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TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Sharon: Israel ready for attack

Israelis shouldn't worry about a possible Iraqi attack because the country's defenders are "excellent and well-equipped," Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said.

"I have to say there is a danger" of an Iraqi attack. "You can't evade that," Sharon said Monday during a tour of a military base in central Israel. "But we have taken all the means to prevent it."

In another development Monday, Israeli officials said they would decide in the coming weeks whether to offer voluntary inoculations against smallpox to millions of Israeli citizens.

Lieberman for Palestinian state

Sen. Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.) expressed support for Palestinian statehood during a visit to Ramallah.

"There's strong support for the aspirations of the Palestinian people for independent statehood. The question is whether there will be sufficient leadership here and in the world to bring this about sooner than later," Lieberman told reporters Monday following talks with Palestinian Authority Information Minister Yasser Abed Rabbo.

Lieberman, who called conditions in Ramallah "desperate," met later Monday with Palestinian Cabinet minister Saeb Erekat. Erekat said they discussed the urgent need to revive the peace process.

Lieberman, who has said he will announce in January whether he will seek the U.S. presidency in 2004, met Sunday with Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.

Israel, P.A. get revised 'road map'

Israeli and Palestinian officials were given a revised version of the U.S. "road map" for achieving peace between the two sides.

Over the weekend, Israel and the Palestinians were given the revised version, which incorporated some of their reactions to an earlier draft. Ra'anan Gissin, an adviser to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, said Monday that in the revised version, Israel will not have to withdraw from Palestinian areas until a cease-fire is in place.

Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat told reporters Monday that he has "a lot of reservations" about the revised plan, but did not spell them out.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Israel, U.S. coordinate plans on Iraq, but rift looms on possible retaliation

By Leslie Susser

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Never have Israel and the United States had such close coordination on Iraq.

As the anticipated American attack on Baghdad draws nearer, the U.S. military even has been showing Israeli officials its detailed plans for preventing Iraqi missile attacks on Israel.

But the reason for the American operational largesse is clear: The United States does not want Israel to play any military role in the war against Iraq.

Despite the close coordination, Israel has not promised to stay out of the fighting. Moreover, there are sharp differences between the two sides on how to respond if Israel is attacked with nonconventional weapons.

During Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz's mid-December visit to Washington, American officials went out of their way to convince the Israeli delegation that the United States would do all it could to defend Israel, and that there would be no need for Israel to get involved in the war.

The officials said American forces would take decisive action to prevent Iraqi missile launchers from being moved into western Iraq — from where Israel would be in their range — and to take them out if they are. The officials promised that America would show Israel its plans for neutralizing the Iraqi missile launchers, and allow Israel to comment and offer suggestions.

Moreover, the United States said it would send 1,000 American soldiers to Israel with Patriot missiles, to back up Israel's Arrow anti-missile defense system.

If, despite these offensive and defensive measures, an Iraqi missile were to get through and hit Israel, America — not Israel — would retaliate, the officials said.

The problem is that Israel and the United States have a number of fundamentally different strategic interests in the context of the conflict with Iraq.

America does not want direct Israeli involvement in the war to further complicate U.S. ties with the Arab world. But Israel has domestic and regional considerations that make it very difficult to refrain from retaliation if the country is hit by Iraqi missiles, as it did in the 1991 Persian Gulf War under fierce American pressure.

Israeli officials believe Israel's failure to respond then seriously undermined Israel's deterrent posture and encouraged other groups, such as Hezbollah, to attack Israel.

If Israeli casualty figures are high or if the Iraqis attack with nonconventional weapons, Israel's government will feel duty-bound to retaliate — both to satisfy domestic public opinion and, more importantly, to maintain Israel's deterrent capacity in the region.

Mofaz therefore refused to say what the Americans wanted to hear, and would not commit that Israel would avoid getting involved in the war under any circumstances.

On the contrary, Mofaz made it clear that Israel reserves the right to retaliate if it suffers heavy civilian casualties or if it is attacked with nonconventional weapons.

However, Mofaz did promise that in return for American consideration of Israel's interests, Israel would coordinate any retaliatory strike with Washington.

That might be why American military planners were smiling after the meeting. In operational terms, the Mofaz commitment seems to mean that Israel will clear retaliatory plans with the Americans in advance, and will not attack unless given flying

MIDEAST FOCUS

Report: Iraq planned bio attack

Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein had a secret plan to use biological weapons against Israel during the 1991 Gulf War, but was unable to carry out the plan, Israel Radio reported Monday.

According to a secret CIA document that was made public over the weekend, Iraq sent three MiG-21 planes to bomb Israeli targets with regular bombs to check whether they were able to penetrate the Israeli air defense system. In the second stage, three more MiGs armed with conventional weaponry were to be sent to Israel as a diversion, together with an airplane armed with biological weapons.

