



# Daily News Bulletin

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86th Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Israel to ignore U.N. resolution

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon dismissed a U.N. resolution passed last Friday that demands Israel not "remove" Yasser Arafat.

On Sunday, Sharon said the U.N. vote will not change Israel's decision regarding the Palestinian Authority president, whom Israel and the United States regard as a backer of terrorism and an obstacle to peace.

"It is erroneous for the U.N., after 9/11, to legitimize one of the world's arch-terrorists," Sharon spokesman Ra'anan Gissin said, according to the Jerusalem Post. "For Israel the resolution is irrelevant, but the most critical thing is it makes the U.N. General Assembly irrelevant, and that is dangerous."

### Israeli tourists in Bolivia rescued

Israeli tourists in a Bolivian resort town were rescued after gun battles broke out between the army and local farmers.

The Israelis were trapped for more than a week after the gunfights erupted, killing six.

One of the tourists, Guy Rosenthal, 22, of Haifa, told the Jerusalem Post that he was scared for his life. While things "went on as normal" inside the village, he said, all roads to the outside world were blocked.

Two policemen and four demonstrators were killed after security forces arriving in town to rescue the tourists encountered resistance.

### Revised route on security fence

A new Israeli proposal on the security fence suggests an opening near Ariel, a large Jewish city in the West Bank.

The Israeli prime minister's bureau chief, Dov Weisglass, is in Washington for discussions on the fence, which Israel is building to protect itself from terrorist infiltration from the West Bank.

The United States wants the fence to exclude Ariel, population 13,000, because it would take the fence 12 miles into the West Bank. The revised route proposes that the fence section between the Jewish settlements of Elkana and Alei Zahav not be built, leaving a "break" opposite Ariel, Ha'aretz reported.

Weisglass and Amos Yaron, director-general of the Defense Ministry, will meet Monday with Condoleezza Rice, President Bush's national security adviser.

### 5763: STRENGTH AMID STRIFE

## American Jews adjust and adapt to unknown fears and challenges

By Michael J. Jordan

NEW YORK (JTA) — The Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, the Palestinian intifada and a resurgence of anti-Semitism in Europe all combined to show American Jews that the world may not be as safe as seemed possible at the close of the last century.

Three years later, however, it seems that the shock to the Jewish system has given way to acceptance of a new reality of uncertainty and insecurity.

Israel has been battered by terrorist attacks, yet tourists began to return to the Jewish state even before Palestinian terrorist groups announced a cease-fire in early summer. The war in Iraq came and went, but there was little public discussion in the community of the security of American Jews.

In the year 5763, it seems, Jews grew accustomed to the unforeseeable.

"It's certainly impossible to live in a constant state of alarm, so there is a little less adrenaline in the Jewish system — but not a lot less," said David Wolpe, rabbi of Sinai Temple in Los Angeles. "One comment by a French government official" about the Jews, he said, "and the thermostat rises again."

Meanwhile, Jewish leaders who warned of a new and dangerous world feel vindicated, observers said. This holds particularly true for those who long had warned of Islamic fundamentalism.

"There's growing understanding of the issues and nature of the threat among Americans, American Jews, our government and other governments that for a long time were ignored," said Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

"The war on terrorism will define the 21st century and help determine the quality of life that we, our children and grandchildren will enjoy," he said. "The spread of Islamic extremism is a threat to all of us."

Jewish groups cheered as U.S. officials shut down several Islamic foundations and arrested individuals allegedly raising funds for terror groups.

But other tactics in the war on terror drew criticism.

"We still find a concern about striking the right balance between security and protecting our civil liberties," said Hannah Rosenthal, executive director of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs. "We, as a religious minority in the United States, have felt our safety and success is due in large part because our liberties and freedoms have been protected. We don't want to see compromised the very freedoms that our war on terrorism is fighting for."

Given the divisions in the community, it was little surprise that the first instance of the Bush administration's new policy of pre-emptive deterrence — the war on Iraq — would arouse fierce debate.

