



# Daily News Bulletin

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85th Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### U.S. peace plan criticized

Israel and the Palestinians expressed reservations Wednesday about a new U.S. peace plan. Both sides said the plan, which has the backing of the United Nations, Russia and the European Union, is too vague on important issues.

The criticisms were voiced as the U.S. assistant secretary of state, William Burns, arrived in Israel on Wednesday for talks with the two sides about the plan. He was expected to meet with top Israeli and Palestinian officials, but not with Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat.

### U.S.-Israeli programs get funds

President Bush signed a defense spending bill Wednesday that includes extensive funding for joint U.S.-Israeli programs.

Congress appropriated \$136 million for the Arrow anti-missile defense program, as well as \$18.5 million for the Mobile Tactical High Energy Laser, which intercepts rockets.

The Litening II Targeting Pod, which enables aircraft to fly and target at night and in bad conditions, received \$48 million. The Bradley Reactive Armor Tiles program, which protects tanks by exploding outward when hit, got \$25 million.

### Israelis arrested as spies

A military officer is among several Israelis arrested on charges of spying for Hezbollah.

The lieutenant colonel in the Israeli army allegedly passed on information about Israeli deployment along the country's border with Lebanon in return for drugs. Ten other Israelis have been arrested in connection with the case.

### Sharon rebukes Cabinet member

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon reprimanded a Cabinet minister who had voiced scathing criticism of the defense minister.

Sharon summoned National Religious Party head Efraim Eitam for the dressing down Tuesday after Eitam called Benjamin Ben-Eliezer "a cheat, a liar and a coward." Eitam's comments prompted Ben-Eliezer and other Labor Party officials to threaten to leave the government. Sharon's reprimand came in an effort to smooth over the coalition crisis. Eitam vowed not to make such comments again.

## FOCUS ON ISSUES

### Pro-Israel lobby flexes muscles, making some legislators uneasy

By Matthew E. Berger

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Pro-Israel lawmakers, including some Jewish members of the U.S. House of Representatives, are complaining about the influence of Jewish lobbying groups on Middle East issues.

According to congressional staffers and lobbyists, several pro-Israel congressmen are agitated by the type of influence that Jewish organizations are exerting, specifically their calls to support the policies of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.

Following the defeat this year of several incumbents deemed anti-Israel — defeats attributed in part to the influence of Jewish money — representatives who normally would speak out on the Middle East are finding it better to stay quiet.

Most of the focus is on the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, the influential pro-Israel lobbying organization. The organization stresses that its mandate is to support the policies of the current Israeli government, but lawmakers say AIPAC has little tolerance for more dovish stances, such as calls for restraint during Israeli military incursions into the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"There is a growing sense on the Hill that" the Israeli-Palestinian conflict "is not so cut and dried," one congressional staffer said. "Many members feel uncomfortable buying into AIPAC's line."

Supporters of AIPAC and other Jewish groups make no apologies about their tactics, saying they're simply playing by the rules of politics.

They compare the Jewish lobby to other organizations like the National Rifle Association — and note that AIPAC essentially is being criticized for doing its job effectively.

"I'm sure there are people out there who are for gun control, but because of the NRA don't say anything," said Morris Amitay, who served as AIPAC's executive director from 1974 to 1980 and now is treasurer of the pro-Israel Washington PAC.

"If you're a weak candidate to begin with," your record is "anti-Israel and you have a credible opponent, your opponent will be helped," he said.

AIPAC stresses that the organization does not promote candidates or fundraise for them. But many AIPAC leaders do contribute to campaigns and other PACs based on lawmakers' views on Israel.

In two highly publicized congressional primaries this year, incumbents who were considered anti-Israel lost to challengers who received large amounts of Jewish money.

Both Reps. Earl Hilliard (D-Ala.) and Cynthia McKinney (D-Ga.) were targeted by Jewish groups because of their perceived anti-Israel stances.

"It was designed to send the message, 'Shut up,' and that message was heard," one longtime Jewish community activist said. "It will have a chilling effect on the Middle East debate."

