

IN THE NEWS

Israel bombs Hezbollah targets

Israeli jets bombed Hezbollah targets in southern Lebanon.

Monday's attack on suspected terrorist bases in southern Lebanon came a day after an Israeli soldier was killed by a Hezbollah anti-tank missile. The missile had been fired at an Israeli bulldozer defusing mines that Hezbollah had planted along the Israel-Lebanon border.

Israeli officials placed responsibility for the attack on Syria, which is the main power broker in Lebanon and a financial supporter of Hezbollah. But Israeli officials said they did not bomb targets in Syria for fear of inflaming the region.

School bus full of Jews attacked

A Jewish school bus in France was set on fire in what community leaders say was an anti-Semitic act.

Monday's attack on the minibus in Strasbourg came shortly after rocks were thrown at a synagogue in the center of the city, the local daily DNA reported. No injuries were reported in the attack.

Pierre Levy, the regional head of the CRIF umbrella organization of French Jews, said the attacks could be linked to a demonstration against a proposed ban on Muslim head scarves during the weekend in which anti-Semitic statements were made.

Police and settlers clash at outpost

Israeli police clashed with settlers while dismantling an illegal West Bank outpost.

The move on Tapuach West, which has a synagogue in memory of slain extremist Rabbi Meir Kahane, was ordered Tuesday after Israel's High Court of Justice rejected a petition against the eviction order.

Scores of settler youth tried to block access to the outpost, prompting scuffles with police. There were at least 20 arrests.



WORLD REPORT

PUBLISHED WEEKDAYS BY JTA—THE GLOBAL NEWS SERVICE OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE · WWW.JTA.ORG

Kerry machine and concerns about Dean sway Iowa Jews

By RON KAMPEAS

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Jewish voters in Iowa turned to Sen. John Kerry in large numbers because of a well-oiled machine that targeted Jews — and because of ongoing concerns about Howard Dean, activists there say.

Alan Koslow, a Dean activist who hosted a caucus in West Des Moines — where many of the state's Jews live — said he and his wife were the only Jews in the room Monday night voting for Dean, the former Vermont governor who was the early Democratic front-runner in Iowa.

"I was absolutely shocked," Koslow said. "The Jewish vote went so completely to Kerry, from what I could ascertain. He made a strong impression."

Koslow attributed the performance of Kerry (D-Mass.) to eight young Jewish campaign staffers who targeted the community. Koslow also had three helpers but said he only reached about 400 of Iowa's 1,300 known Jewish families in the days before the election.

An evening for Jewish voters that Koslow hosted last week with Rep. Jan Schakowsky, a Jewish Democrat from neighboring Illinois, attracted far fewer people than expected.

"I expected 100; about 45 came," he said. "About a quarter of those were people who supported other candidates and who were upset at Dean's perceived positions on Israel."

Dean once called for the United States to take an "even-handed" policy in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and once referred to Hamas terrorists as "soldiers."

Dean says he now regrets using the term "even-handed," explaining that he simply

had wanted to advocate greater U.S. involvement in the Middle East. He also says he used the term "soldiers" to justify Israel's right to target Hamas leaders for assassination.

Schakowsky and Dean's spokesman, Matt Dorf, made those points at the meeting in Iowa, but it didn't help much on Monday night.

Paulee Lipsman, a senior official in the state legislature who backed Kerry, was elated with the results — a welcome high after the heartbreak she said she experienced when Sen. Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.) opted not to run in Iowa. Lipsman had co-chaired Lieberman's campaign in the state.

Israel played a role in her decision to back Kerry, but Lipsman said the bottom line for her, as for many Iowa Democrats, was that she

believed Kerry's extensive Senate experience and his background as a Vietnam War hero made him the best Democrat to challenge President Bush. "Bottom line: He's the one who can be elected in November," she said.

Kerry was seen as the strongest performer at a synagogue event in Des Moines in November, and several congregants told him afterward that he had swung their support away from other candidates. Dean and Rep. Dennis Kucinich (D-Ohio) also addressed the crowd.

