



Daily News Bulletin

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86th Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Suicide bombings kill 2

Two Israelis were killed and more than a dozen wounded in separate suicide bombings.

Yehezkel Yekutieli, a 43-year-old father of two, was killed in a blast Tuesday morning in the Israeli city of Rosh Ha'ayin. Erez Hershkovitz, 18, was killed in an attack near the West Bank settlement of Ariel.

The Fatah movement's Al-Aksa Brigade claimed responsibility for the Rosh Ha'ayin attack, and Hamas claimed responsibility for the Ariel attack. [Page 4]

Israel stops prisoner releases

Israel suspended the release of Palestinian prisoners after Tuesday's suicide bombings.

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon halted the release of 77 prisoners after the attacks, which killed two Israelis and wounded more than a dozen. The order to stop the releases came after the prisoners already had been loaded onto buses. [Page 4]

Abbas pressed on terror

Mahmoud Abbas must dismantle Palestinian terrorist groups, Bush administration officials said.

The comments were made after two suicide bombings Tuesday killed two Israelis and wounded more than a dozen.

Secretary of State Colin Powell said peace is impossible as long as "people continue to participate in terrorist activities, and we see the response to terrorist activities, which are necessary for self-defense."

Powell made his comments at a State Department gathering of Israeli and Arab children from the Seeds for Peace conflict-resolution camp. [Page 4]

Yeshiva may be shut down

An eviction notice was served on an Australian yeshiva.

The Sydney Yeshiva is in danger of being closed after Rabbi Joseph Gutnick called in a multimillion-dollar loan he had given the yeshiva, which is run by his brother-in-law, Rabbi Pinchus Feldman.

A court this week rejected Feldman's claim for an injunction against the eviction, but he is trying to persuade another court to issue an injunction.

An Australian court recently ruled that the money Gutnick gave was a loan and not, as Feldman had claimed, a gift.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

Bronfman letter on fence revives debate on Jewish criticism of Israel

By Joe Berkofsky

NEW YORK (JTA) — An uproar over Israel's security fence is provoking an unusual public scuffle in a major Jewish organization and reviving the longtime Diaspora debate on the propriety of publicly challenging Israeli policy.

The spat between the World Jewish Congress' president, Edgar Bronfman, and the group's senior vice president, Isi Leibler, erupted last week when Leibler wrote a newspaper column demanding that Bronfman apologize or resign for urging President Bush to pressure Israel and the Palestinians to follow the "road map" peace plan.

Bronfman also called the security fence Israel is building to keep out terrorists — which Palestinians describe as a land grab — "potentially problematic."

After a flurry of letters and news articles, Bronfman told JTA that he will ask the WJC leadership to oust Leibler, setting up a battle of wills between two of world Jewry's wealthiest public figures.

While many Jewish leaders say most American Jews care little about the WJC dispute and largely support Israel's anti-terror moves, the conflict has revived a larger debate about whether Diaspora Jews should come out publicly against Israeli policy, especially on security issues.

"This kind of McCarthyism in Jewish life is not something I will stand for," said the WJC's chairman, Rabbi Israel Singer, who backed Bronfman. "Freedom of speech and freedom of expression in the Jewish community has been the issue."

Controversies about the right of Diaspora Jews to criticize openly or question Israeli policy have raged since the 1967 Six-Day War, said Rabbi Eric Yoffie, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the Reform synagogue group.

While almost all believe in open debate, most Jewish organizations and American Jews support Israeli government decisions when it comes to the country's security, according to Martin Raffel, associate executive director of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, the national umbrella for Jewish community relations councils.

"I think that applies to the fence" as well, Raffel said.

In Yoffie's view, many Jews do not have a detailed understanding of the fence's political and literal twists and turns, so they are not paying close attention to the issue.

In addition, the way the fence plan has evolved, from its genesis on the Israeli left to its slightly different implementation by the Israeli right, has both broadened its appeal and obscured some of the issue's nuances.

