



Daily News Bulletin

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86th Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Jewish student killed in Moscow

A Jewish student was among the five people killed in Tuesday's suicide bombing in Moscow.

Igor Akimov, 18, was a freshman at Moscow State University's Center for Jewish Studies and Jewish Civilization.

The campus is located near the site of Tuesday's attack, which injured 14.

Born in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, Akimov graduated from a Jewish day school in his native city and moved to Moscow this fall.

He was majoring in Jewish history and wanted to become a professor, friends said. [Page 3]

Israel out of Iraq

Israel is not on a list of countries allowed to do business in postwar Iraq.

The list of 63 nations, posted Wednesday by Paul Wolfowitz, the U.S. deputy defense secretary, aims to reward countries that contributed to the U.S.-led war in Iraq and the postwar occupation.

An Israeli official said Israel is "neither surprised nor disappointed" by Israel's omission given Arab and Iraqi sensitivities about U.S. cooperation with the Jewish state.

Also not on the list are Russia, France and Germany, which opposed the war.

Donors blast Israel, Palestinians

International donors called on Israel and the Palestinian Authority to show concrete progress toward peace.

Meeting Wednesday at a conference in Rome, the donors called on the Palestinian Authority to halt terrorism and allow for transparency in how aid money is spent.

Israel was criticized for its West Bank security barrier and its anti-terrorist operations in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The top U.S. Middle East peace envoy, William Burns, was attending the meeting with his deputy, David Satterfield.

Burns and Satterfield are to attend the meeting Thursday of a committee monitoring Palestinian Authority attempts at democratic reform.

Satterfield is expected to fly to Jerusalem on Friday to meet with both Palestinian and Israeli leaders.

FOCUS ON ISSUES

Jewish elderly may pay more for drugs under new Medicare law

By Matthew E. Berger

WASHINGTON (JTA) — A law that was supposed to ease the burden of prescription drug costs for the elderly may force some Jewish seniors to pay more than they do now.

The Medicare reform legislation, signed by President Bush this week, grants some relief in prescription drug costs for seniors. But other provisions of the law may affect adversely more affluent seniors, including Jews.

Jewish groups still are learning what the law will mean for Jewish seniors and already are looking at ways to amend it.

Several Jewish groups opposed the legislation, claiming it did not go far enough to aid seniors.

They are looking to join coalitions of other advocacy groups to seek a new Medicare reform bill, or amendments to the current one, before most of the provisions go into effect in 2006.

Other organizations, including representatives of Jewish nursing homes, say the law will grant Jewish seniors some relief and is a step in the right direction.

The Medicare issue is an important one for Jews, since they are older on average than the general American population.

According to the National Jewish Population Survey 2000-01, 19 percent of the U.S. Jewish population is over age 65, compared to 12 percent of the U.S. population as a whole.

Because Jewish seniors tend to be more affluent than seniors in the general population, they may be adversely affected by the new Medicare laws.

For example, Jewish seniors currently are more likely to be using private insurance, known as Medigap, to supplement what Medicare covers, including prescription drugs.

But the new law prohibits Medigap policies from covering prescription drug costs, so seniors who rely on that service may soon have to pay more out of pocket.

The same is true for seniors who are on prescription drug programs through their employers or pensions.

Some Jewish policy analysts fear that the prescription drug provisions in private insurance programs will be dropped or downgraded for retirees because of the availability of the optional Medicare program.

While the new law contains subsidies to encourage employers to keep prescription drug benefits for retirees, it's unclear how good drug benefits must be for businesses to receive the subsidy — and analysts say some employers may downgrade their programs to the minimum required.

Another possibility is that Jewish seniors who currently have low drug costs will pay more to opt into the program when it begins in 2006 or when they turn 65, to avoid penalties for joining later.

B'nai B'rith International opposed the legislation, along with several other Jewish groups. Rachel Goldberg, B'nai B'rith's assistant director for senior services and advocacy, said the main concern was a gap in prescription drug coverage for seniors.

