



# Daily News Bulletin

Vol. 81, No. 25

Thursday, February 6, 2003

86th Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Ramon's remains identified

NASA officials informed Israeli authorities Wednesday that the remains of Israel's first astronaut, Ilan Ramon, have been positively identified. The remains are expected to be flown to Israel next week.

In another development, a woman in Louisiana found a piece of fabric that depicted a Star of David. It was believed to have come from Ramon's spacesuit, according to The Associated Press.

Ramon's father, Eliezer Wolfman, said Wednesday that he would have preferred his son remained unknown and alive, rather than having died a hero.

Wolfman told Army Radio that NASA officials told the family that the astronauts had between 60 and 90 seconds between the time they could see something had gone wrong and when the shuttle broke into pieces and they were killed.

### Powell cites Iraq, Palestinian link

U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell discussed Iraqi support for Palestinian terrorist groups in making the case for military action against Saddam Hussein.

Speaking Wednesday in front of the U.N. Security Council, Powell said Baghdad trains Palestinian terrorists "in small arms and explosives" and funnels "money to the families of Palestinian suicide bombers in order to prolong the intifada." Powell also claimed that Al-Qaida members are hiding in Iraq. **[Page 1]**

### Iraq raid noted at memorial

A tribute in New York to the late Israeli astronaut Ilan Ramon noted his role in destroying Iraq's nuclear reactor. At Wednesday's ceremony at Manhattan's Park East Synagogue, retired Col. Ze'ev Raz, commander of the 1981 Israeli mission that destroyed the reactor, said Ramon's coordination of the planes' fuel supply allowed the mission to return safely.

The chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, Mortimer Zuckerman, later drew a parallel between that mission — which initially earned international condemnation and only much later was praised — and Israel's current fight against terror.

"As time goes on," Israel "will be equally recognized for what it is doing" in the fight against terror, he said.

## FOCUS ON ISSUES

### Israeli help in planning Iraq war may keep it out of actual fighting

By Matthew E. Berger

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Neither the United States nor Israel wants the Jewish state involved in an anticipated war against Iraq.

To minimize the chances of that happening, however, Israel has become very involved in planning an attack.

U.S.-Israel coordination becomes ever more crucial after U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell's briefing to the U.N. Security Council on Wednesday.

The briefing is seen as the major U.S. effort to convince the international community that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein is flouting weapons inspections and must be disarmed by force.

Powell used audiotapes and satellite images to prove that Iraq has been hiding weapons materials from U.N. inspectors and continues to produce dangerous weapons.

Powell also claimed that members of the Al-Qaida terrorist network are hiding in Iraq.

The presentation touched only briefly on Saddam's support for Palestinian terrorists and the threat Iraq poses to Israel.

"Baghdad trains Palestine Liberation Front members in small arms and explosives," Powell said. "Saddam uses the Arab Liberation Front to funnel money to the families of Palestinian suicide bombers in order to prolong the intifada. And it's no secret that Saddam's own intelligence service was involved in dozens of attacks or attempted assassinations in the 1990s."

Both Israel and the United States are trying to minimize reports of their coordination ahead of any U.S.-led attack on Iraq. But if the United States does go to war with Iraq, Israel's fingerprints will be on the battle plans.

The two countries have been spending years coordinating information, developing technology for battle in the Middle East and trying to protect Israel from weapons of mass destruction.

The most visible sign of such cooperation is the Arrow Missile Program, a joint U.S.-Israeli program to protect Israel from missiles.

In the 1991 Persian Gulf War, when Iraq fired 39 Scud missiles at Israel, Israel and the United States used Patriot missiles in an attempt to bring the Scuds down. However, Patriots are designed to protect airbases and specific landmarks, not full cities, and proved largely ineffective.

The Arrow was crafted with a much broader footprint, and is viewed as the only missile that can shoot down another missile at high altitudes and speeds.

