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TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Bomber attacks Tel Aviv pub

At least three people were killed and 35 wounded, five seriously, in a suicide bombing at a Tel Aviv beachfront pub.

The bomber blew himself up late Tuesday night at the entrance to "Mike's Place" when a security guard barred him from entering.

Envoy to deliver 'road map'

The U.S. ambassador to Israel is expected to hand the "road map" for Middle East peace to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon in the next few days.

The step became possible after Palestinian legislators confirmed the new Palestinian Authority prime minister, Mahmoud Abbas, and approved his Cabinet on Tuesday.

Diplomatic sources said Daniel Kurtzer will deliver the road map to Sharon in Jerusalem. Other members of the "Quartet" — the United States, European Union, United Nations and Russia — will present it to the Palestinians. [Page 1]

New Crown Heights defense

Lawyers for the man facing a retrial in the 1991 Crown Heights riots admitted that he killed an Orthodox Jew. However, Lemrick Nelson Jr.'s lawyers say he was drunk when he stabbed yeshiva student Yankel Rosenbaum, and that he wasn't motivated by anti-Semitism.

The retrial is for violating Rosenbaum's civil rights. Lawyers for Nelson, 27, said he had been drinking beer when he was swept up in an Aug. 19, 1991, riot and stabbed Rosenbaum. [Page 4]

Abbas invited to Shoah museum

The new Palestinian Authority prime minister should visit the U.S. Holocaust museum, a U.S. congressman and Holocaust survivor said. Rep. Tom Lantos (D-Calif.) said he invited Mahmoud Abbas to visit the museum because Abbas "needs considerable insight about what happened during the Holocaust."

Abbas has been criticized for his 1982 doctoral thesis that minimizes the Holocaust and accuses the Zionists of collaborating with the Nazis. Abbas says he wrote the thesis when Israel was the PLO's enemy.

In 1998, the museum extended — and then rescinded — an invitation to Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat, sparking controversy.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Conditions favor peace moves, but leaders on each side face difficulties

By Leslie Susser

JERUSALEM (JTA) — On the face of it, conditions are ripe for a new chapter in Israeli-Palestinian relations.

The American victory in Iraq has changed the regional balance of power, and the "road map" plan drafted by the United States, European Union, United Nations and Russia marks a new, widely accepted international peace plan.

Mahmoud Abbas, the new Palestinian Authority prime minister, says he is committed to stopping violence against Israel and resuming peace talks, and Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon says he wants to crown his career with a major peacemaking achievement.

But beneath the surface, things aren't so simple, as both Sharon and Abbas face powerful domestic opposition to peacemaking, and progress will be hard to come by.

Still, because of the changed conditions, it's too early to discount the road map's chances of success.

On Sunday, the head of Israel's Shin Bet security service, Avi Dichter, outlined to the Cabinet what he saw as Abbas' main difficulties.

First and foremost, Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat will still be around, breathing down Abbas' neck and trying to trip him up. There is a real danger of a bifurcated Palestinian leadership emerging, with Abbas pulling in one direction and Arafat in the other, Dichter said.

Moreover, Abbas' position vis-a-vis Arafat is weak, as many top figures in the mainstream Palestinian Fatah movement don't accept the new prime minister's authority and he is widely seen in the Palestinian street as an American-Israeli puppet.

Abbas' security chief and strongman, Mohammed Dahlan, has real clout only in Gaza, not in the West Bank. In Dichter's view, the upshot might well be that Abbas will show toughness toward Israel to win domestic support — which could work against progress in peacemaking.

The Palestinian legislature confirmed Abbas on Tuesday by a vote of 51-18 with three abstentions. Just before the vote, however, Arafat made two major moves to shore up his position that may hamper Abbas' room to maneuver.

First, he set up a National Security Council that will have ultimate control over Palestinian security organizations and will report directly to Arafat. This was a clear, 11th-hour attempt to undermine Dahlan, who is the minister responsible for security affairs in Abbas' government.

Dahlan sees as his main goal the creation of a single, unified Palestinian armed force under his control. The Israelis and Americans see that as vital for progress toward peace.

