



Daily News Bulletin

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85th Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

U.S. vetoes anti-Israel resolution

The United States vetoed an Arab-backed resolution that sought to condemn Israel for the recent killings of three U.N. workers.

The U.S. ambassador called the resolution one-sided and not conducive to Mideast peace efforts.

In last Friday's vote, 12 other council members supported the resolution.

Bulgaria and Cameroon abstained.

The resolution expressed "grave concern" at the killings by Israeli troops and demanded that Israel "refrain from the excessive and disproportionate use of force in the Occupied Palestinian territories."

It also demanded that Israel comply fully with its obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention, which deals with the protection of civilians during war, according to The Associated Press.

Lieberman, Sharon meet

Sen. Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.) equated Israel's attempts to end Palestinian terror with the U.S.-led global war on terrorism.

Meeting Sunday in Jerusalem with Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, Lieberman said he had never seen as much bipartisan support for Israel in the U.S. Congress as he has in recent months.

Part of the reason is "that the conflict that you are involved in here is being seen in the United States now as part of a larger global conflict against terrorism," he said.

Lieberman, who has said he will announce in January whether he will seek the U.S. presidency in 2004, is slated to meet with Palestinian officials Monday in the West Bank town of Ramallah before heading to the Persian Gulf.

Israel speeds defense plans

Israel is accelerating civil defense preparations for possible Iraqi retaliation to a U.S. strike on Iraq. Amid assessments that Israel could be the target of Iraqi retaliatory attacks, the army is planning to distribute instruction booklets to Israelis in the coming weeks, Israel Radio reported Sunday. [Page 4]

The JTA DAILY NEWS BULLETIN will not be published Thursday, Dec. 26.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

U.S. won't unveil Mideast 'road map,' but Bush says it matches June speech

By Matthew E. Berger

WASHINGTON (JTA) — The White House is continuing its attempt to react to the concerns of all sides in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Members of the Bush administration met last Friday at the White House with the other members of the diplomatic "Quartet" — the European Union, United Nations and Russia — working for an end to the conflict. While the group did not officially unveil its "road map" toward Mideast peace, the text of the plan was finalized. Drafts of the plan, which envisions the creation of a Palestinian state within three years, have been circulating for months.

The government of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has argued that making the plan public now would constitute interference in Israel's Jan. 28 elections.

In deference to Sharon's request, Bush was able to keep the Quartet from unveiling the plan.

Israeli officials also had complained that draft versions did not incorporate specific demands that Bush made of the Palestinians in a June 24 speech.

Last Friday, Bush said that he stands by that speech, which demanded extensive reform of the Palestinian Authority and the replacement of the P.A. leadership, which Bush said was compromised by terrorism, as a condition for Palestinian statehood.

"I am strongly committed to the vision that I outlined on June the 24th," Bush said. "I believe it is in everybody's best interests that there be two states living side by side in peace, and this government will work hard to achieve that."

Bush called the road map "a part of the vision I described."

He also expressed strong support for the international community's role in Middle East peacemaking. Israel has been apprehensive about allowing countries other than the United States to play a mediator role, feeling that the other Quartet members are biased toward the Palestinians.

After the meeting, the Quartet released a statement, calling for an immediate cease-fire and demanding that "All Palestinian individuals and groups must end all acts of terror against Israelis, in any location."

It also called on Israel to withdraw troops from the West Bank "as calm is established."

Administration officials attempted to make clear last Friday that the delay in unveiling the road map did not mean the United States would be any less involved.

"By the time the road map is released, you'll see that some of the things in the road map have already been done, and the goal is to make sure as many of those things as possible are being done because those are the important issues right now," State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said. "What the road map really does is takes these issues and things that we're doing now and shows how they can be extended in the future, with the obligations of both parties, to achieve that goal in three years."

Boucher mentioned plans for Israel to transfer additional tax revenue to the Palestinian Authority and continue to improve humanitarian conditions for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The road map envisions three phases that would include an interim Palestinian state in parts of the West Bank and Gaza next year and a permanent state by the end of 2005.

In the first stage, the plan calls for the appointment of a new Palestinian Authority Cabinet and the creation of a prime minister's post to dilute the power of Arafat, the

MIDEAST FOCUS

Rabbi killed in Gaza

An Israeli rabbi was killed in the Gaza Strip last Friday. Yitzhak Arameh, 40, of the Netzer Hazani settlement, was driving with his wife and six children when Palestinian gunmen opened fire on his car. Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility.

Over the weekend, Israeli troops demolished the home of an Islamic Jihad terrorist believed to have planned last Friday's ambush. Israeli soldiers also erected roadblocks dividing Gaza into three parts. The army said the aim was to prevent the flow of terrorists and weapons.

