



# Daily News Bulletin

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86th Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Security fence plan approved

Israel approved construction of a new section of its West Bank security fence.

The Cabinet decided Wednesday that the 25-mile stretch will not include the Jewish West Bank city of Ariel, a move to mollify U.S. concerns that the project was endangering peace efforts by prompting Palestinian charges of a "land grab." Instead, Ariel will have its own fence, and a decision about connecting it to the larger fence will be postponed for several months.

Reacting to the decision, State Department Spokesman Richard Boucher said that the United States continues to discuss its concerns with Israeli officials. He said a fence should not intrude on the lives of Palestinians, nor affect future negotiations.

### Israel hits Jihad

Israeli troops killed an Islamic Jihad fugitive and captured another top member of the terrorist group.

Palestinian witnesses said undercover commandos shot dead Mazen al-Badawi, 25, in Tulkarm on Wednesday, hours after the army nabbed Sheik Bassem Sa'adi as he hid under a car in the nearby West Bank city of Jenin.

The Shin Bet also announced this week that it had arrested three members of the terrorist group in connection with a June 17 ambush on the Trans-Israel Highway, which killed a 7-year-old Israeli girl.

### High court to hear Nazi art case

The Supreme Court will consider whether a California woman can sue Austria in U.S. courts to recoup Nazi-looted art.

Maria Altmann, who fled Austria, is seeking \$150 million worth of paintings that were stolen 65 years ago. Austria has appealed the case, questioning California court rulings that Altmann can sue Austria and the Austrian Gallery in the United States. Austria contends that the courts do not hold jurisdiction over foreign countries.

Altmann is seeking six paintings by Gustav Klimt, two of which depict Altmann's aunt. The case is likely to be heard early next year.

Because of Yom Kippur, the JTA DAILY NEWS BULLETIN will not be published Tuesday, Oct. 7.

## FOCUS ON ISSUES

### Many Jewish groups stay silent as country debates Iraq exit strategy

By Ron Kampeas

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Any divisions among American Jews about the war in Iraq and the U.S. role in rebuilding the ravaged country are not reflected on the national organizational level, where only two positions have emerged: for the administration, and for keeping quiet.

The strong support that underscored the build-up to the Iraq war has dissipated, and the question of how to go forward is becoming a defining issue for many Americans. It has emerged as a major election-year issue, with Democrats accusing the administration of lacking a realistic exit plan.

Democratic candidates for president, including Sen. Joseph Lieberman (Conn.), say the Bush administration's initial reluctance to allow other nations a role in rebuilding Iraq has left the United States alone to foot a huge bill and manage a long military occupation.

Administration defenders say a quick influx of cash now will help Iraqis stand on their own feet sooner.

Leaders of the Reform and Conservative movements say they hear similar questions about post-war strategy among their congregants — but the leaders don't see it becoming a national Jewish issue, if only because of differences of opinion on what should be done.

"We're a large movement," said Rabbi Eric Yoffie, president of the Reform movement's Union of American Hebrew Congregations. "The consensus we have on many issues does not exist on this issue."

An exit strategy for Iraq has yet to present a Jewish dilemma, said Rabbi Jerome Epstein, executive vice president of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism.

"This is not an issue in which the Jewish values flow on one side or the other," said Epstein, whose movement was rattled by fierce debate on the issue at a rabbinical conference in April.

Lawmakers leading the criticism agree that such views are best expressed as issues of concern to all Americans, and not as specifically Jewish concerns.

"The situation since the end of major military combat, that we don't have a multilateral effort, is detrimental to America and the world," said Peter Deutsch (D-Fla.), a Jewish congressman whose Fort Lauderdale constituency is home to many Jews. "But that is not particularly a Jewish issue."

Still, that has not stopped some mainstream groups from pronouncing their support for the administration in no uncertain terms.

Jason Isaacson, director of the American Jewish Committee's government affairs office, wrote a letter last week urging congressional support for President Bush's appeal for \$87 billion in emergency spending on Iraq and Afghanistan — an appeal that triggered a dramatic drop in Bush's approval ratings.

"Although the magnitude of the president's spending request is formidable, in appropriating these resources the Congress would serve our country's most compelling interests," Isaacson wrote to congressmen.

Isaacson said that supporting the administration's postwar efforts was consistent with strong Jewish support for the war.

"The war isn't quite over, and because it's not quite over funds must be provided to see that it's concluded decisively, successfully and that Iraq has the tools to assure

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Israel eyes foreign ports

Israel is considering using Aqaba, Jordan, and Port Said, Egypt, as alternatives to domestic ports paralyzed by a strike. Israel's Transportation Ministry said Wednesday it had held talks with Jordanian and Egyptian officials on subcontracting Israeli maritime commerce to their ports.

