



Daily News Bulletin

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TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Israel raids Rafah again

Six Palestinians were injured in an Israeli raid to destroy weapons smuggling tunnels in the Gaza Strip. The raid was Israel's second in the Rafah refugee camp in less than a week.

Eight Palestinians were killed in the earlier raid.

Fence vote on hold

A U.N. resolution demanding that Israel dismantle its West Bank security fence did not come to a vote Tuesday.

Forty-three ambassadors spoke at the open Security Council meeting, called by Syria to debate the fence.

The meeting was expected to conclude Tuesday afternoon without a vote, U.N. spokesman Stéphane Dujarric said.

The Ha'aretz newspaper said "several speakers in the debate compared the fence to the Berlin Wall and the former Iron Curtain that divided Europe for half a century."

Israel's U.N. ambassador, Dan Gillerman, said the fence was strictly a security measure with no political significance.

"Many Palestinians who oppose the fence simply want to continue killing Israelis. The Israelis building the fence simply want to live," Gillerman said.

Agreement on Swiss banks money

Swiss banks agreed to give some access to dormant accounts involved in a settlement with Holocaust victims.

One of the lawyers who represented survivors in the \$1.25 billion settlement said the agreement would allow more money from the fund to be released to survivors and their families, The New York Times said Tuesday.

The agreement comes shortly after the investigator involved in overseeing the fund filed a report critical of the banks for restricting access to documents needed to make payouts.

But a representative for the banks said the agreement was reached before the report was filed.

Because of Simchat Torah, the JTA DAILY NEWS BULLETIN will not be published Monday, Oct. 20.

Search process under way to replace top UJC executive

By Rachel Pomerance

NEW YORK (JTA) — Just four months after the top executive of the United Jewish Communities federation umbrella group unveiled his vision for the federation system, a search has begun to replace him.

Stephen Hoffman, the president and chief executive officer of the UJC, who is respected for his steely resolve, managerial and fund-raising expertise, and prowess for grooming Jewish professionals nationwide, took over a flagging federation system for a three-year stint in November 2001. Now, that stint is coming to an end.

Despite all the personal and professional praise he has received, Hoffman also has heard an earful of criticism about the UJC — the four-year old merger of the United Jewish Appeal, the Council of Jewish Federations and the United Israel Appeal — from the individual federations that own the system and the UJC's many beneficiary agencies.

In June, he presented a vision to his constituents that included three general "areas of focus."

In addition to reducing its budget by nearly 10 percent, the UJC, he said, should be a "vehicle for global Jewish responsibility," an engine of innovation and an organization that must strengthen the federations by offering them improved services and top-notch professionals.

The move was, in part, a response to vigorous complaints — that the system was bloated and lacked focus, failed to fund its overseas partners sufficiently, inadequately served the federations and excluded smaller federations from decision-making processes.

Now, observers say, the new leader who will replace Hoffman will play a pivotal role in shaping the UJC's future — one that has been called seriously into question by many frustrated Jewish professionals.

Robert Goldberg, UJC's chairman of the board-designate, who also is heading the search committee to replace Hoffman, would not comment on the contenders for the position.

But federation insiders confirmed that the following names are being discussed: Robert Aronson, chief executive officer of the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit; Steven Nasatir, president of the Jewish United Fund/Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago; John Ruskay, executive vice president and CEO of the UJA-Federation of New York; and Jacob Solomon, executive vice president of the Greater Miami Jewish Federation.

Some of these individuals were considered for the post last time the top slot was being filled.

Already, that list has fueled one of the criticisms of the federation system — that it caters to large cities.

"It's just rotating the chairs in the club," said one federation leader who asked not to be identified.

Others are focusing on how the new top executive might lead.

Hoffman has developed a "wonderful vision for the future," said Lee Wunsch, executive vice president of the Jewish Federation of Greater Houston. "The success of that vision is contingent upon his successor."

Houston's federation made headlines in Jewish newspapers after the group sent a Jan. 13 letter to the UJC in which the federation threatened to suspend its dues until, the

MIDEAST FOCUS

House to debate Syria bill

The U.S. House of Representatives is slated to vote Wednesday on sanctions against Syria.

The Syria Accountability Act requires the president to impose sanctions on Syria for the country's support of terrorist organizations and its efforts to develop or acquire weapons of mass destruction.

The bill is expected to pass Congress, and the White House is expected to sign it.

Turkish Jewish deaths probed

Turkish police are investigating the recent murders of two members of Istanbul's Jewish community.

Both caterer Muiz Konor and dentist Yosef Yehiyeh were bound and shot at close range, according to media reports.

Police have yet to establish a link between the two cases.

Israel to deport prisoners

Israel wants to deport to the Gaza Strip 15 prisoners it is holding in the West Bank.

