



Daily News Bulletin

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86th Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Saddam's sons killed

U.S. military officials confirmed the deaths of Saddam Hussein's two sons.

Uday and Qusay Hussein were killed Tuesday in a raid on a house in the northern city of Mosul.

At least two other people were killed in the raid, which occurred after intelligence indicated that Qusay and Uday were in the area together. [Page 3]

Palestinian killed near West Bank

A Palestinian was killed and another wounded by Israeli border police near an Israeli Arab town.

The police, who were on high alert for a possible terrorist infiltration, opened fire Tuesday on a car near Taibe after the driver ignored orders to stop. A passenger escaped.

A police spokesman said the car fit the description given to security forces of a terrorists' vehicle.

Abbas: I won't crack down

Mahmoud Abbas said he would not crack down on Palestinian terrorists.

"Cracking down on Hamas, Islamic Jihad and Palestinian organizations is not an option at all," the Palestinian Authority prime minister said in Egypt on Tuesday.

Abbas, who will meet with President Bush in the White House on Friday, is obligated to crack down on terrorist groups under the terms of the "road map" peace plan.

Holocaust allocations upheld

The Conference of Jewish Material Claims Against Germany voted to maintain its current division of Holocaust restitution money.

Meeting Tuesday in New York, the Claims Conference board of directors voted unanimously to continue allocating 80 percent of the \$430 million from the sale of unclaimed East German Jewish property to needy Holocaust survivors.

The remaining 20 percent is spent on Holocaust education, documentation and research.

Some survivors' groups had argued that a higher percentage of the restitution money should go to the survivors. But Claims Conference officials say they have done much to help needy survivors in the United States and in places such as the former Soviet Union. [Page 4]

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

Ahead of Sharon and Abbas visits, Jews want to keep focus on terror

By Matthew E. Berger

WASHINGTON (JTA) — As the White House prepares for visits by the prime ministers of Israel and the Palestinian Authority, advocates for Israel are working to ensure that the Bush administration stays focused on the need to combat terrorism.

P.A. Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas arrives Friday and is expected to receive a warm welcome. American Jewish leaders are hoping to schedule a meeting with him, as are members of Congress.

Abbas' visit — his first to the White House — is generating more buzz than that of Sharon, who is expected July 29. But both visits are focusing Washington's attention on the need for further progress on the "road map" peace plan.

While there generally is much optimism about Abbas' early steps toward peace, some in the U.S. Jewish community express concern that the White House will pressure Israel to do more than its share in the early stages of the peace plan.

Jewish leaders are reminding the administration that the first step toward peace must be the dismantling of terrorist groups in the Palestinian territories and throughout the Middle East.

Already, the Bush administration seems to be getting the message. On Monday, Bush blasted Syria and Iran for harboring and assisting terrorists, and said both Abbas and Sharon need more support from other leaders in the region.

Bush also called on all countries "interested in a peaceful solution in the Middle East" to support Abbas' efforts, a direct jab at European leaders who continue to deal with P.A. President Yasser Arafat.

Israel and the United States have cut off contact with Arafat, whom they consider irredeemably involved in terrorism. In contrast, Abbas clearly has the support of many in Washington and the Jewish community.

"I look forward to Abu Mazen's visit," said Rep. Tom Lantos (D-Calif.), the ranking Democrat on the House of Representatives' International Relations Committee, using Abbas' nom de guerre. "I believe the administration will have the same message for him that I have for him: We are happy and inclined to support him, but he has to perform."

Lawmakers are endorsing White House efforts to strengthen Abbas. Specifically, 71 congressmen signed a letter to Bush supporting his recent decision to give \$20 million in aid to the Palestinian Authority, the first direct U.S. aid to the Palestinian government. Because of fears of P.A. corruption, previous aid had been given to nongovernmental organizations working in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Ten Jewish lawmakers joined the letter, including Rep. Gary Ackerman (D-N.Y.), ranking minority member of the International Relations Committee's Middle East panel; Rep. Henry Waxman (D-Calif.); and Rep. Jane Harman (D-Calif.).

