



# Daily News Bulletin

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86th Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Embassy possible target

A captured Al-Qaida leader has named the Israeli Embassy in Washington as a possible target of future terrorist attacks.

During interrogation by U.S. authorities, Khalid Sheik Mohammed has named a dozen Al-Qaida operatives plotting terrorist attacks, and named the embassy as a target, along with other U.S. sites, such as Chicago's Sears Tower, according to a report in Time magazine.

A spokesperson for the embassy would not comment on the report, but said security has been upgraded since the United States raised its terror alert level to orange.

### Israel cuts air patrols

Israel reduced air patrols on its eastern border as the threat of a non-conventional Iraqi attack using a lone plane or drone diminished.

The Israeli air force on Sunday reduced its round-the-clock patrols because it believes the American assault on Iraq had significantly reduced the danger of such an attack, the Israeli daily Ha'aretz reported.

### Soldiers kill Palestinian teen

A Palestinian teen-ager was killed in clashes with Israeli soldiers in the West Bank.

Three other teens were wounded in Monday's clashes, which took place near Hebron. The skirmishes came as the soldiers took down an illegal Jewish outpost.

### 'Pianist' earns Oscar gold

"The Pianist," a drama about a Jewish musician's survival in the Warsaw Ghetto, won three Oscars.

Adrien Brody won best actor and Roman Polanski won best director for the film, which also won an award for best adapted screenplay. [Page 3]

### JTA foreign editor dies

JTA's longtime foreign editor, Mitchell Danow, has died in Japan.

Danow, 55, died of a heart attack March 20 in Kyoto.

Born and raised in New York, Danow attended Yale, where he studied philosophy.

He worked for Newsweek and the Forward before coming to JTA in 1993.

## WAR IN IRAQ

### Timing of AIPAC conference raises concerns of how to frame message

By Matthew E. Berger

WASHINGTON (JTA)—For months, Jewish groups have been working tirelessly to separate the Iraq issue from Israel, lowering their voices of support for the war.

But next week, close to 5,000 pro-Israel activists — many of whom strongly support the U.S.-led war on Iraq and its benefits to Israel's security — will meet in the nation's capital for the annual policy conference of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee.

It's likely that they won't want to keep quiet any longer. But the fact that the March 30-April 1 conference is taking place in wartime presents uncomfortable dilemmas about how to discuss aspects of the Bush administration's Middle East policy.

"I believe that we don't have to choose between being pro-Israel and being a patriotic American," said Amy Friedkin, AIPAC's president.

In a perfect world, AIPAC would highlight the role Israel has played in U.S. efforts against Iraq, and the job the United States has done to protect Israel from possible attacks from Baghdad.

In the real world, however, the United States has tried to downplay Israel's role — even keeping it off the list of countries in its "coalition of the willing" — to prevent a potential backlash from the Arab world.

Some figures have suggested that American Jews, and especially Jewish neoconservatives in the Bush administration, were pushing the country toward war.

As a result, many in the Jewish world have been trying to keep their support for the Bush administration's agenda, in Iraq and in Israel, to a whisper.

"The war inhibits your desire to want to trumpet the relationship at a time when the United States and Israel are downplaying it," said Doug Bloomfield, a former legislative director for AIPAC.

But conference attendees "can highlight common values and common issues," he said. There also are questions as to how AIPAC will express its concerns about some aspects of administration policy.

There are grave fears in the American Jewish world about the White House's postwar plans, given Bush's recent announcement that he will present the "road map" for Israeli-Palestinian peace following confirmation of the new Palestinian Authority prime minister, which is expected shortly. According to some reports, however, presentation of the road map may be delayed until after the end of the war in Iraq.

Many in the Jewish community are concerned about the participation of the United States' partners in the diplomatic "Quartet" that drafted the plan — the United Nations, European Union and Russia — who are seen as biased toward the Palestinians.