Kerry told the crowd how he had shouted "Am Yisrael Chai" from atop Masada, and he was the only one of the three to invoke the Holocaust, when he called for more thoughtful U.S. involvement in human-rights issues.

Such particulars — and Kerry's animated delivery — registered with the crowd.

"John Kerry has been to Masada," David Moskowitz said at the synagogue event. "He knows the issues."

AMERICA
DECIDES
2004

N.Y. politicians fight insurance redlining on Israel

By **JOE BERKOFSKY**

NEW YORK (JTA) — Top New York legislators are trying to prevent insurance companies from blacklisting travelers to Israel from life insurance coverage.

Sheldon Silver, the speaker of the New York State Assembly, and Assemblyman Peter Grannis unveiled a bill Dec. 15 that would bar state insurance firms from denying life insurance to anyone who has traveled to Israel.

"I don't know what Israel travel means: Is it risky lifestyle?" Silver said in an interview with JTA. "Does this smack of anti-Semitism? Does it smack of participation in an Arab boycott?"

Their move came in response to a recent JTA report that several major insurance companies around the country are refusing to issue life insurance policies to applicants who recently have visited Israel, or in some cases to those who plan to travel to Israel or 27 other nations for which the State Department has issued a travel advisory.

The New York bill is aimed solely at insurers that "discriminate" against those who already have been to Israel, Silver said — in part because he has not heard of policy applications asking about future travel plans.

Several top firms, including Allstate, State Farm and TIAA-CREF, told JTA recently they won't underwrite life insurance policies for people planning to visit Israel or other U.S.-designated hot spots because they consider such travel too risky.

Meanwhile, a young public relations professional in Washington said Fidelity Investments denied his otherwise trouble-free application for insurance because he already had visited Israel in 2002.

Officials with Jewish organizations said they had heard of similar cases over the past year, and the JTA story sparked yet more reports of recent rejections of insurance coverage by Israel travelers.

"After the story broke other people told us about it, but they'd never talked about it because they were embarrassed," said Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

Hoenlein could not say how many people complained, but said they were all from New York.

Silver also received three complaints, he said. At a recent news conference, he introduced one such case, that of Dennis Rapps of the Jewish Commission on Law and Public Affairs.

In the wake of the JTA report, Hoenlein approached Silver, who in 1996 had introduced similar legislation when the New York-based Metropolitan Life Insurance Company denied life insurance to a senior member of the Orthodox Union who often visited Israel.

In that case, Metropolitan scrapped its policy and the legislation never reached a vote. But Silver and Grannis' spokesman, Peter Newell, said they expect the current bill to win support easily in the assembly, which is controlled by Democrats.

Silver also said he would bring the bill

to other state insurance commissioners and the National Conference of Insurance Legislators in hopes that the New York bill can serve as a model for other states.

Hoenlein and senior officials of other Jewish groups said they would welcome such attention, in part because they fear insurance redlining could threaten U.S. travel to Israel at time when Israel can't afford a further drop in tourism.

"Our community is committed to tourism to Israel, and no one should have to suffer this kind of discrimination," said Betty Ehrenberg, director of international affairs and communal relations for the O.U.'s Institute for Public Affairs in Washington.

If such denials "are more widely imposed," Hoenlein said, "people are not going to risk not getting life insurance by going to Israel."

Sarina Roffe, director of communications for the Jewish National Fund, told JTA she also was a victim of the hot-spot boycott.

Roffe said she recently attempted to switch her life insurance policy with John Hancock Insurance and Financial Services, but was rejected because she had visited Israel within the past two years.

"Within 20 minutes my agent called and said, 'You're out,'" she said. "You just don't think of Israel as an extreme place. You just don't think it's going to affect you."

The agent also told her that "no one" in the insurance industry is "writing policies for anyone who has been to Israel," Roffe said.