"It doesn't lend itself to sound bites," Yoffie said.

The real issue, Raffel added, "is the location of the fence, not the existence of the fence."

At the center of the fence dispute is the question of whether it should hew to the "Green Line" that existed before the 1967 Six-Day War — an armistice line between Israel and Jordan that was never accepted as an international border — or whether it should cut slightly into the West Bank to protect major Jewish settlements close to the Green Line. The fight broke out when Leibler wrote an "open letter" to the Jerusalem Post on Aug. 6 urging Bronfman to apologize or resign for the letter he sent Bush on the eve of a White House summit with Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.

Leibler said Bronfman — who has a history of taking maverick stands — did not reflect the opinion of most WJC members on the issue and should have presented his opinions to Sharon, not Bush. In the wake of Leibler's article, Singer said more than 150

MIDEAST FOCUS

Temple Mount visits to resume?

Jerusalem's Temple Mount will reopen to non-Muslim visitors next week, Israel's security minister said. Visits to Judaism's holiest site began in June after a nearly three-year hiatus but were stopped soon thereafter.

"We hope by week's end there will be an agreement" with Islamic officials on allowing visits to the Temple Mount, Tzachi Hanegbi said Monday, "but if not we will not wait any longer."

An Islamic holy site, the Al-Aksa Mosque, sits on the Temple Mount.

Report: Israel to move fence

Following heavy American pressure, Israel reportedly will change the route of its security fence.

The Ma'ariv newspaper reported Tuesday that the fence's "eastern finger," which was to have included the Israeli settlement of Ariel, in the West Bank, will be dropped.

Instead, the fence will run further west, closer to the boundary that divides Israel proper from the West Bank, captured from Jordan in 1967.

Israel's Prime Minister's Office declined to comment on the report.

Swiss still mad at Israel

Switzerland dismissed Israel's contention that Israeli soldiers did not target the car of a Swiss diplomat in a May incident in the Gaza Strip.

On a visit to Switzerland, Israeli Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom told his hosts, "We are fighting terrorism, and not Switzerland."

Israel has said it regrets the incident, in which the car of Switzerland's representative to the Palestinian Authority was hit with gunfire.

But the Swiss foreign minister, Micheline Calmy-Rey, said Israel has failed to address some questions regarding the incident.



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WJC members had backed Bronfman's letter, which he co-wrote with Lawrence Eagleburger, who was secretary of state in the administration of George H. W. Bush and today is chairman of the International Commission on Holocaust-Era Insurance Claims.

Among Bronfman's supporters is former Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres.

"Clearly, issues that are open for debate in Israel, are also open for discussion in the Jewish world," Peres wrote to Bronfman and Eagleburger. "The Jewish people should never be taken for a rubber stamp. Such a role would enfeeble the Jewish people and undermine the people of Israel."

Eagleburger, a longtime friend and neighbor of Bronfman's, did not return calls seeking comment. Bronfman continued to defend his letter, saying he did not write on WJC stationery or use his WJC title.

"I retain my right to speak as a human being," Bronfman said. "I do intend to support my president as much as I can in his efforts to keep the road map going."

Leibler, however, said that "it is out of place for someone living in New York or anywhere in the Diaspora to interfere in such matters, particularly on the eve of the visit" by Sharon.

"In this case, it was not just a letter, but it was canvassing the president of the United States to take up a position contrary to that of the government of Israel on a security-related issue that could affect the lives and deaths" of Israelis.

Bronfman said he would ask the WJC executive committee to strip Leibler of his title at the group's next meeting. The leadership meets twice yearly, but the next meeting has not been set.

"His title is honorary. It's a title we've given to a lot of people who are old and have done a good job," Bronfman said. But now Leibler "is abusing it."

Leibler, who founded a chain of Australian travel agencies before moving to Israel, vowed to continue challenging Bronfman, the former owner of Seagrams.

The struggle is largely to establish clear rules in the WJC, Leibler said.