A staffer for one Jewish lawmaker said the letter, like the aid, was an acknowledgment that the Palestinians have made some steps in the right direction.

"We asked for a change and we got it," he said, referring to the appointment of a new Palestinian leader, as Bush demanded in a landmark policy speech in June 2002. "We want this guy to succeed. We want him to succeed because it's good for Israel."

But, the aide said, the money is not a blank check: It comes with strong expectations that Abbas and his team will continue down the path toward peace.

Some are concerned that the accolades for Abbas will translate into pressure on

MIDEAST FOCUS

Arafat blasts Temple Mount visits

Yasser Arafat called Jewish visits to Jerusalem's Temple Mount a "big crime." The Palestinian Authority president made his comments before Palestinian children at a summer camp in the West Bank city of Ramallah.

The Al-Aksa Mosque sits atop the Temple Mount, Judaism's holiest shrine.

Visits by Jews and some non-Jewish tourists to the mount have resumed in the past two months, the first time since Palestinian officials closed the site to non-Muslims when the intifada began in September 2000.

Prisoner list drawn up

Israel's defense minister and the chief of the Shin Bet security service were to meet Tuesday to finalize a list of Palestinian prisoners to be released.

The meeting between Shaul Mofaz and Avi Dichter came ahead of Wednesday's scheduled meeting of an Israeli ministerial committee on prisoners.

Peres: U.N. stewardship OK

Jerusalem's holy sites should be put under U.N. stewardship, Shimon Peres said.

The former Israeli prime minister raised the issue in a meeting with Russian diplomats, his spokesman told Reuters.

Most Israeli officials oppose the idea of putting Jewish holy sites under international control.

Israeli rights group livid

Human rights in Israel are deteriorating, Israel's leading civil rights group said.

In its annual report issued Monday, the Association for Civil Rights in Israel highlighted unfavorable public attitudes about democracy, unfulfilled government promises to Arab citizens and inconsistencies in investigating alleged misbehavior by Israeli soldiers.



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Israel to make more concessions. Specifically, the Palestinians are demanding that Israel release more Palestinian prisoners in exchange for a cease-fire called recently by the main Palestinian terrorist organizations, even though Israel is not obligated to release prisoners under the road map.

Palestinian officials also have been pressing the White House and others in Washington over construction of a security fence designed to prevent West Bank terrorists from infiltrating Israel. Palestinians say the fence goes over Palestinian land and prevents farmers from reaching their fields.

The White House's national security adviser, Condoleezza Rice, raised concerns about the fence during talks with Sharon in the Middle East last month. The administration fears Israel is unilaterally setting a border that will prejudice the outcome of possible future peace talks, though Israel says the fence is not a political border.

Several lawmakers, including Ackerman, signed a letter to Bush criticizing the administration for rebuking Israel over the fence. The White House is "mistakenly pressuring Israel to limit construction of this important security barrier," the letter said.

"In order for the road map, or any peace plan, to be successful, the Israeli people must be secure," said the letter, sponsored by Rep. Joseph Crowley (D-N.Y.). "The government of Israel believes that the construction of a security fence between parts of the West Bank and Israel will make it much more difficult for terrorists to attack innocent Israeli civilians. We should not be hampering such an important project."

The White House has assured Jewish leaders that it will not place undue pressure on Israel, and that its messages to Abbas and Sharon will be consistent with what it has said in the past — most of which has been well received in the Jewish community.

"We're committed to speaking honestly to both sides," a senior administration official said. "The president has said repeatedly that he will hold them to their responsibilities."

Jewish officials believe Sharon will be told that the security fence is not helpful and will be pressured to release more Palestinian prisoners. "But I don't anticipate severe pressure brought to bear on Israel," said Martin Raffel, associate executive director of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs. "Sharon comes with a commitment to do what Israel can do to strengthen Abbas' hand within the Palestinian community."