Leaders of other Jewish organizations also say the Hilliard and McKinney races affected the way they work.

While some say the outcome strengthened the groups' ties with lawmakers, others — including groups that do not support all of Sharon's policies — say they are having trouble getting lawmakers to buck the AIPAC line, even if legislators privately indicate that they favor more dovish views.

Critics point to the May 2 debate in the House on a resolution in support of Israel.

"Many of the members thought that the resolution was inflammatory, unbalanced

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Sharon blasts terrorists

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon accused Palestinian terrorist groups of trying to sabotage U.S. efforts to negotiate a solution to the Israel-Palestinian conflict. Sharon made the comment Wednesday at the opening of the Likud Party convention.

Sharon addressed the convention as the U.S. assistant secretary of state, William Burns, met with Foreign Minister Shimon Peres to discuss a U.S. proposal for restarting the diplomatic process.

### Reservists appear in court

Eight Israeli reservists who were jailed for refusing to serve in Palestinian areas appeared before Israel's Supreme Court.

The eight argued Wednesday that the Israeli presence in the West Bank and Gaza Strip is illegal and that therefore they were within their rights to refuse to serve there. The state argued that the Israeli military's actions have been upheld by previous high court rulings. The court deferred its ruling.

### Egypt to air anti-Semitic series

Egyptian television plans to broadcast a 30-part series based on the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion," an infamous anti-Semitic tract. Egyptian television this week began advertising "Horseman Without a Horse," saying it will be broadcast during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, which starts in early November.

Israeli media and Jewish groups have criticized the show, starring and produced by well-known Egyptian actor Mohammed Sobhi, since plans for its production were announced last year.

The "Protocols" purports to reveal a Judeo-Masonic conspiracy to overthrow the established world and pave the way for world Jewish domination. Sobhi defended the series, telling The Associated Press his show is "an artistic work which only reveals the Zionist schemes to seize Palestine."



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and gave a green light to Sharon's military response to terrorism," a congressional aide said.

Several lawmakers who eventually voted for the bill first voted against suspending House rules to bring the bill quickly to the floor, hoping that additional debate might lead to a more balanced resolution.

They said the bill should recognize the suffering of the Palestinian people and call for increased U.S. engagement to resolve the conflict.

The vote to suspend the rules passed with 82 votes against it, including three from Jewish legislators and several others with strongly pro-Israel voting records. In the vote on the actual bill — which was more closely watched by Jewish organizations — only 21 representatives voted no.

"It's difficult for members of Congress to stand up against a resolution that might appear to be pro-Israel but under the surface is not pro-Israel" — because it is too hawkish — "or in the best interest of the United States," the congressional aide said.

Both sides of the debate acknowledge that Hilliard and McKinney were rare cases: Both had long records of anti-Israel bias and were weak within their own districts for other reasons.

Some of the more staunchly anti-Israel congressmen have been immune to AIPAC pressure because of their popularity in their home districts.

But some representatives, none of whom were willing to speak on the record, describe a growing fear factor: People on the Hill acknowledge that the chances of Jewish money being used to defeat a safe incumbent are slim, but many in Congress are unwilling to take the risk that they will be the first.

Some lawmakers say they fear to express views — such as opposition to Israeli military operations — that they say are more in line with their local Jewish communities.

While there have been cases in the past of Jewish money helping to defeat powerful legislators, the McKinney and Hilliard races showed that Jewish activists will even target lawmakers without a great deal of influence.

That has forced some lawmakers to cast votes against their better judgment, sources said.

"For the first time they are going after people who are obscure and insignificant," the community activist said. "It sends a message that you can be from Podunk, Miss., and we'll go after you."

Officials at other Jewish organizations say they are being told by lawmakers and staffers that they feel more pressure than usual, and are fearful that any vote could come back to haunt them.

"Since Sharon became prime minister they hold their nose and do what they're told by AIPAC," the community activist said. "What members say privately is totally at a variance with what they say publicly."