An army official gave the orders Tuesday to transfer the Palestinians to the Erez crossing in Gaza, where they will be held for 48 hours to give them a chance to appeal the decision.

Israel says all 15 were involved in terrorist attacks.

Sneh: No nukes on subs

Israeli officials dismissed reports that the country has upgraded its submarines to hold nuclear weapons.

Israel's former deputy defense minister, Ephraim Sneh, said the reports of nuclear-armed submarines, which first appeared in the Los Angeles Times, are "simply impossible."

An expert at Jane's Naval Weapons Systems, a magazine that covers the defense industry, agreed with Sneh.

letter said, "significant concerns are addressed to our satisfaction."

The letter cited a "flawed" overseas allocations process and attacked the UJC for "lurching from crisis to crisis" without "planning or prioritization."

Since then, in the spring and summer, a flurry of letters have come from other federations — Boston, St. Louis and Chicago — sounding off on similar gripes.

"A lot of federations have jumped on the bandwagon," said Wunsch, who said Houston's concerns with the UJC are "ongoing."

Resolution of all of the federations' complaints will hinge on the next leader, he said. "The leader of an organization has a lot to do with the direction it goes," he said.

Miami's Solomon also expressed his hope that the next UJC leader will carry Hoffman's agenda forward.

Solomon specified Hoffman's work to make the federation system more accessible to its clients and build a "strong professional team."

Still, supplying the system with "a talented pool of professionals" is "a crying need," he said. "Alignment among the federations with respect to what we want to get out of our overseas partnership" is also critical, he said.

Robert Schroyer of Chicago, national chairman of the UJC's fund-raising campaign, has some different ideas.

"I hope that they'll have more emphasis on campaigning, on fund raising and not necessarily on Hoffman's vision that he laid out."

According to several insiders, Aronson is eager for the position, but he would not say so publicly.

"I'm not going to comment on whether or not I'm going to be a candidate," he said. "Obviously I do care a lot about the organization. It's an extremely important job."

Asked about the role of Hoffman's successor, Aronson said, "The most important thing is to make sure UJC remains and continues to develop as a strong national organization."

Larry Jackier, president of the Detroit federation, said of Aronson that "while they're looking to get him, he isn't interested in the job."

Jackier said he has had "numerous phone calls over the past six months" from "various people indicating that they would like Aronson to take Steve Hoffman's job."

This year, Aronson has pared down his work for the Detroit federation to three days per week. He divides his remaining time in the work week between work as a philanthropic consultant for Jewish philanthropist Michael Steinhardt and Detroit magnate Bill Davidson.

Nasatir was not available for comment. But leaders close to him said he was unlikely to accept the position unless he could work from Chicago.

Solomon of Miami said he has had only "informal conversations" about the post. "I don't have any idea where the search process is right now," he said.

Asked if he was interested in the position, Solomon said, "I have no idea," and said he would have to discuss the possibility with his wife.

In New York, Ruskay declined to comment.

Some disparage the fact that the rumored contenders spring from a well of longtime leaders that perennially come up for the top position.

"As long as the large city execs consider this position their private reserve, all you can rely on is the best of that group," said one federation leader close to the search process.

Others concede that the large cities provide the bulk of the funds to the federation system, and a representative from those places makes sense.

"Central to the leadership of the UJC" are the "relationships that you must have with your largest partners. And the largest partners are the large cities," said Conrad Giles of Detroit, the former president of the Council of Jewish Federations.

Furthermore, he said, "All of those who would be considered for this job, I believe, will have the requisite sensitivities, while coming from a large city environment, to appropriately care for the needs of the smaller cities."

Most agree, however, that the choice is critical when the viability of North American Jewry's central fund-raising organization is at stake.

According to Solomon, there's "no way one can overestimate the importance of coming up with the right person." □



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JEWISH WORLD

Jewish man killed in Russia

A Jewish man died Tuesday of head injuries he received on the night of Yom Kippur when he was attacked on a Moscow street.

Robert Aminashvili, 25 an observant Jew, was severely beaten after he left a downtown Moscow yeshiva. His family could not be contacted this week, and yeshiva officials refused to release any information to news media. Police officials said they are investigating the case.

Meanwhile, a U.S.-born Israeli yeshiva student suffered severe head injuries when he was beaten on a Russian street. The student, whose name has not yet been released, remains in a hospital in the city of Perm. His condition is being described as serious but stable.

Court to hear 'under God' case

The Supreme Court has agreed to determine the constitutionality of the phrase "one nation, under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The high court announced that it will hear *Elk Grove Unified School District v. Newdow*, in which the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled last year that the phrase violated the separation of church and state and therefore could not be mandated in public schools.

There has been a hold on that ruling ever since, awaiting a clarification from the high court. Oral arguments are likely to be held early next year.