The strike at the ports, declared as part of public-sector actions against Israel's 2004 austerity budget, is costing the country \$40 million a day, Ha'aretz said.

### Unfriendly skies

El Al passengers are demanding that four airline crewmen who signed a conscientious objector petition be fired. The Yediot Achronot newspaper said El Al sources Wednesday were flummoxed by the angry appeals because they have no legal basis to fire the pilots.

The crewmen were among 27 combat pilots in the Israel Air Force who last month issued a letter declaring their opposition to operations against Palestinian terrorists in civilian areas.

### Father allows child's Israel study

A New York man dropped a court case aimed at preventing his daughter from studying in Israel.

Vladimir Brichkov last week dismissed the case he had filed to keep his daughter away from Israel, due to the potential for violence there.

"She really wanted to go. Why should I stop her?" he said. Brichkov's daughter, Bianca, 15, is one of five North American students attending a three-year high school program through the Jewish Agency for Israel.

### Israeli economy looking up?

Israel's economy may have bottomed out, according to Globes newspaper. Israel's gross domestic product is expected to grow by 1.1 percent this year, the Israeli business newspaper said.

stability in that region instead of instability," he said.

Abraham Foxman, whose Anti-Defamation League also strongly supports administration efforts, said widespread Jewish satisfaction with the ouster of a vicious, anti-Israel regime overwhelms any concerns about Iraq's postwar direction.

"There are nuances, there will be nuances, but those are not significant," Foxman said. "The victory over Saddam Hussein, the releasing of Iraqi people from a dictatorship bent on Israel's destruction — that's a sigh of relief."

That view is shared by Orthodox Union congregants, said Nathan Diament, director of the O.U.'s Institute for Public Affairs.

"Our community would support the notion that the reconstruction of Iraq is not a project the United States can fail at; therefore, we have to invest money and manpower," Diament said.

The union is sending Bush a letter supporting the appropriation, Diament said.

The reluctance of mainstream organizations to join administration critics is a disappointment to some left-wing Jews who opposed the war from the outset.

"In terms of institutions, I'm not aware of any changes" in their position on the war, said Rabbi Arthur Waskow of the Shalom Center in Philadelphia.

Rabbi Mordechai Liebling, an activist with Philadelphia's Shefa Fund, said much Jewish support for the war derived from promises by Bush and others that a victory in Iraq would facilitate a resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which has claimed several thousand lives over the past three years.

Instead, the administration has become preoccupied with Iraq and is even less involved in pursuing its "road map" peace plan — leading to a sense of despair among many Jews, Liebling said.

"The administration has dropped the ball on the road map, and mainstream Jews are having second thoughts about the Iraq war because their interests are not served," Liebling said. "The level of despair, the lack of hope, is reaching an almost all-time high."

The general absence of Jewish criticism of the war and its aftermath also is striking because groups representing other constituencies — especially black groups — have been critical. For example, the religious affairs department of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People was forceful in its opposition to the war.

Officials active in Jewish and Democratic circles say a drift away from alliances with such groups, and the reluctance to criticize a victory against a virulently anti-Israel regime, meant Jews never were going to be at the forefront of criticism.

Another factor is what many see as a blunt Bush administration strategy of ignoring critics and cultivating supporters. When Bush invited more than two dozen rabbis to a Rosh Hashanah meeting on Monday, many of those present enthusiastically endorsed his Iraq policies, and no one criticized them, participants said.

The Reform movement's Yoffie said Jewish organizations might be more willing to criticize administration strategy if Bush's critics articulated their own exit strategy more clearly — as may happen when the presidential election campaign moves into high gear as primaries begin in January.

"Right now there are legitimate questions and reservations, but in the absence of any clear proposal, I don't see a change," Yoffie told JTA. "Down the road, who knows?" □

### S. African panel names Jewish leader

CAPE TOWN (JTA) — South Africa's president appointed a Jewish woman as deputy chairwoman of a national human rights commission.

Marlene Bethlehem, a former president of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, the representative body of the community, was nominated to the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities by both the board and by Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris.

She was one of 196 nominees from all communities to the commission, which is expected to play an important role in nation building, according to the 1996 South African constitution. The constitution mandates 11 official languages and respect for all religious, linguistic and cultural groups. □



## Daily News Bulletin

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## JEWISH WORLD

### Panel excoriates U.S. image

A panel found that "the bottom has indeed fallen out of support for the United States" in the Arab and Muslim world.

The panel, commissioned by a congressional subcommittee, recommends an overhaul of American public-relations efforts among Arabs and Muslims.

### Belarus institute closed

Belarus' Jewish community is protesting a decision by the country's Education Ministry to close a Jewish studies institute.

Two weeks ago, the International Institute for Humanities, which is part of the Belarus State University in the capital Minsk, was ordered to shut down its operations. In a letter to Alexander Kozulin, rector of the university, ministry officials offered no explanation for the decision.