Most Jewish groups ultimately supported the war, yet many worried about how it would impact Israel and world Jewry.

Meanwhile, fears of divided loyalties didn't deter Jewish groups from a third year of vociferous defense of Israel.

In addition to fund-raising, Jewish organizations focused on arming grass-roots activists with information in the public relations war for Israel. They provided them with talking points and seminars to combat perceived anti-Israel bias in local communities, on college campuses and in the media.

The Jewish Council for Public Affairs, for example, began a series of regional

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Problems on prisoner-swap deal

Some Israeli Cabinet members oppose a prisoner-exchange deal with Hezbollah because it includes releasing Palestinian prisoners.

The ministers say they're worried the deal — in which Israel would gain the release from Lebanon of kidnapped businessman Elhanan Tannenbaum and the remains of three abducted Israeli soldiers — would provide incentives for future attempts to kidnap Israelis, Ha'aretz reported.

### Losing my religion

Israel's Religious Affairs Ministry may close to resolve a coalition crisis that threatens the passage of Israel's 2004 budget.

National Religious Party Minister Yitzhak Levy is scheduled to submit a plan for dismantling the ministry in order to pave the way for a vote in favor of the proposed budget by the secularist Shinui Party.

Shinui's five ministers voted against the budget last week after the Prime Minister's office reneged on its promise to dismantle the Religious Affairs Ministry.

### Palestinians kill each other

A gunfight between members of the Al-Aksa Brigade left two dead, including a fugitive wanted by Israel. One of those killed, Al-Aksa leader Saleh Nassar, had survived two attempts by Israeli troops to kill him, Palestinians said.

The other fatality was an Al-Aksa member wounded in the firefight in the West Bank city of Tulkarm and later killed by revenge-seeking militia members, Reuters reported.

### Netanyahu cancels Dubai trip

Benjamin Netanyahu canceled a planned trip to Dubai due to security concerns, Ha'aretz reported.

The Israeli finance minister was to head Israel's 80-person delegation to the IMF conference there.

"Israel Advocacy" conferences to better educate constituents.

Yet there were no massive shows of support for Israel like the April 2002 rally in Washington. For the most part, the sense of crisis that pervaded the previous Jewish year — ushered in by the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks — was absent in 5763.

A year earlier, Jews said they felt besieged, sensing that everyone was ganging up on Jews and Israel. This year, several prominent voices suggested that the threat of anti-Semitism in America was overstated.

"The vast majority of North American Jews do not feel the insecurity that many of the major Jewish institutions report, because that is what these institutions are set up to do," said Rabbi Brad Hirschfield, vice president of CLAL-The National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership. "At their core, all the major Jewish organizations are defense organizations."

As the government's "terror alert" oscillated between yellow and orange, Jewish institutions are presumed to have spent untold millions on enhanced security.

Beefing up security only added to the financial strain all organizations experienced during the country's economic downturn.

Jewish poverty in New York more than doubled, according to a demographic survey funded by the UJA-Federation of New York. Many institutions were forced to lay off employees; yeshivas struggled as families struggled to pay tuition fees.

"If one person can't pay, that's OK, there are scholarships," said Mandell Ganchrow, executive vice president of the Religious Zionists of America and former president of the Orthodox Union. "But we find that more and more people can't pay the tuition. This hurts Orthodox institutions."

Reform institutions also are enduring cutbacks of staff, rabbis and educators, said Rabbi Eric Yoffie, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.

"When times are tough, people turn to the synagogue," Yoffie said. "But it's obviously very distressing that we are less able to provide congregants with the fundamental religious services in the way they're accustomed. But the spirit is good, commitment is high, and congregations have to compensate by more intensive involvement by lay leaders, and that's what's happening."

One of the more startling moments came in November, when the United Jewish Communities — the federation umbrella organization — suddenly canceled the presentation of its long-awaited National Jewish Population Survey 2000-01.