In addition, they feel the road map places too much pressure on Israel to make concessions without preliminary, reciprocal or irrevocable steps by the Palestinians.

But it's unclear how much criticism can be voiced, given the "rally around the flag" mentality at the AIPAC summit. "There's a fine line for the community to be walking right now," one Jewish official said.

Participants at the conference will need to find a way to praise the U.S.-Israel relationship while noting that it is not the impetus for the war.

They also are expected to support the president's plans to further postwar democracy in the Middle East — while criticizing the linkage between the Iraq war and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Plans for the conference are fluid, as it's unclear whether

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Al-Aksa Brigade calls for attacks

The Al-Aksa Martyrs Brigade called for attacks on U.S., British and Israeli targets around the world because of the war in Iraq.

The group, which is affiliated with Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat's Fatah Party, said the three countries are attempting to take control of Arab and Muslim resources through "terror and massacres." P.A. officials said the statement does not reflect official Fatah policy.

Meanwhile, Hamas declared Monday a day of fasting in support of Saddam Hussein.

### 2 soldiers wounded in Gaza Strip

Two Israeli troops were lightly wounded during an operation in the Gaza Strip on Sunday night.

Five wanted Palestinians were detained in the operation in Rafiah. In the West Bank, Israeli troops arrested 33 wanted Palestinians. Troops also closed down the offices of three foundations in the Hebron area that were suspected of raising funds for Hamas.

### Israel lifts closure of territories

Some 10,000 Palestinian workers from the Gaza Strip entered Israel on Monday after a weeklong closure of the territories was lifted.

The closure had been imposed before the Purim holiday. Some 200 Palestinian merchants also entered Israel, Israel Radio reported.

### Economic plan meets opposition

Residents in northern Israel plan to boycott schools and commerce on Tuesday to protest a proposed economic austerity plan.

The confrontation line communities are protesting against planned cuts in their benefits. Amir Peretz, chairman of the Histadrut trade union federation, said Monday that the federation had not ruled out a general strike over the proposals.

it will be held in the midst of war or at the beginning stages of regime change. Bush's national security adviser, Condoleezza Rice, is confirmed to speak, and Secretary of State Colin Powell has been invited. Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom will represent Israel.

One topic on the agenda is clear: AIPAC wants to encourage congressional approval of the \$1 billion in military aid and \$9 billion in loan guarantees for Israel that the White House is expected to propose in coming days.

The money would be part of a supplemental spending bill related to the Iraq war that may reach \$100 billion.

Extra aid to Israel could be problematic in the midst of war, tax cuts and a deficit, but the pro-Israel lobby has been encouraged in recent weeks by bipartisan calls of support from congressional leaders.

Israel had been seeking \$4 billion in military aid, but was given only a quarter of the amount. Friedkin said that AIPAC will lobby for whatever package the Bush administration and Israel agree to.

The other priority will be to make sure that the president's engagement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict reflects his landmark speech of June 24, which differs in some respects from drafts of the road map. Jewish leaders had been heartened by the White House's reluctance to embrace the road map over the past few months, repeatedly delaying its implementation at Israel's request.

They were caught off guard earlier this month when, during U.S. attempts to build international support for the war on Iraq, Bush announced he would present the road map after a Palestinian prime minister "with real authority" takes office.

Jewish leaders were encouraged by Bush's indication that the exact contents of the road map were still up for debate. In the days that followed, however, the administration has flip-flopped on that issue. State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said March 19 that the road map was nonnegotiable, while other State Department and National Security Council officials have said otherwise.

AIPAC has called repeatedly for congressional legislation that codifies Bush's June 24 speech — in which he called for an interim Palestinian state, but only after a complete cessation of violence against Israel and the replacement of the Palestinian Authority leadership.

AIPAC has convinced lawmakers to offer such legislation and place it inside spending bills. The theory is that legislation that holds Bush to the parameters of his June speech could offset the influence of the road map.

"We will be lobbying for support for the road map that implements the president's June 24th vision," Friedkin said.