### Nazi halftime show no touchdown

A school band director apologized for a performance that included Nazi symbolism during a high school football game.

Charles Grissom, band director at Texas' Paris High School, said he had intended for the "Visions of World War II" show — which included a rendition of Nazi favorite "Deutschland Uber Alles" and a student waving a Nazi flag — to be part of a historical performance. The flags and music of France, Britain, Japan and the United States were included, but the show backfired. "We were booed," Grissom said. "We had things thrown at us."

### Commission denies Papon

Nazi-era war criminal Maurice Papon was denied a French government pension.

A parliamentary committee ruled that Papon's pension should not be reinstated, the daily Liberation reported. Papon, who served as a Cabinet minister in postwar French governments, was a senior Vichy official in southwest France during World War II. In 1998, he was found guilty of "complicity in crimes against humanity" for his role in deporting some 1,500 Jews to Auschwitz.

### Prague synagogue reopens

Prague's Pinkas Synagogue reopened Tuesday following one of the most complex renovation projects ever undertaken by the city's Jewish community.

The synagogue, one of the best-preserved Jewish sites in Prague, suffered water damage during extensive flooding in the Czech Republic 14 months ago.

"The synagogue is symbolic because there are 350 years of Prague's history here," Jewish Museum historian Arno Parik said during a news briefing at the synagogue.

## In the new report on loan guarantees, Bush won't address settlement spending

By Matthew E. Berger

WASHINGTON (JTA) — The Bush administration will not deduct money from its loan guarantees to Israel at this time — a blow to Palestinian attempts to link the guarantees to the barrier Israel is building in the West Bank.

The State Department was to have announced Tuesday the amount that it would deduct from the \$3 billion available to Israel in loan guarantees for next year, because of Israeli spending on Jewish towns in the West Bank and Gaza.

But State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said that while the loan-guarantees law requires the administration to submit a report by the end of September, it does not mandate a decision about deductions by then.

"The process is under way," Boucher said Tuesday. "But don't expect us to start laying out specific amounts at this point because we've really not made those decisions, and our consultations with the Israelis on these matters continue."

But Boucher also said reductions are likely at some point over the next two fiscal years because of Israel's construction of a security fence and that U.S. and Israeli officials were holding talks on the exact amount.

One Democratic congressional aide suggested that Bush's failure to follow the law could spawn a lawsuit.

"The letter of the law is very clear that there should be a specific amount reported by the State Department today," the aide said. "No matter what your views on the Middle East conflict or loan guarantees, there are many members of Congress who will be demanding a more complete report to Congress."

The loan guarantees law, authorizing \$9 billion in guarantees over three years, says the president "shall submit a report to Congress no later than September 30 of each fiscal year during the pendency of the program specifying the amount calculated under the preceding proviso and that will be deducted from the amount of guarantees authorized to be issued in the next fiscal year."

The Bush administration suggested this summer that money spent on a security fence in the West Bank could be deducted from the loan guarantees. Palestinians say the fence is a land grab; Israel says it's necessary to keep terrorists at bay.

U.S. lawmakers vigorously defended the fence, and the Bush administration has since backtracked.

Bush told a group of rabbis on Monday that he supports the fence as long as its route does not preclude future negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians.

An Israeli official in Washington said the country's strategy was to reach understandings with the Bush administration on both settlement issues and the security fence. Israeli and Palestinian officials have traveled to Washington frequently in the last few months to present their cases on both issues.

Peace activists had been eagerly anticipating the Bush administration's calculations on how much Israel has spent in the West Bank and Gaza. While various reports estimated the figure at between \$200 million and \$250 million, a report recently published in Ha'aretz said the number could be as high as \$556 million annually in nonmilitary surplus spending. Those numbers do not include spending on the barrier.

"Hopefully, the administration hasn't been able to make a determination because of the new information out there," said Lewis Roth, assistant executive director of Americans for Peace Now.

An administration official said it is unclear when the White House would reach a final number on the loan-guarantee deductions, and that it could be more than a year.

Israel issued a note for \$1.6 billion last month, with U.S. guarantees. Israel can utilize the additional \$1.4 billion available this year through December. Loan guarantees from the United States allow Israel to take out loans at a reduced interest rate. Direct aid to Israel is not affected.

Deductions based on settlement spending were applied to \$10 billion in loan guarantees in the 1990s. Over five years, the United States deducted \$773.8 million, according to Americans for Peace Now. □

## NEWS ANALYSIS

## In Israel, there's no end in sight after three years of the intifada

By Dan Baron

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Three years of terrorism, military operations, recession and failed peace missions finally have Israelis and Palestinians agreeing on something: There is no light at the end of the tunnel.

