

## IN THE NEWS

## U.S. guarantee on West Bank?

The United States reportedly will not require Israel to leave all of the West Bank under any peace plan.

Ha'aretz reported Sunday that President Bush would make the pledge in a letter to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon when they meet in Washington later this week.

The Palestinians say peace will be impossible unless Israel gives up all of the West Bank, including eastern Jerusalem.

Israeli and U.S. officials did not immediately comment on the report.

## Palestinians rally for Iraqi insurgents

Palestinian demonstrations in support of anti-U.S. fighters in Iraq continued over the week-end. Thousands of Palestinians marched in rallies in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to back the insurgency against the American occupation.

In addition to burning American and Israeli flags and photos of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and President Bush, some also displayed photos of Iraqi Shi'ite leader Muqtada Al-Sadr and Hezbollah leader Sheik Hassan Nasrallah.

## Officials testify on anti-Semitism

U.S. officials and Jewish leaders testified to the Senate about the rise of anti-Semitism in Europe. Witnesses appearing April 8 before the Senate Foreign Relations committee emphasized the troubling convergence of traditional anti-Semitism with modern militant Islamism.

Testifying were officials with B'nai B'rith International, the Anti-Defamation League, the American Jewish Committee and the National Conference of Soviet Jewry.

**JTA World Report will not be published Tuesday, April 13 and Wednesday, April 14.**

# WORLD REPORT

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

## Iraq unrest could help Sharon, but could hurt Israel in long run

By RON KAMPEAS

**W**ASHINGTON (JTA) — The conflagration in Iraq is likely to draw Israel and the United States closer for now, but a long-term war could riddle the alliance with political land mines.

The uncertainty flourishing in Iraq is reinforcing American reliance on its closest regional ally, but a failure in Iraq could lead to a range of dire outcomes for Israel, including a new U.S. isolationism that would embolden radicals in the region.

"The stakes are very high for Israel," said Steven Spiegel, a scholar with the Israel Policy Forum. "Should Iraq descend into chaos, instability, an anti-Israel government — that would be a serious blow for Israel."

In the short term, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has a clear advantage in his meeting, which was set for Wednesday, with President Bush. Bush is under fire from Democrats and some Republicans for a perceived failure to directly address the mounting casualties in Iraq, and needs whatever Middle East success he can achieve.

"It puts all the more importance on a successful meeting between Sharon and the president," said Edward Walker, a former assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs who travels frequently to the region as president of the Middle East Institute, a think tank. "The last thing the president needs is any more problems in the region."

Sharon is to present Bush with his final plan for a unilateral Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and parts of the West Bank. The subject of intense U.S.-Israeli negotiation for weeks, the plan still is under wraps, but

Sharon appears ready to extract major concessions.

Sharon said last week that he will evacuate only four West Bank settlements in the initial stages of the withdrawal. At the same time, Israeli officials are suggesting that Bush is ready to state in a letter that Israel will not have to return to its border prior to the 1967 Six-Day War, known as the Green Line.

Last month, senior U.S. officials adamantly rejected any such recognition of Israel's claim to parts of the West Bank. Then, two weeks ago, U.S. officials said they were considering expressing support for Israel's claim to three West Bank settlement blocs — provided that Sharon's withdrawal was far-reaching.

Now it appears Bush will hand Sharon a letter supporting some Israeli annexation in exchange even for a minimal West Bank withdrawal.

"Sharon is in a stronger position now that Bush is in trouble in Iraq," said Raymond Tanter, a Reagan-era member of the National Security Council now working with the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. "The last thing Bush needs is trouble from Sharon in a political year."

However, the United States refused an Israeli request to come out explicitly against the Palestinian demand that refugees from the 1948 war, and their descendants, be allowed to return to Israel.

On the other hand, the United States has signed on wholeheartedly to Israel's West Bank security barrier after Israel adjusted the route to meet U.S. concerns. U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell said last week that Israel would suffer no deductions this year from

*Continued on page 2*

NEWS ANALYSIS

## ■ *Help for Sharon in the short term, but worries about Israel in the long run*

*Continued from page 1*

loan guarantees because of the barrier, as opposed to last year, when the fence cost Israel almost \$300 million in guarantees.

"At the moment, we don't have any plans to dock them over the route of the fence," Powell told a Senate panel last week.

In any case, Israel does not expect to implement a withdrawal for another year — and by that time, whatever negotiating victories Sharon wins from Bush this week could be faded memories in the case of a protracted Iraq war.

Gal Luft, executive director of the Institute for the Analysis of Global Security, worried that the American public could become increasingly isolationist if Iraq becomes a quagmire.

"If in the long run there is a sense that Iraq has been a failure, it could affect the mood of the American people when it comes to the Middle East, with more and more voices like Pat Buchanan pushing neo-isolationism," he said.