Arafat, through the National Security Council, could try to prevent it — and the outcome of that power struggle could be crucial.

Second, Arafat appointed Saeb Erekat as head of negotiations with Israel within the Fatah movement, after having forced Abbas to make Erekat chief negotiator with Israel in his government. Erekat is an unreserved Arafat loyalist.

Through the National Security Council and through Erekat, Arafat hopes to retain control of the two keys to future relations with Israel: security affairs and peacemaking. Life will not be easy for Abbas.

As for Sharon, he faces growing opposition from right-wingers in his coalition and

MIDEAST FOCUS

Abbas vows to fight terror

The Palestinian Authority's prime minister-delegate pledged to fight terrorism.

"There is no room for weapons except in the hands of the government," Mahmoud Abbas told members of the Palestinian legislative council who met in Ramallah on Tuesday to confirm his new Cabinet. Abbas rejected Israel's requested changes to the "road map" toward Israeli-Palestinian peace, and said peace is not possible until Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip are removed.

A spokesman for Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said Israel would wait to see if Abbas' words are met with deeds.

Israel remembers the Holocaust

Israelis came to a halt Tuesday during a two-minute siren in memory of the 6 million Jews murdered in the Holocaust.

As part of this year's Holocaust Martyrs and Heroes Remembrance Day observances, Conservative synagogues in Israel and around the world were holding readings of the first liturgical text marking the Holocaust.

In Poland, Israeli President Moshe Katsav and Polish President Alexander Kwasniewski helped high school students and Holocaust survivors from around the world mark the day at the site of the Auschwitz death camp.

Terrorist killed in Israeli strike

A senior Palestinian terrorist was killed in an Israeli helicopter strike in the Gaza Strip. A missile fired from an Israeli military helicopter Tuesday hit the car Nidal Salame was traveling in, killing him and a passerby, Israel Radio reported.

In the West Bank, the head of the Fatah military wing in Bethlehem and his deputy were killed in a clash with Israeli troops.

his own Likud party. They have set up a new lobby group for the West Bank and Gaza settlers, dedicated to undermining the road map and preventing the establishment of a Palestinian state.

Eighteen of the 40 Likud legislators, including Public Security Minister Tzachi Hanegbi, already have joined the group. One of the founding members was the Likud's Yehiel Hazan, who says "the road map in its current form will lead to the destruction on the State of Israel."

They also are calling on right-wing elements in the American Jewish community to oppose the road map, and to make their views known to U.S. officials

The settlers, too, have not been idle. The Yesha settler council has produced an "alternative road map" that leaves most of the West Bank in Israeli hands, does not dismantle settlements and rules out the establishment of a Palestinian state.

Sharon himself seems to be torn: He knows it would be foolhardy to obstruct American-led peace efforts, but he is loathe to give up settlements that he himself was instrumental in setting up over the years.

Sharon believes one of the keys to peacemaking will be Abbas' handling of the fundamentalist Hamas and Islamic Jihad militias. He insists that they be disarmed — by force, if necessary.

That, indeed, is perhaps Abbas' greatest dilemma: whether to confront the radicals head-on or try to reach a hudna, or temporary cease-fire, agreement with them. Under such a cease-fire, the radicals would keep their arms, but wouldn't use them against Israel — as long as peace talks continue, that is.

Sharon fears the radicals would simply use a hudna to regroup for another round of terrorism against Israel, or even perhaps to turn on the Palestinian Authority and seize power by force. Abbas, however, fears a clash could be tantamount to civil war.

Does this mean the road map is destined to fail, as have all previous initiatives since the eruption of the Palestinian intifada in September 2000?

Not necessarily. What the road map has that the Mitchell (April 2001), Tenet (June 2001) and Zinni (March 2002) plans lacked is a clear linkage between a cease-fire and the political endgame. The equation is simple: Palestinian quiet equals Palestinian statehood, guaranteed by the international community.

