



Daily News Bulletin

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85th Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Sharon headed to White House

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon is preparing for Wednesday's meeting with President Bush in Washington.

Sharon was expected to meet the U.S. national security adviser, Condoleezza Rice, on Tuesday evening. Plans also are being made for Sharon to meet with Vice President Dick Cheney, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and congressional leaders.

Shooting may have been accident

Israeli police said a shooting incident in which four bus passengers were wounded Tuesday may have been an accident and not a terrorist attack.

Egged Bus No. 412 was traveling from Afula to Beit Shean when it was hit by a single bullet near Kibbutz Nir David.

Several hours later, police were still investigating the possibility of a terrorist attack but said it was possible the bus had been hit by a stray bullet, Israel Radio reported.

Israel could expand pullback

Israel said it may pull troops out of another West Bank city. The comments by Israeli Defense Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer came as President Bush was expected to press Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon this week to ease restrictions on the Palestinians.

Candidate target of anti-Semitism

A Jewish candidate for governor in Hawaii received anti-Semitic mail.

Linda Lingle, the Republican candidate, has received death threats and some postcards with swastikas, including a postcard that said: "Go Back Home! Haole (foreigner) Jew! Your (sic) Evil!" with a drawing of a swastika and the letters "SS."

Report: Russian hate crimes up

Hate crimes increased by 30 percent in Russia outside of Moscow in 2001, a report by a Jewish watchdog group says.

The 250-page report, Antisemitism, Xenophobia and Religious Persecution in Russia's Regions in 2001, also states that the country's criminal justice system is unable to respond effectively. The Union of Councils for Jews in the Former Soviet Union prepared the report, released Tuesday in Washington.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

Jews forge ties with Iraqi dissidents as the possibility of a war intensifies

By Matthew E. Berger

WASHINGTON (JTA) — The old saying "the enemy of my enemy is my friend" appears to have resonance for American Jewish groups and the Iraqi dissidents seeking to overthrow the government of Saddam Hussein.

Jewish groups have privately met with Iraqi opposition leaders in the past, but today some groups are forging a broader, more public relationship.

In the last two weeks, two Jewish organizations, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee and the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs, have sponsored discussions with members of the Iraqi National Congress, a prominent Iraqi opposition group that is financially supported by the U.S. government.

With the Bush administration pursuing a policy of regime change in Iraq, both the INC and Jewish groups say they have something to gain from a strong bond.

The INC sees a way to tap into Jewish influence in Washington and Jerusalem, and drum up increased support for its cause.

The Jewish groups, for their part, see an opportunity to pave the way for better relations between Israel and Iraq, if and when the INC is involved in replacing Saddam's regime.

"It's important for Jewish groups to have a relationship with anyone who is a problem for Saddam," said Tom Neumann, JINSA's executive director.

Still, the relationship is a complicated one, which some are approaching with caution and others are warning will work against Jewish interests.

"It's not too wise to get involved with them," said Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

He and others worry that alliances with the Iraqi opposition will revive the notion put forth during the 1991 Persian Gulf War that American military action in Iraq is intended to help Israel.

But the Jewish groups that are working with the INC say that they share a common interest — removing Saddam from power — for the benefit of Iraq, the United States and Israel.

The INC was founded shortly after the end of the Persian Gulf War, combining several smaller opposition forces within Iraq.

It currently operates a newspaper, television station, regional offices and a center for humanitarian relief. It is based in Salahuddin in Iraq, and lists its external base as London.

The United States has given the INC more than \$18 million over the past three years and is expected to give the INC another \$8 million for the second half of this year, as part of a new cooperative agreement.

U.S. aid to the INC was suspended in January because of the INC's mismanagement of funds, but resumed a month later.

The United States has also given a smaller amount, \$315,000, to another opposition group, the Iraqi National Movement, and \$1.5 million to the Future of Iraq Project, which brings together numerous opposition groups, including the INC.

Against this backdrop, with the INC finding favor in Washington — and seeking more — Ahmed Chalabi, the INC president, was invited to a JINSA dinner on Oct. 9 on Long Island.

Entifadh Qanbar, the INC's Washington office director, spoke at an Oct. 7 gathering

MIDEAST FOCUS

Rabbis' call on outposts blasted

An Israeli official criticized a call by rabbis from the West Bank and Gaza Strip urging soldiers to refuse orders to dismantle illegal settlement outposts.

Israel's deputy foreign minister, Rabbi Michael Melchior, said he objects to attempts to bring Jewish religious law into political debate, Israel Radio reported.

At a gathering Monday at one of the outposts slated to be dismantled, rabbis said soldiers should ask to be excused from such duty for reasons of conscience.

If commanders refuse, soldiers would have to decide how to act, one of the rabbis said.

Cabinet Minister and former general Effi Eitam of the National Religious Party criticized the call, saying that refusing to carry out army orders endangers state security.