Another casualty, Luft said, would be Bush administration plans to use Iraqi oil to counter the Saudis' long-standing hegemony over global energy policy.

"When you don't have security in Iraq, oil companies don't want to invest," he said. "America thought it would be less dependent on the Saudis; now it could be more dependent on the Saudis."

Tanter had hoped to see the revival of a pre-1948 oil pipeline from Mosul in Iraq to Haifa in Israel — though the provisional leaders the United States and its allies picked to run Iraq said from the start they were not considering closer ties to Israel. "Some of us who talked about a new Middle East, who assumed that the road to Jerusalem went through Baghdad — the fighting puts a damper on that," Tanter said.

Perhaps the most fearsome outcome would be an increased radicalization of the region. Iran reportedly is backing Moqtada Al-Sadr, the Shi'ite cleric at the center of much of the anti-U.S. insurgency, and it would be emboldened by any dilution of

U.S. influence and prestige.

So, too, would the Palestinians, Spiegel said. "If the United States appears to fail in Iraq, it will have a highly deleterious impact on Israel's standing. It will give the Palestinians less incentive to give up on the intifada," said Spiegel, who teaches political science at UCLA.

U.S. efforts to revive Israeli-Palestinian peace talks — already in abeyance after the failure of the "road map" peace plan — likely would flag even further, Spiegel said.

Another concern for Israel, Walker said, was the threat to relatively moderate Arab governments that a failure would impose. He noted that President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt and King Abdullah II of Jordan, are due to visit Bush in coming days.

"For the Jordanians, a meltdown in Iraq would be the worst thing," he said. "King Abdullah will make it very clear to the president that it is imperative for the United States to stay the course. He cannot allow the situation to deteriorate so that it becomes an infection." ■

**A failure in Iraq could radicalize the region.**

## Brit milah in Prague seen as symbol for historic shul

By **MAGNUS BENNETT**

PRAGUE (JTA) — David Abramson is only a few days old, but already he has made a huge impact on Prague's Jewish community.

Recently he became the first child in at

least 30 years to be circumcised at the 98-year-old Jubilee synagogue, known locally as *Jerusalemska*.

The brit milah comes as the Jewish community draws up plans to return the *Jerusalemska* shul to its original status as Prague's second most important Jewish cultural center.

The brit milah ceremony is so rare in the Czech Republic that a specialist had to be flown in from Zurich to perform it.

David's father, Samuel Abramson, is the Orthodox rabbi of *Jerusalemska*, which boasted a thriving congregation before the Holocaust and the anti-Jewish policies of the Communist regime took their toll. It now has fewer than 30 official members.

The congregation's administrator, Emil Svatek, said he was delighted to see a brit milah after so many years.

"It's a great addition to our family," he told JTA. "We lost so many in the past, but now we can see a bright future."

David Stecher, chairman of the Prague Jewish community's supervisory board and godfather of young David, also was a happy man.

"It's a wonderful day for me today be-

cause Rabbi Abramson is a longtime friend of mine and this sort of event doesn't happen every day," he said.

Stecher, thought to be the last person circumcised at *Jerusalemska* back in 1969, also believes the brit milah represents a brighter future for the shul.

"I think this is an important moment because I remember that 20 years ago everyone was saying Jewish life will be finished here within 10 or 20 years," he said.

The brit milah is the latest in a series of events that have helped put *Jerusalemska* back on Prague's Jewish map. Two years ago, Stecher became the first man in more than 30 years to get married in the shul. Last year, an outreach event designed to bring assimilated Jews back into the community drew 2,000 people.

Tomas Jelinek, chairman of the Prague community, said the synagogue is an important part of the city's Jewish history.

"*Jerusalemska* was once a cultural and religious center, and we would like to get back to this tradition," he said. "It should be Prague Jewry's second cultural center after *Maisel Street*, which has the *Altneu shul* and the Jewish town hall." ■

### **JTA** WORLD REPORT

**Howard E. Friedman**  
President

**Mark J. Joffe**  
Executive Editor and Publisher

**Lisa Hostein**  
Editor

**Michael S. Arnold**  
Managing Editor

**Lenore A. Silverstein**  
Finance and Administration Director

**Paula Simmonds**  
Marketing and Development Director

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](http://www.jta.org).  
© JTA. Reproduction only with permission.

# College increases fund for Latin American Jews

By E.B. SOLOMONT

NEW YORK (JTA) — Lucia Eisenschlos' Argentine roots are strong.

The 18-year-old aspiring playwright is inspired by Argentine national poets, and often takes local social issues as her theme.

When it comes to education, however, Eisenschlos is preparing to leave Argentina for the United States, where an expanding scholarship program at Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pa., is benefiting Jewish teens like her. With wavy hair swirling around her shoulders, the teenager exudes excitement.