But the operation failed during the first stage, when the three MiGs were downed over the Persian Gulf a short time after takeoff, Ha'aretz reported.

Two Hamas members killed

Israeli undercover soldiers killed two Hamas members Monday near the West Bank city of Jenin.

One of those killed was a senior member of the Hamas military wing and on Israel's wanted list, The Associated Press reported. Two explosives belts were found in the men's car.

Clinton disavows Palestinian tie

Sen. Hillary Clinton (D-N.Y.) denied reports that she has ties to the Palestinian owner of a house that Israel had targeted for demolition.

Israeli and American media reported last week that Israel had canceled plans to destroy a Bethlehem house after discovering that the owner is friendly with Clinton.

Neighbors said the building was owned by Hussein Othman Issa, whose family runs the Hope Flowers School, which teaches its students Hebrew and promotes coexistence.

An aide to Clinton told JTA that the senator had no recollection of Issa.



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times, routes and friend-foe air codes. That would seem to make an Israeli strike dependent on American approval: If the United States disapproves of the response, it could withhold the operational information, making an attack virtually impossible.

Israeli defense officials acknowledge that this could present a problem, but say they are confident the United States will understand Israel's needs and will make it possible for Israel to retaliate if necessary. Then again, Washington would want to have a say on the scope of the Israeli response.

Israel would prefer to respond itself, and with great force, to deter other countries in the region from following the Iraqi example. That could mean widespread destruction in Iraq.

"We would want everyone to know it was us, and to realize just what we can do," an Israeli defense official told JTA.

The United States, however, would prefer a far more measured response, one that the United States carries out and controls, because it hopes to rebuild Iraq and Iraqi institutions as quickly as possible in the post-Saddam era.

How serious is the threat of a nonconventional Iraqi attack?

Besides the possible delivery of biological or chemical agents via Scud missiles, Israeli and U.S. intelligence officials believe Iraq will attempt to send "suicide pilots" with cargoes of biological or chemical weapons.

Israeli officials recall that in the 1991 Gulf War, Iraq planned a fighter-bomber biological attack, first sending three conventionally armed MiG bombers to see if they could penetrate Israeli airspace.

If successful, the plan was to follow up with more sorties, including one by a Sukhoi bomber loaded with biological agents. The plan never materialized because the first MiG's were shot down soon after takeoff.

Since the Gulf War, Israeli air defenses have become tighter, and defense officials say the "suicide planes" would be easier to intercept than Scud missiles.

As for missile attacks, the officials rate these as less likely than suicide plane sorties, because the number of missiles Iraq has and its capacity to launch them have been severely curtailed since the 1991 Gulf War, officials say.

Still, Israel is not taking chances, and plans are being considered to inoculate the entire population against smallpox.

The bottom line is this: Should an Iraqi missile or plane get through, and should the Americans urge restraint, Israel will face an acute dilemma — because in addition to its operational leverage, the United States has considerable political and economic leverage.

Israeli officials say their U.S. counterparts have not made any attempt to condition the \$4 billion Israel has requested in military aid to help defray the costs of its deployment against the Iraqi threat on Israel's agreement to take a blow quietly.

Clearly, however, if Israel were to retaliate against American wishes, it could find itself forfeiting this aid and being punished by the Americans on the Palestinian issue after the war.

If it sits out the war, Israel might just be rewarded — though whether that would make up for physical damages to the Israeli home front, and the intangible damage to Israel's deterrent capacity, remains to be seen. □

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

Sharon warns Likud ministers

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said that if re-elected next month he would not appoint to Cabinet posts any Likud members who oppose the eventual creation of a Palestinian state.

"Contradictory messages are emanating from the Likud, and it is damaging to be portrayed in this way," Sharon said. "Whoever does not accept my political plan will not be a member of the next government. I do not intend to establish a non-unified government."

Environment Minister Tzachi Hanegbi, the apparent target of Sharon's remarks, said he would continue to oppose Palestinian statehood and accused Sharon of ignoring the Likud platform in an effort to win centrist votes in the Jan. 28 election. □

JEWISH WORLD

Farrakhan gets around ban

Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan circumvented a ban preventing him from visiting Britain on Sunday by addressing supporters via satellite link from Arizona.

Farrakhan, who has praised Hitler and called Jews "bloodsuckers," has been banned from Britain since 1986, partly due to pressure from Jewish groups.

Canada plans for Mideast force

Canada reportedly is planning an international peacekeeping force in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The plans are taking place without formal Israeli or Palestinian approval, the *Forward* newspaper reported. Just the same, Canada is working with both groups to discuss peacekeeping models. Canada proposed and led a U.N. peacekeeping force in the region during the 1956 Suez crisis.

