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85th Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Shul shooting link in sniper case

The two suspects in the Washington, D.C.-area sniper case allegedly fired gunshots at a synagogue in Washington state last May.

The latest allegations against John Allen Muhammad and John Lee Malvo surfaced after a man in Tacoma, Wash., told police he had lent the pair his guns.

The duo also is believed to be behind the killing last February of a Tacoma woman who was shot in the face when she opened the door to her house. Then, between May 1 and May 4, shots were fired at Temple Beth El in Tacoma. There were no injuries, and damage was minimal. [Page 4]

Palestinian gunman kills Israeli

At least one Israeli was killed by a Palestinian gunman who infiltrated a West Bank settlement on Tuesday.

The Palestinian, who injured several others, was then shot and killed by residents of Hermesh.

Did killing protest U.S.-Israel ties?

A little-known Islamic group claimed it was responsible for killing an American official in Jordan on Monday to protest U.S. support for Israel.

But Jordanian officials on Tuesday dismissed the claim from the group, the Honorables of Jordan, as they did last year, when the group said it killed an Israeli businessman in Amman.

On Monday, Lawrence Foley, a senior administrator for the U.S. Agency for International Development, was gunned down as he was walking to his car.

Powell cancels speech

Secretary of State Colin Powell canceled a speech scheduled for next week on Middle East democratization.

The speech, which was expected to unveil the Middle East Partnership Initiative, was canceled because the program is already under way, a State Department official said, and administration officials were concerned that the policy would be unfairly characterized as a ploy to garner Arab support for an attack against Iraq.

"With so much of the region focused on Iraq policy, letting the program proceed on its own merits is the best way," the official said.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Bush's Mideast plan sets stage for possible showdown with Sharon

By Leslie Susser

JERUSALEM (JTA) — A new American "road map" is the most vigorous U.S. effort in nearly 18 months to end Israeli-Palestinian violence, but it could presage a coming clash between the Israeli and American governments.

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon is concerned that the new U.S. plan could lead to a Palestinian state even without the Palestinians ending terror or making necessary democratic and security reforms to allow a secure and durable peace.

Senior Palestinian officials, on the contrary, fear that the plan could lead to the perpetuation of Israel's presence in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Throughout the two years of fighting, the failure to restart political talks has revolved around a seemingly insoluble contradiction: Israel refuses to talk about the end goal of negotiations until the shooting stops, while the Palestinians are unwilling to stop shooting until the end result is guaranteed.

The American plan tries to square the circle by promising an end result — Palestinian statehood in three years — but making that goal performance-based. That means the Palestinians must stop violence and introduce reforms before they can achieve statehood.

The road map has three stages.

- Stage one, to be completed by mid-2003, is restoration of the status quo: An end to Palestinian terror and an Israeli troop withdrawal to positions Israel held before the intifada began in September 2000.

During this period Israel would freeze all settlement activity and the Palestinian Authority would undertake reforms to become more democratic and transparent.

International monitors stationed in the area would determine whether each side had met its obligations.

- Stage two, to be completed by the beginning of 2004, involves reducing the scope of Israel's occupation and creating a Palestinian "mini-state."

The Palestinian Authority would hold new elections, an international conference would be convened, a provisional Palestinian "mini-state" would be established after further Israeli territorial withdrawals, and Israel would take "additional action" on settlements— including, perhaps, dismantling some.

- In stage three, which would take until the end of 2005, Israel would end its presence in the West Bank and Gaza Strip by removing troops and settlers. Negotiations would address the most difficult "final-status" issues between the two sides — Jerusalem, refugees, water and final borders — leading to the establishment of a full-fledged Palestinian state.

The Saudi peace plan of February 2002 is seen as a relevant model for a final territorial deal between Israel and Palestine — based on an Israeli withdrawal to the pre-1967 borders, with land swaps to compensate for any adjustments — and for ending the conflict between Israel and the rest of the Arab world.

Under the road map, movement from one step to the next within each stage, or from one stage to the next, would be "performance-based" — in other words, dependent on the parties carrying out their sequential obligations.

Sharon has accepted the road map "in principle," but sees it as a "dangerous diversion" from President Bush's landmark June speech: The plan is far less insistent on removing Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat, and far more ambivalent about

MIDEAST FOCUS

Israeli troops kill Hamas leader

An Israeli undercover unit killed a senior Hamas member during a raid in the West Bank on Monday night. Assam Sawafta was killed after he was discovered in the home of another Hamas member in the village of Tubas.

Israeli officials said Sawafta was a local Hamas commander who served as a coordinator with Hamas' military wing in the Gaza Strip, Israel Radio reported.

Arafat's new Cabinet approved

Palestinian legislators approved Yasser Arafat's new Cabinet during a meeting Tuesday in Ramallah. The approval came by a vote of 56-18, despite efforts by dissenters to carry out more sweeping changes and limit Arafat's authority.