Moreover, Abbas has bought into the equation in a way that Arafat never did. Where Arafat hoped to pressure Israel into major concessions through terror, Abbas argues that if the Palestinians refrain from terror — which has failed — international pressure on Israel will accomplish their goals instead.

After two and a half years of terror and retaliation, both sides are showing signs of fatigue, both bruised societies are looking for change, and both recognize the link between ongoing violence and economic hardship.

But to break out of the cycle of terror and response, both sides will have to make allowances. The Palestinians will have to make genuine efforts to stop the violence before Israel withdraws from Palestinian territories; and Israel may have to allow the Palestinian effort to be judged by its resolve, not its success.

As political pundit Chemi Shalev wrote in Ma'ariv: "In one of the refugee camps, near one of the bomb-making workshops, sits the man who holds the real key to the road map. Not George Bush or Colin Powell, not Ariel Sharon or Shaul Mofaz, and not even Yasser Arafat or Abbas, but the lone terrorist, the potential suicide bomber, who with perfect timing will blow himself, his surroundings and the faint hope for change to smithereens."

To give peace a chance, says Shalev, Sharon must take back the veto power he gave the terrorists when he demanded absolute quiet before making any peace moves. □
(Leslie Susser is the diplomatic correspondent for the Jerusalem Report.)

Expert: Islamic clergy to blame

NEW YORK (JTA) — Incitement by Islamic clergymen is the most dangerous form of anti-Semitism in the world today, an expert on anti-Semitism said.

The Hebrew University's Robert Wistrich made his comments Monday at a conference on the topic in Jerusalem. As an example, he cited repeated references by Muslim clergy to blood libels against Jews. □



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JEWISH WORLD

Policyholders' names available

A list of hundreds of thousands of Holocaust-era insurance policyholders is being made available.

The list of 363,232 policyholders, being made public by German insurers, is part of a multibillion-dollar agreement reached in 2000 by the United States and Germany, a spokesman for the International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims said.

The actual value of the policies is unclear, and German companies say many of those eligible for payouts received money in general restitution payments during the 1950s and 1960s. The names of other Holocaust victims who held policies with other European insurance firms remain sealed.

Israel tipped U.S. on POW?

Israeli intelligence reportedly gave U.S. forces the first tip into the whereabouts of POW Jessica Lynch.

Contradicting earlier reports that an Iraqi civilian tipped off U.S. forces, Rep. Tom Lantos (D-Calif.) said Israeli intelligence provided the United States with the first information that Lynch and five of her comrades were being held in an Iraqi hospital in Nasiriyah, the New York Post reported.

Group praises Abbas

Americans for Peace Now praised the new prime minister of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, for having his Cabinet confirmed.

The group also called on Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to take steps to help Abbas achieve his goals.

Hadassah lauds Bush on AIDS bill

Hadassah is praising President Bush for endorsing a plan to fight AIDS in Africa. "President Bush has moved the battle against HIV/AIDS into a position of global importance," said Bonnie Lipton, Hadassah's national president. "By his actions, he has demonstrated the talmudic maxim that saving one life is akin to saving the entire universe."

N.Y. federation leader dies

Gary Rubin, a senior official with the UJA-Federation of New York and a veteran Jewish communal professional, died Monday. Rubin, 53, died of a heart attack.

"We have lost a colleague with unique gifts — his intellectual rigor, his vast experience in the Jewish community, his deep abiding commitment to Jewish life," said the executive vice president of the New York federation, John Ruskay.

Rubin previously worked at the American Jewish Committee, Americans for Peace Now and the New York Association for New Americans. He is survived by his wife, Sheila, and four children.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

Report: Intermarried households soon will dominate U.S. Jewish life

By Joe Berkofsky

NEW YORK (JTA) — Households with intermarried Jews will soon dominate the American Jewish landscape, according to a new report.

A study by the Jewish Outreach Institute in New York contends that intermarried households may soon become a majority of homes with one or more Jews.

What's more, the study says, more children younger than 12 already belong to intermarried families than to entirely Jewish families.

"If the creation of intermarried households is not at the halfway mark, it's clearly coming," said Paul Golin, director of communications and strategic planning for the institute and author of the report.

