

## IN THE NEWS

## Edwards supports Israel self-defense

Sen. John Edwards, named by Sen. John Kerry to run on the Democratic presidential ticket, has said Israel has a right to defend itself from terrorism.

Edwards (D-N.C.), who got the nod from Kerry (D-Mass.) on Tuesday, told JTA in January that "as long as the Palestinian leadership fails to end terror, Israel has a right to take measures to defend itself. Such defensive measures are not the cause of terrorism, they are the response to terrorism."

Edwards has visited Israel and met with Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.

## Powell disappointed by settlers' outposts

The United States is "disappointed" by Israel's failure to dismantle unauthorized settlement outposts.

Secretary of State Colin Powell brought up the outposts in his meeting Tuesday with Silvan Shalom, the Israeli foreign minister. Shalom presented Powell with a list of 81 outposts Shalom said had been dismantled since 2002, and he said 28 remaining outposts were in the process of being dismantled.

Shalom also asked Powell to persuade donor nations to make funds to the Palestinians conditional on a crackdown on terrorism.

## ElBaradei visits Israel to talk nukes

The U.N.'s top nuclear official wants Israel to support a non-proliferation treaty.

Mohammed ElBaradei, who heads the U.N.'s International Atomic Energy Agency, arrived in Israel on Tuesday to discuss the possibility of creating a nuclear-free Middle East.

"If I get the parties closer on the need for a dialogue, I think I'll be successful," ElBaradei said.

Israeli officials said they would urge ElBaradei to curtail Iran's nuclear weapons program.

# WORLD REPORT

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## John Edwards' instincts 'in line' with Jewish voters, supporters say

By MATTHEW E. BERGER

**W**ASHINGTON (JTA) — U.S. Sen. John Edwards (D-N.C.) doesn't need to represent a state with a lot of Jews to understand the needs of the Jewish community, supporters say.

"In a lot of ways, John Edwards transcends North Carolina," said Lonnie Kaplan, a former president of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, who backed Edwards when he sought the Democratic nomination for president earlier this year.

U.S. Sen. John Kerry (D-Mass.), who defeated Edwards to become the presumptive Democratic nominee for president earlier this year, named the trial lawyer-turned-legislator as his running mate Tuesday.

Speaking to supporters in Pittsburgh, Kerry described Edwards as a "man whose life has prepared him for leadership, and whose character brings him to exercise it."

There is seemingly solid support among Jewish Democrats hoping that Edwards' selection will help bolster Kerry's bid to unseat President Bush.

The National Jewish Democratic Council called Edwards "an outstanding friend of the American Jewish community and a powerful supporter" of the positions "held by the vast majority of American Jews."

As the number of candidates dwindled in the 2000 Democratic primary last winter, several significant Jewish contributors became enamored with Edwards.

"His basic instincts are in line with the community," said Ryan Karben, a Jewish state assemblyman in New York who repre-

sents an area with several Chasidic communities. "That's reassuring because it doesn't come across as contrived or gleaned from years of meetings."

Edwards was a highly successful trial lawyer in North Carolina seven years ago when he sought a seat in the U.S. Senate, largely financing his own campaign.

That meant Edwards didn't spend as much time as other aspiring lawmakers courting support and dollars in the Jewish community, both in and out of his state, North Carolina Jewish activists said.

Edwards nonetheless has earned respect in the Jewish community.

He has a solid voting record on Israel, pro-Israel lobbyists say, and he emphasizes issues that resonate with many Jewish voters: health, education and poverty.

The senator visited Israel with colleagues from the Senate Intelligence Committee in 2001 and was there when a suicide bomber attacked a Sbarro restaurant in downtown Jerusalem.

"I think the trip left on him an understanding," said Randall Kaplan, a Greensboro businessman who is a board member for the American Israel Public Affairs Committee. "He really gets the strategic issues, the existential issues."

In a statement to JTA during his presidential bid, Edwards said he would, as president, increase U.S. engagement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with the appointment of a senior envoy to the region.

He said he supports a two-state solution, with the Jewish State of Israel and "a legitimate, democratic and territorially viable

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## ■ *Jews may not know Edwards well, but his instincts are right, supporters say*

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Palestinian state living side by side in peace.”

And he signaled support for Israel's anti-terrorism tactics, including the security barrier Israel is erecting in the West Bank.

“As long as the Palestinian leadership fails to end terror, Israel has a right to take measures to defend itself,” Edwards said. “Such defensive measures are not the cause of terrorism — they are the response to terrorism.”

As part of the rollout of Edwards as a candidate for vice president, Kerry's campaign took note of Edwards' foreign policy experience, including meetings he has had with Middle East leaders like Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon; former Prime Minister Shimon Peres; Ephraim Halevy, who heads the Mossad intelligence service; Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Maher and Jordanian King Abdullah II.