Study: Israel 22nd in development

Israel ranks 22nd out of 174 countries in social development, according to the U.N. Human Development Index for the year 2000.

The ranking places Israel ahead of Greece, Portugal and Mexico.

Among developed nations, however, the Jewish state is weak in education and poverty rates.

Jerusalem mufti questioned

Israeli police questioned Jerusalem's top Muslim cleric Tuesday for alleged incitement to violence.

Sheik Ekrima Sabri was questioned regarding comments he made in June to a Palestinian newspaper that appeared to approve of Palestinian suicide bombings against the Israeli presence in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Sabri was released after three hours of questioning. Israel Radio quoted police sources as saying that the Jerusalem mufti told them he supports the Palestinian uprising, but not violence or suicide attacks.

of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee in Atlanta.

Jewish leaders say they are able to garner a new perspective from their talks with Iraq's opposition leaders.

"With so much attention focused on Iraq and its future post-Saddam Hussein, we felt it was important for our members to get some insight into the prospects for bringing democracy to the Iraqi people," said Josh Block, an AIPAC spokesman.

Although there is only a possibility of them being pro-Israel, "they won't be anti-Israel," Neumann said of a new Iraqi government led by opposition forces.

"How close they are to Israel is up for conjecture, but they won't be like this government is."

For his part, Qanbar says the INC is reaching out to the Jewish community because it is the best avenue to get to the Israeli government, which he believes should be reaching out to the INC and getting more involved in creating lasting political change in Iraq.

"The Jewish groups in Washington have some influence in Israel," he said in an interview with JTA.

Qanbar told JTA that he believes that good relations with Israel are possible under a new regime because, he said, Saddam is the one who has a problem with Israel, not the Iraqi people.

He also said that the INC's platform urged the resolution of all regional conflicts without violence.

Chalabi told the JINSA audience last week that Saddam is the source of all terrorism in the Middle East, and a governmental change in Iraq would change the dynamics for the whole region, to the benefit of the United States and Israel.

He also said that the United States will not be able to effectively deal with Al Qaida leader Osama bin Laden until it deals with Saddam.

Observers say the INC is also trying to tap into the strong alliances that Jewish organizations have with Congress, hoping that highlighting the prospects for Israel under a post-Saddam Iraq will sway more pro-Israel lawmakers to support U.S. action.

While JINSA has had a relationship with Chalabi for 10 years, according to Neumann, other groups are supporting him publicly for the first time.

Observers say the more public relationship is now possible because Jewish groups are coming out publicly with positions on Iraq.

Jewish groups seem to be entering this new relationship with trepidation. Last week, several Jewish organizations were scheduled to appear at a Capitol Hill news conference with Senate Republicans and Iraqi defectors to express support for the congressional resolutions on Iraq.

But when Jewish groups realized they would be the only special interest group participating, they bailed out.

"We shouldn't be the only ones doing it," said Neumann, whose organization was supposed to participate, along with B'nai B'rith International, the Orthodox Union and the American Jewish Congress.

"It's not a Jewish agenda, but an American agenda."

Some observers worry that a public relationship could work against the mutual interests of Jewish groups and the Iraqi opposition.

Michael Amitay, the executive director of the Washington Kurdish Institute, says Jewish groups might run into problems by working only with Chalabi and Qanbar, because the INC is not strongly supported in Iraq, where there are numerous opposition groups.

Perceived U.S. Jewish support for Chalabi could "drive a wedge between Chalabi and other forces in the Iraqi opposition," said Amitay, whose father, Morrie, is vice chairman of JINSA's board of directors.

Calling the Jewish approach "short-sighted," he said that it would be "much more helpful if Jewish groups reached out to other groups, such as the Kurds" as well.

Qanbar disputes that claim.

He says Jewish groups have been among the first to form an alliance with the INC because they realize support for his organization is growing within the Bush administration.

"Jewish groups have a strong understanding of American politics," he said. "It's an indication that there is a new phase of" U.S. policy. □



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JEWISH WORLD

Prague Jewish exhibits reopen

Prague's Jewish Museum reopened all but one of its permanent exhibitions Tuesday that had been closed to avoid flood damage.

However, the Pinkas Synagogue, which was the Jewish site most seriously damaged in the August floods, will remain closed for up to a year, museum director Leo Pavlat told JTA.

The Old Jewish Cemetery, which stands beside the Pinkas Synagogue, also reopened Tuesday.

Latvian Jew may join Cabinet

A Latvian Jewish leader appears likely to become the country's next foreign minister. The center-right New Era Party, the winner in last week's parliamentary elections in the Baltic nation, said it would nominate Grigory Krupnikov, a longtime co-chairman of Latvia's Jewish community, to the new Cabinet.