"Nobody wants to take on Edgar Bronfman; he's an extremely powerful personality," Leibler said. "But I will take on this battle if it means we have a man who has the title of World Jewish Congress president and who lobbies against the security interests of Israel."

The dispute threatened to get messier when Bronfman began discussing Palestinian political aims and his longtime opposition to Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

While "murder is murder and mayhem is mayhem, no matter where," Bronfman said, he felt a "more effective" Palestinian tactic would have been to launch attacks only against settlements, which do not enjoy international support, rather than inside pre-1967 Israel.

"If the Palestinian suicide bombers only went to the settlements and told the whole world they were wrong, then the whole world would have had a case against Israel and there would be a two-state solution by now," he said. "Instead, they sent them into Israel proper, which is ghastly."

Leibler called the statement "outrageous" and "obscene."

"There seems to me an implicit suggestion that there is a difference between Jews over the Green Line and behind the Green Line," he said.

"Are you telling me that the president of the World Jewish Congress said to you that had the Palestinians concentrated on Jews over the Green Line, that would have been more acceptable?"

Bronfman said his point was different.

"It would not have been more acceptable," he said, "it would have been smarter on their part." □

The ties that bind

TEL AVIV (JTA) — Boeing is increasing its links with Israeli firms.

The U.S. defense firm is expected to ask Israel Aircraft Industries and Elbit Systems to bid on the production of unmanned aerial vehicles, which transmit intelligence information to battlefield forces, according to Globes newspaper.

Israel Aircraft Industries and Boeing have signed a preliminary agreement to transfer the manufacture of the Arrow anti-missile system to the United States. □

JEWISH WORLD

U.N. pressed on Jewish refugees

The World Jewish Congress presented the United Nations with studies on Jewish refugees from Arab countries.

In testimony to a subgroup of the U.N. Commission on Human Rights, the WJC presented one study on the "ethnic cleansing" of the Jews of Iraq in the years after the founding of the State of Israel in 1948.

Another WJC study argued that the work of the U.N. Relief and Works Agency ensures that Palestinians remain refugees.

"There will be no lasting and cohesive peace in the Middle East without also addressing the gross and systematic violation of the human rights of the Jewish communities of Arab lands," a WJC official said this week.

The group, which has submitted the studies to the White House, members of Congress and the British Parliament, will present the studies to leading members of the Human Rights Commission this week.

ADL wants Gibson film changed

Mel Gibson's new film will fuel anti-Semitism if it is released without changes, the Anti-Defamation League said.

The organization says "The Passion" blames Jews for Jesus' crucifixion and relies on sinister medieval stereotypes and historical errors.

Gibson is a member of a fundamentalist Roman Catholic sect that repudiates Vatican teachings clearing the Jews of the charge of deicide.

'Mein Kampf' conviction

A Czech publisher has been convicted a second time for publishing a translation of Hitler's "Mein Kampf" without commentary.

Earlier this year, the Czech Supreme Court overturned a lower court ruling that publisher Michal Zitko had supported a movement that suppressed human rights.

On Monday, however, a district court in Prague found that Zitko had defamed Jews by publishing the book.

Zitko received a suspended sentence of 22 months in prison with three years' probation.

He has yet to announce whether he will appeal again.

Nazi fashion nixed

A top Hong Kong fashion chain is pulling a new line of Nazi-themed clothing amid protests.

I.T. Ltd., the company that owns the chain, put up Nazi banners and flags in its stores this past weekend to advertise the new line of clothes with swastikas and other Nazi symbols, Reuters reported.

Pollard to get a day in court in latest twist of famous spy case

By Edwin Black

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Sept. 2, 2003 is going to be a big day for Jonathan Pollard: The American Jewish spy is going to get another day in court.

Pollard's lawyers will have 40 minutes in a federal courtroom to explain why they should be permitted to continue efforts to rescind the life sentence he received 18 years ago for committing espionage for Israel.

Years of tenacious motions by attorneys Jacques Semmelman and Eliot Lauer either have been opposed by government attorneys or allowed to languish in the court.

