



# Daily News Bulletin

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85th Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Mitzna wins Labor primary

Haifa Mayor Amram Mitzna was elected leader of Israel's Labor Party. Mitzna's two challengers, incumbent leader Benjamin Ben-Eliezer and legislator Haim Ramon, conceded defeat several hours after polls closed Tuesday night. An exit poll aired on Israeli Television showed Mitzna winning 57 percent of the vote, far more than the 40 percent necessary to prevent a runoff. Ben-Eliezer won 35 percent of the vote and Ramon 8 percent, according to the exit poll.

Mitzna immediately offered Ben-Eliezer the No. 2 position on the Labor Knesset list, but Ben-Eliezer said he needed time to consider the offer.

In another development, Mitzna said he would immediately dismantle all Jewish settlements in the Gaza Strip if he becomes prime minister.

In an interview with the Israeli daily Ha'aretz, he also said he would resume talks with the Palestinians without condition and would withdraw from most of the West Bank within a year of taking office.

### Israeli sites allegedly targeted

An Australian man was arrested for allegedly planning to blow up the Israeli Embassy in Canberra and the Israeli Consulate in Sydney.

Jack Roche, who holds British and Australian citizenship, reportedly converted to Islam 10 years ago.

### 10 Commandments fight brews

The chief justice of Alabama's Supreme Court vowed a legal fight to keep a monument of the Ten Commandments in the Alabama judicial building.

Chief Justice Roy Moore, who installed the monument, said through his lawyer that he would ask an appeals court to allow the 5,300-pound granite monument to stay where it is until the appeals process is completed.

### Web site helps Jews learn

Edgar Bronfman and Lynn Schusterman are backing a multimillion-dollar Web initiative to teach Jewish religion, history and culture. The site, called MyJewishLearning.com, is being co-produced by Hebrew College in Boston and Jewish Family & Life, an online publisher.

Bronfman, who is putting several million dollars into the venture, said it may be "the most important" donation he has ever made in Jewish life.

## Team set to investigate NJPS as debate over survey intensifies

By Joe Berkofsky

NEW YORK (JTA) — The head of the United Jewish Communities appointed a committee this week to investigate what went wrong with the National Jewish Population Survey.

The appointments came as Stephen Hoffman, president and CEO of the UJC, which funded the \$6 million study, traded barbs with top advisers to the much-heralded survey over his decision to delay making key parts of the study public.

Members of the National Technical Advisory Committee are criticizing Hoffman for pulling its release from the organization's General Assembly in Philadelphia this week.

Hoffman is standing by the decision he made last week after learning that the outside research firm conducting the 2000-01 study lost some data.

Hoffman said he had lost faith in the committee's top two advisers and that the study was too important to risk going forward at this time.

He said the lost data raised concerns that could damage the credibility of what was being billed as the most extensive portrait of American Jewry to date.

"The issue is not that there's something catastrophic — there's no smoking gun here," Hoffman said. "The issue is an accumulation of questions concerning NJPS."

Hoffman's decision to delay the NJPS came on the eve of the General Assembly, where many in the organized Jewish community were hoping to learn the latest data from the survey about Jewish identity issues such as affiliation and intermarriage.

"The integrity of the National Jewish Population Study is of the utmost importance," Hoffman said Monday as he appointed a task force to investigate the matter.

Hoffman named McGill University's principal and vice chancellor, Bernard Shapiro, to head the UJC task force.

Hoffman also appointed Howard Rieger, president of the United Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh, and Mandell Berman and Edward Kaplan, co-chairs of the NJPS trustees, to the investigative body.

The news that the study was not being released as expected this week stunned the organized Jewish world.

Some advisers to the study criticized the delay for generating controversy and overshadowing what was essentially an accurate survey.

"We think it was a mistake not to release the data," said Frank Mott, co-chair of the advisory committee and professor at Ohio State University.

"A molehill has been turned into a mountain," said Mott, who along with co-chair Vivian Klaff, a professor at the University of Delaware, unsuccessfully lobbied Hoffman to go forward with the study last week.