On the domestic front, Edwards said in his statement to JTA that he supports faith-based charities delivering social services “in a manner consistent with the First Amendment,” but did not specify whether he supports federal funding for such charities.

But in contrast to the Bush administration's plan that allows religious charities to receive federal funds while allowing the hiring of individuals of a specific religion, Edwards said the charities should follow anti-discrimination standards.

He is a former co-sponsor of the Work-

place Religious Freedom Act, legislation that has languished in Congress for years and would give employees the right to seek accommodations for their religious practices. While Edwards has not put his name to the legislation this year, Jewish organizational officials say he is expected to support the legislation if it moves forward for a vote.

A member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Edwards has called for changes to the USA Patriot Act, which some say strips away civil liberties in the name of fighting terrorism.

He also has actively backed hate crime legislation that would expand federal authority for prosecuting hate crimes.

He has a high rating from abortion rights activists but was absent from Senate votes on the so-called Partial Birth Abortion Ban Act.

While he was running for president, Edwards emphasized his experience growing up poor in the South and how that helped shape an outlook that makes him attractive to groups that see themselves as outsiders scrambling to get in.

Born in South Carolina on June 10, 1953, Edwards and his family soon moved to North Carolina, where he spent most of his childhood.

Edwards was the first in his family to go to college, graduating from North Carolina State University in 1974. He received a law degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1977.

Edwards' specialty in law was personal-injury cases involving children. He won a record-setting verdict for Valerie Lakey, a girl who was severely injured by a faulty swimming pool drain in 1993.

Edwards was apolitical until the 1996 death of his eldest son, Wade, who was killed at age 16 in a car accident, changed Edwards' life.

“When John walked out of the church for Wade's funeral, all he said was, ‘Something good has got to come from this,’” said Fred Baron, who was the co-finance chairman of Edwards' presidential campaign and a former president of the Association of Trial Lawyers of America. “You saw a transformation.”

Edwards withdrew completely for six months, friends said, and walked away from his law practice.

“He decided at that point that he wanted to do something other than the strict practice of law,” said Ken Broun, a former dean of UNC's law school. He wanted a larger mission, and he chose to challenge incumbent Sen. Lauch Faircloth, a Republican.

“When he decided to run for political office, it made incredible sense to me because of his incredible talent to connect with people,” said Bill Cassell, a longtime Edwards

friend and former Jewish federation campaign chairman in Greensboro.

Kaplan, the Greensboro businessman, remembers early meetings Edwards held with Jews in the community.

“When he first started considering the Senate race, he was a great listener,” Kaplan told JTA earlier this year. “He was as knowledgeable as someone can get when they first run for office but didn't have first-hand experience.”

Upon his election in 1998, Edwards continued listening.

“A lot of times you go into a Senate office and they just repeat back to you the party line,” Randall Kaplan said. “With John, he would really listen and you could tell he was really thinking about it.”

Edwards, a Methodist, has a good grasp on the religious politics of his state, friends say.

“Up until the last 15 years, this was a fairly lonely place for Jews and Catholics,” Broun said. “I think he understands that.”

In a statement Edwards wrote for JTA, he said, “Faith is enormously important to me personally and to tens of millions of Americans.”

Edwards' friends say the candidate is privately spiritual. Cassell said that the candidate's wife, Elizabeth Edwards, “wouldn't let him be any other way.”

The couple, married in 1977, have three living children.

Baron described Edwards as someone with “a great deal of inner peace.”

“I've never seen him look troubled or act troubled,” he said. “If he has a bad day, he just moves on to the next one.”

The 1996 death of Edwards' eldest son in a car accident changed Edwards' life and influenced his decision to enter politics.

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# Jewish groups step up efforts on Sudan crisis

By PETER EPHROSS

NEW YORK (JTA) — It seems the phrase “never again” isn’t just for the Holocaust anymore.

In recent weeks, Jewish groups have stepped up their efforts to stop the government-sponsored killing of tens of thousands of black Muslims in Sudan.

The efforts have come as world attention begins to focus on the crisis in Sudan, where hundreds of thousands of black Africans have fled their homes to escape violence.

Late last month, President Bush made available up to \$34 million for special refugee needs in Sudan and neighboring Chad, as well as the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell and the U.N.’s secretary-general, Kofi Annan, visited the Sudan refugee camps last week. After the visits, Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir promised he would reign in government-backed Arab militias and allow human rights observers into the disputed region of Darfur.

But most observers are skeptical that the government will make good on its promises, and pressure on the Khartoum government is mounting.