The NJPS was to have been the most extensive — and, at \$6 million, the costliest — demographic study ever conducted of the American Jewish community. Lost data that forced the UJC to postpone presentation of the study also cast a cloud on the ultimate results, whose release was postponed several times throughout the year.

In September, the UJC released the population study. It showed the number of American Jews at 5.2 million, down 300,000 from a decade ago, with an intermarriage rate of 47 percent, up slightly from what was recalculated to be 43 percent one decade ago. An estimated 4.3 million Jews were said to belong to one or more Jewish groups or perform a range of Jewish rituals.

Meanwhile, the same issues that have dogged American Jewry for generations continue to be important. "Assimilation, intermarriage, Jewish knowledge, passion, commitment and their opposite — indifference, apathy and ignorance," Wolpe said.

One new issue was the prospect of a Jewish president: Sen. Joseph Lieberman announced his candidacy for the Democratic nomination for president, hoping to build on the momentum he established as Al Gore's running mate in the 2000 election.

When it comes to Bush, observers are waiting to see if the Jews will line up behind the incumbent in 2004 or throw their weight behind the Democratic presidential candidate.

"There's a feeling that we owe him, to repay his kindness for going out of his way in a way we didn't expect," Ganchrow said, referring to Bush's unexpectedly strong support for Israel. "But there's also an uneasiness over how much pressure he may now place" on Israel.

Yet Iraq continues to loom as a key issue for Israel and U.S. Jews, Yoffie said.

"This will determine the character of the neighborhood in which Israel will live," Yoffie said. "Our well-being as Jews, our mental state, our sense of ourselves is directly tied to the welfare of Israel." □



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## JEWISH WORLD

### Le Pen looks south

French far-right leader Jean-Marie Le Pen officially announced his candidacy to head a key region in the South of France.

Le Pen, who made the announcement Sept. 18, said he would be running in March 2004 for the presidency of the Provence Alpes Cote d'Azur region, which includes the large Jewish communities in Marseille and Nice. Le Pen, who has a history of making anti-Semitic statements, got more than a quarter of the vote in that region in the first round of last year's general election. Le Pen's National Front currently holds 37 of 123 seats on the regional council.

### Y.U. inducts Joel as president

Yeshiva University officially inaugurated Richard Joel as its president. Joel, the former 14-year president and international director of Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life, is the fourth president of Yeshiva in 117 years.

### Israelis, Arabs to Antarctica

A group of eight Israelis and Arabs are planning a joint expedition to Antarctica.

The group set sail from the Tel Aviv marina Saturday for a trial run. Their trip, slated for January, will take them from Patagonia in southern Chile to Antarctica, where they plan to scale an as-yet-unnamed mountain, Britain's Independent reported.

Called "Breaking the Ice," the trip has the blessings of U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, Labor Party Chairman Shimon Peres and the Dalai Lama.

"We're not a political group," said the Israeli who conceived of the trip, Hezkel Nathaniel, a 41-year-old extreme sports enthusiast. "We shall have to work as a team. I wanted to show that Jews and Arabs can work in peace together."

### S. African judge gets Jewish post

Judge Dennis Davis of the Cape High Court was elected chairman of the Cape Town council of South Africa's main Jewish group.

Davis, who was an active opponent of South Africa's apartheid regime, told JTA that a key issue for the Jewish Board of Deputies' Cape Council would be to educate the country's Jews to exercise citizenship "in the fullest way." A recent study found that Jews — like many white South Africans — have not taken well to the country's transition to democracy.

### Kosher soup for you

Campbell's vegetarian vegetable soup was certified as kosher by the nation's largest kosher-certification group. The company shut down a production line so it could be cleaned and certified by officials with the Orthodox Union.

## ADL proceeds with Berlusconi honor despite anger over Mussolini comment

By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME (JTA) — Despite recent remarks by Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi that angered Italy's Jews, the Anti-Defamation League decided to go ahead this week with plans to honor the Italian leader.

Berlusconi was set to receive the ADL's Distinguished Statesman Award at a "Salute to Italy" dinner Tuesday, which was scheduled to honor the Italian leader for his support of Israel and his efforts in the war on terrorism.