Some argue that the change has less to do with the Hilliard and McKinney races or lobbying pressure, and more with the situation on the ground in the Middle East. The past two years of violence have created the impression that Israel is under attack and has moved Jewish constituents to the right, one Jewish leader noted.

"One has to look at what's happening in the broader context of the situation Israel faces," the official said. "There is a heightened sense to protect Israel and seeing it more vulnerable than people did in the mid-1990s."

Jewish groups welcome the fact that even lawmakers considered strongly pro-Israel have been reaching out to them in recent months to affirm their support.

"The only thing I see as a result is that the real attention has been paid to relationships we might have taken for granted," one Jewish lobbyist said. "Lawmakers who thought they were in our corner" are making "efforts to strengthen relationships and make sure no one feels they are being taken for granted."

AIPAC spokeswoman Rebecca Needler said her organization acts like other Jewish — and non-Jewish — groups, who track lawmakers' votes and give the information to their membership.

"AIPAC works to strengthen the U.S.-Israel relationship, a key component of America's Middle East policy," she said. "The reason why the majority of Americans and their elected representatives back that relationship is because they understand the value of supporting the one true democracy in the region. It's good policy and it happens to be true." □

## JEWISH WORLD

### Federation ambulance responds

An ambulance donated by Florida Jews responded to the terrorist attack in northern Israel on Monday.

The ambulance was put into use hours after its arrival in the country.

Donated by the Jewish Federation of Pinellas County, the ambulance was to have been dedicated Tuesday during a ceremony attended by a United Jewish Communities mission from the southeastern United States.

In preparation for the ceremony, Magen David Adom officials outfitted the ambulance on Monday.

When the call about the attack came in, a crew was dispatched to the scene and helped save the lives of three people, the Jewish Agency for Israel said in a statement. According to Bonnie Friedman, executive director of the Pinellas federation, the donated ambulance was the first to reach the site of the attack.

### Danish Jews to avoid ceremony

Jews in Denmark reportedly plan to boycott a public gathering for Kristallnacht.

Community leaders say they are afraid that radical Muslims will run a parallel, anti-Israel demonstration, according to Israel Radio.

### B'nai Brith Canada honors writers

Four Toronto-based newspaper journalists received awards from B'nai Brith Canada. The journalists were honored Monday for offering accurate discussions of issues affecting Israel and the Jewish community, as well as for their uncompromising condemnation of Islamic fundamentalist terrorism.

Ruth Klein, the organization's national director of advocacy, said B'nai Brith Canada intends to make the awards an annual event.

The four honorees were National Post reporter Stewart Bell, Toronto Star columnist Rosie DiManno, Toronto Sun columnist John Downing and Globe and Mail columnist Marcus Gee.

### Center protests anti-Semitic book

The Simon Wiesenthal Center asked the United Nations to denounce an anti-Semitic book written by Syria's defense minister.

The book, which is in its eighth edition and has become a best-seller in the Arab world, accuses Jews of murdering Christians and using their blood to bake matzahs for Passover.

"The United States and the Security Council should not sit by idly while one of its member states flaunts the charter of the United Nations and allows a senior minister to promote anti-Semitism on a grand scale," Rabbi Marvin Hier, the center's dean, wrote in a letter to the United Nations.

## German politician may face jail over flier lambasted as anti-Semitic

By Toby Axelrod

BERLIN (JTA) — A German politician may end up in jail over irregular funding for a campaign flier that critics call anti-Semitic.

Jurgen Mollemann resigned Sunday as leader of the Free Democratic Party in his home state of North Rhine-Westphalia after allegations about the flier surfaced.

Mollemann is facing an investigation over funding for the flier, which he had printed and distributed to 1 million residents in his home state at a cost of nearly \$1 million.

The controversial flier, issued days before the Sept. 22 federal elections, described Mollemann as a longtime supporter of both Israel and a Palestinian state.

The flier then repeated Mollemann's past accusations against Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and German Jewish leader Michel Friedman.