Despite the fact that "we have a very good data set," Mott said, "to some extent it's now being trashed. Mr. Hoffman reacted very hastily. He is, I think, misinformed."

But Hoffman was critical of the leading advisers on the study, saying last week's revelations were only the latest in a series of problems.

He said he was concerned that the revelations of missing data only reached him last week despite the fact that at least one NJPS researcher knew of the glitch for some time.

"I have lost total confidence in the leadership of NTAC," Hoffman said, referring to the advisory panel.

The missing data was the "straw that broke my camel's back" regarding the advisory panel leadership, he said.

For some time, Hoffman said, he had built an "accumulation of doubt" about the

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Terrorists vie over ambush claims

Hamas and Islamic Jihad are competing for bragging rights over last Friday's attack in Hebron that killed 12 Israelis.

Islamic Jihad issued a leaflet this week saying its members had no assistance from any other group and expressing surprise that Hamas decided, three days after the incident, to issue its own statement, Israel Radio reported. On Monday, Hamas claimed that its gunmen had fired on the Israelis, but withdrew safely during the ensuing firefight. The three gunmen killed by Israeli troops belonged to Islamic Jihad.

### Sadat visit anniversary marked

Israel marked the 25th anniversary of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's historic visit to Jerusalem. Israel's Foreign Ministry said the visit, and the peace treaty it led to, show how former enemies can make peace.

### Army commander threatened

Threatening posters were pasted outside the home of a senior Israeli army commander because of a house arrest order he issued against an extremist Jewish activist.

The signs, which resembled death notices, accused Moshe Kaplinsky of chasing down Jews because of their opinions, instead of fighting terrorism, Israel Radio reported.

### Veteran kibbutz dismantled

The Israeli government decided to dismantle a cash-strapped kibbutz. Located along the eastern shores of the Sea of Galilee, Kibbutz Ha'on was established in the early 1950s.

The government took action Sunday after the kibbutz become engulfed in financial difficulties. The kibbutz's assets will be used to pay debts and to insure pension plans and lodging for kibbutz members.

panel's leadership, though he declined to say why. Still, Hoffman said he had no plans to dismiss any members of the volunteer advisory panel, and none of the critics on the panel had plans to step down.

Anticipation of the new data on intermarriage and affiliation has built since the last study in 1990 produced the controversial finding that 52 percent of Jews married non-Jews in the previous five years.

That finding largely split the community into those who urged outreach to marginal Jews and those who advocated strengthening Jewish identity among those already affiliated.

This time around, the NJPS team set out a timetable in releasing the results of the survey.

UJC released initial population figures last month.

According to the latest study, the population has fallen to 5.2 million, down 300,000 from 1990, as the median age climbed and women waited longer to have fewer children.

Hoffman last week said that, had he known of the missing data before releasing the initial population information in October, "we would not have released it."

But several members of the advisory panel said they thought the missing data was relatively minor.

The lost data concerned codes that telephone callers from the firm Roper Audits & Surveys Worldwide were supposed to keep when screening households for Jews, advisory committee members said.

These callers failed to keep, or later lost, codes for two-thirds of the first 14 sets of 22 surveys the overall study was based upon, committee members said.

David Marker, a member of the advisory committee and senior statistician at the firm Westat, said that at worst, the glitch caused the study to underestimate the population by 1 percent — well within a typical margin of error for such a large survey sample of 4,500.

Such missing information could also have resulted in a 5 percent overestimate of some 40,000 people "loosely associated" with Jews, Marker added, while the number of non-Jews living with Jews may have been overestimated by 1 percent.

"On a statistical basis, it's not enough" to withhold the survey, Marker said.

Klaff said that most of his committee colleagues were "very disappointed" in the decision to delay the study.

Ira Sheskin, an advisory committee member and director of the Jewish Demography Project at the University of Miami's Miller Center for Contemporary Jewish Studies, is among the minority of advisers who supported Hoffman's decision to delay the study until "we're 100 percent certain it's OK."

