

IN THE NEWS

E.U.: Aid to Israel to be cut?

The European Union said it might cut aid to Israel if the Jewish state failed to engage in positive dialogue with the union.

E.U. "aid and support for Israel through different instruments has to go hand-in-hand with the political dialogue," Dutch Foreign Minister Bernard Bot said in Brussels on Tuesday.

Bot, whose country recently assumed the E.U.'s rotating presidency, added, "It takes two to tango," and Israeli Prime Minister Ariel "Sharon has to be prepared to tango a bit with the European Union." Israel considers E.U. diplomacy to have a decidedly pro-Palestinian bias.

Jewish groups oppose marriage amendment

Jewish groups reiterated their opposition to a constitutional amendment outlawing gay marriage. On Monday, the Anti-Defamation League sent a letter to Republican and Democratic leaders urging them to vote against the amendment, which is backed by President Bush.

"Discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation is as ugly as any other form of discrimination," said the letter, calling the proposed amendment "divisive and unnecessary."

The Reform Movement, the National Council of Jewish Women and the Boston Jewish Community Relations Council also have expressed opposition to the amendment.

Washington eyes West Bank outposts

Ariel Sharon assured U.S. envoys that Israel would crack down on illegal West Bank settlements.

The U.S. deputy national security adviser, Stephen Hadley, and Elliot Abrams, head of the Middle East desk at the National Security Council, met with the Israeli prime minister. He assured them that Israel would dismantle some two dozen unauthorized West Bank outposts.

WORLD REPORT

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After fake anti-Semitic attack, Jews see sympathy turning into criticism

By PHILIP CARMEL

PARIS (JTA) — It took precisely 24 hours for demonstrations in solidarity with France's Jewish community to turn into opprobrium against it.

The sudden change came Tuesday when a 23-year-old non-Jewish woman who claimed she had been the victim of a violent anti-Semitic act admitted to police that she had staged the incident.

French Jews are now hoping the incident won't do too much damage to the fight against anti-Semitism in France, which remains a real problem.

Given the massive surge in anti-Semitic incidents in France over the past six months, reports that the woman and her baby had been violently attacked on a Paris suburban train had sent shock waves through the political establishment and the country's Jewish community.

The woman told police that six men armed with knives had attacked her July 9 after discovering information on her identity card that led them to believe, erroneously, that she was Jewish.

According to the woman's police complaint, the attackers cut her hair, ripped her clothing and scrawled three swastikas on her stomach with a black marker pen. They then overturned a carriage carrying her 13-month-old baby.

Reports of the incident — and particularly the woman's claim that it had occurred in full view of at least 20 witnesses who did nothing — drew swift condemnation, with President Jacques Chirac expressing his "horror."

"I demand that everything should be done

to find the perpetrators of this shameful act in order that they should be tried and sentenced with the severity required," Chirac said in a statement.

But it soon became apparent that there were serious holes in the woman's story.

With no witnesses coming forward, the woman — who has a history of making false police complaints — was placed in police custody pending charges for providing false information. She later admitted she had drawn the swastikas herself with the aid of her companion.

Jewish leaders initially had focused their comments on rising anti-Semitism among Muslim youth in working-class suburbs around France's large cities, particularly as the woman had told police her attackers were "four Arabs and two Africans."

Such remarks have led Muslim leaders and anti-racist groups to object to what they see as overkill in dealing with anti-Semitism in France. They also charge that the government has largely ignored racism targeted at Arabs and Muslims.

While Muslim leaders had expressed solidarity with the Jewish community after initial reports of the attack, the woman's detention provoked a sharp change in tone.

In a statement issued Tuesday, the Movement Against Racism and for Friendship Between Peoples — an organization that traditionally has had sour relations with the organized Jewish community — said that "stigmatized populations in the suburbs had been thrown out to pasture."

The group also blasted "irresponsible

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BEHIND THE HEADLINES

■ Hoax leaves French Jews anxious about fight against anti-Semitism

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statements used by people who profited from this fabrication to once more instrumentalize anti-Semitism against a specific population and to increase intercommunal tensions.”

Those remarks appeared aimed at Jewish leaders and organizations, some of whom — like Interior Minister Dominique de Villepin — issued statements without checking with the police.

One such example was the National Bureau for Vigilance Against anti-Semitism, which provides statistics for the Simon Wiesenthal Center and the Israeli government on anti-Semitic incidents in France.

“It’s always been Arab-Muslims who commit anti-Jewish attacks for the last four years,” the organization said in a statement.