It criticized Sharon's policies and accused Friedman, a vice president of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, of defending Sharon and trying to label Mollemann "as 'anti-Israeli and anti-Semitic.'"

The flier also urged voters to support Mollemann by voting for the Free Democratic Party.

Mollemann, who long has expressed sympathy for Palestinian suicide bombers, roiled Germany earlier this year when he said Friedman helped provoke anti-Semitism by his manner and behavior.

In September, facing allegations that his anti-Israel, pro-Palestinian positions were responsible for the Free Democrats' poor electoral showing in the national elections, Mollemann resigned as the party's national vice president.

Following the allegations, Mollemann has only a matter of days to reveal the names of contributors who helped fund the flier. If he fails to comply, he may face a jail term of up to three years.

To some, the campaign finance scandal is secondary to the uproar caused by the fliers themselves, which led the leader of the Free Democrats, Guido Westerwelle, to distance himself from Mollemann in the last days of the election campaign.

Journalist Henryk Broder, who reprinted Mollemann's flier on his Web site, wrote that no other world conflict would serve the politician's purposes as well as the Mideast conflict, "because there have to be Jews there in order to make" Mollemann's "blood boil."

Investigators say the account set up to fund the flier contains mostly anonymous donations, which is illegal according to laws governing political parties.

If the sources of funding are not revealed, the funds must be turned over to the president of the lower house of Parliament, Wolfgang Thierse.

Mollemann, who is recovering from a heart problem in the Canary Islands, criticized his party leaders but gave no hint of when or if he would clear up the mystery of the donors.

He accused Westerwelle and party treasurer Gunther Rexrodt of seeking his downfall rather than caring for the future of the party.

Rexrodt told the German Press Agency that the bank account for the fliers had contained some \$800,000, mostly from anonymous donors.

Of some 145 donor signatures, only a few could be deciphered.

The 11 individuals who have been reached have denied that they made any contributions.

Rexrodt also said a prosecutor in North Rhine-Westphalia would soon announce the results of a judicial investigation into the case.

Meanwhile, the honorary chairman of the Free Democrats, Otto Graf Lambsdorff, made a reference to Mollemann's past expressions of sympathy for Palestinian terrorists.

Lambsdorff called Mollemann a suicide bomber against his party and his own ambitions.

Lambsdorff, who was the government representative in negotiations to provide reparations to Nazi-era slaves and forced laborers, also told a radio station that Mollemann has "used every chance he got to blow himself up politically." □

AROUND THE JEWISH WORLD**After 500 years, Jews leaving Spanish enclaves near Morocco***By Hillel Landes*

MADRID (JTA) — Growing anti-Semitism and poor economic prospects are threatening to extinguish two Jewish communities on the North African coast.

After the expulsion from Spain in 1492, a small number of Jews escaped across the Strait of Gibraltar to two fortress cities that Spanish kings were establishing as beachheads in North Africa.

Despite the Inquisition on the Iberian mainland, the Jewish inhabitants of Ceuta and Melilla largely were left alone for the next five centuries. They were joined by other Sephardic Jews over the centuries. Their descendants now are leaving the enclaves, which are surrounded by Moroccan territory, and returning to Spain.

"In 10 years, perhaps there will be no one here," said Mesod Bengio, a Jewish perfume merchant in Ceuta.

Ceuta and slightly smaller Melilla are unlike any other part of Spain, where no Jews lived — at least not openly — until religious freedom was reinstated in the 19th century.

Jews in Ceuta and Melilla, which measure about eight and five square miles, respectively, have lived cheek by jowl, but largely in peace, with Christians, Muslims and a small minority of Hindus.

Historical evidence shows Jews living in Ceuta as far back as the 12th century. The Jewish presence in Melilla is said to have started several years after the expulsion with a Spanish aristocrat who had Jewish ancestors.