While the law offers discounts for those who spend less than \$2,250 a year on drugs, the next discounts do not start until after one pays \$5,100 a year.

"People are going to be really surprised when they look at it," Goldberg said.

The demographics of the Jewish community mean Jews may be among the first to

MIDEAST FOCUS

Three Palestinians dead

Three Palestinians died Tuesday in two separate incidents in the West Bank.

Two died near Hebron when a bomb they were believed to be preparing blew up prematurely. A Palestinian teenager died when he was shot in a refugee camp while stoning Israeli soldiers.

Israelis warn on Arafat ouster

Ousting Yasser Arafat likely would elevate Hamas to the Palestinian leadership and kill hopes for peace, experts warned.

A memorandum by former Israeli intelligence officials was leaked Wednesday on the Web site of Israel's daily Ma'ariv criticizing the Israeli government for delaying negotiations with the Palestinians until Arafat dies or is deposed.

Reps: Israel peace key in Iraq

Two congressmen who toured Iraq say solving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is key to fighting terrorism.

Reps. Frank Wolf (R-Va.) and Christopher Shays (R-Conn.) say negotiating a successful Israeli-Palestinian peace is key to bolstering U.S. credibility among Iraqis. The two recommended that President Bush name a high-level envoy to the region, suggesting as possibilities Bush's father or George Schultz, President Reagan's secretary of state.

Crisis management

A controversy was resolved over jurisdiction at terrorist-attack sites in Israel.

Zaka, the fervently Orthodox rescue organization that collects victims' body parts after terrorist attacks, and Israel's Magen David Adom ambulance service have settled the dispute. Zaka said Tuesday it agreed to limit itself to identifying fatalities of suicide bombings and gun attacks. Magen David Adom will treat the wounded and evacuate casualties.



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see how the new provisions affect spending on senior services.

Not only is the Jewish community older, but Jewish families also have fewer children than the U.S. average, meaning that there are fewer sources of income to offset growing costs in a family.

"What's going to happen nationwide, we're a microcosm of that," Goldberg said. "It's going to happen to us first."

That includes assisting poorer Jews.

While Jewish elderly generally have more money than elderly in the general population, 9 percent of Jews over age 65 live at or below the poverty level, and 18 percent live in households that earn \$15,000 or less a year, according to the population survey.

Another 15 percent live in households that earn between \$15,000 and \$25,000.

People on Medicaid will have to begin paying a small co-payment, and poor Jews who do not apply for Medicaid may have to deplete their assets to receive increased benefits, Goldberg said.

"The low income portions of the bill are better than we feared, but nowhere near as good as we hoped," she said.

Harvey Tillipman, executive director of the Association of Jewish Aging Services of North America, said that portions of the legislation outside of the prescription drug provisions could aid Jewish nursing home programs.

These programs are essential for dealing with an influx of aging Jews who can't necessarily rely on family for help.

"There are pieces in that bill that are very important, not only to Jewish homes but other homes as well," he said.

That includes the restoration of federal funds for physical therapy programs in nursing homes, which had been cut in recent years.

"I don't think it's a bill that will hurt Jewish nursing homes or residents," Tillipman said. "It's a modicum of help, but it's a question of how much help it will be."

Jewish groups say they're beginning to educate their membership about the new laws and are working with other advocacy groups to mobilize an effort to repeal portions of the legislation.

"People are wrestling with it," said Shelley Klein, director of advocacy for Hadassah. "They want to know more about it, and they are disappointed."

Advocates say several factors could help them make changes to the law, including the fact that 2004 is a presidential election year and that a lot of the law's provisions don't take effect until 2006.

But there is concern that some lawmakers will be disinclined to reopen the Medicare issue so soon after a long fight on Capitol Hill produced this legislation.