Orthodox oppose gay marriages

Two Orthodox groups filed a court brief against same-sex marriages. The Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America and Agudath Israel of America filed the brief in the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts against judicial recognition of same-sex marriages. The friend-of-the-court brief supports the state of Massachusetts' view of "marriage in its traditional form."

"Traditional Judaism recognizes that the institution of marriage is central to the formation of a healthy society and the raising of children," said Nathan Diamant, the O.U.'s director of public policy and legal counsel. "Thus, we are compelled to insist that the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts exercise judicial restraint and not, by fiat, undermine the consensus in this country on the traditional institution of marriage."

Lebanon refuses U.S. ads

Lebanon refused to allow U.S. TV commercials aimed at improving America's image in Arab and Muslim countries.

"The TV spots were banned because they contained words contrary to truth. The spots say that America is treating the Arabs and Muslims well. This is not true," Lebanese Information Minister Ghazi Aridi told *The Associated Press* last week.

Bible manuscript auctioned

A 15th-century Bible commentary fetched more than \$400,000 at an auction.

The Rashi Commentary to the Pentateuch, which belonged to Jews College, London, went for \$434,000 at the Dec. 17 auction. Rashi, who lived from 1040 to 1105, is considered the premier commentator on the Bible and Talmud.

Germans have disturbing attitudes toward Jews, according to new poll

By Toby Axelrod

BERLIN (JTA) — Negative attitudes toward Jews are widespread in German society today, according to a new survey.

Among other results, the American Jewish Committee poll found that 52 percent of Germans believe Jews are exploiting the memory of the Holocaust for their own purposes.

The AJCommittee's executive director, David Harris, called this the "most disturbing result" in the survey, the third such poll conducted since German unification in 1990. The result "is profoundly troubling," Harris said in an interview with JTA.

Harris was in Berlin with the group's president, Harold Tanner, and its director of governmental and international affairs, Jason Isaacson, to meet with German officials.

Harris said the survey "represents both encouraging and discouraging news. The most important finding, looking ahead, is the correlation between the levels of tolerance and levels of education."

Most Germans favor Holocaust education and Holocaust memorials, the survey showed. But the survey also suggested that many Germans believe education is not enough to prevent intolerance.

The poll found that 60 percent of Germans acknowledge that anti-Semitism is a problem in their country, and 35 percent say the problem is increasing.

One positive sign in the survey is that "one in every five Germans has met a Jewish person — and of those with a higher education, it is one in three," said Deidre Berger, director of the AJCommittee office in Berlin, which opened in 1998.

The survey, conducted by the research firm Infratest from Oct. 8-25, was based on personal interviews with 1,250 respondents and has a margin of error of 3 percent. It focused on attitudes toward Jews, Holocaust remembrance and the war on terrorism.

Among its other findings:

- 40 percent said Jews exert too much influence on world events, and 20 percent said they have "too much influence" in Germany;
- 35 percent of Germans believe Jews "are motivated by feelings of revenge" more than other groups;
- 59 percent agreed with the statement, "Many people in Germany are afraid to express their true feelings about Jews";
- 17 percent of Germans "prefer not" to have Jews as neighbors, though more Germans would prefer not to have Gypsies, Arabs, Turks, Africans or Poles as neighbors;
- 65 percent of Germans think that teaching about the Nazi extermination of Jews should be required in the German school curriculum, while 22 percent say it should not; and

• 49 percent approve of the German Parliament's decision to authorize the building of a national Holocaust memorial in Berlin, while 27 percent disapprove. Support is highest among young people.

• Regarding the war on terrorism, 63 percent of the respondents backed the U.S. decision to launch the war following the Sept. 11 attacks, but 77 percent said the United States was acting mainly in its own interests.

In general, the older the respondents, the more likely they are to express negative attitudes toward Jews and other minorities.

The AJCommittee poll was one of several such surveys released in the past year. In June, two separate polls revealed persistent stereotypes in Germany about Jews.

Both suggested that drastic change is needed in the German educational system, said Horst-Eberhard Richter, director of the Sigmund Freud Institute in Frankfurt, who co-directed one of the studies. "People who graduated from high school have far fewer anti-Jewish leanings than those with less education," he said.

In November, Bielefeld University released a study of 3,000 Germans indicating that increasing numbers of them sympathize with "law and order," xenophobic, anti-Semitic and anti-Islam politics. □

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

Canadian Jewish students scared? Letter to newspaper fuels a debate

By Bram Eisenthal

MONTREAL (JTA) — Canadian Jewish students are so traumatized by campus anti-Semitism that they are frightened to speak out on behalf of Israel or Judaism, according to an advertisement appearing in Canada's most prominent newspaper.

