

IN THE NEWS
Security Council discusses resolution

The U.N. Security Council is discussing a resolution to condemn Israel's recent killings of Hamas leaders as "illegal and unjustified."

The resolution discussed Monday also calls for an end to terrorism and reaffirms support for the "road map" peace plan.

Swiss funds urged for poorest FSU survivors

Most money left from the \$1.25 billion Swiss banks settlement likely will go to poor Holocaust survivors in the former Soviet Union.

In his recommendation this week, the special master in the case echoed U.S. District Court Judge Edward Korman.

So far, Korman has approved \$593 million in restitution for Swiss account holders or their heirs, slave laborers of German firms that used Swiss banks, Jewish refugees from Switzerland and various humanitarian programs.

Bush renews PLO presence

President Bush renewed the PLO's right to maintain its Washington office. Like other presidents before him, Bush last week exercised his right to waive for six months a provision that bans groups linked to terrorism from operating in the U.S. capital. Republicans and Democrats in Congress in recent years have called on Bush to reconsider the waiver because of increasing terrorism by PLO-affiliated groups like the Al-Aksa Brigade.

Netanyahu: More money for settlers

Israel will invest millions of dollars in its West Bank settlements, Benjamin Netanyahu said.

The finance minister's comments came Monday after he reversed his position and said he'd support Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's plan to withdraw from Gaza and parts of the West Bank.

WORLD REPORT

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Ahead of Likud vote, tide swings Sharon's way, but obstacles remain

By LESLIE SUSSER

JERUSALEM (JTA) — When Ariel Sharon decided to have the full Likud Party vote on his controversial plan to withdraw from the Gaza Strip and part of the West Bank, it seemed like a desperate gamble.

The chances that Sharon's party would approve the plan were uncertain, to put it mildly. Yet just two weeks later, it looks as if the prime minister's gamble has paid off and that the Likud will pass Sharon's plan by a clear majority.

After his mid-April White House meeting with President Bush and the ensuing support of key Likud Cabinet ministers, Sharon is confident he can win the crucial May 2 party vote by a convincing margin.

And though aides insist that Saturday night's assassination of Hamas leader Abdel Aziz Rantissi in Gaza was planned long before the mini-referendum, pundits believe it will help Sharon garner even more Likud support.

The latest polls, taken after the meeting with Bush but before Rantissi's assassination, gave supporters of the plan a 10-15 percent lead over opponents in the Likud. Only strong public opposition by Finance Minister Benjamin Netanyahu might have turned the tables — but Netanyahu, after some wavering, announced that he, too, is now on Sharon's side.

But the Likud is not the only factor that could affect the plan's success: It still could be delayed or scuttled if Attorney General Menachem Mazuz decides to indict Sharon on corruption charges. The plan also could

be modified if the Palestinians finally discard violence in an attempt to stop Israel's unilateral moves and force Sharon into talks on a negotiated settlement.

In his meeting with President Bush, Sharon won two significant American endorsements of Israeli policy:

- That the permanent borders between Israel and a future Palestinian state will not be identical to the "Green Line" — the 1949 armistice line after Israel's War of Independence, which served as a de facto border between Israel and the West Bank until the 1967 Six-Day War — but will take into account Israel's large West Bank settlements;

- That Palestinian refugees wishing to return to their "homeland" will return to the Palestinian state, rather than to Israel.

These two American commitments will be of major importance in any permanent peace deal between Israel and the Palestinians. They also have been instrumental in turning the Likud tide in Sharon's favor, with the prime minister presenting them as part of his disengagement package.

Rantissi's assassination is having a similar effect. If the Bush commitments show the disengagement plan's diplomatic potential, the assassination shows Sharon's determination to continue fighting terrorism.

Likud opponents argue that withdrawing from Gaza could impede the fight against terrorism, even encouraging more attacks if Israel seems to be fleeing in the face of violence. Rantissi's killing undercuts those arguments.

Netanyahu, the only Likud leader who

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NEWS ANALYSIS

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could have mobilized enough party support to defeat Sharon, made his backing for disengagement contingent on three conditions: that Israel control all border passages to prevent arms smuggling into Gaza after the army withdraws; that the possibility of refugees returning to Israel be ruled out; and that the West Bank security fence be completed before any withdrawal, and that it include the main Israeli settlements in the West Bank.

After Sharon was able to satisfy him on these points, Netanyahu came out in favor of the plan. Playing to party right-wingers, he said he, too, was not enamored of the plan, but was thinking about damage control.

Other heavyweight waverers, most notably Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom and Education Minister Limor Livnat, also have announced their support for the plan.