Bert Goldberg, president and CEO of the Association of Jewish Family and Children's Agencies, said his organization will analyze the law and try to advise seniors how to take advantage of its options.

"We now at least have something that deals with drugs for seniors, and we've never had that," he said. "That's at least something to be pleased about." □

Report: Israel training U.S. forces

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Israel is training U.S. forces in "targeted killings," a British newspaper reported.

The Israel Defense Forces has sent urban warfare specialists to U.S. Special Forces headquarters in Fort Bragg, N.C., and Israeli military consultants have visited Iraq, the Guardian reported Tuesday.

Among other things, the consultants are dispensing advice on killing counterinsurgent leaders.

Previous reports said Israel advised the United States on how to deal with terrorists hiding among the civilian population.

In a news briefing Tuesday, U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said he has "no knowledge" of such contacts with Israel, but he would not rule them out. "I'm not going to stand here and say that nobody from country X has ever uttered a word about anything to some American military person," Rumsfeld said.

JEWISH WORLD

Army discharges protested

Two congressmen are asking why two Jews were discharged from the U.S. Army for missing a class scheduled for Yom Kippur.

Reps. Robert Wexler (D-Fla.) and Chris Bell (D-Texas) wrote to the army asking why Refael and Margaret Chaiken were dismissed from their five-year commitment to be interrogators in the U.S.-led war on terrorism after they missed a class on Yom Kippur.

An army spokeswoman told The Associated Press that the two were dismissed because they did not meet course requirements at Fort Huachuca, Ariz., adding that the army acted within its policy on accommodating religious practice.

Auschwitz cemetery defaced

The Jewish cemetery at the site of the former Auschwitz death camp was vandalized.

On Wednesday, Jewish officials noticed that 16 tombstones had been desecrated and swastikas had been painted on the cemetery wall, Reuters reported.

In another incident, a Jewish cemetery in northern Germany was desecrated Sunday night.

Touchdowns for Allah

The names of some teams in a Muslim football tournament in California are causing controversy.

Jewish leaders are protesting after some of the teams in the Jan. 4 tournament chose names such as Intifada, Soldiers of Allah and Mujahadeen, or Holy Warrior.

"A lot of the kids on our team are from Palestinian origin," The Associated Press quoted Tarek Shawky, the captain of the Intifada team, as saying. "We are in solidarity with people in the uprising. It's about human rights and basic freedoms."

Rabbi Bernie King, who lives in Irvine, where the tournament is being held, said the team names undermined those who worked to have closer relations with Muslims.

No foaming at the mouth

A Canadian researcher is investigating how stressed Montreal Jews get when discussing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Kimberly Matheson, a psychology professor at Carleton University in Ottawa, is checking how much of the hormone cortisol is secreted when Jews read articles about the Middle East, Canada's National Post newspaper reported.

The idea came to her when she saw how red Jewish colleagues' faces became when they read articles they considered anti-Israel.

Matheson conducted a similar study among those born in the former Yugoslavia during the Balkans War in the 1990s.

Jewish history major in Russia among five victims of Moscow blast

By Lev Krichevsky

MOSCOW (JTA) — Igor Akimov decided to skip his first class Tuesday morning and instead start the day with his second one.

That turned out to be a fatal choice for Akimov, a Jewish history major.

Akimov, 18, exited the subway in downtown Moscow at 10:50 a.m., 10 minutes before his class — and just as a blast rocked the entrance to a posh hotel he was passing.

Akimov was killed instantly along with four other victims.

Fourteen passers-by were injured and the female suicide bomber was killed.

Akimov was a freshman at Moscow State University's Center for Jewish Studies and Jewish Civilization, which is located near the site of the attack.

He graduated from Jewish day school in his native Uzbekistan and moved to Moscow this fall to attend college. He was one of 23 freshman at the five-year-old center, opened in collaboration with Jerusalem's Hebrew University at the downtown campus of Moscow State University.