The prediction comes as the Jewish community awaits the release of the 2000-01 National Jewish Population Survey, which will update controversial intermarriage findings from the last survey in 1990.

In 1990 the survey found that 52 percent of marriages involving Jews in the previous five years were to non-Jews, while 28 percent of Jews overall are married to non-Jews.

In the intervening years, responses have ranged from efforts to stem intermarriage by strengthening Jewish identity to encouraging interfaith couples to become more Jewishly active in hopes that they will raise Jewish children.

The latest report, "The Coming Majority: Suggested Action on Intermarried Households," urges more outreach as a way to shift the demographic tide.

"Interfaith marriage is not the end of Jewish continuity — not raising Jewish children is," said the institute's executive director, Rabbi Kerry Olitzky. "The challenge is not necessarily in the rate, the challenge is in the response."

The 1990 study sparked a flurry of subsequent studies and reports on intermarriage. Some of them challenged the 52 percent rate, while others issued similar findings.

In one noted example, sociologist Steven M. Cohen, professor at the Melton Centre at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, found that intermarriage was closer to 40 percent.

In 2000, when the \$6 million NJPS survey was due to be issued, the Center for Jewish Studies at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York issued a report using similar methodology that found that 33 percent of Jews were married to non-Jews. But Golin said the intermarriage numbers largely have been "misunderstood."

Any rate higher than 33 percent means more intermarriages than in-marriages are taking place, he said.

Furthermore, none of the decennial population surveys have shown an intermarriage rate lower than 33 percent since the mid-1960s.

Golin's report maintains that even a conservative estimate of 40 percent means that four intermarriages creating four intermarried households are being created for every six Jewish marriages, which lead to three in-married homes.

At 50 percent the ratio widens to 2:1.

Only by seeing the intermarriage rate in these terms can the community begin to grapple with the importance of reaching out to the intermarried, Golin and Olitzky said.

Referring to the 1990 population survey that found one-third of interfaith families raising their children as Jews, Golin said the overall Jewish population would grow if that rate climbed. "Increasing the percent of intermarried families raising Jewish children from 30 percent to 50 percent is an attainable goal, and should be a primary mission for the Jewish community," he said.

The Hebrew University's Cohen, while agreeing with the newest report's math, said it only told "half the truth."

"Even if half of the households being formed with a Jew in them are interfaith, it doesn't negate the fact that a vast majority of Jews continue to live in in-married households," he said.

"In-married households have many more Jews in them: The spouse is Jewish, they have more children and most of the children identify as Jews," he said. □

Latest twist in Crown Heights case spurs anger among Jewish leaders

By Joe Berkofsky

NEW YORK (JTA) — Chanina Sperlin spits out the words like a bad taste to describe Lemrick Nelson Jr., now standing trial in the 1991 slaying of a Chasidic Jew.

"This is one rotten apple that came out. So what do you do with a rotten apple? You throw it in the garbage."

Sperlin, chairman of the Crown Heights Jewish Community Council, was reacting to the latest, alcohol-laced legal twist in the infamous Brooklyn case that marked four days of race riots in New York City 12 years ago and soured black-Jewish relations for years.

Nelson, 27, is facing a retrial on civil rights charges in the Aug. 19, 1991, stabbing death of 29-year-old yeshiva student Yankel Rosenbaum, an Australian studying in the United States.

Jews across the area widely echoed the distaste for Nelson, who at the trial's opening on Monday admitted for the first time that he killed Rosenbaum, but insisted it was because he was drunk and not because Rosenbaum was Jewish.

"I would hope that a jury would recognize that being filled with beer doesn't preclude being filled with hatred," said Rabbi Avi Shafran, director of public affairs for Agudath Israel of America, a fervently Orthodox group.

At the same time, Jewish leaders say the new trial and their skepticism about Nelson's latest tack should not reopen old black-Jewish wounds.

This is the third trial in the Crown Heights saga, which began when a motorcade carrying the late Lubavitch Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson fatally struck a black child, Gavin Cato, 7.