The new 19-member Cabinet closely resembles the Cabinet that resigned last month.

Group decries Israeli roadblocks

Israeli army roadblocks have prevented ambulances from moving injured and sick Palestinians in about 600 cases during the past two years, a group of Israeli doctors said.

In a report issued this week, Physicians for Human Rights said that since the Palestinian uprising began, Israeli roadblocks have blocked or delayed Palestinians from receiving prompt medical care.

Temple Mount wall said OK

A group of Jordanian engineers who investigated a bulge in the southern wall of the Temple Mount recommended replacing some eroding stones. The report drawn up by the engineers concluded that the wall is not in danger of immediate collapse, the Jerusalem Post reported.

Israel says the bulge has been caused by massive, unsupervised construction on the mount carried out by the Islamic religious trust.

the need for a cease-fire before negotiations can begin. Sharon also is worried about the idea of international observers deciding each sides' performance.

"How can we allow observers to decide for us whether terror has or has not stopped?" he asked the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee on Monday.

Moreover, Sharon argues, the plan's performance demands are totally incompatible with its fixed timetables. If the Palestinians are slated to get a mini-state in 18 months and full statehood in three years, the international community — eager to maintain apparent momentum toward a peace deal — will cut corners on Palestinian performance in order to meet the fixed deadlines, he maintains.

In late October meetings in Jerusalem with U.S. peace envoy William Burns, Sharon and Defense Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer argued that the road map makes no specific demands on the Palestinians to prevent terror until Israel withdraws to pre-intifada lines and the new, unified Palestinian security service is up and running.

Yet many here ask how Israel can be expected to pull troops out of Palestinian cities and towns if it means exposing Israeli citizens to terror attacks. Surely Israel would need convincing guarantees that the Palestinians would take effective action against terror.

Burns, it seems, got the Israeli message.

"It is only through decisive action to end terror and violence and decisive action to reform in preparation for Palestinian statehood that we are going to be able to move ahead on a practical pathway to end occupation and this terrible conflict," he declared after talks with Palestinian leaders in Jericho.

As for the Palestinians, they are seeking even more binding timetables — as well as American guarantees that the end product will be a Palestinian state with its capital in eastern Jerusalem and a "just" solution to the refugee problem.

The Palestinians also want elections as early as next January, which they believe will shore up Arafat's status as a major player.

Does the road map stand a chance of effecting a breakthrough where other plans have failed? Or will it merely lead to tension between the Sharon government and Washington?

Several months ago, a senior official in Israel's Foreign Ministry warned Sharon that he had not properly understood Bush's June 24 speech.

Bush's emphasis on the need for a cease-fire, democratization of Palestinian institutions and replacement of Arafat was only one side of the equation, the official said; the other was the president's call for a Palestinian state in three years.

Sooner or later, he said, that would mean American pressure on Israel to deal with final status issues that Sharon, with his emphasis on a long-term interim agreement — and only after violence ends — has been reluctant to address.

During his year and a half in office, Sharon's proudest diplomatic achievement in his contacts with the U.S. administration was to get the 2000 Clinton-Barak package for a final peace deal removed from the table. Now, with the road map, much of that package is back.

As such, the plan shows the successes and failures of Sharon's diplomacy: He has succeeded in winning support for serious reform of the Palestinian Authority, but he has failed in dampening territorial demands from Israel and in preventing the internationalization of the conflict. Given Israel's economic woes and Sharon's request — made during his Oct. 16 White House visit — for \$10 billion from the United States in loan guarantees, the Jewish state seems unusually vulnerable to diplomatic pressure right now, creating the potential for a showdown.

But there is another school of thought that sees the road map as a real chance for peace, provided the Americans are serious about forcing the Palestinians to democratize.

Taking this line, columnist Sever Plotzker wrote in the Israeli daily Yedioth Achronot that the road map "changes the final goal of an Israeli-Palestinian peace deal from 'two states for two peoples' to 'two democratic states for two peoples at peace.'"

And, Plotzker added, a final peace agreement that ends the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will require far-reaching concessions of the kind only democracies are able to make — and keep.

The real question, though, is whether the Americans will have the political will and the stamina to make the demands of both sides that are needed to make the road map work. □

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



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JEWISH WORLD

Kids among hostage deaths

At least four Jews, including two children, were among the dead in last weekend's hostage crisis in Moscow, according to the Federation of Jewish Communities of Russia.

At least 20 Jewish hostages survived, some of whom are still recuperating in local hospitals.

Group: Islamic hacks escalating

Pro-Islamic hackers are escalating their cyber attacks, according to a computer security firm.

The hackers have an anti-U.S., anti-Israel agenda and also are escalating attacks on countries that support the U.S.-led war on terror, the London-based computer security firm mi2g told Reuters.