"It's as reliable as anything in the position it's in, which is not used yet in wartime," said Marvin Feuer, director of defense and strategic issues at the American Israel Public Affairs Committee. "The Arrow does what we had hoped the Patriot would do in the first war."

Both Israel and the United States have been impressed with the Arrow's success in test firings, Feuer said.

An improved version of the Patriot missile was tested Tuesday in Israel. Israeli and American officials say the tests were routine.

But analysts say the Patriot will be an important backup if the Arrow does not perform as well as anticipated.

Still, analysts say the surest way to keep Israel safe is to take out missile bases in

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### 2 Palestinians killed

Two Palestinians were killed in Israeli army operations Wednesday. In the Gaza Strip, the 65-year-old stepmother of a Palestinian was killed, apparently after failing to hear warnings to leave the building before troops demolished the structure.

In the West Bank, a Palestinian policeman was killed and another wounded during an army raid on police headquarters in Kalkilya.

### Bush, Blair discussed settlements

President Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair reportedly agreed during their weekend meeting at Camp David that they are "troubled" by Israel's settlement policies. At their meeting, which primarily focused on the Iraq crisis, Blair tried to convince Bush of the importance of international involvement in solving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, according to the Israeli daily Ha'aretz. Blair called for early publication of the "road map" for a Middle East peace agreement.

Bush, who accepted a request by Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to postpone publication of the road map until after a new Israeli government is formed, rejected Blair's proposal, the paper reported.

### Israel razes Negev mosque

An Israeli Arab lawmaker warned of repercussions after Israel demolished a mosque in a Bedouin village in the Negev. Because the village is unrecognized by state authorities, no construction is allowed in it, according to the Israeli daily Ha'aretz.

### P.A.: Halt rocket attacks

The Palestinian Authority called on all Palestinian groups to stop firing rockets from the Gaza Strip into Israel. In an ad published Wednesday in Palestinian media, the P.A. said anyone who launched rockets into Israel would be giving Israel an excuse to send troops into Gaza, the Jerusalem Post reported.



## Daily News Bulletin

Norman H. Lipoff, President

Mark J. Joffe, Executive Editor and Publisher

Lisa Hostein, Editor

Michael S. Arnold, Managing Editor

Lenore A. Silverstein, Finance and Administration Director

Paula Simmonds, Marketing and Development Director

JTA DAILY NEWS BULLETIN is published five days a week, except holidays, by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency Inc., 330 Seventh Ave., New York, N.Y. 10001-5010. For information about how to subscribe by e-mail, fax or regular mail, call (212) 643-1890, or visit our Web site at [www.jta.org](http://www.jta.org).  
© JTA Reproduction only by previous arrangement.

Iraq's western desert from which it could attack Israel.

Iraq is believed to have far fewer weapons than it did in 1991, but Pentagon officials believe that Iraqi missile bases will be targeted in the early stages of a war to minimize the possibility that Israel will be attacked and will feel obligated to respond.

"America has made a commitment to take out Scud launchers in the west within 72 hours" of the beginning of a war, said Tom Neumann, executive director of the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs.

Still, similar promises in 1991 didn't stop the Iraqi Scuds.

"We did a very poor job of stopping Scuds, and we learned from it," said Gen. David Grange, who during the 1991 war worked in Army Special Forces to eliminate Iraq's Scud capabilities. "I believe that intelligence and information will be shared in more robust ways than in 1991."

Neumann said some American military officials resented the effort to protect Israel during the Gulf War, viewing it as a diversion from the main battle.

Protecting Israel is less of an issue this time around, as U.S.-Israel coordination has cemented their mutual agenda.

Even if Israel does stay out of the war, its technology and equipment will not.

Among the Israeli technology that American forces may use is the HAVE NAP air-to-ground missile, which the Israelis call Popeye. It is used to destroy targets such as concrete military bunkers from great distances, and can be re-targeted while already in the air.

The United States also is using Israeli-made Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, which allow the military to identify targets and assess bomb damage without risking pilots' lives.