AIPAC also will push for support of legislation that pressures Syria to cut its ties with terrorist groups.

But no matter what is on AIPAC's agenda, the war in Iraq will be the elephant in the room. "I don't think there will be that much talk about the road map," said Morris Amitay, a former executive director of AIPAC. "Unless the war is over by then, everything will be focused on the war."

Friedkin says she does not believe security concerns will hurt attendance. She says AIPAC has stressed to attendees that there will be a strong law enforcement presence at the event.

She also says the war will not alter speakers' messages.

Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League, said the conference is likely to attract the scorn of "bigots," but in fact it will be a sign that Jewish groups are acting as normal — including attending a regularly-scheduled conference.

"There was no need for Jews to get ahead of the curve" on Iraq, speaking out before the White House decided whether to go to war, Foxman said. But now that the United States has invaded Iraq, it is appropriate for the Jewish world to support it, he said.

Friedkin said that holding the policy conference during the war is, in some ways, an advantage: A major discussion of Mideast issues is likely to attract media attention, which could highlight the other parts of AIPAC's agenda.

"We are very aware that we are at war," Friedkin said. "While we are celebrating the relationship of the United States and Israel, we need to support American troops and support the efforts for democracy to be built in the Middle East." □



## Daily News Bulletin

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## JEWISH WORLD

### Student attacked in Germany

An American rabbinical student was attacked in Berlin in what police consider an anti-Semitic attack.

Police spokesman Uwe Kozelnik told JTA that the student, Mendel D., 21, was slapped in the face by one of four young men of Arab appearance Sunday evening while walking on the Kurfurstendam. "He was recognized because of his clothing and because of his earlocks," Kozelnik said.

### Paris mayor condemns attack

Paris Mayor Bertrand Delanoe condemned a weekend attack by anti-war protesters on two Jews.

Delanoe visited the headquarters of the socialist Zionist youth movement Hashomer Hatzair on Monday in a gesture of solidarity following Saturday's attack. Delanoe said the city would increase security measures to ensure the safety of its Jewish citizens.

### Poll: French Jews wary

More than one-quarter of French Jews have considered emigrating because of anti-Semitism, a new poll finds.

The survey, by pollster Stan Greenberg for The Israel Project, found that 26 percent of French Jews have strongly considered immigrating to Israel or the United States due to rising anti-Semitism, with 13 percent of them "very seriously" eyeing emigration.

Thirty-eight percent of all French Jews say they have experienced an anti-Semitic incident. Overall, 82 percent of French Jews say anti-Semitism is a serious problem. The survey of 493 French Jews was conducted last October.

### Swiss apologize for pro-PLO letter

Switzerland's Foreign Ministry apologized for a letter a senior official wrote to a pro-Palestinian group that appeared to condone terror attacks on Israel.

The head of the ministry's Middle East department, Ambassador Thomas Kupfer, had written to the Swiss-based group "Pro-PLO," describing Palestinian suicide bombers as resistance fighters. "We apologize that this happened," ministry spokesman Simon Hubacher wrote to JTA. "The content of the letter does not reflect Switzerland's view."

### Arsonists target Sydney shul

A Sydney synagogue was attacked by arsonists. Vandals last week smeared oil on an outside wall and a lawn, then tried to light it, David Samuel, president of the South Sydney Synagogue, told JTA. However, the fire did not catch, and damage was limited to blackened walls. The arson attempt took place at night, when the building is unattended. During the 1991 Persian Gulf War, the synagogue was severely damaged in a fire-bomb attack.

## ARTS & CULTURE

### A story of Holocaust survival, 'The Pianist,' scores upset at Oscars

By Tom Tugend

LOS ANGELES (JTA) — "The Pianist," a searing film of one Jew's survival in Warsaw during the Nazi occupation, scored a major upset when it won three Oscars this week.