Senate OKs genetics act

Jewish groups are applauding the Senate for approving a bill that would prevent discrimination based on genetic information.

On Tuesday, the Senate unanimously passed the Genetic Information Non-Discrimination Act of 2003, which Hadassah called a great step forward for medical research.

"Hadassah is pleased that the legislation would ban all health insurance companies — in both the individual and group markets — from raising premiums or restricting enrollment based on genetic information," said June Walker, the group's president.

The Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism also hailed the bill's passage.

Goussinsky won't be extradited

A Greek court refused a Russian request to extradite a Jewish media tycoon. The judge said the fraud and money-laundering charges against Vladimir Goussinsky are not a crime under Greek statutes. Goussinsky, a media magnate and former leader of the Russian Jewish Congress, has been living abroad since he fled Russia three years ago following a Kremlin-orchestrated campaign against him that many believe was politically motivated.

For new fund, Ford Foundation joins Jewish social justice group

By Joe Berkofsky

NEW YORK (JTA) — The Ford Foundation is steering its drive for progressive Israeli causes into a new philanthropic vehicle that partners with a Jewish group.

Ford is rolling out a \$20 million peace and social-justice fund in partnership with the Washington-based New Israel Fund, the groups have announced.

"This grant to the New Israel Fund will increase our funding in Israel and help build the capacity of civic organizations vital to strengthening its democracy," Susan Berresford, president of the Ford Foundation, said in a statement.

A panel made up of members of the Ford Foundation, the NIF and recipients of past Ford grants in Israel will advise the fund, whose grants will be awarded over five years.

By shifting control of its Israel-related philanthropy to a Jewish group, Ford could blaze a new philanthropic trail that other non-Jewish charities may follow, philanthropy experts say.

"If others emulate this shift, as a model it becomes even more significant than as an isolated act — and I hope it will," said Mark Charendoff, president of the Jewish Funders Network, an umbrella group of Jewish foundations.

Ford's idea also is a major boon to the New Israel Fund, which supports Israeli groups devoted to human and civil rights, economic and social justice, and religious pluralism.

Since its 1979 founding, NIF has given more than \$120 million to 700 Israeli Jewish and Arab groups. The NIF currently supports about 130 organizations.

Among other efforts, it aids a Bedouin group, a shelter for battered Israeli Arab women and a lawyer's group that advocates for civil rights.

Ford's move also represents an upgrade of Ford's activities in Israel. In recent years, Ford has granted between \$2 million and \$2.5 million annually to Israeli-based peace and social-justice groups. Since 1948, Ford has granted \$50 million to Israeli causes, Ford officials said.

Among its recipients has been the NIF, which has received \$5 million since 1988.

"This has an enormous effect, in that one of the world's great philanthropic organizations has the confidence to put their portfolio of giving in Israel with us," said Peter Edelman, the New York-based chairman of the NIF board.

Of the \$20 million Ford is giving over five years, \$1 million will go directly into NIF's \$4 million endowment, adding significant capacity directly to the grant-maker itself. The bulk of the money will go toward donor-advised awards by the new Ford-NIF fund to Israeli Arab and Jewish groups, to the tune of between \$3.4 million to \$3.5 million annually.

Directing the new fund will be Ford's former program officer for Israel, Aaron Back, who will be responsible for recommending the grants, according to Bradford Smith, vice president of the Ford Foundation's peace and social-justice programs.

The NIF project does not affect Ford's other Middle East activities, which are based in Cairo, Smith said.

Those efforts, which he said amount to between \$2 million and \$2.5 million annually, aid such groups as Palestinian non-governmental organizations and universities in the West Bank and Gaza, as well as projects in Lebanon.

Ford's new philanthropic project is part of a global road map to move monies closer to their intended targets, Smith said.

Similar moves are under way to direct Ford funds in Poland through a private foundation and in Cuba through a Mexican group.

According to Charendoff, the move also allows Ford — widely seen as the "gold standard" in the charitable foundation world — to cut overhead and maintain current spending levels on programs at a time of shrinking endowment returns.

The move "shows real leadership" on Ford's part, he said.

That Ford is sharing the driver's seat with a Jewish group "is even more striking," Charendoff added. □

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

What's in a name? For Clark, clues to his Jewish heritage*By Ron Kampeas*

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Wesley Clark likes to tell his Jewish cousins how he wondered as a little boy why his middle name, Kanne, was so unusual — so unlike the middle names his buddies had in Little Rock, Ark.

When he was a little older, Clark's mother, Veneta Updegraf, explained that Kanne was the family name of his biological father. Updegraf had moved from Chicago to her native Little Rock when Barry Kanne died, and she married Victor Clark, who adopted Wesley.