But Jews in Italy are still upset over the prime minister's remarks.

Last week, Berlusconi met for 90 minutes with Italian Jewish leaders at the city's Great Synagogue and apologized for telling two British journalists that Italy's former fascist dictator, Benito Mussolini, was "benign" and that his crimes before and during World War II could not be compared to those of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

"Mussolini never killed anyone," Berlusconi was quoted as saying. "Mussolini sent people on holiday in internal exile."

During his meeting, Berlusconi also reiterated his strong support for Israel.

ADL national director Abraham Foxman said there was no reason to change the group's plans to honor Berlusconi, even though the award has caused uneasiness among some Italian Jews. "A friend is a friend even though he is flawed," Foxman said. "Has Berlusconi said things that I am critical of? Yes," he said. "But he's America's friend, Israel's friend, our friend."

Berlusconi strongly supported President Bush's war on terrorism and the war in Iraq. He also has emerged as one of Israel's closest allies in Europe, winning praise from Israeli leaders.

Italy, which currently holds the presidency of the European Union, was "very instrumental in pushing for the recent European decision to declare Hamas a terrorist organization," Foxman said.

In Italy, Jewish attitudes toward Berlusconi are divided. On the one hand, there is his record of support for Israel and anti-terrorism efforts. On the other hand, Berlusconi's government coalition includes a right-wing party that was formed from the neo-fascist movement and another right-wing party notorious for xenophobic positions.

So while there is widespread appreciation of the government's policy regarding Israel, Jews who oppose the current administration distrust Berlusconi's sincerity on Jewish issues.

"I saw that announcement of the ADL award and it made my flesh crawl," said one Jew from Rome who asked not to be named.

Berlusconi has a history of gaffes that have infuriated both allies and opponents. Earlier this summer, he touched off a miniature crisis when he compared a German member of the European Parliament to a guard in a Nazi concentration camp. □

## Egyptian intellectuals: Don't sue Jews

NEW YORK (JTA) — Egyptian intellectuals are warning against suing Jews for gold the ancient Israelites took from Egypt because it could bolster Zionism.

Abd al-Wahab al-Masiri, author of the encyclopedia "Jews, Judaism, and Zionism," said a planned lawsuit to recover damages for gold taken during the exodus could indirectly strengthen Zionist claims to the land of Israel because it treats the Bible as a historically accurate document.

Last month, the Middle East Media Research Institute translated a report that said a group of Egyptian jurists were preparing the lawsuit against the Jews. Nabil Hilmi, law dean at the University of Al-Zaqziq, told the Egyptian weekly Al-Ahram al-Arabi, "This is clear theft of a host country's resources and treasure, something that fits the morals and character of the Jews."

The report did not say whether Jewish slave labor in Egypt, reported in that same biblical narrative, would be taken into consideration. Al-Masiri told Reuters that the lawsuit "paves the way to acceptance of the Zionist claims." □

## As Iraq and Israel fronts heat up, Bush keeps eye on rest of Mideast

By Matthew E. Berger

WASHINGTON (JTA) — With the death toll mounting in Iraq and the Israeli-Palestinian “road map” plan in tatters, the Bush administration and Congress want to put out other Middle East fires before they get out of control.

Administration officials and lawmakers recently launched initiatives to sanction Syria and Iran for links to terrorist organizations and plans to develop and obtain weapons of mass destruction.

Lawmakers also have focused on Saudi Arabia, accusing it of supporting Hamas and other terrorist groups.

Officially, the Bush administration regards the kingdom as an ally in the war on terrorism.

The United States has been keeping an eye on these three countries for years, but attention on the three has increased in the wake of U.S. military action against Iraq.

“I think it’s all wrapped up with the Iraq war and concern about the riffraff of the world assembling in Iraq to attack American forces,” said Edward Walker, a former assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs.

Walker said some Bush administration officials want to take severe actions against Iran and Syria, including new sanctions made possible by the Patriot Act, passed over Sept. 11, 2001.