The Israeli-made Litening device uses heat sensors to enable aircraft to fly and target in bad weather.

Israel and the United States also share communications channels that could prove vital in any war.

"This kind of coordination between the United States and Israel is qualitatively different from the first war," Feuer said.

Senior officials of the first Bush administration, such as Paul Wolfowitz, who was then an undersecretary of defense, and the deputy secretary of state, Lawrence Eagleburger, were sent to Israel late during the first Iraqi crisis.

This time, the United States has made coordination with Israel and other regional allies a priority.

Gen. Charles Wald, deputy commander of the U.S. European Command, who has been put in charge of ties with the Israeli military, recently visited Israel.

Gen. Charles Simpson, director of air and space operations at the European Command, has been assigned as chief liaison between the two countries if war breaks out.

Feuer said the coordination has allowed Israel and the United States to narrow their disagreements about the possible scope of a war.

The Bush administration has hinted that Israel has the right to retaliate if it is hit with weapons of mass destruction, or with missiles that cause mass casualties.

But both the U.S. and Israeli governments would prefer that Israel not have to get involved.

"The United States and Great Britain do not want Israel to have to enter the war," Grange said. "They will go to extraordinary measures" to prevent that. □

## Poll: Palestinians weary of hardships

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Palestinians feel they can't endure much more of the economic hardship brought about by the intifada, according to a new poll.

Only 18 percent of respondents said they could hold out for another four months, compared with 64 percent three months ago, according to a poll conducted by the Palestinian Center for Public Opinion.

At the same time, the poll among 1,100 West Bank residents indicated that support for the intifada stands at nearly 41 percent, compared with almost 39 percent three months ago, according to the Israeli daily Ha'aretz. □

## JEWISH WORLD

### Britain-Iran meeting raises ire

A leading British Jewish group expressed strong reservations about Prime Minister Tony Blair's plan to receive Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi in London on Thursday.

"Iran is a major source of international terrorism," the director general of the Board of Deputies, Neville Nagler, said a day before the visit. The meeting is described as the highest-level diplomatic contact between Britain and Iran since the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

The Israeli Embassy said it had asked Blair to express to Kharrazi concern about Iran's support of terrorists, especially Hezbollah, and its efforts to acquire nuclear weapons.

### Poll: U.S. could vote Jewish

Ninety percent of registered voters say they could vote for a Jewish candidate for president, according to a new poll.

The Los Angeles Times poll released Wednesday also found that 59 percent of registered voters think their neighbors would support a Jewish candidate for president.

When asked whether a Jewish candidate would be able to deal fairly with both Israelis and Palestinians, 64 percent said they are confident the person could be fair, while 21 percent said they are not.

### CARE bill passes Senate panel

The U.S. Senate Finance Committee approved a bill that would increase resources to charities.

By a vote of 10-1, the panel approved the Charity Assistance Recovery and Empowerment Act, known as the CARE Act, which would provide a tax deduction of up to \$800 per family for contributions to charities and allow people to roll over IRA accounts to charities, with no tax penalty.

The Orthodox Union, a strong supporter of the CARE Act, urged the full Senate to pass the legislation.

### Nadler blasts Muslim group

Rep. Jerrold Nadler (D-N.Y.) criticized remarks by a U.S. Muslim leader who suggested that the Shuttle Columbia disaster was an act of divine retribution against Israel.

In a letter to Eric Erfan Vickers, the executive director of the American Muslim Council, Nadler wrote, "It is unthinkable that any American would take such perverse pleasure in a tragedy."

Vickers sent a message to supporters Monday asking whether people see "a sign in the calamitous destruction" of the shuttle mission "while on board was the first Israeli astronaut, who also happened to have been the pilot that bombed several years ago an Iraqi nuclear facility."