2 Palestinians killed in Gaza

Israeli troops killed a Palestinian terrorist who tried to infiltrate a Gaza settlement Saturday night. An Israeli soldier was lightly wounded when the terrorist threw grenades and opened fire on the troops near the settlement of Morag. In another development, an 11-year-old Palestinian girl died of a gunshot wound Saturday in Gaza.

Palestinians postpone elections

The Palestinian Cabinet postponed elections that were originally planned for next month. The Cabinet said Sunday it had reached the decision because Israeli troops remain in Palestinian population centers.

Labor unveils new platform

The new platform of Israel's Labor Party offers Palestinians part of Jerusalem and joint administration of disputed holy sites.

The platform, part of Amram Mitzna's campaign for prime minister in the Jan. 28 elections, also calls for an immediate Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and negotiations with the Palestinians. If the negotiations fail, a Labor-led government would withdraw from much of the West Bank within a year and establish a border unilaterally, the platform says.



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P.A. president. It also demands that Israel dismantle any settlement outposts created since the Sharon government took office in March 2001. Later, it would require the Palestinians to write a constitution.

A monitoring system led by the Quartet would ensure that the two sides meet their commitments. Israel also would be called on to withdraw troops from all areas occupied since the Palestinian intifada began in September 2000, and to freeze all settlement activity.

The second phase, which would run through the end of 2003, begins with Palestinian elections and an international conference to form a provisional Palestinian state. The third phase, set for 2004 and 2005, calls for a second conference and negotiations toward a final peace agreement and a permanent Palestinian state.

Drafts of the plan have been written throughout the fall, and it is unclear whether additional changes have been made since the most recent draft was prepared in November. Israel claims it mostly has been left out of the drafting process.

Stephen P. Cohen, a national scholar with the Israel Policy Forum, said he believes "everybody got what they needed" from last Friday's meeting.

The text of the road map will be released, most likely by the United Nations, before Israel's elections.

But, at least for now, it won't have U.S. endorsement, Cohen said.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan hinted at that last Friday.

"As you heard in the Oval Office, we are determined to finalize this plan" as soon as possible "and release it to the parties and press ahead," Annan said after the meeting. "We all agree that that is the only solution."

Cohen said that while the United States may move on to other issues — such as an attack on Iraq — it won't abandon the road map. "You now have an offramp," Cohen said. "The action by the other members of the Quartet will keep this going until the next phase, the next time the president seizes the issue."

The United States is reluctant to move boldly on the Israeli-Palestinian track as long as the administration is focused primarily on Iraq. However, some believe that U.S. endorsement of the road map is key to building European and Arab support for an attack on Iraq.

Focus on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will shift to London next month, when British Prime Minister Tony Blair discusses reforms with Palestinian leaders. □

In Berlin, archive names those killed by Nazi 'euthanasia' program

By Toby Axelrod

BERLIN (JTA) — The names of people killed under the Nazi "euthanasia" program have been read aloud here.

For three days last week, Rene Talbot of Berlin, Aviel Hagai of Israel and other volunteers have been reading aloud the names of Germans selected for extermination as "worthless" under the Nazi program that preceded the mass murder of Jews and others.

On Dec. 17, they stood in a damp snowfall, reading names aloud as holiday shoppers crossed Wittenberg Platz.

Behind them was a Holocaust memorial naming the most famous of the Nazi concentration camps, with the admonition to "never forget these places of horror."

The names were released by an archive in the former East Germany.

Before the mass extermination of Jews and others began in Nazi death camps, more than 300,000 people, many with physical or psychological handicaps, had been put to death under the euthanasia program.

A batch of 31,161 names were released by the German Federal Archive only recently, after they had been computerized, said Hagai, chairman of the Israeli Association Against Psychiatric Assault. The files had been kept in East Germany because they were in the Soviet Zone after the war.

The two said they hope to repeat the reading at the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial in Jerusalem. □

JEWISH WORLD

Lott resignation praised

Jewish leaders praised Trent Lott's resignation as the Senate's incoming majority leader.

"His stepping down will allow the incoming Congress to focus on issues," said Mark Pelavin, associate director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism. "Clearly, the controversy had become a significant impediment to getting anything done." Lott (R-Miss.) has been under fire for comments he made earlier this month that appeared to praise racial segregation.

Montreal Hillel sues

The Hillel at Montreal Concordia's University is suing the school's student union.

The lawsuit, filed last Friday, demands that the student union apologize to Hillel, reinstate Hillel without conditions and give the group \$100,000 in damages.