In a sign of the shifting political winds, a series of debates between Sharon and Cabinet Minister Uzi Landau, one of the fiercest opponents of the plan within Likud, were canceled.

Sharon has other cards too. If the plan is defeated, both he and President Bush will be deeply embarrassed, his backers argue. Sharon might resign, they whisper, and Bush will resent being made to look foolish.

On the positive side, they maintain, disengagement will help the fight against terrorism, improve Israel's international standing and create conditions for future

peacemaking with the Palestinians.

The opponents are fighting an uphill battle. Fearful that any frontal assault on Sharon will backfire, they are being careful to attack the policy and not the prime minister.

"We love you, Arik, but we're voting against withdrawal," is one slogan now under consideration.

The opponents' cause is not helped by the fact that they are divided among themselves. There are three opposition camps in the Likud, one led by ministers Landau and Natan Sharansky; another made up mainly of members of Moshe Feiglin's far-right "Jewish Leadership" group; and a third under Agriculture Minister Yisrael Katz.

Most of the Cabinet ministers who oppose the plan have chosen not to campaign actively against Sharon.

Weekend polls reflect the slide toward Sharon. A poll published in the mass circulation daily, Yediot Achronot, showed that of Likud members who were sure they would vote, 54 percent supported disengagement, 38 percent opposed it and 8 percent were undecided.

In the rival Ma'ariv newspaper, the figures were nearly 52 percent for, 40 percent against, and 8 percent undecided. Experts say it will be virtually impossible for the

naysayers to make up the difference in the short time left before the May 2 vote.

Soon after that, Mazuz will make his decision on whether to indict Sharon.

If he presses charges and Sharon steps down, the American input will make it difficult for a successor to drop the plan entirely. But someone like Netanyahu, who is not enthusiastic about disengagement, could slow things down.

Much will depend on the Palestinian response, too.

If, because of the plan and the strikes against Hamas leaders, there is more Palestinian terrorism, Israel

will continue its unilateral moves.

But some Palestinian voices are urging a cessation of violence, arguing that terrorism has led them into a political dead end, facing unilateral Israeli actions at their expense and American support for key Israeli positions.

If the violence stops, they say, the Palestinians could get wide international support for a dialogue with Israel. Then, instead of carrying out unilateral moves, Israel could be forced to negotiate, leading to steps carried out by mutual agreement — and far more compatible with Palestinian interests.

(Leslie Susser is the diplomatic correspondent for the Jerusalem Report.)

Disengagement could help the fight against terrorism, improve Israel's standing abroad and create conditions for future peacemaking with the Palestinians.

Abraham Spiegel dies at 97

By TOM TUGEND

LOS ANGELES (JTA) — Abraham Spiegel, a survivor of four concentration camps who built a life in America as a businessman, philanthropist and supporter of Jewish life, died April 10 at 97.

Among his major legacies are the Children's Memorial at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, the Spiegel Family Building at the Museum of the Jewish Diaspora in Tel Aviv, and the Spiegel Family Park, in Tel Aviv.

In Los Angeles, he helped establish the Yeshiva University of Los Angeles High School and the Yavneh Hebrew Academy.

Spiegel was born in Mukachevo, in

what is now Ukraine, the son of a lumbermill owner. In 1940, he married Edita. In 1944, the couple and their 2-year-old son, Uziel, were shipped to Auschwitz. The parents survived, but their son perished.

After being liberated by the Russian army, Spiegel and his wife arrived in 1947 in the United States. Spiegel quickly established himself as a highly successful businessman and philanthropist.

Yuval Rotem, Israel's consul general in Los Angeles, praised Spiegel's "enormous contributions to the State of Israel." He said, "I think Abe felt that if a Jewish state had existed in the early 1940s, his son might still be alive."

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European Jews on guard, but not cowed

By JTA STAFF

BUDAPEST (JTA) — Agnes Penzias was shocked when police reported arrests in a terrorist plot aimed at Hungary's new Holocaust Memorial Center — but the news didn't prevent Penzias and her husband from attending the center's inauguration.

"I'm always worried about people vandalizing Jewish buildings and graveyards, so you can imagine how frightened I was to learn about this terrorist plan," she told JTA. "But then I saw how seriously they took the security arrangements, so that calmed me considerably."

Indeed, there was unprecedented security at the April 15 inauguration of the center in Budapest.

Hundreds of guards monitored the event as helicopters hovered overhead and snipers watched from the rooftops of nearby buildings.

The security seen in Budapest is not uncommon in Europe.

In the wake of last month's lethal Al-Qaida bombings in Madrid — and with reports last week that those bombers were planning follow-up attacks on Jewish targets — security is being stepped up at Jewish institutions across the Continent.