Now U.S. District Court Judge Thomas Hogan has granted Pollard and his attorneys — who are working on the case pro bono — a hearing.

Semmelman and Lauer will get 30 minutes to argue why they should be permitted to appeal, the government can take half an hour to respond and then Pollard's attorneys will be granted 10 minutes for the last word.

So pivotal is the hearing that the judge has ordered federal prison officials in Butner, N.C., to shuttle Pollard to the U.S. District Court in Washington for the event.

Prison officials said they are uncertain whether U.S. marshals will fly Pollard to the nation's capital or drive.

"Normally, we drive them for a mere six-hour trip," a prison spokesman said, "but a high-profile prisoner like Pollard might be flown."

He added that arrangements would be made for Pollard's kosher meals.

Despite mounds of legal briefs and well-researched citations, Pollard's hearing boils down to two issues:

- Was the ex-naval intelligence officer convicted in March 1987 on the basis of a misleading secret 46-page affidavit?

- Was he denied due process by a defense attorney who declined to file a routine appeal after Judge Aubrey Robinson stunned Pollard and threw a crowded courtroom into pandemonium with an unexpected life sentence? The life sentence violated the prosecutor's plea agreement to not ask for life in exchange for Pollard's cooperation.

Then-Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger submitted the secret affidavit at virtually the last minute at Robinson's personal request.

In the affidavit, Weinberger wrote: "It is difficult for me, in the so-called 'year of the spy' to conceive of a greater harm to national security."

The message, backed up with some 20 classified documents, was clear: Give Pollard a life sentence — regardless of the written plea agreement.

Fifteen years later, Weinberger conceded that "the Pollard matter was comparatively minor. It was made far bigger than its actual importance."

Attorneys Semmelman and Lauer have been filing motion after motion to see the supposedly secret documents so they can adequately appeal.

But their efforts have been denied on the grounds of national security, even though they have been granted the necessary security clearances.

The second question asks whether Pollard was denied due process on account of "ineffective assistance of counsel," according to the motion.

Pollard's attorney at the time, Richard Hibey, has been widely criticized for inaction. He failed to object when prosecutors violated the plea agreement and asked for life, failed to call for an evidentiary hearing on Weinberger's secret affidavit and then — to the surprise of most observers — declined to file the routine notice of appeal in the 10 days allotted.

For years, Hibey has dodged all questions on his representation of Pollard.

Despite the hearing, there are few prospects for a Pollard release in the immediate future.

Even if Semmelman and Lauer were granted the opportunity to appeal — consistently denied because Hibey failed to file the 10-day notice — it might take another year or two for any decision.

Pollard already has served far longer than the average for people convicting of spying either for enemies of the United States or its allies. □

Meaning of 'cease-fire' in doubt after terror attacks disrupt calm

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM (JTA) — The suicide bombings that hit Israel this week shattered the relative calm that had taken hold in Israel and the West Bank this summer.

How they will affect the cease-fire declared by Palestinian terrorist groups and implementation of the "road map" peace plan is anybody's guess.

At the least, they certainly indicate differing interpretations of the concept "cease-fire."

With the truce now six weeks old, Israel expects the Palestinians not just to halt all terror attacks but to crack down on terrorist groups, which the Palestinians must do under the road map.

"If the Palestinians do not do what they ought to do, it will not be possible to make progress in the process, and at the end of the day the Palestinians might not achieve what they want to achieve," Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon warned after the attacks, which killed one Israeli man in the city of Rosh Ha'ayin and a teenager near the West Bank settlement of Ariel.

But Elias Zananiri, a spokesman for the Palestinian Authority's security chief, Mohammed Dahlan, said the terrorist attacks emanated from areas that still are under Israeli security control.

"The Palestinian security forces in the West Bank do not have the ability to do what they are requested to do," he said.

The Al-Aksa Brigade of the Palestinians' mainstream Fatah movement claimed responsibility for the Rosh Ha'ayin attack. The Islamic fundamentalist group Hamas claimed responsibility for the Ariel attack.

