



# Daily News Bulletin

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86th Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Bush singles out Iran, Syria

President Bush called Syria and Iran's harboring of terrorists "completely unacceptable."

Speaking to reporters in Crawford, Texas, on Monday with Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, Bush said Iran and Syria have been harboring and assisting terrorists.

The president also called on all countries "interested in a peaceful solution in the Middle East" to support the efforts of Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas.

These remarks are seen as a jab at European leaders who continue to deal with P.A. President Yasser Arafat.

### Israeli firms can work with Iraq

Israeli companies can do business with Iraq.

Israeli Finance Minister Benjamin Netanyahu signed an order Monday allowing Israeli firms to invest in Iraq and import and export goods.

Netanyahu made the decision after meeting with Israeli businessmen who wanted to participate in the reconstruction of Iraq following the U.S.-led war, according to Israeli Army Radio.

### Shalom: Iran threatens world

Iran's nuclear program is a threat to the entire world, Israel's foreign minister said.

Speaking in Brussels after talks with European Union counterparts, Silvan Shalom said Iran threatens the stability not only of the region, but of the international community.

His comments came against the backdrop of Tehran's official inauguration of a new ballistic missile capable of reaching Israel and U.S. troops stationed abroad.

### North American Jews go to Israel

About 350 North American Jews will immigrate together to Israel this week.

Tuesday's flight, coordinated by the Nefesh B'Nefesh organization, in conjunction with the Jewish Agency for Israel, is the second such immigration of the summer.

The immigrants are slated to be welcomed at Ben-Gurion Airport on Wednesday by Deputy Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Labor Party Chairman Shimon Peres.

## In a struggling Latin America, Jews face a host of challenges

By Larry Luxner

BUENOS AIRES (JTA) — In economically ravaged Argentina, thousands of once-prosperous Jews now depend on charity for their basic needs, despite optimism sparked by the recent inauguration of a new president and a slight improvement in the economy.

Across the Rio de la Plata in Uruguay, the storefronts of Jewish-owned shops in downtown Montevideo remain shuttered as the country continues to implode.

To the north in Brazil, the economic outlook is better, though soup kitchens still are the main source of nourishment for hundreds of elderly Jews in Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro.

"The situation is very difficult," says Bernardo Kliksberg, a senior economist at the Inter-American Development Bank in Washington.

"In Argentina, we estimate that 60,000 of the country's 220,000 Jews are below the poverty level. Of these 60,000, approximately 25,000 live in extreme poverty. That means they cannot meet the most basic needs.

"The situation is also very bad in Uruguay, where the trends are similar, and in Brazil and Venezuela," said Kliksberg, an Argentine Jew who has written 33 books on social justice and the root causes of poverty in Latin America.

Poverty's Jewish victims include professionals who have been laid off as a result of recent privatizations.

They also include tailors, shopkeepers and other small merchants who have been forced to close their businesses in the wake of government austerity measures that have sapped consumers' purchasing power.

In a series of articles, JTA will look at how Latin America's Jews — which number approximately 415,000 out of a total population of 508 million — are responding to the economic, social and political challenges facing them.

Those challenges include preserving dwindling communities in the face of emigration to the United States and Israel, as well as combating the anti-Semitism that has sporadically cropped up in Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and Mexico in response to domestic economic difficulties and events in the Middle East.

By far, the region's largest Jewish community is in Argentina. Home to nearly half the region's Jews, Argentina — once the richest country in Latin America — finally is beginning to pull itself out of its worst depression in over a century.

The May 22 inauguration of President Nestor Kirchner ensured that former President Carlos Menem, who many say bankrupted the country during 10 years in office that ended in 1999, would never return to political life.

Will Recant, assistant executive vice president at the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, called Argentina "a great example of the way JDC has to move with the times."

The organization's worldwide budget is \$220 million, of which \$15.7 million — or about 7 percent — went to Argentina alone in fiscal 2003.

"We're currently feeding 36,000 Jews" in Argentina, Recant said. "We have 74 centers around the country with employment bureaus, and we're doing community restructuring programs.

