.

Soldiers arrested 23 suspected terrorists during Tuesday's raid in the Khan Yunis refugee camp. Soldiers also blew up the house of a Hamas terrorist who was killed eight months ago during an attack on an Israeli settlement, according to Palestinian officials.

During the past week, Israeli troops have been carrying out almost nightly raids in Gaza, searching for wanted terrorists and weapons factories.

On Sunday, the Israeli daily Ha'aretz reported that Israeli officials no longer believe the Palestinians will uphold their end of the "Gaza/Bethlehem First" plan.

Palestinian dies in 'work accident'

A 14-year-old Palestinian was killed in an explosion Tuesday in the Tulkarm refugee camp. The boy was killed when a bomb he apparently was making blew up, Palestinian security officials said.

Court considers Mordechai appeal

Israel's Supreme Court is considering former Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai's request to file a second appeal of his conviction for sexually assaulting and harassing two women.

Mordechai's request is based on a letter recently sent to the court by one of the two women, in which she retracted her testimony.

The woman wrote that due to pressure from police and media during the investigation, she may have misinterpreted Mordechai's behavior.

The court on Tuesday instructed police to examine the letter and the circumstances in which it was written.

A court previously rejected Mordechai's appeal of the conviction and his 18-month suspended sentence.

and a member of the Jewish community. "Schroeder told me the world will not fall apart if he is not elected," he quipped.

And as far as Jews are concerned, "I don't believe in special interests, except on the communal level, if there is a need for a new synagogue," Broder said.

Deidre Berger, director of the American Jewish Committee's office in Berlin, had a slightly different view.

Jewish voters are naturally more concerned than the average German about protecting Israel, Holocaust remembrance, compensation for survivors, and fighting anti-Semitism and xenophobia, she said.

"Whatever government is elected, it is likely that these issues will remain central" to the Jewish community's agenda, Berger said.

She, like Broder, expects no major changes should a new party come into power.

"The larger issue is the gap that sometimes exist between public opinion and the actions of policy makers on issues of Jewish interest," said Berger.

"The increasing distance of younger voters from the Nazi era" is one of several "areas to watch in terms of their impact on important Jewish issues."

Another issue of concern is the persistence of stereotypes about Jews.

According to a poll of 1,000 Germans commissioned last spring by Der Spiegel magazine, 44 percent of those older than 60 believed that "Jews have too much influence in the world." Only 16 percent of those aged 18 to 29 agreed.

Whether they think the influence is too great or not, German politicians clearly do court Jewish votes.

And when they do, "it impresses people abroad," wrote Schneider. "In Germany, one plays politics with Jews or against them, but never without them," he added.

Jewish voters certainly will not make or break the election.

But in at least one sense their influence may be greater than their numbers seem to warrant: Jewish confidence in Germany builds world confidence in Germany.

And no mainstream politician wants to rock that boat. □

Russian 'friends' of Hebrew U. favor increasing cultural exchange

By Lev Krichevsky

MOSCOW (JTA) — A new initiative aims to promote academic and research cooperation between the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Russian universities.

The Russian Friends of the Hebrew University, as the new group is called, will also encourage the development of university-level programs in Russia devoted to Jewish and Middle Eastern studies. Hebrew University is believed to be the first Israeli academic institution to establish this type of partnership in the former Soviet Union.

The creation of the group marks another step in the ongoing process of liberalization in Russia, said Leonid Nevzlin, Russian senator and chairman of the group's board.

The new organization, inaugurated recently in a posh kosher restaurant in downtown Moscow, is made up of a few members of the Russian Jewish political and financial elite.

The group said it does not see itself as a purely Jewish organization.

As its first step, the Russian Friends of Hebrew University provided full-year scholarships for seven Russian students, both Jewish and non-Jewish, to enroll this fall semester at the Hebrew University's Rothberg International School. The students will start classes in Jerusalem in October.

"Having Russian students who study Near Eastern and Arab subjects in Israel will help us bring a more balanced view on Israeli society and its issues here in Russia," said Mark Shabad, a Moscow banking executive who is the president of the new society.

The creation of a Russian friends organization brings Hebrew University closer to the land where its idea was conceived, said the president of Hebrew University, Menachem Magidor.

Hebrew University was established in 1925. But it was a Russian Jew who suggested the idea of a Jewish university in Jerusalem, even before the modern Jewish colonization of Palestine began in the late 19th century. □



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JEWISH WORLD

Activist dies after accident

Jonathan Greenberg, the executive director of the Jewish Life Network, died Saturday in Israel after his bicycle was struck by a car a day earlier. Greenberg also was a founder of Makor, a Jewish center on New York's Upper West Side.

Greenberg was "incredibly passionate" about his work, said a colleague, Mark Charendoff, president of the Jewish Funders Network, on whose board Greenberg participated. Greenberg "was one of the most beloved and respected people working in the Jewish family foundation field."