Rumors quickly spread that a Chasidic ambulance service aided the injured driver but ignored Cato and a young cousin, touching off long-simmering tensions in Crown Heights between the fervently Orthodox Lubavitch Chasidim, and Caribbean Americans and African Americans.

In a 1992 state trial, Nelson was acquitted of murder and related felony charges. Five years later, then Attorney General Janet Reno won a federal court civil rights conviction that sent Nelson to prison for 19 years.

A co-defendant, Charles Price, 47, was convicted at the same time of leading a mob, including Nelson, that shouted either "get the Jew" or "kill the Jew," according to various reports, and hunted down Rosenbaum.

But a federal appeals court last year overturned the convictions on grounds that the judge manipulated the jury's racial makeup, and ordered a new trial.

In the opening of the retrial in Federal District Court in Brooklyn on Monday, Nelson's attorneys introduced a new defense.

In a dramatic reversal, they admitted that Nelson stabbed Rosenbaum. But, they said, he did it because he was drunk, not because the victim was Jewish, and therefore Rosenbaum's civil rights were not violated.

Jewish leaders in the area insist that Nelson was fueled by anti-Semitism and not by a day of drinking 40-ounce beers.

Still, they say, blacks and Jews in Crown Heights have worked hard to foster better relations since 1991.

"The relationship has changed 100 percent, because there is communication," Sperlin said. "You can't compare then to now."

For example, the Crown Heights Jewish Community Council

sponsored the rehabilitation of a 112-unit low-income rental building that will largely house blacks.

Sperlin said he and other local Jewish leaders and leaders of the African American and Caribbean American communities also regularly keep in contact.

"I have their home numbers; they have my home number, my beeper number, my cell number. We are always in communication, even when we are not in crisis."

Rabbi Marc Schneier, president of the New York-based Foundation for Ethnic Understanding, which promotes black-Jewish ties, said the latest Crown Heights trial must be seen "on both a micro and a macro level."

Locally, the Nelson trial is once again moving through a "tense" jury selection that should ultimately reflect the community's demographics, he said.

Yet the case "has little to do with blacks and Jews nationally," he added.

Since the 1991 conflict, he said, "there's been a sea change in black-Jewish relations. Most black and Jewish leaders will trust that justice will prevail and will not allow the old wounds of Crown Heights to jeopardize the process of healing that has taken place between blacks and Jews."

One decade after the race riots, the foundation released a survey showing that one-third of both blacks and Jews believe intergroup relations had improved.

Yet the majority of both groups said relations remain unchanged.

Black-Jewish relations "are not like the heyday of the civil rights movement and Martin Luther King" in the 1960s, Schneier said, "but they're better than in 1991."

Tensions surfaced last year in several U.S. congressional races, and relations between some black lawmakers and the Jewish community are strained on many issues.

In one instance, seven-term Alabama Rep. Earl Hilliard, an African American and sometime critic of Israel, blamed his defeat to African American challenger Artur Davis on out-of-state Jewish money.

Then the father of Cynthia McKinney, a Georgia lawmaker who was also a critic of Israel, blamed her defeat to Denise Majette, a fellow African American, to Jewish power as well.

Schneier blamed both those flare-ups in black-Jewish relations on the Jewish community's not "laying the groundwork" among members of the Congressional Black Caucus beforehand.

Yet Schneier also lauded the Black Caucus for its support of Israel during an anti-racism conference in Durban, South Africa, last year.

Still, in the wake of the latest Crown Heights twist, Jewish anger was apparent over the case that does not seem to go away.

In a statement, Michael Miller, executive vice president of the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York, called Nelson's new defense a "cynical manipulation" of the legal system and "a cruel twisting of the knife in the back of Yankel's family and friends."

Schneier, too, believes it was indeed a "racial attack," but does not want to "reopen these old wounds" by dwelling on it.

This time, "we can disagree in a respectful manner, and that was not the case in 1991," he said.

"Thank God there are forums where blacks and Jews can express their anger behind closed doors instead of expressing that anger in a four-day riot and pogrom," he said. □