Still Sheskin said the missing data was not a big problem and he was not aware of any other major problems with the NJPS.

"As far as I know, there are not skeletons in the closet," he said.

But Hoffman dismissed the argument that the missing data was not important enough to halt the study.

Klaff and Mott "have had an excuse that says, 'it's not significant' on a number of occasions," Hoffman said, and they "keep explaining away things."

"One percent here, 1 percent there — pretty soon it's significant," he said.

Still, Hoffman expressed confidence in the ultimate outcome of the study, which he said would be released at some point in the future.

"I have fundamental confidence in the core data," he said.

Shapiro, who is heading the investigation, said the task force will convene "in the coming weeks" and "examine the full range of issues concerning NJPS."

One path the task force will follow will be uncovering who knew of the missing information and at what point.

Members of the advisory panel told JTA that on May 31, Roper sent a memo concerning "incomplete" information to committee members and members of the NJPS research department at the UJC.

Members of the department include Jim Schwartz, the NJPS research director, and Lorraine Blass, the NJPS project director.

On June 11, several advisory committee members met with the NJPS researchers and discussed the missing data, committee members said.

"We didn't realize what the implications were," Klaff said. □



## Daily News Bulletin

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## JEWISH WORLD

### Christianity in Russia's schools?

Human rights groups in Russia are criticizing a Russian government document widely seen as paving the way for Christian instruction in the country's public schools.

The document from the Russian Education Ministry would allow teachings from the Russian Orthodox Church if approved by regional officials or a school's principal. Critics say the textbook for a proposed course is permeated with xenophobia and propagates the notion that Jews killed Jesus.

### Second-century artifacts found

Papyrus scrolls dating to the second-century Jewish rebellion against the Romans were discovered in a Judean desert cave. Rappelling into the cave in the Ein Gedi reserve, researchers from the Hebrew University, Bar-Ilan University and Stanford University discovered the scrolls.

They also found crude arrowheads and coins bearing the Hebrew name "Shimon," a reference to the leader of the rebellion against the Roman army, Shimon Bar Kochba. A Hebrew University researcher said the items probably belonged to Jews who hid in the remote cave to escape the Roman army.

### Wolfowitz receives award

Paul Wolfowitz told a Jewish group that U.S. military action in Iraq will have positive effects throughout the Middle East.

"We may well hope that with the demise of a truly evil and despotic regime in Iraq, we will see the liberation of one of the most talented peoples in the Arab world," the deputy secretary of defense told the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs on Monday. "Should this happen, it would be a significant step toward progress in other parts of the Muslim world, encouraging others who dream that ancient dream of freedom." Wolfowitz received the Henry M. Jackson Distinguished Service Award from the Washington-based organization.

### Thanksgiving project launched

The American Jewish Committee is cosponsoring a Thanksgiving project honoring America's democracy and diversity.

The centerpiece of the initiative is "America's Table: A Thanksgiving Reader." It was published by the American Jewish Committee in cooperation with several other groups, including the NAACP, the Cuban American National Council, the Islamic Supreme Council, the Japanese American Citizens League and the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies.

The reader is available at [www.ajc.org](http://www.ajc.org). The AJCommittee and its partners are distributing copies across the country.

## Terror insurance bill could mean lower premiums for Jewish groups

By Matthew E. Berger

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Jewish leaders are hoping terrorism insurance legislation, expected to become law within days, will provide relief from skyrocketing premiums Jewish organizations are paying to insure their offices.

The terrorism insurance bill, which passed the House of Representatives on Nov. 14 by a voice vote, provides insurance companies with up to \$100 billion in government protection against losses from terrorist attacks. The Senate was expected to vote on the bill this week.

The federal protection should allow insurance companies to lower their rates and take on more clients, the bill's proponents hope.

"It's likely to reduce the chances that insurance companies will be skittish about offering insurance," said Diana Aviv, vice president for public policy at United Jewish Communities. "We think it's a partnership between the government and the insurance companies to meet their responsibility to provide insurance coverage to all businesses that require it, including terrorism coverage."