Greenberg was buried in Israel on Tuesday. He is survived by his parents, Rabbi Yitz and Blu Greenberg; his brothers, David and Moshe; and his sisters, Deborah and Goodey.

Lanner sentencing postponed

The jail sentencing of New Jersey Rabbi Baruch Lanner on sexual abuse charges has been delayed until Oct. 4.

Lanner, 52, was found guilty in Monmouth County, N.J., Superior Court on June 27 of endangering the welfare of two girls who attended the Hillel High School in Ocean Township, N.J., where he was principal from 1992 to 1996.

He also was the girls' supervisor in the National Conference of Synagogue Youth, the youth wing of the Orthodox Union. Lanner faces 10 to 20 years in prison and a maximum \$300,000 fine at the sentencing, which was postponed from Sept. 13.

Lanner has maintained his innocence, and has 45 days to appeal after his sentencing. He remains free on \$100,000 bail.

Jewish leaders hold D.C. parleys

Leaders of American Jewish groups are planning to meet with Bush administration officials and Senate leaders Wednesday.

More than 30 Jewish leaders from the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations are expected to attend the meetings in Washington, which include discussions with Deputy National Security Adviser Stephen Hadley, Pentagon officials and both parties' Senate leadership.

Landau, Ridge to meet

Israel's public security minister is expected to meet Wednesday with Tom Ridge, the White House director of homeland security. Uzi Landau is in Washington to press for an international cooperation office in the evolving U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Landau also is expected to meet with congressional leaders, but will be "staying away" from the issue of a U.S. attack on Iraq during his meetings, an Israeli official said.

We are Jewish women, hear us roar: New coalition begins lobbying for Israel

By Sharon Samber

WASHINGTON (JTA) — It's a women's thing, too.

That's what a new coalition is saying about lobbying for Israel.

One Voice: Jewish Women for Israel, a broad-based coalition involving several major American Jewish women's groups, is working to increase — and, in many cases, launch — women's involvement in pro-Israel activism.

In June, a coalition-run phone campaign organized women across the country to "Take five and take to the phones" and call members of Congress to thank them for standing with Israel, urge continued support of a strong U.S.-Israel relationship and express concern for a rise in anti-Semitic acts around the world.

Now the coalition is gearing up for a second phone-in on Sept. 18, this time aimed at the White House.

Callers are being asked to thank President Bush for his support for Israel — and note that both Americans and Israelis have been the targets of terrorists and that America should not tolerate the incitement against the United States, Israel and the Jewish people in the Arab world.

"It's an incredible opportunity for women to be empowered," said Madeleine Brecher, one of the coalition's coordinators.

"After five minutes, thousands feel that they have done something," said Brecher of New Jersey, who is national vice president of the National Council of Jewish Women, one of the groups involved.

Organizers don't know exactly how many women participated in the last call-in, but they say it was successful.

When Debbie Buls Kahn of New York participated in the phone campaign in June she felt it was her way of telling her senators and representatives that their support of Israel is important.

Kahn, whose daughter is studying in Israel this year, plans to participate in this month's campaign as well.

"Every woman should call," she said.

The coalition was established earlier this year by Blu Greenberg, a longtime Jewish feminist activist and president of the Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance.

Greenberg, also of New York, says women's groups that oppose the Bush administration's pro-Israel policy are well-organized and that the Jewish community was not utilizing women and their desire to help.

"Women are a force," Greenberg said. "We wanted to show our solidarity and identity."

Greenberg got an "instantaneous" positive response from Jewish women's groups — and in what she calls "a record in Jewish history" the coalition, its name and its general goals were hammered out in two hours.

The coalition's leaders believe the work has gone smoothly because women realize how vulnerable Israel is at this time.

The agreement on the message is an important statement to the Jewish community, said Adena Berkowitz, another coalition coordinator.

"Too often in the Jewish community we focus on divisions," said Berkowitz, a board member of the Orthodox Feminist Alliance. "The coalition works through consensus — 'What we can all agree on' and 'What can we do to help Israel.'"

Coalition members said they did not want to duplicate efforts. So it is sticking primarily to political activism, and staying away from helping terror victims and Israeli businesses.

In promoting the upcoming national call-in day, the coalition is asking women to distribute an action guide to their rabbis and asking them to announce the event from the dais during Yom Kippur. Also, women are encouraged to forward the information over e-mail and encourage friends or family members to call.

The coalition is planning a leadership lobbying day Oct. 31 and a possible follow-up lobbying day for more women as well. □

Coming to a TV station near you: Ads trumpeting Israeli democracy

By Joe Berkofsky

NEW YORK (JTA) — Ads trumpeting Israeli democracy and its cultural and political similarities to America are coming to TV sets nationwide.