Most Jewish fund raising focuses on internal Jewish issues, such as support for Israel, Israeli victims of terrorism, local social services and the needs of Jewish communities around the world.

But Nobel Peace Prize winner Elie Wiesel, who for several years has been trying to place the Sudan violence on the public agenda, said there’s no reason Jews shouldn’t focus on other people’s problems too. “I do it as a Jew because I think Jews should be sensitive to other peoples as well,” Wiesel said. “I cannot just live isolated.”

Ruth Messenger, president of the American Jewish World Service, agrees.

“We’re capable of taking positions and, frankly, we’re capable of raising money for more than just one issue,” Messenger said.

These positions on Sudan increasingly are becoming public.

This week, the Washington-area Jewish Community Council is hosting an interfaith vigil to protest the killings in Sudan. That comes on the heels of a protest last week at the Sudanese Embassy in Washington, co-sponsored by the Reli-

gious Action Center of Reform Judaism.

“When genocidal activity is going on, Jews need to be at the forefront,” Rabbi David Saperstein, the center’s director, told JTA at the rally. “We’ve been the quintessential victims.”

Part of the motivation seems to be the feeling that Jewish groups didn’t do enough the last time questions of genocide were raised, in Rwanda in 1994.

“During both the Holocaust and Rwanda genocide, warnings were received and ignored,” Jerry Fowler, staff director of the Committee on Conscience at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, wrote in an Op-Ed for The Washington Post after visiting a Sudanese refugee camp in Chad.

“Today we say ‘never again.’ The question now is whether we will ignore warnings while the Africans of Darfur perish and then — once again — say ‘never again,’” he said.

On June 24, the Holocaust museum stopped all its activities for 30 minutes to draw attention to the Sudan crisis. The museum now features information about the situation in Sudan on its Internet home page. “One way that we honor the memory that we’re preserving is by trying to have an effect on the world that we live in,” Fowler said.

As public efforts have stepped up, so have behind-the-scenes moves aimed at humanitarian relief.

The Jewish Disaster Relief Coalition, made up of some 45 Jewish groups across the political and religious spectrum, set up a mailbox for humanitarian relief for Sudanese facing homelessness and starvation in the camps, after they were chased from their homes by Arab Muslim marauders armed by the government.

The coalition’s efforts were spurred by the American Jewish World Service, which convened a meeting of the coalition a few months ago. The World Service supports humanitarian and economic projects, mainly in the developing world.

At that time, coalition members weren’t ready to take a stand on the issue,

Messenger said.

Sudan has been in upheaval for two decades as a result of civil war between Muslims in the north and Christians and animists in the south. An estimated 2 million people died in the fighting, which began in 1983 and subsided a bit only earlier this year.

Last year, more violence broke out after the Sudanese government exploited ethnic tensions in Darfur, a western region of the country. Nomadic Arab tribes long have been in conflict with their African

neighbors over Darfur’s water and arable land.

The tensions exploded after two African rebel groups took up arms against the government in February 2003 over what they regarded as unjust government treatment in their struggle with Arab countrymen.

At least 30,000 people have been killed in the revolt, which has precipitated a refugee problem.

The government denies that it has supplied arms and encouraged violence, but there are widespread reports by witnesses of government airplanes and helicopter gunships backing the militias, known as janjaweed, or horsemen.

After members of the Jewish disaster relief coalition learned more about Sudan — in part from increased media attention — they decided to take action. In addition to what some individual groups had collected, the coalition, through its mailbox at the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, had collected \$11,000 as of last week.

The amount raised is minuscule compared to the sums raised for emergency campaigns for Israel. But those involved in the Sudan campaign say the issue shouldn’t be ignored.

“If the message of the Holocaust is ‘never again’ when it comes to genocide, it means ‘never again,’” said Reva Price, Washington director for the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, an umbrella organization for local community relations councils. “We have to get that right.”

(JTA intern Justin Bosch in Washington contributed to this report.)

‘When genocidal activity is going on, Jews need to be at the forefront’ of protest.

Rabbi David Saperstein

Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism

# NEWS IN BRIEF

## NORTH AMERICA

### Arab Bank under fire

U.S. victims of Palestinian terrorism are suing a Jordanian bank in New York.

Five American families whose loved ones were killed by Palestinian terrorists filed a lawsuit in federal court last Friday in New York against the Arab Bank for allegedly laundering money to Palestinian terrorist groups.

The lawsuit accuses the bank of "aiding and abetting" murder by disbursing money to families of suicide bombers and aiding Palestinian terrorist organizations and their charity front groups.

### It's not just Koufax

Jewish baseball players will be celebrated at baseball's Hall of Fame.