Synagogues have come to us and asked us for help. Wherever we go, we go in with

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Terror alerts down

Terrorist alerts have dropped significantly in the past three weeks, Israel's defense minister said. Shaul Mofaz was quoted as telling legislators from his Likud Party on Monday that warnings had dropped from 50-60 alerts per day to 10-15. He said there still are warnings of plans to kidnap Israelis.

### Israeli man suspected of terror

An Israeli whose infant daughter was killed by a Palestinian sniper in Hebron two years ago is suspected of belonging to a Jewish terrorist cell.

This information was revealed Monday by the High Court of Justice, which barred Yitzhak Pass and his brother-in-law, Matityahu Shvu, from meeting with their lawyers.

The daily Ha'aretz reported Monday that, in prior court testimony, Pass had been accused of paying for two gas balloons that a Jewish terror cell allegedly used to make a bomb that was planted outside an Arab girls school in eastern Jerusalem.

### Abbas to Cairo

Mahmoud Abbas was slated to hold talks in Cairo.

Monday's visit by the Palestinian Authority prime minister was the first stop on a diplomatic mission that will take him to Jordan and the United States. Abbas is scheduled to hold his first official White House meeting with President Bush on Friday.

### Troops defuse explosives belt

Israeli troops discovered and destroyed an explosives belt found near Nablus.

The army detained for questioning six Palestinians who were in the area on Monday. Near Jenin, a bomb went off near an Israeli army patrol Sunday night. There were no injuries. The terrorist who set up the device was killed, Israel Radio reported.



## Daily News Bulletin

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the local community as our partners." Yet things may finally be starting to brighten in Argentina, a mood encouraged by the Kirchner's swearing-in as the country's new leader.

"There are some signs of recovery," said Avi Beker, secretary-general of the World Jewish Congress in New York.

"For example, I hear fewer people talking about aliyah. From a Zionist point of view, that's bad, but it's a fact that people in Argentina do feel more comfortable and they're hopeful that things will get better."

Things already have gotten somewhat better in Portuguese-speaking Brazil, home to 120,000 Jews — and about 6 million Arabs.

Brazil has Latin America's largest economy, but in January 1999, President Fernando Henrique Cardoso was forced to devalue the Brazilian real by 50 percent. The move may have saved the Brazilian economy in the long run, but in the short run it wiped out the savings of millions of Brazilians, Jewish and non-Jewish alike.

"Unlike the case in Argentina and Uruguay, there was no sudden exodus to Israel," said Jayme Blay, president of the influential Federacao Israelita do Estado de Sao Paulo. "In Argentina, they went straight to extreme poverty. Here in Brazil, our welfare net could still manage and try to help people survive."

Jack Terpins, president of the Confederacao Israelita do Brasil and a leader of the World Jewish Congress, agreed.

"Brazilians are more accustomed to poverty than Argentines," he said. "Argentina always had the highest quality of life in Latin America, and Brazil has always had lots of poverty. But the Jews have adapted to the situation in Brazil."

Meanwhile, in poor, isolated countries such as Bolivia, Ecuador and Paraguay, the relatively tiny but well-off Jewish communities are in danger of disappearing. In Peru, the country's 3,000 Jews are reeling from an internal banking scandal that turned millionaires into paupers overnight.

In Mexico, poverty as a result of the country's continuing economic stagnation is beginning to affect the fragmented, 40,000-member Jewish community.

In oil-rich Venezuela, concern about the country's 16,000 remaining Jews is mounting in the face of widespread opposition to Hugo Chavez, the country's populist — yet deeply unpopular — president.

"People there feel the country is sliding toward totalitarianism," Beker told JTA. "The country also has close ties with Iran, which worries the Jews there. Young Jews don't see a future in Venezuela. More are leaving the country all the time."

Thousands of Jews also have left neighboring Colombia, a country of 41 million that has been wracked by kidnappings, drug wars, political violence and assassinations for decades.