But it wasn't until 1967, when he was 23, that Clark found out that Kanne was far more meaningful than most middle names: Benjamin Kanne was a Kohen, a descendant of the ancient Jewish priestly caste.

Clark was a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford that year when, one evening, his wife said a relative had called.

His cousin, Barry Kanne, recalled the story: "His wife told him, 'You got a call from this Molly Friedman, who says she's your cousin. Do you have Jewish roots?' He says, 'I wasn't aware of any, but maybe.'"

The meeting with Friedman led to contacts with other Jewish family members, often initiated by Clark, who would go on to become a four-star general and, now, a Democratic candidate for president.

Kanne described his first encounter with Clark, which took place about 1990. "He was in Atlanta, and he called and said we ought to get together," said Kanne, whose wife is active in the Atlanta Jewish community. "We had him for dinner in our home."

Their children — Kanne's daughter, April, and Clark's son, Wesley Jr. — were studying at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service, and they already had been in touch.

Kanne said Clark always was interested in the family's Jewish roots and was intrigued by the discovery that their grandfather, Jacob Kanne, was marked as a Kohen on his tombstone in Chicago.

It's not clear why Clark told a startled room of yeshiva students in 1999, "I am the oldest son of the oldest son of the oldest son — at least five generations, and they're all rabbis."

Clark now says that statement was the product of "bad information."

Kanne says it's hard to place the family's origins; immigration papers list both Minsk and Pinsk.

Kanne, an executive with an Atlanta-area telecommunications company, has made family genealogy a mission. He has drawn up a chart tracing Clark's Jewish heritage as far back as 1846.

Clark's closest religious adviser is a former Navy chaplain, Rabbi Arnold Resnicoff, according to The Associated Press. The candidate's statements have been pro-Israel, and he supported the Oct. 5 Israeli airstrike against a suspected terrorist camp in Syria.

Clark's supporters have used his Jewish roots to tout his candidacy. Organizers of a \$2,000-a-plate fund-raiser last month targeting New York Jews preceded the invitations with a mass e-mail of an earlier JTA story about Clark's Jewish roots.

Clark denies using his heritage for political advantage, saying he is hardly a Johnny-come-lately to his Jewish past. □

It's a new decade, but peace plan has a decidedly familiar ring to it*By Dan Baron*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Just as many people in Israel are driving the last nail into Oslo's coffin, along comes a reincarnation of the decade-old accords.

The faces were familiar — Yossi Beilin leading the 40-member Israeli team, with Yasser Abed Rabbo on the Palestinian side — but this time the secret proposal for Middle East compromise was drafted not in Norway's capital but in the Jordanian resort town of Shuneh, on the Dead Sea.

Under the plan agreed to over the weekend, Israel reportedly would relinquish sovereignty over Jerusalem's Temple Mount and the Palestinians would give up the "right of return" for refugees who fled their homes during Israel's 1948 War of Independence.

Neither delegation to the talks had any official weight, although Abed Rabbo — a former Cabinet member in the Palestinian Authority and a longtime Palestinian negotiator — said the authority would endorse the plan.

Israeli politicians criticized the plan, which is being called the Geneva Accords, due to the Swiss Foreign Ministry's role in financing and mediating the two and a half years of negotiations.

"The opposition is negotiating behind the government's back with the Palestinians, while we are in a serious conflict with them, in a war against Palestinian terror, which is directed and encouraged by some of the people with whom the left-wing officials have met," Israel's health minister, Dan Naveh, said.

The Israeli delegation says Prime Minister Ariel Sharon was aware of the negotiations, a charge aides in the Prime Minister's Office denied.

Israeli officials have said such opposition efforts are counter-productive.

"At a time when the whole world is becoming convinced by our arguments against Arafat, people stand up among us and come to a final agreement with them. This puts us in a ridiculous light," a source in the Prime Minister's Office told Ha'aretz.

Beilin, a former Knesset member and official of the left-wing Meretz Party, led the last round of peace talks under former Prime Minister Ehud Barak in Taba, Egypt, in January 2001, shortly before Barak was voted out of office.

For his part, Barak called the new peace proposal "delusional," saying it "clearly harms the interests of the State of Israel."

The draft reportedly has Israel agreeing to withdraw troops and settlers from much of the West Bank and Gaza Strip to allow for a Palestinian state.

Holy sites in Jerusalem would be shared by several religious groups, much as President Clinton envisaged at the failed 2000 peace talks at Camp David.

Palestinians denied that the document requires them to give up the right of return for millions of refugees or their descendants. Israel regards the demand for a right of return essentially as the elimination of the Jewish state.

P.A. President Yasser Arafat has refused to budge on the right of return, but he backed the contacts that led to the meeting between Beilin and Abed Rabbo over the last year. The plan reportedly will be mailed to all Israeli homes, according to the Jerusalem Post, but it has not yet been published. □