The White House's goal now is to provide an environment in which Abbas and his team can succeed, and concessions on prisoners and the fence would help, said James Zogby, president of the Arab American Institute.

"The question is whether there is the capacity right now for the Palestinians to do what they need to do," Zogby said. "The strongest party is putting burdens on the weakest party that they can't accomplish at this time."

The White House and Israel should use the period of the terrorist groups' cease-fire to strengthen Abbas, which might make it easier for him to dismantle the terror groups later, Zogby said. But Jewish leaders are concerned that the Palestinians' responsibility to eradicate terrorism is being pushed to the back burner.

"I think the time to bypass the critical issue has passed," Raffel said. "We all need to focus on what it will take to put aside terrorism as a Palestinian tactic, and move to the diplomatic process."

The second order of business, Jewish leaders say, is curbing incitement against Israel in the Palestinian media, mosques and schools.

While there is concern in the Jewish community, the general feeling is of strong support for Bush, and a propensity to expect the best from the president.

"I'm confident," Lantos said. "And in the event that I should be mistaken, there will be some of us in Congress who will organize a very effective counterpressure." □

France: Israel shouldn't boycott Arafat

PARIS (JTA) — Israel should drop its boycott of Yasser Arafat, France's foreign minister said.

Dominique de Villepin made his comments during a summit meeting of E.U. foreign ministers Monday in Brussels. Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has refused to meet European officials who meet with Arafat, arguing that the Palestinian Authority president encourages terrorism. □

JEWISH WORLD

Abbas to visit Shoah museum?

Mahmoud Abbas may visit the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington this week. Rep. Tom Lantos (D-Calif.) asked the Palestinian Authority prime minister — who wrote a doctoral dissertation minimizing the Holocaust — to tour the museum with him.

But it remains unclear whether Abbas will have time when he's in Washington from Wednesday through Saturday. Museum officials were unavailable for comment.

On Thursday, Abbas will be meeting with congressional leaders and the White House's national security adviser, Condoleezza Rice, and will give a speech at the Council on Foreign Relations.

On Friday he will meet with President Bush, Vice President Dick Cheney and Secretary of State Colin Powell. Jewish leaders also have requested a meeting with Abbas, but it has yet to be scheduled.

Terror victims brief Congress

Sarri Singer, an American who was injured in a bus bombing in Israel, shared her story with U.S. lawmakers.

Singer joined 25 other victims of terrorist attacks in Israel on Capitol Hill on Tuesday, speaking to lawmakers about the physical and emotional pain they have endured. "This is not a normal life to live," said Singer, the daughter of New Jersey's Senate majority leader. "There's no reason why innocent people should be hurt or killed for land or any objectives."

More AMIA files to be opened

Argentine President Nelson Kirchner pledged to open secret police archives pertaining to the bombing of the main Jewish community center in Buenos Aires.

The announcement by Kirchner, made Monday in a meeting with Argentine Jewish leaders, came after he pledged to open secret intelligence files relating to the July 18, 1994, bombing, which killed 85 people.

Also Monday, Kirchner vowed in a meeting with a delegation from the Simon Wiesenthal Center to open files relating to suspected Nazis who immigrated to Argentina after World War II.

UJC backs elderly transportation

The United Jewish Communities testified this week in front of a U.S. Senate special committee in favor of increased transportation for the elderly.

Among other things, the UJC is seeking congressional reauthorization of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century. "Transportation is not only a critical part of the service delivery system but it also becomes essential in order for older adults to maintain their independence," testified Stephan Kline, the UJC's legislative director.

Killing of Saddam's sons may aid regional stability, Israel backers say

By Matthew E. Berger

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Israeli officials are keeping mum on the killing of Saddam Hussein's two sons, but developments in postwar Iraq could have clear repercussions for Israel and the Middle East.

Uday and Qusay Hussein, who were killed Tuesday in a gun battle with U.S. troops in Iraq, had little direct involvement with policy toward Israel, but their survival in postwar Iraq was seen as a destabilizing remnant of a regime that had attacked Israel and undermined U.S. interests in the region.