The exodus of Venezuelans as well as Colombians has brought many Spanish-speaking Jews to the United States — specifically the Miami area — where the newcomers have joined Cuban Jewish exiles living in South Florida for the last 40 years. In Cuba itself, Jewish life hangs on, largely thanks to donations from American Jewish organizations — and despite a totalitarian regime and the U.S. trade embargo that further isolates Cuba's 1,300 or so Jews from their American brethren.

Dr. Jose Miller, 78, a retired surgeon and longtime president of Cuba's Jewish community, said political tensions between Washington and Havana have aggravated living conditions for all Cubans, Jew and non-Jew alike.

Even so, "we're better off now than we were in the early 1990s, when we couldn't find anything to eat," Miller said. "In general, the Jews in Cuba live the same as everyone else, and in some ways better. The Jewish community has lots of friends, and whenever we have an opportunity, we ask people to help us." □

## Zionism in reverse

NEW YORK (JTA) — More than 650,000 Israelis live abroad, including half a million in the United States.

The number abroad is approximately 10 percent of Israel's total population, according to a Foreign Ministry study reported in the Yediot Achronot newspaper. Some 150,000 of these Israelis live in New York and 115,000 live in Los Angeles. □

## JEWISH WORLD

### French Jews mark deportation

Hundreds of French Jews marked the anniversary of the 1942 roundup of Parisian Jews, who were then sent to Nazi death camps.

Sunday's ceremony, held at Jewish Martyrs Square in central Paris, took place on the day set aside by the French government in 1993 as a national memorial day for victims of racist and anti-Semitic crimes.

The memorial takes place annually on the first Sunday after July 16, the date in 1942 when more than 13,000 Jews from the Paris region were rounded up and taken to the Velodrome d'Hiver cycle stadium before being sent to Auschwitz.

### Arabs call to oppose Pipes

Arab Americans are being urged to call Congress to oppose Daniel Pipes' nomination to the U.S. Institute of Peace.

Monday is "National Call-In Day" for several Arab groups, who are urging members to contact the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee that is scheduled to vote Wednesday on Pipes' nomination.

Arab leaders claim Pipes is anti-Islam, an accusation that Pipes, director of the Middle East Form, denies.

The American Jewish Committee and the American Israel Public Affairs Committee are backing Pipes' nomination.

### Uniting for Christians in Israel

Catholics and Jews in Chicago launched a project to build Christian Arab life in Israel.

The Fassouta Computer Literacy Project, launched Sunday by the Catholic Archdiocese of Chicago and the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago, will help provide computers and software for a Christian Arab village of 3,000 people in the Galilee.

The project hopes to establish a computer literacy program in the village this fall.

"The Jewish community has always appreciated the responsiveness of the Archdiocese to concerns raised by our community, and so we were most interested in working with our Catholic friends in an effort which will have positive value for the State of Israel," said Steven Nasatir, the president of the Chicago federation.

### British Torah sage dies

Rabbi Bezalel Rakow, a leader of Britain's fervently Orthodox community, died Saturday.

Rakow was born in Germany in 1927.

Chairman of the Council of Torah Sages of the Agudas Yisroel of Great Britain, Rakow immigrated to England with his family in 1939.

## AROUND THE JEWISH WORLD

### Dwindling readership puts Dutch Jewish weekly in danger

By Rachel Levy

AMSTERDAM (JTA) — When the Dutch Jewish Weekly was founded in 1865, it was one of many Jewish publications in the Netherlands.

Now known as the Nieuw Israelietisch Weekblad, or New Israelite Weekly, it's the oldest — in fact, the only — Jewish weekly left in the country.

Unless the newspaper secures substantial funding soon, however, it may be in danger of folding.

Recently the paper admitted its precarious financial situation and its board and editor in chief began a rescue effort. Initially it will target the Jewish community in Holland and abroad, but the paper also is considering asking non-Jewish groups for assistance.

The paper also wants to discourage readers from passing on their copies of the paper to others, hoping more people will take out subscriptions.