Even large communal organizations, who usually are more reticent about making statements, were pulled into the melee.

In the wake of the supposed attack, Roger Cukierman, president of the CRIF umbrella organization of French Jews, told a radio station that “imams in housing estates where these attackers live have to start using the right language to point out that anti-Semitic acts are unacceptable.”

Despite the polemic, however, there is clear evidence that the vast majority of racially inspired attacks in France target Jews — as Cukierman himself later pointed out.

“If this was believed, it’s because the climate permits it,” he told JTA. “The fact

is that we live at a time where there are hundreds of anti-Semitic attacks.”

Moreover, only hours before the woman told police she had been attacked, the government published figures showing that out of 230 racist attacks against persons or property in the first half of 2004, 135 were committed against Jewish targets.

The trend has been evident for a number of years and is accentuated by the fact that Jews make up only a tiny proportion of France’s ethnic minorities.

After the embarrassment of this incident, the Jewish community must face the possibility that government ministers will be far more reticent in the future to immediately condemn anti-Semitic acts.

Ariel Goldman, spokesman for the Jewish Committee Protection Service, said that if mistakes were made, they weren’t the fault of the Jewish community.

“The first reactions came right from the top, from the president and the prime minister. We just followed,” Goldman said in an interview.

Cukierman, too, said he “regretted that French citizens had been tricked,” adding that the incident had hurt the fight against anti-Semitism.

“Everybody, the press as much as the authorities, has made itself look ridiculous by immediately crying out anti-Semitism instead of waiting to have more information,” said Kabel Kabtane, the Lyon region president of France’s Muslim Council. “Anti-Semitism is something very serious, but when we deal with it, it’s Muslims who are targeted.”

Kabtane also drew attention to other well-publicized anti-Semitic acts that remain unsolved. Among those is an arson attack on a Jewish school near Paris last November

that lead to the creation of new governmental measures to tackle anti-Semitism, as well as a highly suspicious knife attack on a rabbi in January 2003 that still is under investigation.

Despite those isolated incidents, government ministers remain aware that anti-Semitism is a deep problem in today’s France.

Referring to the outcry over the fake attack, government spokesman Jean-François Cope said it was necessary to “see that beyond the considerable emotion engendered by this act, there is a reality. That is the explosion of anti-Semitic acts in France.”

Jews are embarrassed about the incident, but also concerned about the future.

Hadassah pushes stem cell research

By **MATTHEW E. BERGER**

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Hadassah members are trying to get their message on stem cell research to the White House — all at once. Members of the women’s Zionist group swamped White House phone lines Tuesday, petitioning President Bush to reverse his position on stem cell research.

Hadassah says expanding the use of stem cells in medical research could provide new treatments and cures for disease.

Bush allowed research using existing stem cell lines from 2001, but few of those lines are still viable today. Stem cells are extracted from embryos and can be manipulated to create various human blood and tissue cells. The lines are cell groups extracted from embryos, and are capable of reproducing themselves.

No further lines are available for use

under current administration policy.

“What President Bush knew and what scientists knew in 2001 is a lot different from what we know now,” said Marla Gilson, Hadassah’s Washington representative. “It’s time to allow new lines to be formed and those lines to be formed with federal funding.”

To make their voices heard, about 1,500 Hadassah members all tried to call the White House at the same time during their conference in Phoenix. Many could not get through.

Hadassah sees itself as a strong supporter of stem cell research, fostered by the work of Hadassah hospitals in Israel.

Now Hadassah is rolling out a national education campaign for its members, explaining the religious issues in stem cell research and suggesting tools to bring the issue to legislators.

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Jewish sites eligible for security funds

By MATTHEW E. BERGER

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Jewish institutions are finding new ways to get federal money to secure sites that could be targets for terrorist attacks.

While legislation to create a fund specifically for the protection of high-risk non-profit institutions lingers in Congress, Jewish communities are working with states and local governments to obtain funds earmarked by the Department of Homeland Security for security upgrades.

Already, Maryland has allocated more than \$200,000 for the protection of Jewish sites in the state. It is also the home of a pilot program to provide federal money for security upgrades to synagogues.

Recent events have shown that Jewish sites are high-risk targets for terrorist attacks, both in the United States and abroad. And as the federal government allocates money to prevent such attacks, Jewish institutions are hoping to win some grants to defray the staggering cost of protecting themselves.

The Department of Homeland Security determined last month that non-profit institutions are eligible for part of the \$2 billion in grants from the department's Office of Domestic Preparedness. The money is given to states and municipalities for distribution for security measures, both for law enforcement and for the protection of public and private facilities.