The ad, written as a letter by journalist Anna Morgan, author Geraldine Sherman and York University professor Rachael Turkienicz for a group called Solidarity With Jews at Risk, expresses support for Jewish students across Canada and condemns anti-Semitism on the country's campuses.

More than 100 people signed the ad, which appeared in the Dec. 17 edition of the Toronto Globe and Mail.

The most publicized case of anti-Semitic ferment occurred at Montreal's Concordia University.

Anti-Israel protesters rioted there in the fall, eventually preventing a speech by Benjamin Netanyahu, who is now Israel's foreign minister.

More recently, Concordia's student union voted to ban the campus Hillel after fliers promoting an Israeli army volunteer program were distributed from Hillel's table on campus.

But most of the activities on campus aren't so blatant, says Turkienicz, a professor of the Faculty of Education and Center for Jewish Studies at Toronto's York College: "It's all subtle, it's all done by innuendo."

The extent of intimidation is a matter of debate. While agreeing that anti-Israel activity generally has risen since the Palestinian intifada began in September 2000, a recent report from UIA Federations Canada says the picture is more complex.

"On almost every campus other than Concordia University, students and Jewish professionals rejected the idea that their campuses are on fire, as some in the Jewish world have claimed," the report says.

Jeffrey Ross, the director of campus and higher education affairs for the Anti-Defamation League, agreed.

"My sense is that it's much like the United States in that you have a number of places where the battle over the Middle East is very intense. But there are many other campuses where" it has not been a major issue, he said.

While there may be similarities between the campus experience in the United States and Canada, there are differences as well.

In the United States, schools such as the University of California at Berkeley and Harvard have witnessed the most ferment over the Middle East, while Canadian commuter schools with large number of first-generation immigrant students are more likely to be hotbeds of protest, according to the UIA report,

In addition, the report says, anti-Israel activity — often coordinated over the Internet — comes more from extreme-left groups than from Arab or Muslim groups.

The authors of the newspaper ad say they got their information from students at universities across Canada.

"Our findings were not hearsay and not third hand. We spoke to students and faculty directly and found they are not reporting incidents — like shouting matches, shoving and actual physical violence — because they are totally intimidated," Turkienicz said. "Getting people to go on the record was a problem. On university

campuses, Jewish students don't feel they can voice an opinion, so they revert to silence."

Ruth Klein, national director of the League for Human Rights of B'nai Brith Canada, calls the ad "a wake-up call" to university administrators.

"I think the letter was important because it opens peoples' eyes to the fact something is happening, bubbling below the surface," Klein said. "The ad refers to a certain atmosphere that exists, and what is missing from these administrations is a process which will enable students to feel comfortable enough to come forward."

A student at York, Miriam Levin, recently wrote a story for the Canadian Jewish News that documented a litany of anti-Israel incidents on campus. She is one of just a few Jewish students willing to speak up publicly about the anti-Israel atmosphere at York — cultivated by the school's administration, she said.

At one point, Levin told JTA, an Arab student walked up to her and announced that he was prepared to be the next suicide bomber for the Palestinians. When she called security, they promised to do something about the incident, but did nothing, Levin said.

Another time, Levin said, York organized a conflict resolution seminar, but invited only a former head of the Arab Students' Association and a neutral woman, ignoring the Jewish side.

Her conclusion?

"The administration at York is openly one-sided in favor of the Palestinians. Without a doubt," Levin told JTA. "Any pro-Israel views shared by Jewish students are dismissed out of hand and not even allowed to be heard."

"I am concerned about the perception this student leaves, and this certainly wouldn't be the way I would characterize this administration's approach," York's director of media relations, Kim Nunn, told JTA.

"We would not countenance expressions of hatred. And I would be surprised if someone filed a complaint and that these concerns were not thoroughly explored," he said.

Turkienicz says the administrators' response to anti-Semitic allegations has been inadequate.

"Part of our reason for doing this was to say" to administrators "we know you have these regulations against racism, you just don't enforce them evenly," she said.

Susan Bloch-Nevitte, communications director at the University of Toronto, said faculty and students at her school have held lectures and other forums on tolerance. In February, the school will host an international academic symposium on anti-Semitism past and present, she added.

Bloch-Nevitte admitted, however, that there have been incidents at the University of Toronto that could be viewed as anti-Semitic. In one incident, a student publication referred to "the memory of innocents, Afghanistan and Palestine murdered."

While the material was cited as being anti-Semitic, "this is a community of 70,000, so we have to keep perspective on this," Bloch-Nevitte said. "The leader of our Jewish Student Services is unequivocal that there is no sense of fear among Jewish students here."

The UIA Federations report agreed.

Referring to the University of Toronto and York University, the report said, "the level of political activity of any sort on both of Toronto's large campuses is extremely low relative to other urban campuses." □

(JTA Staff Writer Peter Ephross in New York contributed to this report.)