For some Dutch Jews, particularly those in the provinces, NIW is a crucial link to Jewish life.

"Oy, bad news — the NIW in danger," one reader wrote. "This is my only link with the community."

NIW was founded by a group of Dutch Jews who didn't feel the existing papers were pro-Jewish enough. It was fiercely anti-Zionist until the end of the 1930s, when the shadow of Nazism was looming and fugitives started to arrive in the Netherlands from neighboring Germany. The paper has not had an anti-Zionist editor since.

Dutch Jewry was devastated in World War II, reduced from a population of 140,000 to about 20,000. Two weeks after the liberation of the Netherlands on May 15, 1945, survivors scraped together what money they could to get NIW rolling off the presses again. It was the only Jewish paper to reappear after the war.

Like most other weeklies in the Netherlands, NIW is financed by subscriptions and advertising. Because it is independent, it does not receive funding from any of Holland's Jewish groups or movements, and tries to cater to readers across the religious and political spectrum.

It covers subjects ranging from Jewish rappers to Dutch Jewish history to the legitimacy of paternal descent — plus, of course, "hatches, matches and dispatches," or births, marriages and deaths in the community.

In the past few years, anti-Semitism in the Netherlands and neighboring countries and a growing intolerance in the Netherlands for Israeli policy — some would say for Israel in general — have become prominent topics in the paper.

Subscription fees have been kept low to enable less affluent community members to stay in touch with Jewish issues. However, with the Dutch Jewish population hovering around 30,000, subscription income is far too low to keep the paper running, and advertising does not make up the difference.

Readership had been steadily declining in the past decade as older readers died and younger Jews didn't join.

In the first half of 2003, after a successful restyling, hundreds of new readers took out subscriptions. It was the first rise in years — but it wasn't enough.

Some argue that without support from Jewish organizations, the paper's chances of survival are minimal.

"The NIW reaches 20 percent of all Dutch Jews, not counting those who read it for free," said Uri Coronel, chairman of the foundation that publishes the paper. "If the paper folds, Jewish organizations will have a hard time reaching so many."

It's too early to say whether the rescue operation will be successful. Representatives of Jewish organizations have sent messages of support, but the organizations — many of which are in dire financial straits themselves — have yet to make contributions.

Meanwhile, supportive and emotional reactions are pouring in.

"The NIW is more than just a paper," one reader wrote. "It's a monument that keeps alive the memory of the Jews who once lived in the Netherlands." □

## NEWS ANALYSIS

**Ahead of Bush meetings, two sides hope U.S. pressure will spur peace**

By Leslie Susser

JERUSALEM (JTA) — As the fragile Israeli-Palestinian peace process inches forward, leaders of both sides are looking to upcoming audiences with President Bush to exert pressure on the other and give the “road map” peace plan some momentum.

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and his Palestinian Authority counterpart, Mahmoud Abbas, each will seek to persuade the American leader to lean on the other side to move faster — and Bush will be ready to lean on both, Israeli analysts believe.

With domestic criticism growing regarding America’s imbroglio in Iraq, Israeli analysts believe Bush wants progress on the Israeli-Palestinian front to help justify the strike against Saddam Hussein.

If toppling the Iraqi dictator is seen to have paved the way for an Israeli-Palestinian accommodation — and, with it, a better chance of pacifying the Middle East as a whole — the administration can argue that the war was worthwhile, the argument goes.

Bush, therefore, will want to resolve as many of the disputed issues on the table as he can. For the Palestinians, most important are releasing prisoners, dismantling illegal settlement outposts, freezing construction of Israeli settlements and Israel’s West Bank security fence, and easing restrictions on Palestinian civilians.

Israel will ask Bush to demand that the Palestinians dismantle terrorist groups and decommission their weapons, and not make do with the groups’ tenuous cease-fire.

Most analysts agree that little progress will be made without concerted American intervention. But they note that the road map actually provides for a hands-on approach; in fact, one of the major differences between the failed Oslo process and the road map is the introduction of a third party monitoring system.