The film, which is based on a memoir by Wladyslaw Szpilman, garnered Academy Awards for director Roman Polanski, actor Adrien Brody and screenwriter Ronald Harwood.

"Nowhere in Africa," which depicts a Jewish family that resettles in Kenya after being forced to flee Nazi Germany, won for best foreign film.

Most American critics had predicted the three winners for "The Pianist" would be distant also-rans in the Oscar voting.

Their victories illustrated once again the enduring hold of the Holocaust on the imagination and sentiments of the film industry.

Polanski, who escaped from the Krakow Ghetto as a 7-year-old boy, was not present at Sunday evening's 75th annual Academy Awards.

He is officially a fugitive from the United States for having engaged in unlawful sexual relations with a minor.

The statuette was accepted on behalf of the director by presenter Harrison Ford. Polanski had been previously nominated for his films "Tess," "Chinatown" and "Rosemary's Baby."

Loud applause greeted the announcement of Polanski's win.

Brody, in his first major starring role, portrayed pianist Szpilman, one of a handful of Jews to survive the doomed uprisings of the ghetto and city of Warsaw during the five years of Nazi military rule.

An obviously stunned Brody exceeded his allotted acceptance speech time.

"My experiences of making this film made me very aware of the sadness and the dehumanization of people at times of war," he said.

Dustin Hoffman, who had earlier introduced a brief segment of "The Pianist," described the film's theme as "the triumph of the human spirit and of the transforming power of art."

"The Pianist" got off to a slow start by missing out in three lesser categories for which it had been nominated.

It also ceded the best picture Oscar to the musical "Chicago," whose director, Rob Marshall, had been considered the odds-on favorite to win in his category.

Less of a surprise was the Academy Award for "Nowhere in Africa" as the top foreign film.

Another Holocaust-themed film, "Prisoner of Paradise," which concerns a Jewish entertainer who directs a Nazi propaganda film, failed to win in the documentary feature category.

Also outside the winner's circle, in the documentary short subject category, was "The Collector of Bedford Street," the story of a developmentally disabled Jewish man in New York who collected more than \$125,000 for medical charities. □

### Pop star faces visa problems

NEW YORK (JTA) — An Iranian-born Israeli pop star has encountered problems obtaining a visa to travel to the United States for a round of concerts.

Rita and her musician husband, Rami Kleinstein, had planned to travel to the U.S. for a concert tour in New York, Los Angeles and Miami, the Israeli daily Yediot Achronot reported.

But Rita's paperwork was held up due to tightened post-Sept. 11 visa procedures for individuals born in Arab countries.

Foreign Ministry sources said efforts were being made to help the singer out, but that she had submitted her application too late. □

WAR IN IRAQ**Israeli students grappling with fear of war, quest for calm***By Matthew Gutman*

TEL AVIV (JTA) — Clutching one drooling infant to her hip and racing after her toddler, Shirli Shaked noted that during the 1991 Persian Gulf War, “I went to ‘end of the world’ parties. Now I’m chasing after leaking diapers.”

Standing outside the Thau kindergarten in Tel Aviv, Shaked, who in 1991 had just finished her military duty, said that this time she hadn’t prepared a sealed room or gotten gas masks for her family.

“What’s the point?” she asked. “The chances anything will happen are so small — and besides, I honestly don’t believe” the masks “will help if, God forbid, Scuds begin to fall.”

Inside the kindergarten things were different, as per Education Ministry orders. Cardboard boxes containing the “bubble suit” gas mask used by children rested in neat squares above the children’s boots, coats and assorted blankets.

Kindergarten teacher Ilana Schtibiel, whose bun of unruly, dyed-blond hair belied her commanding sense of calm, presided over the 31 kindergartners.

“What is there to be nervous about?” she asked a reporter.

“If something should happen, which it won’t, I have this list of parents prepared to come help, and we’ll move the children to the bomb shelter,” she said, pointing to a squat, triangular concrete structure outside the window.