That ruling came as some states were already preparing to give money to Jewish sites, and serves as a clarification, officials said. To avoid crossing the line separating church and state, money is distributed to intermediaries, who monitor the security upgrades and reimburse the sites after the work is completed.

For example, the Baltimore Jewish Council, a local community relations council, is overseeing security improvements to two Jewish community centers in its region.

Maryland Gov. Robert Ehrlich has earmarked \$97,900 for the project. The community centers worked with law enforcement and emergency management officials to determine what security upgrades were needed.

"After 9/11, the government must act proactively and in partnership with communities to ensure all our citizens'

safety," Ehrlich said.

Invoices will be submitted to the Baltimore council as work is completed, and they will be sent to the government for reimbursement.

The funds are used for security upgrades such as bulletproof glass, access cards for secure areas, security cameras, alarm systems and concrete planters to protect against explosives-laden cars driving into the facilities.

Baltimore Jewish officials say that securing Jewish sites is a good investment for the government.

"Certainly, it's the government's obligation to provide for the security of its citizens," said David Conn, director of government relations and public policy for the Baltimore Jewish Council. "What this money is doing is lowering the burden on the government to secure these facilities."

Conn said secure Jewish facilities will mean less of a risk for the general community and therefore will require less law enforcement services.

The community has become keenly aware of the possibility of Jewish sites being targeted since last October, when a Saudi national was caught videotaping the campus of a girls yeshiva in a Baltimore suburb.

The United Jewish Communities, the umbrella organization of federations, will work with federations and other Jewish institutions across the country, educating them on how to seek funds from their states and municipalities.

Charles Konigsberg, UJC's vice president for public policy, said he believed there was great potential for Jewish sites around the country to garner Homeland Security dollars.

David Pollock, associate executive director of the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York, said his group, in conjunction with the UJA-Federation of New York, is in consultation with the state about homeland security funds.

But he also said he is concerned about competing for dollars from the same pot directly with the New York City Police

Department, which he said is doing good work in protecting Jewish sites.

In Maryland, the governor has expressed interest in helping to secure houses of worship with the money as well.

Through grants, Ehrlich has earmarked an additional \$30,000 to the Baltimore Jewish Council to help secure a synagogue, whose name is not yet public.

These funds mark the first time a house of worship is receiving federal funds for security.

But elsewhere in the region, there is some reluctance to use

the money directly for synagogues.

Ron Halber, executive director of the Jewish Community Council of Greater Washington, which includes some Maryland suburbs, said that while his group has no problem securing a Maryland day school with \$98,000 allocated from the state, they are not yet willing to take money to secure local synagogues.

"We want to make sure that if we accept the money, it does not assist in the erosion of the wall between church and state," Halber said. "The concern occurs once you make the leap" from a non-religious but religiously affiliated organization to a house of worship, he said.

The Washington council will investigate the implications of taking the money for synagogues in the next few weeks.

"Just because money is there doesn't mean you always take it," Halber said. "Sometimes, there are other issues at stake."

While Jewish organizations pursue the money to upgrade security, lobbyists are continuing to push for a separate pool of money that Congress is considering that would allocate funds specifically for the security of high-risk non-profit institutions.

That legislation, which would authorize \$100 million for non-profits, has broad support in Congress, the UJC's Konigsberg said.

It has been included as part of the Homeland Security appropriations bill, which currently is being held up in Congress. It is not clear if and when it will come to a vote.

'Just because money is there doesn't mean you always take it.'

Ron Halber

Jewish Community Council
of Greater Washington

NEWS IN BRIEF

MIDDLE EAST

Israel redraws West Bank barrier

Israel is bringing part of its West Bank security fence closer to the Green Line.

The Defense Ministry said Tuesday that by the end of the month it expected to have a new route for some 20 miles of fence northwest of Jerusalem, after Palestinians successfully petitioned the High Court of Justice against the original route.

Israeli officials said the changes were implemented out of deference to Palestinians whose lives will be impacted by the fence, not because of the ruling by the International Court of Justice that all portions of the fence beyond the Green Line — the 1949 armistice line between Israel and the West Bank — are illegal.

State Dept.: Palestinian state unlikely by 2005

It's increasingly unlikely that Palestinians will achieve statehood by next year, the State Department said.

Spokesman Richard Boucher echoed earlier assertions by President Bush that the "road map" peace plan's 2005 deadline for Palestinian statehood was unrealistic, given the disarray among the Palestinians and the fact that they have not met preliminary obligations over the past year.