By general consensus, seeing whether the parties actually carry out their commitments has become mainly an American affair. The meetings with President Bush are part of this process.

More importantly, in their strategic thinking, both Abbas and Sharon put a premium on ties with America. Even before he took over as prime minister, Abbas advocated the use of American and international pressure on Israel, rather than terrorism, to achieve Palestinian goals.

That, he pointed out, was precisely what the Palestinians did so successfully when Benjamin Netanyahu was Israeli prime minister in the late 1990s. By and large they refrained from terrorism, won American sympathy for their plight and — through American pressure — got Israel to make major concessions in the Hebron accord of January 1997 and the Wye River agreement of October 1998.

Sharon, who is to meet with Bush on July 29, sees American support as the key to Israel’s position in the world. He believes that ties with the Bush administration must be carefully nurtured and that Israel should seek prior coordination with Washington whenever appropriate, especially in dealing with the Palestinians.

In Sharon’s view, it is absolutely vital that the Palestinian issue not be allowed to erode Israel’s ties with Washington.

Of course, there will be tactical maneuvering by both prime

ministers, but their meetings with President Bush should be understood in a wider strategic context.

Abbas reportedly will highlight two key issues in his White House meeting on Friday: getting more Palestinian prisoners released and stopping construction of the security fence. He will argue that if Israel is really serious about turning over a new leaf, it should release all Palestinian prisoners, even those with “blood on their hands” — i.e., those involved in terror attacks.

In a recent interview with Israel Radio, Hisham Abdel Razek, the P.A. minister in charge of prisoner affairs, argued that even terrorists who had taken Israeli lives should be seen “as soldiers in a war of liberation,” and released in an Israeli gesture.

On the security fence, the Palestinians have noted the recent sharp differences between Israel and the United States. Israeli officials believe Abbas hopes to use the issue to drive a wedge between Israel and the United States and get the Bush administration to pressure Israel to stop building it, on the grounds that it takes in large swathes of the West Bank and thus prejudices a final territorial accommodation.

Abbas also reportedly will urge Bush to pressure Sharon to put more West Bank cities under Palestinian security control. He argues that unless he has real achievements to show the Palestinian people, his shaky position as prime minister in P.A. President Yasser Arafat’s shadow will be further weakened.

Indeed, Abbas hopes his high-profile meeting with Bush will itself give him more standing and credibility on the Palestinian street, especially since Bush has refused to meet with Arafat because of Arafat’s alleged ties to terrorism. Abbas also apparently intends to use his American sojourn to win support in Congress, the media and the American Jewish community, and has scheduled meetings with key figures in all three groups.

According to aides, Sharon’s main goal will be to convince Bush that the Palestinians must be held to their commitments in the fight against terror. Sharon, they say, will suggest linking further prisoner releases to Palestinian dismantling of militia groups and the collection of illegal weapons.

Sharon will point out that two months have elapsed since the road map was launched at a summit in Aqaba, Jordan. During that time, the Palestinians have not taken serious action against Hamas or Islamic Jihad, and Israeli intelligence sources say the groups continue to arm themselves under cover of the cease-fire. It is time for the Palestinians to act, Sharon will insist.

Sharon hopes to deflect American pressure on Israel by releasing a large group of prisoners and dismantling more illegal West Bank settlement outposts before his meeting with Bush.

As for the fence, Sharon will repeat what he told British Prime Minister Tony Blair last week: “I am a simple farmer, and I tell you plainly the fence is only a security obstacle to stop suicide bombers, and not in any way a political border.”

Before the Bush meeting, the prisoner issue is the hottest issue, and it dominated Sunday’s meeting between Sharon and Abbas. Sharon agreed to Palestinian demands to set up an Israeli-Palestinian team to agree on a list of prisoners to be released.

Though the terrorist groups have made the prisoner release a condition of their cease-fire, it is not one of Israel’s obligations under the road map. However, Israeli officials believe that releasing prisoners may help Abbas’ public stature. □

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