Ceuta's total population is around 70,000; Melilla is slightly smaller. Though their Jewish communities today are small — some 300 in Ceuta and around 800 in Melilla — they still have functioning Sephardic synagogues, schools and butcher shops. That's down from their peak in the late 1960s, when there were about 600 Jews in Ceuta and 1,000 in Melilla.

However, the communities' future has grown uncertain since the Sept. 11 attacks and Moroccan King Mohamed's renewed claims of sovereignty over the cities fired up young Muslim inhabitants.

In the past year, eggs, rocks and bottles have been thrown at Ceuta's Sephardic synagogue while Jews were at prayer, Palestinian flags and graffiti glorifying Osama bin Laden have been painted on synagogues and churches, and graves in Melilla's Jewish cemetery have been desecrated.

Meanwhile, Moroccan claims over the enclaves have become more vociferous since last summer's crisis with Spain over Perejil Island, an uninhabited island a mile and a half from Ceuta. Moroccan troops occupied the island, but were swiftly kicked off by Spanish soldiers.

Morocco argues that if Spain wants Gibraltar back from Britain — which has held it since the early 18th century — then, by the same logic, it should be prepared to give Ceuta and Melilla to Morocco. "Now they're Spanish," said another Ceuti Jew, Jose Benchimol. "Who knows what could happen in 10 years?"

Some commentators sketch worst-case scenarios.

"If anyone doesn't think that within a year or two we'll be at war over Ceuta and Melilla — be it terrorism or open war" — then he "doesn't want to see the obvious," one columnist wrote in

Spain's El Mundo newspaper. What might Moroccan rule be like for Jews in the enclaves?

"Morocco has always accepted Jews," said Benchimol, who spent 12 years as vice president of Ceuta's Jewish community. He noted that there are still Jews in Rabat, Morocco's capital, who "live peacefully and have endured the intifada without repercussions."

However, many Jews who today live in Ceuta and Melilla fled there from Morocco after the 1967 Six-Day War, when Morocco was swept up in the Arab world's outrage over Israel's victory.

Benchimol echoed Spanish leaders' frequent assertions that Ceuta and Melilla are paragons of interfaith harmony. The leaders of the different faith communities "always wish each other happy holidays," he noted.

Still, he conceded that interethnic harmony doesn't always filter down to the population at large — particularly to Muslim youths who have become radicalized since Sept. 11.

Madrid's chief rabbi, Moshe Ben Dahan, is a former Ceuta resident. He moved there from Morocco with his family after the 1967 Six-Day War, when he was 12 years old, and later moved to Madrid after yeshiva studies in Israel.

Ben Dahan downplayed the impact of anti-Semitism in Ceuta and Melilla. Yet he acknowledged that the communities are dwindling — primarily, he said, because there's little future for young Jews in the enclaves, whose economies are dependent on tourism, trade and government subsidies. □

**Holocaust denial, anti-Semitism have implications, speaker says***By Magnus Bennett*

PRAGUE (JTA) — Failure to combat Holocaust denial could lead to the failure of civilization itself, a survivor told a conference here.

Czech Jewish writer Arnost Lustig was one of a number of speakers from Israel, the United States, France and the Czech Republic who gathered this week to discuss anti-Semitism in Central and Eastern Europe in the years since the fall of communism.

The conference covered the beginnings of modern anti-Semitism in the region as well as issues relating to the current extremist scene.

In his speech, Lustig said the issue of Holocaust denial was not simply about the truth of the Holocaust, but whether mankind would allow lies to be presented as truth.

"We are witnesses to an attempt at colossal deceit over history," he said.

"The fate of human beings," as well as the meaningfulness of human history, "is at stake," he said.

Lustig also warned that people should not underestimate what appears to be an innocent joke at the expense of Jews.

"Jews are first defamed and denigrated and then killed," he said. "To underestimate that is tantamount to suicide."

Holocaust denial was also raised by a Czech political science student, Vaclav Nekvapil. He argued that while there was little sympathy in the Czech Republic for anti-Semitic prejudice, there was the "burning problem" of easily accessible incendiary literature, such as the works of Holocaust denier David Irving. □