WORLD REPORT

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JTA WORLD REPORT is published five days a week, except holidays, by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency Inc., 330 Seventh Ave., New York, N.Y. 10001-5010. For more information about how to subscribe by e-mail, fax or regular mail, call (212) 643-1890, or visit our Web site at www.jta.org.
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Will activist's death change IDF rules?

By **RICHARD ALLEN GREENE**

LONDON (JTA) — British Jews from across the political spectrum hope that some good may come from the death of a British student shot by an Israeli soldier in the Gaza Strip last year.

Tom Hurndall, 22, a member of the pro-Palestinian International Solidarity Movement, died of pneumonia Jan. 13 in a London hospital, nine months after a bullet left him with permanent brain damage.

Witnesses say Hurndall was shot by an Israeli sniper while trying to shepherd two Palestinian children out of danger.

A sergeant with the Israel Defense

Force's Bedouin Patrol Battalion was indicted Jan. 12 on six counts related to the shooting. He now may face manslaughter charges, Israel's embassy in London said.

But the head of British Friends of Peace Now says the IDF must do more than simply try one man for shooting another.

"I would hope that this is something of a watershed case. The IDF must look at the rules involving live fire," Paul Usiskin said. "This case demands a complete re-examination of those rules."

Usiskin, an IDF veteran, said the Israeli army "was entitled to call itself the most moral army in the world" only if it backed that claim up with appropriate behavior. ■

Lieberman could be hurt by absence in Iowa

By MATTHEW E. BERGER

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Sen. Joseph Lieberman registered as little more than a ghost in Iowa, and his decision not to compete in that state's caucuses may come back to haunt him in New Hampshire next week.

The Connecticut senator, considered the first viable Jewish presidential candidate, decided to bypass Iowa's Democratic caucus and focus attention on the Jan. 27 New Hampshire contest, followed by primaries a week later in South Carolina, Arizona, Oklahoma and Delaware.

The strategy has kept him largely out of the public eye in recent weeks and makes it critical that he do well in New Hampshire.

That job was hard enough before the Iowa caucuses, when Lieberman had to contend with strong New Hampshire polling by former Vermont Gov. Howard Dean and Gen. Wesley Clark.

Now, with the win by Sen. John Kerry (D-Mass.) in Iowa and the strong second-place showing by Sen. John Edwards (D-N.C.), Lieberman goes into New Hampshire forced to ward off four strong contenders.

The surprise turnout in the Iowa caucuses — some precincts reported three times as much turnout as in 2000 — showed that Lieberman's assessment that he was not viable in the state might have been an oversimplification.

Edwards and Kerry also were not considered favorites in September, when Lieberman made his decision, but they ended up doing well and likely will retain momentum from Iowa heading into New Hampshire.

Lieberman, by contrast, has been an afterthought in media coverage the past few weeks as he campaigns in New Hampshire. Clark, who also opted out of Iowa, campaigned in South Carolina on Monday and appeared in New Hampshire toward the end of the day.

Polls show that Lieberman's support has been slipping in the Granite State. The latest American Research Group poll in New Hampshire, taken Jan. 16-18, had Dean leading the state with 28 percent of the vote, though slipping from a high of close to 40 percent.

Clark was second in the most recent poll, with 20 percent, followed by Kerry with 19 percent, Edwards with 8 percent and then Lieberman with 6 percent.

Lieberman received the endorsement

Monday of New Hampshire's largest newspaper, the Manchester Union-Leader. Given the paper's tough conservative bent, however, it's questionable how much it will help Lieberman's primary campaign.

Lieberman's campaign said the choice to bypass Iowa was born of the most practical consideration: where to spend limited cash. "At the time, we had to make some decisions about resource allocations and we had to allocate resources in places where we had a chance to win," said Dan Gerstein, a Lieberman campaign spokesman.

Several candidates already had better campaign operations and ties to Iowa voters. Lieberman officials also note that New Hampshire allows registered independents to vote in the Democratic primary, which could aid Lieberman, who is considered among the most conservative of the Democratic hopefuls.