The union voted to suspend Hillel earlier this month after fliers promoting a program that calls for young Jews to volunteer in the Israeli army were distributed from Hillel's table on campus.

The student union later voted to reinstate Hillel if the group signs a statement pledging not to distribute material that the student union finds racist or otherwise offensive.

In another development, the Canadian Jewish Congress filed a court brief supporting Concordia's Hillel.

Turkish chief rabbi installed

Turkey's Jewish community formally installed Isak Haleva as chief rabbi.

Haleva has been acting chief rabbi and leader of the 25,000-member Jewish community since his election to the post in October.

Book prompts death threat

Swiss prosecutors are investigating after a call was issued on the Internet to kill a former U.S. under-secretary of state.

Last week, a book by Stuart Eizenstat outraged the Swiss government even before it was published. "Imperfect Justice," which deals with Switzerland's wartime financial dealings with the Nazis, has on its cover a swastika appearing within the Swiss flag.

The death call was issued before Eizenstat is slated to attend an annual economic conference next month in the eastern Swiss town of Davos. In a letter to Swiss Foreign Minister Joseph Deiss, Eizenstat said the cover was not intended as an insult to the Swiss people, and he offered to meet with Swiss officials to discuss the issue when he visits Davos. On Sunday, a spokesman for the Foreign Ministry said no Swiss official will meet with Eizenstat.

Drop in tourism to Jewish sites prompts some concern in Prague

By Magnus Bennett

PRAGUE (JTA) — Czech Jewish leaders are hoping for a turnaround after a huge decline in Israeli tourism to the country in 2002.

In the nine months ended September, there was a 38 percent drop in the number of Israeli tourists compared with the same period in 2001, according to the Czech statistical office.

About 100,000 Israelis are forecast to visit the country by the end of the year. This is half the number that came last year, according to the office.

Tourism experts say the decline, which began after the Sept. 11 terror attacks, was caused by a number of factors, including the tense political situation in the Middle East and flooding in August that damaged many of Jewish Prague's most important historical sites.

Recent claims in the Israeli media, based on intelligence sources, that Prague could be a target for a terrorist attack have done nothing to help the situation, according to the Prague-based firm Mag Consulting, which monitors official statistics.

After those claims were published, Israeli officials, members of the Prague Jewish community and Czech authorities all agreed that there was no indication that an attack was imminent. But the report may well cause a further decline in tourism, and not only among Israelis.

"The threat of a terrorist attack on Israeli tourists in the Czech Republic may result in a lower number of foreign tourists coming to the country in the short term, even if it turns out to be a rumor," said Mag Consulting Director Jaromir Beranek.

This is bad news for Prague's Jewish community, which relies heavily on income from tourists to maintain its social welfare programs.

The community is still reeling from the August floods, which led to a \$250,000 loss in tourist income.

"The falling number of tourists is a big problem, but not a tragedy," said the chairman of the Prague Jewish community, Tomas Jelinek. "We had quite an easy life in the second half of the 1990s, when Prague was one of the most popular tourist destinations in Europe. I see today as the end of an extremely good period."

Jelinek stressed that income from tourism is not the most important issue.

"Israeli tourists don't just come to see the Jewish Museum. Some come and sing in Jewish synagogues or hold a concert. It brings us into contact with other Jewish groups.

"We would like to maintain the Jewish exchange but it very much depends on the willingness of people abroad to travel," he said.

The Jewish community has sought to reassure potential tourists from Israel that it is doing everything it can to make Prague as safe as possible.

Jelinek said the community had been working "in very close cooperation" since the spring with the country's National Security Council to improve security arrangements in Jewish Prague.

Jelinek remains hopeful that the situation is only temporary. □

Canadian Indian goes to synagogue

MONTREAL (JTA) — Canadian Indian Matthew Coon Come gave a Sabbath sermon in a historic Montreal synagogue, where he denounced the anti-Semitic comments of another Canadian Indian leader.

In his sermon at the Sephardic Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue, Coon Come, the national chief of the Assembly of First Nations, compared the Canadian Indian drive for recognition to the Jewish experience.

He also denounced David Ahenakew, calling him a spokesman "of darkness and discrimination."

Ahenakew created a controversy earlier this month when he praised Hitler. He later apologized for his remarks. □

Israel steps up preparations for possible attacks from Iraq

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israel is accelerating civil defense preparations for possible Iraqi retaliation to a U.S. strike on Iraq.

Amid assessments that a U.S. military strike may be launched in February, the Israeli military and other relevant authorities have been instructed to complete their preparations by the middle of January.

As part of the preparations, the army is planning to distribute instruction booklets to Israelis in the coming weeks, Israel Radio reported Sunday.