While some European Jews are frightened by the threats, many appear to be going on with their day-to-day lives.

Some are going on with their routines out of defiance, with the sense that changing their routines would be giving in to the terrorists.

"It's unrealistic to assume that we are somehow invulnerable to terrorism, especially when there are so many prominent Jewish sites in Budapest," said Dora Ses of Budapest. "But I lived in Israel for years and I learned there very quickly that you cannot live in fear. That's exactly what they want to achieve."

Others seemed resigned to the fact that altering their comings and goings wouldn't make them any safer.

Many shoppers searching for their first post-Passover baguettes in Paris's heavily Jewish 19th District said they weren't taking special precautions.

"If you're Jewish, there's always a threat. But look at Madrid — these people don't care who they kill," Guy Seban said.

Just the same, security patrols were stepped up outside French Jewish community institutions over Passover after President Jacques Chirac ordered extra measures following Israel's assassination of Hamas leader Sheik Ahmed Yassin in late March.

Many synagogues in central Paris had a police guard outside the building and patrols were more frequent.

In Britain, many Jews were trying to live as normally as possible while remaining aware of potential threats.

"I'm aware of the threat every day. I take care, but I won't let it stop me from going to Jewish events," London resident Richard Cohn said.

Cohn, who spends much of his social time in pubs and clubs frequented by other young Jewish people, says he won't give the terrorists a victory by staying away from Jewish events and buildings.

Well-known Jewish institutions, such as Carmelli's kosher bakery in London's largely Jewish Golders Green area, remain popular hangouts.

Still, some Jews are wary. Ros Narden, 29, a London-based Web site designer, says she believes Jews are threatened because of their support for Israel, and she admits avoiding situations where she feels exposed as a Jew.

"I don't feel it's safe to go to synagogue anymore," she says. "Whereas I will go on the tube if I have to, I'll try to avoid areas with lots of Jews now."

The Tube, as London's subway system is called, has been singled out as a place where the security threat is higher.

To be sure, many European Jewish institutions have long been protected by tighter security than in North America.

In Italy, for example, security at major Jewish sites has been tight for more than 20 years, ever since a 1982 Palestinian terrorist attack on the main synagogue in Rome, which killed a young boy and injured about 100 people.

Armed police stand outside Rome's main synagogue and Jewish school at all times, and the Jewish community offices are guarded.

There also is an internal community

security apparatus. The Israeli Embassy in Rome also is heavily guarded; the block where it's located is closed off on both ends.

The president of Madrid's Jewish community, Jacob Israel Garzon, says the community's own security has been beefed up, while the Spanish authorities have been asked for additional protection.

Garzon says some Jews now are afraid to attend community activities, but he insisted that "those of us who are not afraid are more numerous."

No specific threats have been received in Barce-

lona, but community spokesman Yitzhak Levy, whose two children go to the city's heavily guarded Jewish school, says the fear is palpable — at the school and at community events.

"At Yom Hashoah there were only about 15 or 20 of us. Last year, there were 80 or 90 people," he said.

Security concerns also affected Berlin's Yom Hashoah commemoration.

For the second year in a row, the reading of names of some 60,000 Berlin Jews deported to their deaths during the Holocaust was held not in a public venue but inside the locked gates of the Jewish community.

In the Czech Republic, Jewish leaders have been pressing state officials to provide greater protection, particularly since the Budapest terrorist plot was uncovered.

The Czech Interior Ministry already has put in place a number of measures at Jewish sites, particularly in Prague.

For many Jews in Europe, particularly older ones, the recent threat is the latest in a lifetime of having to deal with danger. "They have survived so many things," said Tomas Jelinek, head of the Prague Jewish community. "When you've been standing in front of the gas chamber, what else could be more frightening?"

(Balint Molnar in Budapest, Philip Carmel in Paris, Andrew Morris in London, Ruth Ellen Gruber in Rome, Jerome Socolovsky in Madrid, Toby Axelrod in Berlin and Magnus Bennett in Prague contributed to this report.)

"I'm aware of the threat every day."

Richard Cohn
London resident

NEWS IN BRIEF

WORLD

Powell heading to Berlin

Colin Powell will attend a conference on anti-Semitism in Berlin later this month. The State Department announced Friday that the U.S. secretary of state will join the U.S. delegation to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe conference on April 28-29. Several American Jewish organizational leaders have been named public advisers to the U.S. delegation.

They include Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League; Mark Levin, executive director of NCSJ: Advocates on Behalf of Jews in Russia, Ukraine, the Baltic States and Eurasia; Daniel Mariaschin, executive vice president of B'nai B'rith International; Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations; and Rabbi Andrew Baker, director of international Jewish affairs for the American Jewish Committee.