The celebration will take place Aug. 29-30 at the Hall of Fame museum in Cooperstown, N.Y.

The event was spurred by the publication of a 143-card set of Jewish major leaguers developed by Martin Abramowitz, an executive at the Boston Jewish federation.

The cards are available with a donation to the American Jewish Historical Society. More information is available at [www.ajhs.org](http://www.ajhs.org).

## MIDDLE EAST

### 4 Palestinians, Israeli commando killed

An Israeli commando and four Palestinians were killed in a West Bank shootout.

Israeli navy commandos raided Nablus on Tuesday to capture the West Bank chief of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and one of his lieutenants. In the ensuing shootout, one terrorist was killed, as was an Israeli captain.

The second terrorist sought refuge in a neighboring house, drawing Israeli fire that, according to witnesses, killed him along with two Palestinian bystanders.

### Gaza gunmen killed

Israeli troops killed two Palestinian gunmen in the Gaza Strip.

The gunmen were shot as they were spotted en route to attack an army position on the Kissufim highway Tuesday. There was no immediate claim of responsibility from Palestinian terrorist groups.

### Iraqi president inspired by Netanyahu

Iraq's new president said he was inspired to pursue a career in politics by Benjamin Netanyahu.

Ghazi Al-Yawer told the Arabic newspaper A-Sharq Al-Awsat last week that his interest in a political career was sparked when he watched a television program on the life of Netanyahu, who twice interrupted his studies to serve in the Israeli army at war.

### Israeli elections scheduled for 2006

Israel's next general elections will be in 2006, a year earlier than planned.

On Tuesday, the High Court of Justice brought the election date forward, finding in favor of petitions filed by opposition Knesset parties.

The Central Elections Committee had said the Knesset term should end in November 2007, a finding backed by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's government.

But the court determined that sticking to that timetable would over-extend lawmakers' four-year mandate, and it mandated elections for November 2006.

## WORLD

### Argentina vows to fight anti-Semitism

The government of Argentina vowed to fight anti-Semitism. Following a meeting Monday between World Jewish Congress leaders and the Argentine minister of foreign affairs, the country's Foreign Ministry signed a petition against anti-Semitism and said it would encourage other Latin American countries to follow suit. The World Jewish Congress delegation said it made it clear to the minister, Rafael Bielsa, that Jews worldwide still expect the Argentine government to solve the 1994 bombing of the AMIA Jewish center in Buenos Aires, which killed 85 people.

### New restitution panel eyed

Representatives of the Israeli government and Jewish organizations will see how to make Holocaust reparation more efficient.

In a June 30 letter to Edgar Bronfman, president of the World Jewish Restitution Organization, Finance Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israel was backing a plan to establish a blue-ribbon panel that would "examine how to increase efficiency, transparency, relevance and coordination in restitution efforts."

The panel also will consider re-evaluating priorities for administering money received from several humanitarian funds.

### Leading Soviet dissident dies at 90

Alexander Lerner, a leading Soviet scientist and dissident, died in Israel at the age of 90.

Lerner died in early April, but his death was reported only this week. Lerner was a member of the Soviet elite known for his work in cybernetics when he applied to emigrate in 1971. The Soviet government responded by refusing his requests to join his daughter in Israel and stripped him of his job and his privileges. He eventually was allowed to leave and arrived in Israel in 1988.

### Reporter kept out of Israel

The petition of a British journalist linked to nuclear whistle-blower Mordechai Vanunu, to reverse a ban on his entering Israel, failed.

Jerusalem District Court on Tuesday upheld the Interior Ministry's decision to declare Peter Hounam persona non grata last month after the Sunday Times reporter organized a recent unauthorized television interview with Vanunu. In 1986, Hounam broke the story of Vanunu's revelations about his work at the Dimona nuclear reactor.

Israel says Vanunu, who completed an 18-year prison term for treason in April, may intend to spill more secrets to Hounam.

### German terrorist membership?

Four far-right radicals were charged in a German court with plotting to bomb the dedication ceremony of a Munich synagogue last year.

Martin Wiese, head of the Bavarian-based Kameradschaft Sued — a group of 25 neo-Nazis and skinheads — and three other men, were charged with membership in a terrorist organization, according to Frauke Scheuten, a spokeswoman for federal prosecutors.

### ADL, Yad Vashem to fight anti-Semitism

The Anti-Defamation League and Yad Vashem will join forces in the fight against anti-Semitism.

The two bodies plan to focus their efforts on education through the creation of such teaching tools as a curriculum on the Holocaust and background on anti-Semitism.

The decision follows a panel discussion held Monday at Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust memorial, on how to approach a perceived rise in anti-Semitism worldwide.