But Aviv noted that the bill doesn't guarantee that insurers will indeed lower their rates or offer terrorism insurance to their clients.

Since Sept. 11, Jewish groups have had a hard time obtaining terrorism insurance and have faced skyrocketing premiums for property and casualty policies.

Jewish groups are not the only ones facing this problem — the Insurance Information Institute estimates that rates have increased 30 percent nationwide since Sept. 11 — but the rate hikes have forced some federations and Jewish groups to choose between insurance and programming.

Trying to compensate for a \$50 billion industry loss since the attacks, insurance companies are passing on costs to clients and cutting back on terrorism coverage.

"Commercial insurance rates have risen across the board, particularly in big cities and in locations considered higher risks than others," said Jeanne Salvatore, vice president for consumer affairs at the Insurance Information Institute. Considered particularly risky are high-rise buildings, government buildings and high-profile venues such as arenas and stadiums.

President Bush is touting the insurance bill as a boost to the sluggish economy, but Jewish leaders believe it also can help their predicament.

Premiums in some cases have doubled, Jewish groups say.

For example, the UJA-Federation of New York's general liability rates increased from \$2.4 million to at least \$4.8 million. Property insurance has risen from \$870,000 to \$1.7 million, according to John Ruskay, executive vice president of the federation.

In the long run, Jewish leaders say, the proposed legislation should help equalize the market, lowering rates for their properties.

"Everything is dependent on the assumption of no future terrorist attacks," Aviv said. "The longer we go with sufficient efforts to make sure terrorist attacks do not happen, the bargaining position of organizations and the sense of responsibility of the insurance companies go up."

If there is another terror attack, however, it could exacerbate insurance companies' concerns, leading to further hikes in premiums.

The bill guarantees that the government will pay for 90 percent of losses caused by a terrorist attack after the first \$10 billion. In case of lesser damages, insurance companies would be responsible for less than 10 percent of their premiums, with the government handling the rest. The insurance companies' share of the cost would rise over the three years of the legislation, to a maximum of 15 percent.

If the government pays for losses under \$10 billion, it would add a surcharge of up to 3 percent to the premiums charged by the insurance companies.

The UJC has surveyed Jewish organizations but has found no evidence that they are being assessed especially high premiums, Aviv said.

"Jewish organizations are not being singled out by insurance companies," she said. "It's more about location and proximity of potential danger than targeting our community." □

## NEWS ANALYSIS

**Winner of Likud primary seen as clear favorite for prime minister***By Leslie Susser*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — The smart money says Israelis won't have to wait until next January's general election to know who their next prime minister will be: Nearly all the pundits agree it will be the winner of the Nov. 28 Likud Party leadership primary between Ariel Sharon and Benjamin Netanyahu.

The reasoning is that the Likud is so far ahead of Labor — and the right wing-religious bloc's lead over the center-left is so great — that it would take a major political upheaval for anyone but the Likud leader to form the next government.

Whoever wins the Likud primary is expected to face a Labor Party led by Haifa Mayor Amram Mitzna, whom exit polls projected as the winner of Labor's primary on Tuesday.

Pundits believe the Likud's leader in the January elections will be Sharon, the incumbent prime minister, who leads Netanyahu by almost 20 percent in the latest polls.

But Netanyahu is not giving up: He hopes to win by appealing to the innately hawkish sentiments of Likud voters and by slamming the Sharon government's economic record.

His new position as Sharon's foreign minister has not stopped Netanyahu from criticizing the government. But pundits say the old magic has gone, pointing to the vociferous support Sharon enjoyed earlier this month at the Likud convention, compared to the ripples of polite applause for Netanyahu.

"Likud members were always smart, and if the nation wants Sharon, they won't give them Netanyahu instead," key Sharon supporter Yitzhak Regev gloated.

Still, in 1996 Netanyahu closed a 20 percent lead held by then-Prime Minister Shimon Peres of Labor after Palestinian terrorists blew up buses in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.