"Strengthening the U.S. position in the region is the biggest boost for Israel, and any measure that does that is positive," said Lenny Ben-David, a former Israeli diplomat in Washington.

Their deaths will make the regime change look more final in the eyes of many Iraqis. It also is likely to embolden the Bush administration, which has endured several weeks of bad publicity stemming from erroneous intelligence information that formed part of President Bush's argument for war.

That public relations problem, coupled with the ongoing killing of American troops in Iraq, led some to wonder whether the United States would pull out its forces before Iraq had stabilized. A hasty withdrawal could have negative repercussions for Israel.

The news of the pair's death was met with silence from Israel and restrained enthusiasm in the American Jewish community. While careful not to praise the killings, Jewish leaders said the sons' demise could expedite positive change in Iraq.

"We do believe that the removal of Saddam's regime is a positive development and opens the way for progress with Iraq," said Martin Raffel, associate executive director of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs. "If this development helps in building democracy to Iraq, it will be positive."

Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, said that "psychologically, it's very important news."

"The most important will be when they get Saddam," he said. "As long as he's out there, there will be many who are still afraid."

An Israeli government spokesman said the government had no comment. Israel succeeded in staying out of the Iraq war, and has kept silent on developments in the months that have followed.

"The United States does not need Israel's support on this; if anything it could be the opposite," Ben-David said. "There's no reason to give the enemies of the United States propaganda by letting Israel support them on this."

Each of Hussein's sons played a distinctive role in the regime. Qusay, the younger one, held vast security responsibilities. Uday ran several publications and contributed heavily to pro-regime and anti-Israel propaganda.

Nimrod Raphaeli, a senior analyst with the Middle East Media Research Institute, said Uday's publications were not anti-Semitic, but portrayed Zionism and American "colonialism" as evil.

"The paper reflected the official position of the regime, which was simply anti-Zionism," Raphaeli said.

In the first year of the current Palestinian intifada, Uday suggested in his newspaper, *Babil*, that weapons be sent to the Palestinians.

"We have to find a way, whether legal or not, for light arms and mortars to reach those who need them in the occupied territories," Uday said on Aug. 6, 2001, according to Agence France Presse.

Uday was considered to be out of favor with Saddam, who appeared to be grooming Qusay as his successor. Uday was banished to Switzerland in 1988, and his newspaper was shut down for six weeks in 2002.

Qusay was seen to be closely aligned with his father's thinking. Although he was not believed to have played any role in the 1991 Persian Gulf War when Iraq rained Scud missiles on Israel, Qusay became a trusted confidante to Saddam in recent years. □

FOCUS ON ISSUES

Claims Conference votes to continue education funding

By Joe Berkofsky

NEW YORK (JTA) — The main Holocaust reparations organization is standing fast in its policy of using some restitution money to pay for Holocaust education, despite calls to spend all of the funds on needy survivors.

The 57-member board of directors of the Conference of Jewish Material Claims Against Germany voted unanimously Tuesday to continue spending 20 percent of assets from the sale of unclaimed East German Jewish properties on Holocaust education, documentation and research. The other 80 percent of East German assets goes to survivors and their heirs.

"We have a legacy and the legacy is from the dead," said Ben Helfgott, a Claims Conference board member and chairman of the '45 Aid Society, a group of survivors who were brought to England as children in 1945.

"The legacy they left us is not to forget," he told JTA. "Holocaust education is a very important part of it, and if you don't support it, it ends."

But David Schaecter, president of the Holocaust Survivors Foundation, which had led the fight to change the spending, blasted the decision.

"Isn't it a shame that it comes at the expense of desperate, needy and dying survivors?" he asked. "We don't know how the Jewish world can accept it, and how the Jewish world thinks that's a fair way to treat survivors."

In the past year, the 80-20 policy has come under increasing fire from some corners, including the Holocaust Survivors Foundation, some Jewish federation leaders and the Jewish Council for Public Affairs. These critics say the Claims Conference, which represents 24 Jewish organizations worldwide, should be spending more of its funds on survivors.