"The opportunity is a dream for me," she said. "When I found out about the opportunity I thought I'd be excited about changing my life and giving it a shot — and that's what I'm doing."

Eisenschlos and three other Jewish students from Argentina and Uruguay were invited to Dickinson in late March to check out the school before enrolling in the fall. They spoke to JTA at a dinner at Temple Beth Shalom in Cherry Hill, N.J.

The scholarship fund was launched last year following a chance encounter at a baby naming at the synagogue. The rabbi was talking to Robert Massa, Dickinson's vice president for enrollment, when he happened to mention the difficulties Argentina's economic collapse had created for the country's Jewish community.

Massa decided to do what he could to help, and began looking for a promising Argentine student he could bring to Dickinson for a free education. He found Pablo Thaler, 19, a graduate of the ORT School in Buenos Aires.

Thaler entered Dickinson last fall, and has flourished there. Thaler's education initially was to be financed by the school's general scholarship fund, but alumnus and trustee Yale Asbell partnered with another philanthropist to establish a scholarship fund for Thaler.

Now they're expanding that program to help other Jewish students in Argentina and neighboring Uruguay, which has been hit by a similar economic crisis.

"The experience with Pablo was so positive," said Asbell, who underwrote much of the cost for the four additional students enrolling this fall. Study at Dickinson is valued at \$38,000 per year, including room, board and fees.

"We're still looking to expand," Asbell said. "We'd love to be in as many different places as there are students of quality."

Massa said that Dickinson also is establishing ties to ORT schools in Bolivia and Mexico and a Jewish day school in Chile. He's planning a visit to the region in June to expand the relationship.

Ultimately, he said, the college hopes to raise \$8 million to \$10 million for the program — though it may have to broaden the program beyond Jewish students to attract that kind of funding.

"It's all about developing personal connections in areas with excellent students without financial means," he said.

"The first connection that we had was through the Jewish community, but when we get other connections we'll pursue those as well. We want to get top students who wouldn't consider coming to the United States because of finances, and we want to remove that barrier."

Helping fellow Jews in Latin America was an extension of Asbell's other philanthropy. He also gave the money for the campus' Asbell Center for Jewish Life, created a professorship in Hebrew language and endowed a chair in Judaic studies.

"We are one people separated by a common hemisphere," he said of Latin American Jewry.

The 200 Jewish students at Dickinson make up about 9 percent of the student body of around 2,500.

"Jewish life is extremely active and vibrant at Hillel, and the arrival of students from Latin America will only enhance that and give it an exciting international flavor that Dickinson is known for," said Ted Merwin, associate professor of religion and Judaic studies and director of the Asbell Center.

Diversifying its student body is a priority for the small liberal arts college. Like other small schools in rural settings, Dickinson must take concerted steps to diversify what would otherwise be a rather homogeneous student body, Massa said.

The school has 40 international stu-

dents from 20 different countries, he said.

Beside the scholarship program for South American Jews, Dickinson also partners with organizations that help low-income or otherwise disadvantaged American students attend college.

As he got to know the South American students, Massa said he was "attracted to these top students, who had the ability and desire to study in the U.S. but not the economic means."

For the South Americans, a scholarship to Dickinson is a coveted prize.

"Everyone wants an education and deserves an education, but some have to work and search

for something else because of necessity," Eisenschlos said. "I consider myself lucky but it's also because I worked hard. I like to think that everything I have is because I deserve it."

The economic crisis leaves many middle-class Jewish students in Argentina and Uruguay to choose among subpar educational alternatives, with large class sizes, few professors and a lack of resources at public universities.

"To be an excellent student we need the tools to excel, and we need the place to develop it," said Daiana Beitler, 19, a student at the Universidad Catolica in Uruguay who will transfer to Dickinson in the fall. Dickinson officials first learned of her after reading in JTA that she had been accepted to an Ivy League school but had to decline because of the cost.

American universities offer a wider variety of subjects and the potential for better job opportunities compared to Uruguay, which suffers from a high unemployment rate.

"Many physicians are now taxi drivers because they have no money," said Damian Glumcher, 18, of Uruguay, who will be attending Dickinson in the fall.

The education at public universities in Argentina can't compare to that in the United States, Thaler said.

In Argentina, "you take a midterm, take a final and just move on," he said. "To gain access to education in the United States makes a big difference."

An opportunity  
to study in the  
U.S. is a 'dream  
for me.'

Lucia Eisenschlos  
Argentine Jewish student

# NEWS IN BRIEF

## NORTH AMERICA

### No aid cut over fence

The Bush administration won't impose further aid penalties for now, after Israel rerouted its West Bank security barrier.

"At the moment, we don't have any plans to dock them over the route of the fence," U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell told the Senate on April 8 in testimony about aid to Israel. The United States cut \$290 million from \$3 billion in loan guarantees last year because it was unhappy that parts of the fence jutted into the West Bank.