"The continuation of the violence, the failure of the Palestinian Authority to take up its responsibilities and the continuing difficulties of making progress on negotiations had made it increasingly unlikely that we'd be able to make the 2005 date," Boucher said Monday.

Jihad leader killed

Israeli troops killed an Islamic Jihad leader in the West Bank.

Witnesses said Numan Tahayna, head of the terrorist group in Jenin, was shot dead in his car after he tried to flee an Israeli unit in the city Tuesday. Another fugitive in the vehicle was wounded and taken into custody.

Roed-Larsen raps Arafat

The U.N. envoy to the Middle East assailed Yasser Arafat for not stopping Palestinian terrorism.

"The P.A., despite consistent promises by its leadership, has made no progress on its core obligation to take immediate action on the ground to end violence and combat terror and to reform and reorganize the Palestinian Authority," Terje Roed-Larsen said in a report Tuesday to the United Nations. "All those who yearn for peace have already and repeatedly argued that President Arafat, in public and in private, take immediate action to restore this diminished credibility."

Roed-Larsen also accused Israel of poor faith, citing its failure to dismantle illegal settlement outposts in the West Bank.

Palestinian U.N. rep fumes

The Palestinian ambassador to the United Nations rejected the monthly Middle East report to the Security Council.

Nasser Al-Kidwa called Terje Roed-Larsen, U.N. special coordinator for the Middle East peace process, a "cheerleader" for Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon after hearing his report. Roed-Larsen is also the U.N. secretary-general's special representative to the Palestinian Authority.

The report, considered harsh on the Palestinians, said the Palestinian Authority "is in deep distress," and that "this collapse of authority cannot be attributed only to the Israeli incursions and operations inside Palestinian towns."

Al-Kidwa blasted the report for not focusing on the recent opinion of the International Court of Justice against Israel's West Bank security barrier and for saying that a successful Israeli withdrawal

from the Gaza Strip could advance the peace process.

An Israeli U.N. official said Israel found Roed-Larsen's report "more balanced than usual."

U.N. move on fence gains steam

A Palestinian resolution demanding that Israel dismantle its security fence is slated for a vote Friday.

The U.N. General Assembly on Tuesday received a formal request by the Palestinians to introduce the legislation. However, a diplomatic source said the vote may be postponed to next week due to European indecision on how to vote.

The resolution demands that Israel comply with the July 9 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, which said Israel must dismantle its fence and compensate Palestinians for it.

Kerry brother arrives in Israel

Cameron Kerry, brother to Sen. John Kerry (D-Mass.) arrived in Israel for meetings with the top political leaders.

The visit, which will last through Saturday, is hosted by the American Israel Education Foundation, a non-profit organization affiliated with the American Israel Public Affairs Committee.

NORTH AMERICA

PLO responsible for deaths of couple

The PLO and the Palestinian Authority must pay more than \$230 million to the estate of a slain Jewish couple, a U.S. court ruled.

A U.S. District judge upheld an earlier ruling finding the group responsible for the drive-by shooting eight years ago, and ordered each to pay more than \$116 million.

The Anti-Terrorism Act of 1991 allowed the estate's lawyer to sue on behalf of the slain couple, an American and an Israeli, by allowing lawsuits against organizations that kill American citizens.

The ruling expanded the scope of responsibility from Hamas, which the judge ordered in January to pay \$116 million in compensation. Plaintiffs argued that the PLO and Palestinian Authority provide safe haven for Hamas.

New Israeli rep?

A longtime staffer for Benjamin Netanyahu may be the next consul general in New York.

Aviv Bushinsky, chief of staff for the Israeli finance minister, is a leading candidate, the *Jerusalem Post* reported. Bushinsky, who recently resigned and will leave his job in August, is known to have wanted the post in the past.

In an interview with JTA, Bushinsky downplayed rumors about his candidacy. A Foreign Ministry spokeswoman only would say that no one has yet been appointed to the post. Alon Pinkas will be leaving the post by month's end.

WORLD

Survivors to get paid for labor in Bulgaria

Germany has agreed to compensate Jews forced to work in Bulgarian labor camps during World War II.

Newly unearthed documentation by the Claims Conference about the Nazi-era camps convinced the German government to add Bulgaria to the list of countries for which former slave laborers could apply for compensation.

In a statement Monday, the president of the Claims Conference, Israel Singer, called the development "a tremendous breakthrough." The change makes Jewish victims of Nazism from 112 Bulgarian camps eligible for monthly pensions and a one-time payment.