Crucifix proposal divides council

The city council in Milan, Italy is divided over a proposal to hang a crucifix in its assembly hall as a symbol of "Christian and western traditions."

Emanuele Fede, a past president of the Milan Jewish community who is the leader of the leftist opposition in City Hall, criticized the proposal by the right-wing Northern League. "The crucifix as a public symbol in a modern, complex and multicultural society does not correspond to the values of modern Europe," he wrote in an editorial.

Jewish film archive online

More than 100 films from Hebrew University's Steven Spielberg Jewish Film Archive are now available online. Project officials describe the archive as the world's largest collection of Jewish documentary films.

The films deal with the Holocaust, Israeli history, Jewish life in pre-war Europe and many other topics. More information is currently available at www.spielbergfilmarchive.org.il.

Germany honors Jewish athlete

A sports stadium named after a German Jewish athlete barred from the 1936 Berlin Olympics was recently completed in Germany. The stadium in the city of Laupheim is named after Margaret Bergmann Lambert, who was kept out of the Berlin Games even though she was one of the country's top high jumpers. Hitler turned the Games into a showpiece for "Aryan superiority."

Lambert, who immigrated to the United States in 1937, vowed never to have anything to do with Germany.

In 1996, however, she attended the Atlanta Olympic Games at the invitation of the German Olympic Committee, and she visited Germany in 1999. "I decided I could not blame this generation for what their fathers and grandfathers did," she told The New York Times.

Holocaust memorial plan in Italy prompts an anti-Semitic diatribe

By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME (JTA) — Officials in northern Italy have condemned a far-right political party for protesting a drive to erect a Holocaust memorial in the city of Bolzano.

In cooperation with the local Jewish community, local newspapers in the province of Alto Adige launched an effort last Friday to build a monument in Bolzano's Jewish cemetery to honor Jews killed in a Nazi transit camp in the town.

Alto Adige, also known as the South Tyrol, is a largely German-speaking province on the border with Austria.

Thousands of South Tyroleans were enrolled in the German Wehrmacht, Waffen-SS or Nazi police units.

The local Freiheitliche, or Freedom, Party, which is closely allied with Austrian right-wing extremist Jorg Haider, attacked the monument initiative in terms that mixed classic anti-Semitism with pro-Palestinian rhetoric.

"South Tyroleans have more important problems than continually listening to Jews," party secretary Ulli Mair said over the weekend in a statement.

"One must stop attributing to new generations the sins of the past, in which always and only the Jews are represented as victims," the statement said.

"Jews everywhere have positions of power, above all in the United States," it added. "But have they at least learned something from history? Or is it always others who must learn? It's enough to see what's happening in Palestine. For this, we are against South Tyroleans giving their money for a Jewish monument."

The attack outraged mainstream political forces and prompted statements of support for local Jews.

Alessandra Zendron, president of the province, expressed "full solidarity with the Jewish community, because these things must absolutely not be permitted and must be condemned in the most absolute manner."

Mair's words, she said, "provoke an immediate sense of revulsion in anyone who knows history."

Frederico Steinhaus, the president of the local Jewish community, told JTA on Tuesday that all other local political parties condemned the attack and called for Mair's dismissal as party leader.

In addition to the response from political parties, Steinhaus said, the local bishop announced he would make a personal donation toward construction of the memorial.

The Freiheitliche Party's protest, Steinhaus said, "seems to have boomeranged."

The Bolzano transit camp operated for 10 months in 1944-1945. During this time, more than 11,000 anti-fascist political prisoners, Jews, Gypsies and others passed through.

These included more than 200 Jews deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau and other death camps.

Thirteen Jews killed in the transit camp are buried in the Jewish cemetery in Bolzano.

As part of the fund-raising initiative for the monument, an article about one local Jew who was deported to his or her death will be published in the local press each week during the coming six months.

About 50 Jews live today in Alto Adige. □

Turkish Jews choose chief rabbi

NEW YORK (JTA) — Turkey's Jewish community has chosen a new chief rabbi. Ishak Haleve, 62, will lead the 25,000-member community for the next seven years, the rabbi's office announced last Friday.

Haleve replaces Rabbi David Asseo, who led the community for 41 years until his death in July.

No date has been set for when Haleve will become the "Hahambasi," a combination of the Hebrew term for wise man and the Turkish word for leader. □

Tacoma Jews shocked that sniper suspects tied to shooting

By Rachel Pomerance

NEW YORK (JTA) — “Phil Donahue on line two,” a voice squawked through an intercom at Temple Beth El in Tacoma, Wash., during a JTA phone interview with the synagogue’s rabbi, Mark Glickman.

Since Tacoma police stated Monday night that the suspects in the notorious sniper case have been linked to a May shooting at Beth El, the 350-family synagogue has been inundated with calls from the media.