In Tashkent, Akimov had been deeply involved in Jewish life. One of the brightest students at the Or Avner Jewish day school, he went to Jewish camps and was active in the local Hillel youth group, friends said.

His friends and teachers were devastated when they learned late Tuesday afternoon that Akimov was among the casualties of the attack, the second Moscow blast blamed on female suicide bombers from Chechnya in the past seven months.

In July, two bombers killed 15 and injured 60 when they blew themselves up at an open-air rock festival at a Moscow airfield.

Tuesday's terrorist blew herself up outside the entrance to the National Hotel, just a few hundred yards from the Kremlin and the Russian Parliament building, which may have been the intended targets.

Despite the proximity of the school to the blast site, classes went on as usual.

"I called his cell. There was no answer," said Yulia Gotzkokozik, Akimov's classmate, her eyes full of tears. She and Akimov had much in common. Both grew up in Tashkent, the capital of the former Soviet republic of Uzbekistan. It was only in Moscow, where they lived in the same dorm, that they learned they were relatives.

After school on Tuesday, when students came back to their dormitory on the outskirts of Moscow, they discovered that Akimov was missing. They turned on the TV and heard a report on the incident, but police and medical sources had misspelled Akimov's last name as Aripov, and his friends decided it wasn't him.

"There was a sigh of relief," Gotzkokozik said. Only later did they discover the mistake.

"He was such a joyful person and very easy to get along with," Gotzkokozik said.

David Rozenson, who works with Moscow's Jewish community, said he met Akimov in July while the two were attending a Jewish studies conference.

Rozenson recalled how he took a walk with Akimov through the ancient Jewish quarter of the Uzbek town of Samarkand, where the conference was held.

"I have rarely met someone who was as enthusiastic and serious about Jewish studies as he was. He really was a very special kid. He told me his dream was to become a professor in Jewish history," Rozenson said.

Akimov was on his way toward that goal, having won a full-tuition scholarship and a special stipend for his studies from the Jewish Agency for Israel.

Even before Akimov's death became known, all major Russian Jewish leaders had condemned the bombing.

"Like all Russians, Jews are expecting that the authorities would successfully fight terrorism that is killing both Jews and non-Jews," said Yevgeny Satanovsky, president of the Russian Jewish Congress.

Many drew parallels between the Moscow blast and acts of terrorism taking place around the world.

"This attack was even more terrible when you don't know where it will happen next time — in Jerusalem, in Moscow or in New York," said Boruch Gorin, spokesman for the Federation of Jewish Communities of Russia. □

FOCUS ON ISSUES

**Foiled at U.N. Security Council,
Arab states take Israel to court**

By Michael J. Jordan

NEW YORK (JTA) — The pro-Palestinian diplomatic assault on Israel soon will reach a new venue: The International Court of Justice at The Hague.

Arab states succeeded Monday in winning U.N. General Assembly support to petition the court to rule on the legality of Israel's West Bank security barrier.

Though The Hague has the power to issue binding decisions, the type of advisory opinion the U.N. resolution requests is not binding. Still, some advocates for Israel have expressed concern that if the International Court of Justice, a U.N. arm, deems the wall a violation of international law, it might expose Israeli officials to prosecution.

One Israeli official expressed outrage at the special General Assembly session called to debate the fence. A similar resolution in October had produced an overwhelming 144-4 vote, with 12 abstentions.

"We have a right to self-defense that cannot be adjudicated," a senior Israeli official said Monday. "Those who would harm that are in fact devoted to Israel's destruction."

The resolution approved Monday made no mention of Israel's stated rationale for building the security fence: to keep suicide terrorists away from civilians in Israel's major population centers.

Nasser al-Kidwa, the Palestinian U.N. representative, denounced the fence as "an immense war crime."

Still, the recent 90-8 vote in the General Assembly — a body historically hostile to Israel, given the influential bloc of 56 Arab and Muslim member states and their allies across the Third World — was not as lopsided as most General Assembly votes on Israel, since 74 countries abstained.