The debate is over the proper use of Holocaust restitution money and who is the rightful heir to Holocaust victims' unclaimed properties — survivors with no relation to those victims, or the entire Jewish people. That has sparked a further debate about who is responsible for aiding needy survivors.

A year ago, the Claims Conference president, Rabbi Israel Singer, caused a sensation when he wrote that the Claims Conference should devote some of the \$11 billion flowing from various restitution settlements toward a new fund for the "future needs of the Jewish people," including day school education.

Singer's call amplified a longstanding Claims Conference practice of funding some Holocaust education efforts. Of the \$578 million the conference has allocated since 1995, for example, nearly \$86 million has aided projects such as a research database at Israel's Holocaust museum, Yad Vashem; legal aid to help survivors navigate the reparations process; and youth trips to Holocaust sites in Europe and Israel.

Since Singer's call, however, pressure has been building on the Claims Conference to revise its 80-20 policy. Among the chief opponents is the Florida-based Holocaust Survivors Foundation, which represents some 500 grass-roots survivors groups.

Foundation members called on the Claims Conference to revise the formula as it applies to unclaimed East German properties, which so far have yielded \$450 million and are expected to total \$1

billion when all are sold.

Since the 80-20 split of the East German money started in 1995, the Claims Conference has paid \$170 million of those assets to survivors or their heirs, and has handled \$175 million more in claims still outstanding.

Estimates of the number of survivors in the United States range from 127,000 to 145,000. It is believed that about 40 percent of them can't afford adequate health care.

Last year, the Association of Jewish Family and Children's Agencies delivered a study to the judge overseeing the Holocaust-era insurance settlements case, saying it would take \$30 million annually to help needy survivors in the United States.

For their part, Claims Conference officials say they have done much to help needy survivors in the United States and in places such as the former Soviet Union, where many Jews are destitute and receive no government assistance.

Claims Conference officials further maintain that 75 percent of allocations from all the settlements — \$750 million in 2001 and 2002 alone — went directly to survivors globally, and that 80 percent of the East German money has funded survivors worldwide.

The Holocaust Survivors Foundation differs on several counts, including the size and needs of the U.S. survivor population.

Over the past year, the Claims Conference and the survivors group have been pressing their arguments nationally.

In response, heads of some major Jewish federations have said needy survivors should be helped first. The survivors' case picked up steam earlier this year when the JCPA passed a non-binding resolution echoing the call to make needy survivors a top priority.

The United Jewish Communities federation umbrella convened a panel that invited both sides to make their cases earlier this month. UJC officials later weighed in on the matter in a letter to the Claims Conference board.

Lorraine Blass, a senior UJC planner, and Leonard Cole, who chaired the organization's Holocaust Survivors Services Committee, said UJC would work with the Claims Conference to discuss how federations could help in "meeting human service needs."

Dozens of survivors and groups weighed in with the Claims Conference ahead of the vote. Among the petitioners was Natan Sharansky, now Israel's minister of Diaspora affairs, whose support for Holocaust education echoed the majority of letters the Claims Conference collected and gave to its board.

Ahead of the vote, he told JTA that bodies other than the Claims Conference — such as the federation system — also should help needy survivors.

Also addressing the Claims board was Nobel Prize-winning author Elie Wiesel, who called the controversy "an honest debate" but said he would "shy away" from taking sides.

Sallai Meridor, chairman of the executive of the Jewish Agency and World Zionist Organization and a Claims Conference board member, urged the conference to press the German government to meet survivors' welfare needs.

"We should not have to choose between the needs of our parents and the needs of our children," Meridor said.

The Claims Conference would not allow reporters to attend the debate or witness the vote, but one person who attended the session described it as "an open, respectful debate."

If nothing else, the final resolution recognized the heightened attention to needy survivors, and in part heeded Meridor's call. The resolution said the board would "prioritize the issue of home care in negotiations with the German government." □