Sirens across Israel

A memorial siren brought Israel to a standstill for two minutes on Monday, part of annual observances for Yom Hashoah.

Flags throughout the country were at half-staff for the 24-hour memorial, and Israeli television showed films and documentary footage of the Holocaust.

Thousands make 'March of the Living'

Thousands of Jewish students from dozens of countries took part in the "March of the Living" in Poland. Participants included Poles, Americans, Canadians, Israelis and others who walked about two miles to Auschwitz and Birkenau.

The march, which has taken place annually since 1988, seeks to educate a new generation of Jews about the Jewish history of Europe and to affirm the survival of the Jewish people.

Prague rally against anti-Semitism

Hundreds of Christians and Jews gathered in Prague for a rally against anti-Semitism.

Sunday's rally, which was called "We Are All People," was co-organized by the International Christian Embassy of Jerusalem and the Association of Christian and Jews.

NORTH AMERICA

Rice: Rantissi timing unhelpful

The timing of Israel's assassination of a Hamas leader was "not helpful," Condoleezza Rice said.

President Bush's national security adviser did not directly condemn Abdel Aziz Rantissi's killing, but reiterated White House concerns that the Israelis "need to take account of the consequences of what they're doing. And certainly, given that we had just talked about trying to get the 'road map' under way in the Middle East, trying to get the Gaza disengagement plan underway, then the timing is not helpful."

Israel has a right to defend itself, Rice told ABC's "This Week" on Sunday, but "it's just extremely important that the Israelis also keep in mind the long view here."

Abdullah will meet Jewish leaders

Jordan's King Abdullah will meet with Jewish leaders after his summit this week with President Bush.

The king will meet Wednesday with representatives of Americans for Peace Now, the American Jewish Committee, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, the Israel Policy Forum and the Republican

Jewish Coalition, a spokeswoman for the Jordanian Embassy said. Bush and Abdullah will discuss Bush's recognition last week of Israeli claims to some West Bank land in exchange for Israel's unilateral withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and part of the West Bank.

Kerry: Israel must defend itself

Israel has the right to defend itself against terrorism, Sen. John Kerry said.

"Hamas is a terrorist, brutal organization," the Massachusetts senator and presumptive Democratic presidential nominee said Sunday on NBC's "Meet the Press" when asked about the assassination of Hamas leader Abdel Aziz Rantissi. "I support Israel's efforts to try to separate itself and to try to be secure."

Kerry also said he "completely" agrees with President Bush's recognition of some Israeli claims to the West Bank and the president's rejection of the right of Palestinian refugees to return to Israel.

Kerry remembers family on Yom Hashoah

Sen. John Kerry recalled the loss of his own relatives in the Holocaust to mark Yom Hashoah.

"This year, with the knowledge that a great aunt and great uncle perished at Treblinka and Theresienstadt, Yom Hashoah has new personal meaning to me as my entire family is drawn closer still to the survivors who have become witnesses for us all," the Massachusetts senator and presumptive Democratic presidential nominee said in a campaign statement.

10,000 call for settlements to go

More than 10,000 U.S. Jews signed a petition calling on Israel and the United States to relocate Jewish settlers to Israel proper.

Brit Tzedek v'Shalom, a left-wing U.S. group, gathered the signatures in the lead-up to last week's announcement that the Bush administration would recognize a measure of Israel's claim to the West Bank in exchange for a unilateral Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and part of the West Bank. The group rejects any unilateral withdrawal without negotiations.

MIDDLE EAST

Arab ambush in northern Israel

Police killed an Israeli Arab gunman who ambushed one of their patrols. Israel's northern district police chief, Ya'acov Borovsky, said a special paramilitary unit, acting on an intelligence tipoff that a roadside ambush was planned near the Beit Rimon junction in the Galilee, was patrolling the area Sunday night.

After their vehicle came under fire, the patrolmen shot back, killing one gunman and wounding an accomplice.

Vanunu vs. Israel

Nuclear whistle-blower Mordechai Vanunu, soon to be released from jail, said Israel does not have the right to exist.

"There is no need for a Jewish state. There should be a Palestinian state. Whoever wants to be Jewish can live anywhere," the Moroccan-born convicted traitor said in a jailhouse interview released to the media Monday.

Vanunu is to go free Wednesday after serving an 18-year sentence for leaking details about his work at the Dimona nuclear reactor to Britain's Sunday Times.

He has vowed to continue campaigning to expose Israel's assumed nuclear arsenal.

"Just as the Iraqi reactor was destroyed, I want the Israeli reactor destroyed," he said in the interview, referring to Israel's airstrike on the Osirak reactor in 1981. "I am defending the Arab world."