Preparedness exercises are also being held by security forces, rescue personnel and schools.

Some 1,000 American troops with Patriot missiles were due in Israel this week to take part in a joint exercise with the army. The U.S. forces were to remain in the country in the event of a war with Iraq, the report said.

Meanwhile, Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz said U.S. officials do not want Israel to be part of any attack on Iraq.

Mofaz, who met with administration officials in Washington last week, said the White House has promised to assist Israel if it is attacked by Iraq in response to an American-led attack on Baghdad. He also said Israel is better prepared to thwart an Iraqi attack than it was during the 1991 Persian Gulf War.

Speaking at Sunday's weekly Cabinet meeting, Mofaz said he came away from his talks in Washington with the impression that the United States is determined to pursue its campaign against Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein.

At a Pentagon briefing last week, U.S. intelligence officials were quoted as saying that in a U.S.-led war, Saddam might use chemical and biological weapons against Israel and Kuwait.

Israeli academic and military experts disagree over Saddam's ability to carry out a nonconventional attack against Israel.

But they agree there is a chance he may try.

While observers have noted that the likelihood of a nonconventional Iraqi missile attack is significantly lower since the 1991 Gulf War, there are nonetheless concerns that Iraq may send airplanes loaded with biological or chemical weapons on suicide missions to Israel.

The concerns come nearly 11 years after the start of Operation Desert Storm, when Iraq fired 39 Scud missiles at Israel.

Despite fears at the time that the Iraqis were using chemical or biological warfare, all the missiles had conventional warheads.

As part of current preparations for a possible nonconventional attack, some 6,000 Israelis are expected to be vaccinated against smallpox soon.

A program to inoculate 15,000 Israeli health care, emergency and security personnel has already been implemented.

Meanwhile, Israeli military and emergency officials have been conducting exercises to test preparedness. The Education Ministry has plans to hold drills in schools and instruct students how to put on gas masks.

Despite the continuing preparations, officials have not reported a large surge in the number of Israelis seeking to update their gas mask kits.

Army officials had anticipated a large increase in response to recent U.S. preparations for a military strike. □

New study questions values taught in Croatia's textbooks

By Vlasta Kovac

ZAGREB, Croatia (JTA) — Croatian textbooks are teaching violence and intolerance.

This was the conclusion drawn by Natasha Jovicich, who initiated a study of 23 textbooks used in Croatian elementary schools.

Jovicich is the new director of the museum at Jasenovac, the concentration camp operated by Croatia's wartime Ustashe fascist regime. She initiated the study to draw attention to the basic values being taught to Croatian children.

The textbooks were analyzed by a group of high school teachers, with special emphasis on subjects like history and literature. The results, which Jovicich called "shocking," appeared in the latest edition of the Croatian weekly magazine *Globus*.

Among the findings:

- In a history book for eighth graders, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill is ridiculed by being depicted as a bulldog sitting on the British flag.

- On the same page, there is a photograph of a yellow Star of David, and a caption saying, "The Jews had to wear a special mark, the Star of David. This is a six-pointed star. It consists of two triangles, which symbolize the sky and the earth." There is no mention of the discrimination suffered by those forced to wear the symbol.

- The same history book shows the picture of Croatian wartime leader Ante Pavelic. The accompanying caption describes him as "a jurist, politician and the founder of the Ustashe movement," but makes no mention of the war crimes committed under his rule.

"This textbook is a dangerous manipulation of history," professor Rosana Ratkovchich, one of those conducting the study, wrote in her conclusion.

The book was guilty of "relativizing" fascism and the antifascist struggle to the point of rendering them morally indistinguishable, she wrote.

A caption that appears under a photo of Normandy Beach on D-Day, she wrote, creates the impression that the German army had moral superiority during the war.

Jovicich was quoted in *Globus* as saying that there is a "direct connection with the kind of intolerance that we find in these textbooks and the growing violence manifested by young people."

A recent concert in the Croatian coastal town of Split, for example, attracted some 40,000 young people to the soccer stadium. Many of them wore the Ustashe insignia and waved Nazi flags.

The incident prompted some Croatian legislators to sponsor a bill that would criminalize the glorification of Nazi ideology.

The bill is still being debated in Parliament.

Until recently, Jovicich worked in Croatia's Ministry of Education, where she initiated several pilot programs to introduce Holocaust education into Croatian schools.

In October, she proposed that Croatia join an international task force dedicated to promoting Holocaust education.

Croatia is now being monitored by four members of the task force — the United States, Israel, France and Argentina — to see what will come out of plans to introduce Holocaust education in Croatian schools. □