Lieberman is running in part on his support for the U.S.-led war against Iraq last year. That's likely to play better in conservative New Hampshire than in Iowa, considered an anti-war state, said Ann Lewis, a former Clinton adviser.

Gerstein said the campaign has no second thoughts about the decision to skip Iowa, noting that Lieberman has had New Hampshire virtually to himself in recent weeks.

Paulee Lipsman, who was Lieberman's co-chair in Iowa until he backed out of the contest, says Lieberman helped make his own bed in Iowa by failing to campaign seriously there even before September.

"I think the strategy of not playing in Iowa has hurt him around the country," said Lipsman, who serves as director of the Iowa House Democratic Research Staff. She voted for Kerry. "The show is in Iowa, and he's not on the stage."

Because he has spent so much time in New Hampshire, a poor showing in the state likely would cripple Lieberman's presidential aspirations, much as the poor showing by Rep. Dick Gephardt (D-Mo.) in Iowa — fourth place, with 11 percent — forced the former House majority leader out of the race.

Lieberman last month rented an apartment in Manchester, New Hampshire's largest city, to house himself and his campaigning family. He had Rabbi Levi Krinsky, the regional director of Lubavitch of New Hampshire, bring his kitchen up to kosher standards.

No matter how he does in New Hampshire, Lieberman likely will stay in the race through the Feb. 3 contests, as campaign officials believe they have viable chances in Delaware, Oklahoma and South Carolina.

Without a showing above expectations in any of the states that go to the polls in the next two weeks, analysts say Lieberman likely will lose momentum, have

trouble raising additional money and be forced to exit the race.

"Some folks around here believe a third-place finish in New Hampshire is the goal," a Lieberman campaign official said.

Lieberman's aides quietly were hoping that Dean would win the Iowa caucuses because the contrasts between Lieberman and Dean would be easier to express.

Instead, Kerry won 38 percent of the vote, Edwards 32 percent and Dean 18 percent — a disappointing finish for Dean, the one-time front-runner in Iowa.

Kerry, who has aimed much of his fire at Dean, on Monday night was able to assume the front-runner's prerogative of taking on the president.

"George Bush, to put it quite simply, has run the most arrogant, inept, reckless and ideological foreign policy in the modern history of our country, and we are going to turn it around by joining the community of nations," he said. "We will go back to the United Nations and we will turn over a new chapter in America's relationship with the world."

Gephardt's departure from the race could signal an end to a 27-year political career in Washington.

"This didn't come out the way we wanted," Gephardt said Monday in Des Moines.

Lieberman did not reach even 1 percent of the vote.

"There was one Lieberman person out of 250 at my caucus," Lipsman said.

Because Lieberman has spent so much time in New Hampshire, a poor showing there likely would cripple his presidential campaign.

NEWS IN BRIEF

NORTH AMERICA

Powell blames Hezbollah for clash

Colin Powell said Hezbollah was responsible for new clashes along the Israel-Lebanon border.

"It's unfortunate that Hezbollah once again has caused this need for a response," the U.S. secretary of state said in a news conference Tuesday.

He spoke after Israeli jets bombed Hezbollah targets in southern Lebanon in response to the unprovoked killing of an Israeli soldier along the Israel-Lebanon border. "The deliberate action they took, which resulted in the loss of life, once again demonstrates the nature of that organization," he said.

Powell also warned Syria against providing any support for Hezbollah, either vocally or by allowing leaders of the terrorist group to work out of Damascus.

Powell also said both sides need to monitor their actions carefully and adhere to the established line between Israel and Lebanon.

Kosher in the slammer

Florida prisons may soon be offering a kosher dining option. The Florida Department of Corrections has asked Florida's governor for an extra \$1.9 million to cover the cost of providing kosher meals, according to the Fort Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel.

The state estimates that preparing a kosher meal costs about five times as much as preparing standard ones, but says it is making the change because it eventually may be required by law.