The name of the Jewish leader is being floated as the nation of 2.8 million people is entering the final stages of joining both NATO and the European Union.

Two new groups for Russian Jews

The creation of two new umbrella groups of Russian Jewry this week underscored the divisions in the community.

The new organizations were announced as an attempt to overcome the two-year-old feud between the Federation of Jewish Communities of Russia and the Russian Jewish Congress.

But the Conference of Leaders of Jewish Organizations of Russia, set up by the RJC, and the Association of Public Jewish Organizations of Russia, created by the FJC, most likely will cater to their respective parent groups.

Women's network formed

A Jewish women's network was formed in Germany. The organization of professional women was launched with a daylong conference of workshops and panel discussions Sunday at the Jewish Community Center in Berlin.

Jewish exhibit opens in Spain

An exhibition recounting the 1,500-year Jewish presence in Spain has opened in the Spanish city of Toledo. Inaugurated by Spanish Foreign Minister Ana Palacio, "Memoria de Sefarad" traces Jewish Spain from the Roman era through the mass expulsion in 1492.

Three hundred items on display at the San Marco cultural center include Jewish ritual items and models of old synagogues and Jewish quarters of Spanish cities.

When it closes in Spain in January, the show will move on to Montreal, New York and Amsterdam.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

Surgeon saves lives in Bali disaster: A 'horrific sight' that he won't forget

By Henry Benjamin

SYDNEY, Australia (JTA) — For Graeme Southwick, an early Sunday morning on an idyllic island launched a day that turned from a dream into a nightmare.

Southwick was relaxing by the pool of his hotel in Bali after attending a plastic surgeon's conference when he learned of the night club bombing that had claimed more than 180 lives the day before.

Southwick, 55, an active member of Australia's Jewish community, immediately contacted the island's only hospital, in the capital of Denpasar.

"At that stage, no one knew how severe or serious matters were," Southwick told JTA.

Hospital staff initially told Southwick, the president of the Society of Australian Aesthetic Plastic Surgery, that everything was under control. A few hours later, however, he received a phone call from a plastic surgeon in Jakarta asking for his help.

Southwick ended up working 15 hours straight. Today, 64 victims are on the road to recovery thanks to the efforts of his medical team, which worked in cramped wards with limited supplies.

"I was not prepared for what I saw," he said. "The hospital was jammed with patients."

The attack is believed to be the work of Jemaah Islamiah, a group headed by a 64-year-old Muslim cleric, Abu Bakar Bashir, that has links to Al-Qaida. Bashir blames the United States for the attack.

In addition to the dead, who come from around the world, 300 people are injured and 200 are missing.

When Southwick got to the hospital, he immediately set about prioritizing the caseload.

The Australian government had promised to send an Air Force medical unit to assist the doctors, but it was not due for several hours. So Southwick and his team went to work helping people who had suffered burns over as much as 80 percent of their bodies.

"We were able to persuade the Indonesian authorities to let us tackle the European and North American patients first, and we set about identifying as many as we could so that those outside searching for loved ones would know that we had them under our care," Southwick said. "Many volunteers arrived to help, some with no nursing experience."

Many tourists offered blood, but facilities for transfusions weren't available and it was difficult for the medical team to even ascertain patients' blood groups.

They also lacked items like surgical instruments, drugs and even rubber gloves.

Southwick's team was able to visit some smaller hospitals and stabilize their patients as well. The first plane from the Royal Australian Air Force arrived about 10 p.m. on Sunday, and Southwick's team sent patients to the airport in a convoy of nine ambulances, each carrying three wounded.

With more space available in the wards, Southwick was able to identify additional Australian and English patients. He began to stabilize them and prepare them for evacuation to Australia, where they could be treated in proper burn units.

At one stage, 64 patients were lying on the tarmac of Denpasar airport waiting for a flight to Australia. The Air Force had set up a temporary, open-air ward on the tarmac, with a series of ropes holding intravenous drips.

Southwick recalled the case of one woman whose name he never learned.

"She was about 18 and had severe burns around the respiratory area as well as brain damage. We sent her on the first available flight" to Australia, but she died en route, he said.

Most of the patients were on pain medication and remained conscious during the stabilization and evacuation process, Southwick said.

Despite his years as a doctor, nothing had prepared Southwick for the experience in Bali. "I have never seen injuries on such a dreadful scale. It was a horrific sight which will remain in my memory forever," he said. □

BEHIND THE HEADLINES**Anti-Israel parley shows intensity of fight for students' hearts, minds***By Rachel Pomerance*

ANN ARBOR, Mich. (JTA) — In the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the United States is considered Israel's last remaining key ally.

Aiming to change that, the anti-Israel movement on college campuses has adopted a message rooted in bedrock American ideals.