U.S. and Israeli officials had said they would lobby vigorously against what they consider the politicizing of an international court. In any case, there's no guarantee the court at The Hague will in fact weigh in on the matter. The 15-judge panel has the latitude to decide what cases to consider or disregard.

And while pro-Israel observers suggest this is merely one more attempt to turn global opinion against Israel, Israeli officials say they'll try to score points of their own.

"We have a voice," Arye Mekel, Israel's deputy permanent representative to the United Nations, told JTA. "We can also make our case for the fence."

Israeli officials said they would argue that the fence is justified by the need for self-defense.

While the Palestinian move in the General Assembly ratchets up the pressure on Israel, some suggest it also reflects Arab frustration with the U.S. roadblock at the more influential U.N. Security Council.

That U.S. obstructionism can be traced to a 16-month-old policy known as "The Negroponte Doctrine," named for the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, John Negroponte.

While General Assembly resolutions are primarily symbolic, nonbinding and impossible to veto, the 15-member Security Council has the power to intervene in crisis areas. For example, it can impose sanctions or authorize the use of force.

Council resolutions, on the other hand, carry the weight of law.

The five permanent council members — the United States, Britain, France, Russia and China — enjoy veto power.

Negroponte and his staff say they arrived at their criteria after the Palestinians and their advocates responded to the ongoing bloodshed of the intifada, launched in September 2000, by putting forth resolutions on a near-weekly basis.

Debates consumed countless hours and millions of dollars — a chunk of it courtesy of U.S. taxpayers — yet did nothing to bring the sides together to discuss a peaceful resolution.

The United States formulated five criteria that had to be part of Security Council resolutions on the Israeli-Palestinian situation for the United States to withhold from exercising its veto power:

- Resolutions must contain "robust condemnation of acts of terrorism and all forms of incitement to terrorism";
- contain "explicit condemnation of Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades as organizations responsible for acts of terrorism";
- "call for dismantling the infrastructure, which supports these terror operations, wherever located";
- "call upon all parties to make a commitment to pursue a negotiated settlement"; and
- recognize that "the issue of Israeli withdrawal to the September 28, 2000, positions is connected to an improvement in the security situation through reciprocal steps by the Palestinians and Israelis."

Washington enforced the doctrine several times this fall. On Sept. 16, the United States vetoed a resolution demanding that Israel not harm or expel Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat. The resolution came after Israel threatened to deport Arafat.

A month later, the United States killed a resolution condemning Israel's security fence, which led the Palestinians to pursue the matter for the first time at the General Assembly.

A third resolution, put forth by Syria, a member of the Security Council, came on the heels of Israel's October strike against an alleged terrorist training base in Syria.

The resolution omitted reference to the previous day's suicide bombing in Haifa, which killed 21 people and reportedly was carried out by Islamic Jihad, which is headquartered in Damascus. The United States quashed the resolution before it came to a vote.

Palestinian supporters say the Negroponte Doctrine is Washington's means of giving Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon a green light to crack down on the Palestinians.

"You can make the argument with some validity that the fence is for security, has something to do with suicide bombers and so forth, but there's a broader concern that there is a conscious decision not to put Israel on the spot," said Edward Abington, a former U.S. consul general in Jerusalem who now is a Washington political adviser to the Palestinians.

Jewish observers refute that by pointing to the recent deduction of \$290 million from the \$3 billion in U.S. loan guarantees to Israel. The move was taken because of Washington's displeasure with the fence and ongoing Israeli settlement activity.

Nevertheless, the Negroponte Doctrine seems to be having some effect.

The Palestinians returned to the General Assembly on Monday, not the Security Council.

And the annual anti-Israel resolutions in the assembly were, for the first time, narrowed from 22 to 20 this year.

"The cause of Middle East peace is not served by these one-sided resolutions," Negroponte said. □