## Five Iranian Jews on prison furlough, amid hope they be freed permanently

By Tom Tugend

LOS ANGELES (JTA) — The last five Iranian Jews still held in an Iranian prison have been released on "vacation," although it remains uncertain whether they will be permanently freed.

The uncertain status of the five underscores the precarious situation faced by the entire Jewish community in Iran. They now number between 22,000 and 25,000, down from 100,000 or so prior to the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

The five were among 13 Jews who were arrested in January and March 1999 on charges of spying for Israel. Three were subsequently found innocent of the espionage charges and released. The other 10 were sentenced in July 2000 to jail terms of four to 13 years.

The men appealed, and Tehran reduced the sentences from two to nine years in September 2000. But their advocates — as well as media, diplomats and human rights experts from around the world — pronounced the closed trial a fraud.

Israel denies that the men were its spies.

Advocates for the men say that what really bothered Iranian authorities was the men's increasingly fervent brand of Orthodox Judaism.

Most of the men were religious leaders from the southern Iranian city of Shiraz, a bastion of religious conservatism.

The arrests were perceived as a warning to the rest of the community, and there was initial fear that the men might be executed.

In addition, observers say, inciting the public against the "Zionist enemy" and "collaborators" in their midst is an easy way for the mullahs to distract the masses from economic hardship and lack of freedom.

Five of the imprisoned 10 were released after serving some or all of their time.

The "vacation" just granted the five remaining prisoners was given in honor of the Ten Days of Fajr, a holiday celebrating the overthrow of the shah of Iran during the Islamic Revolution. News of their release came in two government-controlled Iranian newspapers that were cited by Pooya Dayanim, president of the newly formed Iranian Jewish Public Affairs Committee in Los Angeles.

The news was confirmed by Maurice Motamed, the sole Jewish representative in the Iranian Parliament, who is currently in Los Angeles on an extended family visit.

The five Jews were furloughed about 10 days ago, said Motamed.

Other sources urged caution in commenting on the new development.

Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, who has been involved with the case from the beginning, warned that public comment might endanger the future of the five Jews.

"I hope and pray that their release will be permanent, but as of now I think the 'vacation' is a kind of test" by the Iranian government, Hoenlein said.

Sam Kermanian, secretary-general of the Iranian American Jewish Federation in Los Angeles, also adopted a cautious approach.

"At this point, we do not wish to make any comment," he said.

Meanwhile, the news of the "vacation" is complicated by apparent personal and ideological animosities among some of the Iranian Jewish spokesmen.

Motamed said the "vacation" was achieved due to his personal intervention with the Iranian judiciary.

But according to Dayanim, the government in Tehran made the move to bolster its human rights record before upcoming meetings with the British government and the European Union.

On a more personal level, Motamed claimed that the five Jews would have been released months ago if Dayanim had not criticized the Iranian judiciary in a Voice of America broadcast. "I hope the 'vacation' will become permanent, unless there are further attacks on the judiciary," Motamed said.

Dayanim responded that what he had said following the release of three of the imprisoned Jews a few months ago was that the move was due to international pressure on Tehran. □

## UJC takes steps to renew confidence in national system

By Rachel Pomerance

MIAMI (JTA) — The North American Jewish federation movement, struggling to serve different masters since its reconfiguration three years ago, has taken a series of steps that appear to have renewed confidence in the system.

The developments come after intense scrutiny of the United Jewish Communities, with federations criticizing the system for its high operational costs compared with services provided, difficulty in reaching decisions and an inability to lead with a clear vision.

Complaints reached a new level after the group's annual General Assembly in November, when the UJC canceled the much-anticipated release of the \$6 million 2000-2001 National Jewish Population Survey, citing lost data.

Lackluster programming at the G.A. also disappointed participants.

Around that time, some federation leaders from around the country began to call for reform, with executives from the large-city federations deciding to discuss the issue at their regularly scheduled retreat in March.

But recent actions undertaken by the UJC may renew faith in the system, say some of those involved.