The Second National Student Conference on the Palestinian Solidarity Movement, held at the University of Michigan last weekend, framed its anti-Israel arguments in the language of civil liberties and human rights.

The new, slicker message showed the challenge Jewish groups will face after a conference that both sides considered a pivotal moment for anti-Israel activism on American campuses.

It's still unclear whether the Oct. 12-14 pro-Palestinian conference, sponsored by a Michigan group called Students Allied for Freedom and Equality, will give the anti-Israel movement a lasting boost or, instead, show that the tide has turned against it.

The movement has come under increasing scrutiny in the past month after Harvard's president said the anti-Israel activism bordered on anti-Semitism.

Some 300 university presidents then signed an American Jewish Committee ad criticizing the anti-Israel movement for allegedly intimidating its opponents.

The developments drew publicity to a movement that until then primarily had attracted campus radicals, but they also put the anti-Israel forces on the defensive.

The weekend conference showed that the pro-Palestinian groups are reacting to the spotlight by crafting an increasingly sophisticated message — and that Jewish activists are split on the proper strategy to confront it.

Mainstream groups such as Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life sought to avoid direct confrontation so as not to give the conference more publicity.

Hillel planned pro-Israel programming to highlight Israel's democratic values, placing ads in campus newspapers, bringing pro-Israel lecturers to campus and sponsoring a pro-Israel rally on Oct. 10 with speakers from mainstream organizations.

A new group — Michigan Student Zionists — worked with Aish HaTorah, the Zionist Organization of America and Coalition for Jewish Concerns-Amcha in crafting a more confrontational approach.

MSZ activists flanked the doors of the conference building, chanting that the pro-Palestinian movement was "justifying suicide bombing" and was anti-Semitic. They also staged a prayer service, counterconference, rally and a "street theater" demonstration where students scattered on the ground to simulate the aftermath of a suicide bombing.

MSZ leaders filed a lawsuit trying to force the university to cancel the conference on the grounds that guest speakers — including Sami Al-Arian, a University of South Florida professor under federal investigation for links to terrorist groups — would incite violence. A judge denied a hearing on the lawsuit, saying the plaintiffs didn't have legal standing.

Many of the 400 people at the pro-Palestinian conference

represent extreme elements from 70 universities across the country. Wayne Firestone, director of the Israel on Campus Coalition, a coordinating body for Israel advocacy sponsored by Hillel and the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, said he wasn't impressed by the Palestinian supporters' new message.

"I believe they're very much on the defensive and they're essentially failing," he said. "They had almost no buy-in from the local Michigan population. And most of the participants were fly-ins."

He added: "To the extent that the advance publicity succeeded in bringing this to the public's attention, it galvanized the administration's opposition."

Indeed, the university's president, Mary Sue Coleman, denounced one of the conference's key planks — for universities to divest their holdings in companies that deal with Israel — in a Sept. 26 statement. But the anti-Israel message could find fertile ground among impressionable and often uninformed college students.

Participants at the pro-Palestinian conference argued that university divestment would pressure Israel to end its occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which they say is the first step toward making peace.

Those who oppose divestment really want to squelch the pro-Arab groups' free speech, they claim.

In response to charges that the anti-Israel movement is anti-Semitic, conference organizers made sure to feature Jewish participants prominently.

"We categorically reject" the accusations of "anti-Semitism being tossed around," said Ora Wise, an Israeli-born junior at Ohio State University, who is on leave to work for the New York-based Jews Against the Occupation.

"We need to go to the origins of the conflict" — in her view, Israel's presence in the West Bank and Gaza Strip — to remove the barrier to peace, Wise said. Ending the occupation will also bring "Jewish emancipation," she said.

At a news conference, SAFE leaders responded to the charge that they endorse terrorism by condemning suicide bombings — along with "state-sponsored terrorism" against civilians. Palestinian supporters use such formulas to equate Palestinian terrorist attacks and Israeli counterterror operations, both of which may result in civilian deaths.

Undermining a key Israeli argument — that Israel is a democracy like America — Palestinian supporters say America's historic subjugation of blacks and, allegedly, of women shows that democracies can be oppressive too.

The Israel on Campus Coalition released a resource guide last week that offers tools to counter pro-Palestinian arguments, and describes different approaches favored by various organizations.

Other groups also have produced materials countering pro-Palestinian arguments, including divestment.

But if attitudes at Michigan are representative, the pro-Israel forces are having a difficult time courting some of the 6,000 Jews on campus on such a highly polarized issue.

Israel and American Jewish groups have "failed to contextualize how remarkable the Zionist enterprise is for this generation of Jews," said Michael Brooks, executive director of the University of Michigan's Hillel.

While many Jewish students are instinctively pro-Israel, even some of the most ardent defenders of Israel are at a loss as to how to refute the pro-Palestinian arguments. Others doubt their pro-Israel education, assuming it was biased. □