The new actions could include cutting sources of funding for the three countries and their interests in the United States.

Lawmakers are already highlighting their concerns in Congress.

A number of congressional hearings last week produced dire predictions about Iranian and Syrian capabilities and what could be the result if the United States fails to act.

U.S. and Israeli legislators said Wednesday during a committee hearing that Iran could be “weeks away” from achieving nuclear-weapon capabilities.

“If not efficiently tackled, in one year from now we may face a new world, a very dangerous Middle East and a very dangerous world,” said Yuval Steinitz, chairman of the Knesset’s foreign affairs and defense committee.

Paula DeSutter, the assistant secretary of state for verification and compliance, said that Iran is working to acquire even more sophisticated and longer-range missiles.

“If they are successful in this endeavor, our attempts to slow the missile trade will have little effect on Iran’s already developing indigenous missile capability,” she said.

Pressure on Syria has been mounting as well.

John Bolton, undersecretary of state for arms control and international security, told a House subcommittee Tuesday that Syria is a dual threat because of its support of terrorist groups and the possibility that Syria could arm the groups.

“There is no graver threat to our country today than states that both sponsor terrorism and possess or aspire to possess weapons of mass destruction,” Bolton said.

“While there is currently no information indicating that the Syrian Government has transferred WMD to terrorist organizations or would permit such groups to acquire them, Syria’s ties to numerous terrorist groups underlie the reasons for our continued anxiety,” he said.

Bolton also appeared to soften Bush administration opposition to the Syria Accountability Act — legislation backed by pro-Israel groups that would sanction Syria for harboring terrorists, seeking nuclear weapons and occupying Lebanon.

Bolton said Tuesday that the administration has no position on the legislation. The White House had previously claimed the legislation would tie up the administration’s hands in foreign policy.

Sources say the State Department is using support for the sanctions act as leverage in discussions with Syrian officials.

Rep. Gary Ackerman (D-N.Y.) sent a letter to Bush on Tuesday calling for the United States to downgrade relations with Syria.

“Unless Syria changes its policies, no United States ambassador should be sent to Damascus, and the president should refuse to accept the credentials of any proposed Syrian ambassador to the United States,” Ackerman wrote.

Walker said unilateral U.S. sanctions on Iran and Syria would have little effect.

“We already have unilateral sanctions against both countries, and it hasn’t really stopped them,” said Walker, now president of the Middle East Institute, a Washington think tank. “Sanctions will only hurt American companies.”

In Saudi Arabia’s case, the Bush administration and lawmakers remain miles apart.

Lawmakers emphasize the link between the Saudis and terrorist organizations, including Al-Qaida; the Bush administration says Saudis are aiding the fight against terrorism.

The New York Times reported Wednesday that American law enforcement officials estimate that 50 percent of Hamas’ budget comes from people in Saudi Arabia.

Rep. Anthony Weiner (D-N.Y.) proposed legislation that would cut all aid to Saudi Arabia and add the country to the State Department list of countries that support terrorism.

“Every day brings more troubling news about the Saudis and their ties to terrorists,” Weiner said. “We need to be sure that as we fight the war on terror we are not inadvertently funding our enemies.”

The Bush administration dismissed the report.

“The Saudi government has committed to ensuring that no Saudi government funds go to Hamas,” State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said.

“We know that private donations from people in Saudi Arabia to Hamas are very difficult to track and stop, and we continue to work closely with Saudi officials to offer expertise and information that can assist them in that regard,” he said. □

## Israel, India cooperate in space

NEW YORK (JTA) — Israel will send a \$15 million telescope into space on an Indian rocket in 2005. The telescope is for scientific purposes, Israeli officials told the Indian Express newspaper.

The announcement follows a recent visit to India by Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, during which India and Israel signed six agreements on broadening educational, medical, cultural and technology ties, as well as an environmental protection pact.

Israel and India have been cooperating on space-related issues for two and a half years, Ha’aretz reported. □