In response, Israel suspended the release of 77 Palestinian prisoners who were due to be freed Tuesday.

The attacks, which are not believed to be linked, represent the most blatant violation of the cease-fire declared six weeks ago.

Seven Israelis and 12 Palestinians — excluding attackers — have been killed since the cease-fire took effect on June 29.

The Palestinian Authority condemned the attacks, but P.A. Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas said they were provoked by recent Israeli anti-terror raids in the West Bank.

Abbas said he did not consider Tuesday's bombings a violation of the cease-fire, according to an Associated Press report that cited a Qatari news agency.

Hamas appears to feel the same way.

Mahmoud a-Zahar, a leader of Hamas, said the organization was still observing the cease-fire but that "the operations are a natural reaction to the Israeli violations of the cease-fire."

A-Zahar seemed to be referring, in part, to an Israeli operation in Nablus last Friday in which one Israeli soldier and four Palestinians — including two members of Hamas — were killed.

But more broadly, Israel has continued certain anti-terror operations during the cease-fire, arresting some 200 Palestinians even as it released more than 300, Palestinians say.

Israel views the cease-fire as an internal Palestinian affair that does not bind Israel. It says the terrorist groups are using the cease-fire to rearm, and demands that the Palestinian Authority fulfill its commitment to dismantle the groups.

Until the Palestinian Authority begins to act, Israeli officials said, Israel will continue its anti-terror operations, though they

have been toned down since the cease-fire was declared.

Abbas has said he will not confront the terrorists for fear of igniting a Palestinian civil war.

Despite the cease-fire, Israeli security sources say gangs of terrorists have received money from Hezbollah and Iran to continue terrorist attacks. Israeli forces are believed to have foiled at least 10 suicide-bombing missions in the past few weeks.

American officials condemned Tuesday's attacks.

Secretary of State Colin Powell said peace is impossible as long as "people continue to participate in terrorist activities, and we see the response to terrorist activities, which are necessary for self-defense."

Powell made his comments at a gathering of Israeli and Arab children from the Seeds for Peace conflict resolution camp.

Powell also emphasized that the United States would continue to work with its partners in the "Quartet" — the United Nations, Russia and the European Union — to implement the road map.

For Israeli officials, one thing remained clear: The cease-fire had not removed the need to fight against terrorism.

"This is not the first terrorist attack during the hudna, and we believe it will not be the last," Israel's police chief, Shlomo Aharonishky, said of the Rosh Ha'ayin attack, using the Arabic term for a cease-fire.

In Islamic tradition, a hudna implies a temporary truce during which forces are rebuilt for future rounds of fighting. □

Foreign Ministry raps ambassador

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israel's Foreign Ministry asked Israel's ambassador to Romania to halt his request for Romanian citizenship. Sando Mazor, who was born in Romania, reportedly applied for citizenship to facilitate a private business venture once he ends his term as ambassador.

The ministry notified Mazor that he is required to wait two years before engaging in business ventures with a country where he has served. The committee reviewing the request said it regards gravely any attempt by civil servants to promote their private interests while on the job.

Mazor countered that he should not be bound by ministry regulations since he is a political appointee and did not come up through the Foreign Service. □

Faith Affects Doctors' Behavior

JERUSALEM (JTA) — A doctor's religion and the location of his or her practice could extend a patient's life, according to a study.

Doctors in northern European countries are more likely to withdraw or withhold life support for patients than their counterparts in southern Europe, according to the first multiple-country observational study of ICU end-of-life practices in Europe.

The study, published in the Journal of the American Medical Association by Charles Sprung of Hadassah-Hebrew University Medical Center in Jerusalem, also found that a doctor's religion affects the decision. Catholic, Protestant and unaffiliated doctors are most likely to withhold or withdraw life support. Greek-Orthodox, Jewish and Muslim doctors are more aggressive in life-extending treatment, the study found. □