Netanyahu's hawkish responses then turned the tables. Similarly, last Friday night's ambush of Israeli soldiers and paramilitary personnel in Hebron provided Netanyahu with political ammunition: a chance to embarrass Sharon by making the kind of right-wing statements that the prime minister cannot echo for fear of antagonizing Washington and jeopardizing an Israeli request for \$10 billion in American loan guarantees.

Israel should respond to the attack by expelling Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat now, Netanyahu declared. In fact, he said, that's what he would do if he were prime minister.

Moreover, Netanyahu said, the Hebron agreement that he himself signed with Arafat is no longer operative because Arafat rendered it null and void by supporting terror. According to Netanyahu, the same is true of the Oslo accords as a whole.

Sharon's response has been curtly dismissive: Security, he says, isn't gained by slogans.

Where Netanyahu is aiming at the Likud's right wing, Sharon is already looking to the political center, where the general election in January will be decided.

Therefore, when Netanyahu rails that Sharon will allow the creation of a Palestinian state, Sharon counters that a Palestinian state already exists in all but name. When Netanyahu talks about restructuring Israel's economic policies and cutting income tax to a 35 percent maximum, Sharon unabashedly echoes the Labor line that the real solution to Israel's economic woes is a peace deal with

the Palestinians, which Sharon says he will achieve. Another Netanyahu ploy is to harp on Sharon's age by repeatedly referring to the coming four-year term, at the end of which Sharon will be 78.

Sharon emphasizes the experience and judgment that come with age, implying that the younger Netanyahu is relatively inexperienced, and irresponsible to boot.

There was little in Sharon's earlier career to suggest that as prime minister he would become the consensual, middle-of-the-road elder statesman. He first came to prominence as the daring, unbridled commander of the Unit 101 commando force, set up in the early 1950s to conduct reprisal raids against Arab terrorists who infiltrated from Egypt and Jordan.

Always unorthodox, Sharon the soldier invariably seemed to overstep his orders, most notoriously when his men blew up about 40 buildings in an anti-terror reprisal raid on the Jordanian village of Qibya, leaving 69 civilians buried in the rubble.

In the early 1970s, as head of the Israel Defense Force's Southern Command, the uncompromising Sharon rooted out terrorism in the Gaza Strip by bulldozing the alleyways terrorists used to ambush or escape Israeli soldiers.

That same determination saw Sharon cross the Suez Canal into Egypt — against the advice of many of his colleagues — to turn the tide of the 1973 Yom Kippur War. As the general with the bandaged head leading his forces across the canal, Sharon became one of the icons of that war.

Nine years later the hero turned villain: As defense minister, Sharon was blamed when Israel's Lebanese Christian allies massacred Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps during the Lebanon War.

Forced to resign as defense minister after a commission of inquiry published its findings, Sharon's political career seemed over. But 20 years later, after a string of government posts — including foreign minister in Netanyahu's government — Sharon defied the odds to become prime minister in March 2001, enjoying stellar approval ratings for much of his term.

It was as prime minister that Sharon seemed to mellow, declaring that "the things you see from here you don't see from anywhere else." The main thing he saw was the need to nurture Israel's strategic relationship with Washington.

Netanyahu, 53, served as an officer in an elite commando unit and nearly drowned in a 1969 operation across the Suez Canal after his dinghy was hit by Egyptian bullets.

Many of his formative years were spent in America, where Netanyahu's father, a Jewish history professor and staunch Revisionist Zionist, found work. After his army service, Netanyahu returned to the United States to study architecture and business administration at MIT.

Back in Israel, he was plucked from a job in a furniture company to serve as an aide to Israel's then-ambassador to the United States, Moshe Arens. It was a short while later, as Israel's highly visible and extremely articulate U.N. ambassador in New York, that Netanyahu first made his name.

His rise in the Likud was meteoric: Netanyahu became party leader at 44 without having held a full ministerial portfolio. His term in office as prime minister, from 1996-1999, was characterized by strained relations with the Clinton administration, which was heavily invested in the Oslo peace process and exerted pressure on Israel to be more flexible vis-a-vis the Palestinians. □

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