The response from the congregation and the local Jewish community is a mixture of relief — that the case may bring closure — and shock, but not panic.

Two bullets were fired into the synagogue sometime between May 1 and May 4 of this year. One lodged in an outside wall, while the second tore through the wall, crossed a meeting room and flew into the chapel. There it penetrated the door of the ark and landed in the back of the ark, but missed the synagogue’s Torah scrolls.

When Glickman learned last week that John Allen Muhammad and John Lee Malvo — suspects in the three-week shooting spree in the Washington, D.C., suburbs that killed 10, wounded three and transfixed the country — had lived in Washington state, he gave local law enforcement officials “a friendly reminder” about the synagogue shooting in May.

Glickman told JTA he was “slightly embarrassed” to make the call because the link was “such a long shot.”

But a ballistic test at the Washington state crime lab matched the bullet from the synagogue shooting to a .44 Magnum the suspects may have used, according to Martha Tebbenkamp, public information officer at the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms in Seattle.

The weapon had been given to police by a concerned citizen who said Muhammad and Malvo were his house guests from May to July 2002, during the time of the synagogue shooting.

“Everybody is just sort of dumbfounded and surprised that our synagogue here in the Pacific Northwest is somehow related to this person who did such horrible things,” Glickman said.

The evidence tying the pair to the Tacoma shooting is scanty, however.

“Chances of going further with this are pretty slim unless someone comes forward with a tip,” said Jim Mattheis, public information officer for the Tacoma police.

This isn’t the first time Beth El has been a target.

In fact, the synagogue “has had the most activity of any institution in the five-state region that I cover,” said Brian Goldberg, regional director of the Anti-Defamation League’s Pacific Northwest region.

Goldberg listed about seven attacks against Beth El in the last two years, which have escalated from threatening phone calls and vandalism to an arson attempt — shortly after Sept. 11 — and the spring shooting.

The Pacific Northwest has the highest concentration of extremist groups in the country, and several white supremacist groups are based in Tacoma, Goldberg said.

There also have been several recent incidents in the region involving Islamic militants, Goldberg said.

Coverage of attacks on the synagogue has only raised its

profile, he said. It also doesn’t help that the synagogue is located on a main thoroughfare, Glickman said.

Beth El, Glickman joked, is like the Far Side cartoon of a deer with a target on its chest, and the deer’s buddy says, that’s a “bummer of a birth mark you got there.”

“We’re pretty visible,” he said.

While congregants have been shaken by word of Muhammad’s and Malvo’s tie to the May shooting, it hasn’t disrupted their lives.

“I think it’s startling, frankly, to think that someone who’s so skilled at shooting might have killed one or more members of our Jewish community, or anyone as a matter of fact,” said Lilly Warnick, 68, a retired college administrator at Tacoma Community College and a member of Beth El for 49 years.

“I’m not scared, but I think wherever you live in the world now there’s concern,” she said. “I think the Israelis have given us a good model. You just go about doing what you’re doing and try to be as vigilant as possible.”

Homebuilder Joe Mayer, 33, said he feels safer knowing that Muhammad and Malvo are “no longer on the street.”

Mayer’s son Ethan, 3, is in a Jewish day care program at the synagogue, where his wife, Gloria, works.

“It’s a little more scary sending them,” he said, “but you would never change your routine for this kind of activity.”

The ADL’s Goldberg is trying to schedule a meeting with Washington Gov. Gary Locke to stress the need to secure Jewish institutions. □

Canadian Jews are incensed as union calls for a boycott of Israel

By Bram Eisenthal

MONTREAL (JTA) — Members of a Quebec labor union who recently visited the West Bank and Gaza Strip have denounced Israel as an “apartheid regime” and called for a boycott of Israeli products.

The Centrale des Syndicats du Quebec, a major union representing teachers, health care and social service workers and other labor groups, sent 10 members on a 12-day fact-finding mission to Palestinian areas.

The group did not meet with any Israeli government representatives or Israeli colleagues from the Histadrut trade union federation.

The delegation prepared a blistering report on Israel’s treatment of Palestinians, outlining a litany of Palestinian suffering that they blamed on Israel’s military presence in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Israel has reoccupied much of the West Bank this year in response to waves of Palestinian terrorism.

Robert Silverman, a founder of the Montreal-based Jewish Alliance Against the Occupation, is part of the union group, which is calling for a Quebec-wide boycott of Israeli products.

Monique Richard, the president of CSQ, went so far as to refer to the “apartheid regime put in place by the Israeli authorities.”

Incensed, Montreal’s Jewish leadership is striking back. At an Oct. 24 news conference, representatives of Canadian Jewish Congress’s Quebec region, the Canada-Israel Committee’s Quebec region, representatives of Quebec’s Sephardic community and Federation CJA condemned the union’s report. □