### 'Marshall Plan' for Middle East

Two leading U.S. senators introduced a bipartisan "Marshall Plan" for the greater Middle East.

Sen. Chuck Hagel (R-Neb.), who chairs the economic subcommittee of the Senate's Foreign Relations Committee, and Sen. Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.), who ran for his party's presidential nomination earlier this year, on April 8 announced the Greater Middle East and Central Asia Development Act of 2004.

The act would allocate \$5 billion over five years to 33 countries through loans, grants and democracy programs.

### Schumer to Google: Drop 'Jew Watch'

Sen. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) wants Google to remove an anti-Semitic Web site from its listings.

Jew Watch, which promotes anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial, has topped Google listings when the word "Jew" is entered into the search engine.

"As one of the most popular search engines in the world, it's outrageous that Google gives top-billing to a hate-spewing group," Schumer said in his letter last Friday. "They need to act immediately to give users an appropriate link when they seek information on the Jewish people."

Google uses algorithms based partly on how many sites link to a targeted site. Google has de-listed some sites, sometimes under threat of lawsuit.

### Charest tours school

Quebec's premier visited a Montreal Jewish school that was firebombed just before Passover.

Jean Charest's visit to the United Talmud Torah school was intended to reassure students, parents and faculty that his Liberal government was doing everything possible to make sure such attacks would not happen again.

### ADL criticizes Carter

The Anti-Defamation League criticized President Carter for his remarks on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The ADL said Carter's remarks to reporters last week, in which he criticized the Bush administration for a lack of progress on the conflict and cited the Palestinian issue as a "prime source of animosity toward the United States," both "distort and oversimplify" U.S. policy in the conflict.

### The greatest (kosher) show on earth

The Ringling Brothers Barnum & Bailey Circus performed before a sold-out crowd of Orthodox Jews at Madison Square Garden. The April 8 event in New York for 19,000 people had some changes: No women were allowed to perform, the organizers brought their own kosher food and separate seating was provided for men and women who so wished.

Also, the circus band played the Passover song "Dayeinu" and a master clown wore a yarmulke for part of the performance.

## MIDDLE EAST

### Deadly West Bank standoff

A Palestinian was killed in a shootout between Fatah terrorists and Israeli soldiers.

The man, apparently a bystander, was fatally shot on Sunday as troops stormed a safe house used by two members of the Tanzim militia near the West Bank city of Nablus. The fugitives were arrested.

On Saturday, Palestinian witnesses said a 12-year-old girl in a Gaza Strip refugee camp was killed by Israeli fire from a nearby settlement. The army said troops returned fire after being shot at by gunmen in the Rafah camp.

### Gaza settlers rally

Hundreds of Israeli settlers from the Gaza Strip demonstrated outside Ariel Sharon's desert ranch. Sunday's rally, under the banner "Sharon Is Selling Out Gush Katif to the Americans," came amid right-wing pressure on the Israeli prime minister to back off his plan for unilateral Israeli disengagement from the Palestinians.

### Likud to decide on withdrawal

Ariel Sharon will submit his plan for Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and West Bank to his Likud Party.

The referendum will be held on April 29. The Israeli prime minister is to formally present his plan to President Bush in Washington on April 14.

## WORLD

### London mayor: Jail Sharon

London's mayor called for Israel's prime minister to be jailed. In an interview April 8 with the Guardian newspaper, Ken Livingstone said he would like to see Ariel Sharon locked up in the cell next to former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic, on trial in The Hague for crimes against humanity and genocide, Ha'aretz and the German Press Agency reported.

### Jews, Tutsis unite

Jews and Tutsis joined together in Paris last week for the opening of a Jewish organization's photo exhibit marking the 10th anniversary of the Rwandan genocide.

The exhibition, titled "The Wounds of Silence," is being held at the Jewish Contemporary Documentation Center, created at the height of the Nazi occupation of France to preserve records of Jewish life. The exhibition is to run until May 14.

### Next year in Kabul

Afghanistan's last two Jews celebrated Passover — separately. Yitzhak Levy and Zevulun Siman-Tov inhabit the same building in the Afghan capital of Kabul but are barely on speaking terms. Both Siman-Tov, 50, and Levy, 73, have large families in Israel but do not intend to make aliyah.

### Report: French Muslim politician slurs Jews

A leading Muslim politician reportedly accused the head of the Paris regional council of being "in the hands of the Jewish lobby."

Senior aides to the president of the Paris region, Jean-Paul Huchon, said Moulid Aounit made the remark after Huchon refused to nominate him as one of the region's vice presidents, the daily Liberation reported Wednesday.

Aounit headed the Communist Party list in the northern suburbs of the capital in last month's regional elections. Aounit has denied the remark.