This week, Palestinians throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip — and Arabs in Israel — celebrated the third anniversary of the intifada with rallies, marches and political pronouncements.

In Palestinian-populated cities, masked militants marched through the streets at political demonstrations marking the campaign of violence launched against Israel at the end of September 2000, but the rallies were relatively small.

Their size suggests popular exhaustion with the intifada, or caution after Israel's strikes against terrorist leaders and its threat to expel Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat.

For Israelis, the optimism that characterizes Rosh Hashanah did little to sweeten expectations for a new year free of suicide bombings and terrorist ambushes.

"I think our triumph is that we have succeeded in internalizing terror so that it does not overly affect our lives," said Justice Minister Yosef "Tommy" Lapid, in one of the week's rosier assessments.

For the Palestinians, too, the year has resulted in few gains.

Arafat repeatedly was maligned by the White House, and a new P.A. prime minister contributed little to the Palestinian cause before bowing out.

Now the Palestinian issue has shifted to the back burner in Washington, given the Bush administration's preoccupation with Iraq, where the United States has its own "occupation."

While the Palestinian Authority's political and economic infrastructure is in shambles, many in the West Bank and Gaza believe they are prevailing.

"We have been reduced to the point of counting the mere infliction of pain on each other, and survival of those attacks, as minor triumphs to be treasured," said Ami Ayalon, a former Shin Bet director who has been leading a grass-roots peace movement with Palestinian intellectual Sari Nusseibeh.

The first intifada, which lasted six years, had a much higher ratio of Palestinians dead to Israelis killed. Now there are three dead Palestinians for every Israeli killed, a startlingly low figure by the standards of most counterinsurgency campaigns.

Jailed Palestinian leader Marwan Barghouti says Palestinians have no alternative but to go on fighting.

"To die is better than living under occupation," he said in Tel Aviv District Court on Monday in closing statements in his trial for complicity in 26 counts of terrorist-related murders.

Many Israelis believe not enough was done to keep Arafat to his Oslo-era pledge of renouncing violence.

"Israel restrained itself into a corner," Jerusalem-based political analyst Ron Dermer said.

"The Israeli military is the most humane in the world when it comes to counterterrorism, which means the Palestinian regime has not been punished enough for launching war. So now we have lost deterrent credibility in our enemies' eyes, while winning no favors

from them or the rest of the world in return," he said.

Confusion about the future has bred reductive theories about the conflict. Many observers believe it is a tale of two old warriors who just cannot compromise, rather than part of an epic confrontation between two religions and cultures.

"Before Arafat goes, nothing will change," said a Ramallah resident named Nidal. "But he can't go alone. Israelis should get rid of Sharon, too." □

## British group uses Yom Kippur to fight against kosher slaughter

By Richard Allen Greene

LONDON (JTA) — A British vegetarian group is planning to launch a new campaign against kosher slaughter, known as shechita, on Yom Kippur.

Emboldened by this summer's recommendation by the British Farm Animal Welfare Council that all animals in the country be stunned before being slaughtered, Vegetarians International Voice for Animals is relaunching an anti-shechita effort begun several years ago.

"We want to raise the public profile of the issue, to say this is a thing we should be talking about," said the head of the campaign, Alistair Currie.

The group's campaign will include dissemination of leaflets, the results of a public opinion survey and the Welfare Council's semi-official report on Jewish and Muslim ritual slaughter.

Britain's government has not yet responded to the Welfare Council report, according to Currie. British law requires that all animals be stunned before they are killed — except for those slaughtered by Jewish or Muslim ritual methods.

Stunning an animal before its throat is cut is forbidden according to Jewish law. Muslims also forbid stunning animals.

Currie said Vegetarians International is aware that defenders of shechita consider it a humane method of killing animals, but said that nowadays there are more humane ways of doing things.

"Our understanding of shechita is that it was an animal welfare issue, and we celebrate that. But times have moved on," he said.

Before the Welfare Council's report was released, Britain's representative Jewish group, the Board of Deputies, issued a statement defending ritual slaughter.

"Many scientific experts have confirmed that the Jewish method of religious slaughter is at least as humane as any other method of slaughter," the statement said. "The right to practice shechita is fundamental to religious observance and entirely consistent with the requirements of humaneness."

Currie said his group did not intend to offend Jews by launching its campaign on Yom Kippur. "As we understand it, it's a day of compassion. Our aim is not to alienate Jewish people," he said.

But Jewish leaders called the date's selection cynical. "They know the Jewish community can't respond" on Yom Kippur, said Michael Kester, executive director of the National Council of Shechita Boards.

He said Vegetarians International had not responded to a written offer to discuss kosher slaughter. "They've taken the view that 'We've made up our minds, don't confuse me with facts,'" Kester said.

Currie said Vegetarians International received no offer in the past year from the shechita group for talks. □