Others say they approve of the UJC's latest decisions, but separate them from other complaints, including the UJC's \$42.5 million annual budget, which they consider too high.

And questions still abound about the purpose of the UJC, formed from a merger of the Council of Jewish Federations, the United Jewish Appeal and the United Israel Appeal.

Among the recent developments:

- The UJC overwhelmingly passed a resolution Jan. 22 that would bar federations that do not pay their dues from membership. The resolution would also expel these federations' community members from national positions. The measure arose after a new dues formula was approved in May 2002.

- UJC passed a resolution earlier this month to pay overdue funds to Birthright Israel. Failure to fund the free trip to Israel for 18- to 26-year-olds who had never been on an organized trip was a festering wound between federations that had paid for the program and their noncompliant counterparts.

- UJC took several steps at its board of trustees meeting in Miami on Jan. 24, including approval of \$39 million to aid Argentine relief and welfare. The board also approved new chairs for UJC divisions.

While some cited poor turnout at the Miami meetings as a cause for concern, most of those who were here described a newfound optimism about UJC's purpose and power.

"Every federation president who was there was encouraged by what they saw and is taking stock of the direction of UJC," Jay Sarber, president of the Jewish Federation of St. Louis, said afterward. "I'm hopeful that the system is moving in the right direction."

The moves to fund Birthright and to oust federations that don't pay dues, coupled with the \$340 million the system raised last year for its Israel Emergency Campaign, "show very good results for the organization this year," said Robert Aronson, executive vice president of the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit.

However, it took too long to decide about Birthright, he said. "We made the commitment three years ago."

But the vote to eject delinquent members shows that federations "are finally realizing that the UJC belongs to them and that they have to pay for it in order to have a stake in it," said Aronson, who did not attend the Miami meetings.

Still, efforts to reform the UJC are taking place. The UJC has hired consultants to clarify the goals of its members, and executives of large-city federations will discuss the consultants' findings in March.

The large-city executives were instructed not to disclose initial findings they heard from a consultant who had interviewed federation leaders about their concerns.

But federation leaders still are grappling with UJC's role and direction.

Jewish federations want a national system, but they appear divided on its goals.

Many federation leaders seem to want a smaller, coordinating body that advocates and allocates for overseas needs.

Some want a stronger, focused central system to service both local federations and respond to needs abroad. Others simply want the system to prioritize its needs.

Highlighting that debate is a current UJC discussion to require federations to fund collective programs beyond their dues obligations, such as overseas spending and Birthright Israel.

Federation contributions for programs currently are based on UJC recommendations of a community's fair share, but they are voluntary.

According to Albert Ratner, chairman of UJC's fair share and collective responsibility committee, demanding compliance with UJC initiatives is one more crackdown that will help the system.

Indeed, the issue of federations not paying their fair share has been a grievance for many federations.

And despite the new policies to pay Birthright and fund Argentine relief, several sources voiced concern over whether federations would meet those commitments.

But many federation leaders say their colleagues are unlikely to cede their power to the national system.

According to Lee Wunsch, CEO of the Jewish Federation of Greater Houston, the heart of the UJC's struggle is enormous uncertainty about how to respond to "challenges like we've never had before."

Local federation leaders are "quite frankly not sure what to do," Wunsch said, adding that UJC has a "tall order" to gain consensus on handling a host of needs, from havoc in Israel to troubled Jewish communities around the world and the impending war in Iraq.

But "in a world of diminished financial resources and the kinds of pressure that are on the community, priorities have to be set," and they have not been set, Wunsch said.

However, media reports that "the system is out of control" are "very far from the truth," he said, pointing to the system's accomplishments in raising funds for the Israel Emergency Campaign, and raising \$800 million to \$900 million in the general campaign.

"That's not a system that's in chaos to me," Wunsch said.

But according to Richard Wexler, a member of UJC's budget committee, "UJC will remain in a fragile state" until it better engages local federations to stave off disenchantment and spawn ownership. □