Due to roll out in 100 major cable TV markets in the coming weeks, the two 30-second spots — costing \$1 million total — are the centerpiece of an unprecedented public relations effort by American Jewish organizations to improve U.S. public perception of Israel.

The ads began airing in the Washington area on Sept. 12 and hit New York City and the Silicon Valley area of California on Tuesday, said spokesmen for the two groups behind the advertisements.

“The ads emphasize that Israel is a democracy, very much like the United States,” said Kenneth Bandler, director of public relations for the American Jewish Committee, which produced one of the ads.

The second ad is being produced by Israel 21C, a group of Silicon Valley high-tech entrepreneurs based in Cupertino, Calif., near San Jose.

Both ads, which paint similar portraits of Israel as the lone Mideast democracy with political freedom for all its citizens, began running back-to-back last week in Washington on CNN, CNBC, Fox News and MSNBC.

The AJCommittee bought slots on CNN and Fox News in New York for its ad, while Israel 21C has bought air time for its San Francisco Bay Area ad on CNN and CNN Headline News.

These ads are set to run throughout each day through December starting in these cities and beginning Oct. 1 in other dozens of other top media markets.

Both their imagery and message is nearly identical: Israel is a pluralistic democracy and shares bedrock cultural and political values with the United States.

“Israel is America’s only real ally in the Middle East,” the AJCommittee ad declares.

“Israel is a democracy that respects the rights of individuals and gives all its citizens the right to vote in free and fair elections,” the ad continues.

“And in Israel, unlike in other countries in the region, all people — Christians, Muslims and Jews — enjoy freedom of religion, press and speech.”

The narrator concludes: “Israel and America — shared values, shared visions for peace.”

The audio is set against a backdrop of images including Israeli newspapers, the Israeli Parliament building, an Arab woman at a ballot box, a high-tech scene and the faces of Israelis of all ages and ethnic backgrounds.

Americans “feel a close affinity to the Israeli people, because we’re both democracies, and we want to build on that support,” Bandler said.

Israel 21C’s ad begins nearly identically. “Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East today, America’s ally,” it says.

“As in America, all Israeli citizens — Christians, Muslims, and Jews — have freedom of religion and the right to vote. Ten Arabs and 17 women are in Israel’s Parliament, and both men and women have access to education, modern health care and good jobs.”

The two ads are “virtually the same, if not identical,” said Larry Weinberg, executive vice president of Israel 21C.

“The whole point of our ad is that we think Americans really don’t understand the true nature of Israel’s democracy. Our job is to educate them about that.”

That was the central theme of a public relations strategy laid out this summer by the Israel P.R. Project, a campaign led by Washington Democratic political consultant Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi, Democratic pollster Stanley Greenberg and Republican pollster Frank Luntz.

Mizrahi was the initial force behind the effort, stirred by what she felt were misleading media images of Israel during the current Palestinian uprising.

The effort included a series of focus groups and opinion surveys about Israel and the Palestinians, which revealed that American backing for Israel is slipping.

While Americans still support Israel over the Palestinians by an overwhelming 4-1 margin, they have grown frustrated with Mideast violence.

About 40 percent say they support both sides equally or favor neither side in the conflict, according to mid-summer polls by the Israel P.R. Project.

But Americans see Israel in a more favorable light when they recognize its common values with the United States, the polls showed.

Their surveys also found that Americans reacted negatively to Israeli spokespeople who tried to marginalize Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat.

Yet Americans warm to Israel’s efforts to make peace, the pollsters found.

That revelation prompted the pollsters to craft a series of talking points for those defending Israel, focusing on Israel’s democracy and its history of peacemaking initiatives.

Ultimately the AJCommittee signed onto the pro-Israel PR campaign, along with Israel 21C and such groups as the United Jewish Communities, the umbrella of the North American federation movement.

All of this pro-Israel public relations comes at a price. The AJCommittee bankrolled \$200,000 for the initial surveys and polls for the Israel P.R. project, an effort that cost an estimated \$700,000 total.

The AJCommittee also earmarked another \$500,000 for the first ad buys in the national cable TV ad campaign, Bandler said. Together with Israel 21C’s ad, the national TV P.R. campaign will cost \$1 million, the two groups said.

While it is too early to know what kind of impact the TV ads will have on public opinion, those behind the messages remain optimistic.

“When Americans understand how much we have in common with Israel, it will be better for both America and Israel,” Weinberg said.

Meanwhile, more pro-Israel TV spots are likely coming to a living room near you.

The AJCommittee is producing a second ad focusing on Israel’s historic quest for peace in the Middle East, and is working on buying TV ad time for that message as well.

Just as the Israel P.R. project found that Americans favor messages focusing on Israeli democracy, the pollsters said Americans also respond well when they learn that Israel has historically sought out peace with its neighbors. □