Currently, only one inmate in Florida is served kosher meals, a convicted murderer who was born Jewish and became Orthodox while in prison.

For years, Florida has provided special dietary options for Muslims, diabetics, vegans and vegetarians.

Jewish women appalled by judge

The National Council of Jewish Women is "appalled" by President Bush's appointment of Judge Charles Pickering.

Pickering, who Bush appointed to a federal appeals court last Friday, is an "opponent of fundamental civil rights, including the right to privacy and reproductive freedom," said Marsha Atkind, the group's president.

Bush appointed Pickering to the bench Friday in a recess appointment, after Senate Democrats blocked his confirmation vote.

JNF gets new online donors

The Jewish National Fund says it is reaching new donors via the Internet. The organization said Jan. 15 that 28 percent of donors who gave online in 2003 were new to the organization, and that more than 19,100 people gave via the Internet last year. Of those, more than 60 people gave more than \$1,000.

WORLD

A Swedish gesture?

A Swedish museum is pulling posters for artwork featuring a Palestinian suicide bomber, which caused a brouhaha.

But the museum is letting the artwork itself, which depicts an Islamic Jihad suicide bomber floating on the blood of her Israeli victims, remain on display.

Last Friday, Israel's ambassador to Sweden, Zvi Mazel, knocked out the lamps around the display. Before the incident, Israel had been promised the exhibit would not contain works referencing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Swiss have suspects in bombings

Swiss prosecutors are investigating two people suspected of involvement in the November bombings in Istanbul.

Hansjuerg Mark Wiedmer, a spokesman for Switzerland's Federal Prosecutor's Office, said Tuesday that two Swiss-resident foreign citizens were the target of an inquiry in the attacks, which included blasts at two synagogues and two British targets.

So long, Lord Black?

The owner of the Jerusalem Post, accused of taking money illegally from his company, is selling his press interests.

On Sunday, Lord Conrad Black made a deal to sell his controlling interest in Hollinger International, which owns the Post, as well as the Daily Telegraph of London and the Chicago Sun-Times, The New York Times reported.

Black is under pressure from his board for allegedly misdirecting payments totaling more than \$224 million from his company to himself and others.

Holocaust memorial defaced

A Holocaust memorial near Vienna was defaced.

The word "lie" was spray-painted over the memorial at Hinterbruehl and an electric saw was taken to it, the Austrian Press Agency reported.

MIDDLE EAST

Israeli minister to Pakistan?

An Israeli Cabinet member said he plans a landmark trip to Pakistan. Agriculture Minister Yisrael Katz told Israel Radio on Tuesday that he had received an invitation to visit Pakistan in March, announcing what would be a breakthrough given the Islamic state's long-standing hostility to Israel.

A Foreign Ministry spokesman in Islamabad denied that Katz had received a formal invitation, saying he may be part of a U.N. agricultural delegation scheduled to visit Pakistan.

Israeli Arab teen sentenced

An Israeli Arab teenager was sentenced to eight years in jail for plotting to carry out a suicide attack.

The teenager sentenced Tuesday contacted a Hamas activist and told him he was willing to carry out a suicide attack. The judge said the sentence, given as part of a plea bargain, was intended to deter other youths from being involved in terrorist activity.

Israeli paper looks west

Israel's mass-circulation daily Ma'ariv has a new online English service. The free Web site, www.maarivintl.com, hit the Internet on Tuesday.

Wolf Prize goes to physicists

A British man and two who work on subatomic particles at a Belgian university won Israel's Wolf Prize in arts and sciences.

Francois Eglert and U.S.-born Robert Brout of the University Libre de Bruxelles, and Peter Higgs of Edinburgh University, will share this year's \$100,000 prize.

In addition, Harry Gray of the California Institute of Technology will receive a special \$100,000 award from the same foundation for his work in bioinorganic chemistry.

The Wolf Prize was established in 1978 by Ricardo Wolf, a German Jew who was Cuba's ambassador to Israel from 1963 until 1973, when diplomatic ties between the two countries were severed.