Israel’s Education Ministry has tried to take every possible precaution, while fostering a sense of calm by urging parents to send their children to school.

The ministry reiterated Sunday that all education facilities would carry on operating as usual, despite the U.S.-led war against Iraq.

At the peak of the Scud missile scare on March 19, hours before the war began, Education Minister Limor Livnat defiantly announced that all Israeli schools would reopen March 20, following the three-day Purim holiday.

Barely half the pupils in the greater Tel Aviv area heeded her call the next day, however. Attendance for kindergartens plummeted by two-thirds, and just half of elementary and high school students showed up.

In Haifa, attendance was slightly less than 65 percent.

Sparking the mass abstentions were reports that Israeli schools were under-prepared for war.

There was insufficient space in bomb shelters, many of which had been converted to storage facilities, and schools were short of both the plastic sheeting and masking tape needed to seal classrooms.

The result was that many parents were loathe to send their children to school.

Several municipal parents’ associations lambasted the government for opening schools without consulting them.

By Sunday morning, nerves were soothed and anxiety suppressed. Over 80 percent of students living in the “danger zone” — the greater Tel Aviv area — attended school.

The superintendent of Israeli elementary schools, Eti Helmer, told JTA in an interview at Tel Aviv’s Gordon School that the 20 percent still absent “were just extending an already long weekend.”

Enrollment would soon be full again, she predicted.

But not everyone shared Helmer’s confidence.

As a female classmate ruffled his blue mohawk, Roy, 14, spoke candidly.

“Frankly, this whole thing scares me. The thought of missiles with chemical weapons falling in my backyard is pretty stressful,” he said.

Roy stayed at home late last week, during the peak of the threat.

He returned to school this week because he missed his friends, he said, and because “staying at home with my parents was probably more stressful.”

Shiri, a female classmate whose hand was conspicuously interlocked with Roy’s, noted that for her, “an alarm would be the most frightening. That is when the hysteria would start.”

With every hour of the American campaign in western Iraq, the only area from which Iraqi missiles could hit Israel, the likelihood of an Iraqi missile attack on Israel decreases.

Consequently, the emergency instructions issued by the Education Ministry at the start of the American attack have been altered slightly.

On Sunday, classes were held in schools with prefabricated structures that are difficult to secure against nonconventional weapons.

For those few residents of Tel Aviv who sought refuge in one of Israel’s southern cities or resort towns, the impetus for flight was not so much the fear of death by Scuds as memories of the panic and trauma of life in sealed rooms in the 1991 war.

Rinat Algom, a Tel Aviv travel agent, was a young mother with two toddlers at the time.

“I had to put my baby in something that most resembled a big plastic bag. I just remember the way she would scream and yell. What must she” — the baby was nine months old at the time — “have felt being stuffed into a plastic bag by this strange creature wearing a gas mask?” she asked.

What was worse, Algom was alone.

Her husband was assigned to a special Home Front Command unit that assessed whether incoming Scuds had been armed with nonconventional weapons.

Algom claims that both her children carry emotional scars from the 1991 war that sound almost comical: They have an overwhelming fear of people in masks, especially clowns.

When Algom, a generally unflappable third-generation resident of Tel Aviv, discovered after the war that the protective units for toddlers were unsafe, she decided never to suffer that experience again.

This time she wasn’t taking any chances, Algom said.

She booked her family a cottage near the Dead Sea at Ein Gedi, and arrived shortly before the first bomb slammed into Saddam Hussein’s palace in Baghdad on the morning of March 20.

According to Algom and other travel agents, hundreds of customers inquired about escaping southward. In fact, the Tourism Ministry recorded a boost of about 15 percent in domestic bookings — but it was nothing like the exodus that some had predicted.

Back in the Thau kindergarten, Schtibiel pulled from a trash bin a two-page folder that she had drafted for the children when the war began.

“I remember another man who tried to kill us,” one kindergartner had written inside. “It was Haman the terrible, but he also failed.” □