

IN THE NEWS
Report: FBI is probing AIPAC

The FBI has been investigating for two years whether AIPAC is passing classified material to Israel, The Washington Post reported.

New reports suggest the probe is broader than the case of documents on Iran policy that a Pentagon analyst allegedly gave to the officials of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee.

According to the newspaper, both Condoleezza Rice, the White House national security adviser, and her deputy, Stephen Hadley, have been aware of the investigation since it began.

AIPAC officials continue to deny involvement in illegal activity, and lawmakers and Jewish organizations have been expressing support for the group since the accusations came to light last week.

Israel hints at attacking Syria

Israel's deputy defense minister, Ze'ev Boim, hinted that Israel might strike Syria in retaliation for the double suicide bombing in Beersheba. Israel has said Syria bears responsibility for the attack that killed 16 people Tuesday because it provides funding and logistical aid to Palestinian terrorist groups.

Bush: 9/11 brought me closer to Israel

President Bush said the Sept. 11 attacks gave him a better understanding of what life is like for Israelis.

In an Op-Ed piece in this week's Forward newspaper, Bush reiterated his support for the Jewish state and its plans to withdraw from the Gaza Strip. He said regime change in Iraq had made America and Israel more secure.

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Reminder: JTA World Report will not be published Sept. 6.

WORLD REPORT

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White House

President Bush speaks after lighting the menorah at the White House in December.

Among the Orthodox, Republicans sense that they have natural allies

By MATTHEW E. BERGER

NEW YORK (JTA) — There's a standard pitch that Republicans make to a Jewish audience, and it usually centers around the support Israel has received from the Bush administration and the Republican-controlled Congress.

But put Republicans in front of a group of Orthodox Jews, and the discussion becomes more intimate.

"You represent a set of views and values that are beautiful, that are courageous and that are right for mankind," Sen. Sam Brownback (R-Kan.) told Orthodox leaders at a Bush/Cheney meeting for observant Jews Tuesday. "We want you as part of this party."

While the Bush administration and re-

election campaign have been focused on getting Jews, seen as a traditionally Democratic voting bloc, to consider supporting President Bush this November, they think longer term when they talk to the Orthodox community.

Sensing that Orthodox Jews may share more values with Christian conservatives than with less observant Jews, Republican strategists think they can get more Orthodox voters to actively support Republicans, both this November and in the future.

That would mean more than just votes: Being able to showcase men with yarmulkes helps bolster the Republicans' argument that they're a party of diversity.

"We are a minority within a minority," said

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■ *Republicans sense they have natural allies among Orthodox Jews*

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Nathan Diamant, director of the Orthodox Union's Institute for Public Affairs. "But within recent years the Orthodox community, on many fronts, has become much more active and engaged players within the political arena, and we ought to be paid attention too."

The fact that Tuesday's campaign event was geared toward Orthodox Jews, and not the Jewish population at large, showed that a different message is being sent to the religious community.

To be sure, the conversation touched on Israel, as well as other priorities in the Middle East. Brownback even suggested that now that Bush has changed the U.S. position on Israel's West Bank settlements, he should take the issue of Jerusalem off the table by declaring that it belongs only to Israel.

But talk also focused on preventing the legalization of gay marriage and preserving the preciousness of all life, including the unborn. Those subjects are strictly taboo in meetings with non-Orthodox Jews because most Jewish voters disagree with the Republicans on those topics.

Two other Republican senators, Norm Coleman (R-Minn.) and Rick Santorum (R-Pa.), toured an Orthodox social service institution in the fervently Orthodox neighborhood of Borough Park, Brooklyn, Tuesday, touting their support for faith-based initiatives. While the idea of giving federal funds to faith-based groups for social service programming is controversial in the Jewish community, many Orthodox

Jewish leaders embrace the program, thinking it may aid their institutions.

Evident throughout the events was the notion that both religious Jews and Republicans are people of morals.

"We are not perfect by any means, and we still get things wrong, but we more represent the values you stand for than the Democratic Party does," said Brownback, himself a religious conservative. "I hope you come in, and you are welcome."

The timing seems to be right for the Republican Party to tout itself to the Orthodox community.

The Republicans' strong support for Israel is important to the outreach, as is the idea that Bush's frequent comments about his own strong religious faith have endeared him to religious Jews.

"This is an administration that appreciates faith, and it comes from the top down," said Tevi Troy, a former Jewish liaison in the White House who now works as a policy advisor in the re-election campaign.

Troy, an observant Jew himself, was concerned about moving to the campaign because he would be able to work only six days a week. But, he said, he found his peers welcoming of his Sabbath observance.

The concerted effort to reach out to the Orthodox community has not always been there: Religious Jews traditionally were seen as more concerned about local politics, and as aligned with Democrats.

The Orthodox also were seen as just another subset of the Jewish vote, which Republicans had all but dismissed as irretrievably Democratic.

In recent years, Orthodox Jews have become more interested in national politics and have actively reached out to Republicans. Now the GOP is reaching back.

"We're reaching out to all Jews," Troy said. "But we recognize that certain communities are more comfortable with events that are just their events."

The Democrats also are reaching out. Cameron Kerry, brother of Democratic presidential nominee Sen. John Kerry (D-Mass.) and his surrogate in the Jewish community, met with Orthodox leaders in New York last week.

David Luchins, a former aide to Sen.

Daniel Patrick Moynihan who is Orthodox, said he believes Democrats still will enjoy large support in the Orthodox community because there are other issues on which Republicans and Orthodox Jews disagree. He cited stem cell research, gun control and the agenda of the Christian right.

He noted that the Republicans most popular in the Jewish community, such as former New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, were socially liberal.

But Republicans seem content to focus on areas in which they are aligned with the devout Jews.

Certainly, the crux of the effort is to increase votes for Bush in November. But having Bush supported by a group of Jews who are visibly recognizable representatives of their faith helps the party sell the message that it is diverse and inclusive, counterbalancing stereotypes about the GOP.

But Abba Cohen, Washington director of Agudath Israel of America, said the community is not content to be a visual prop for the Republicans.

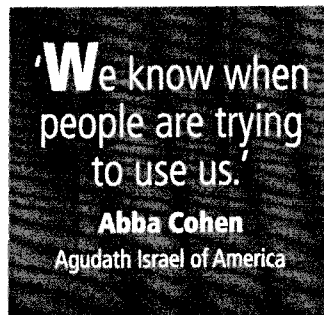
"We're smart people," Cohen said. "We know when people are trying to use us, and we know how to avoid being used."

Orthodox Jews say they have trouble understanding why some of their peers remain Democrats, and think Republicans need to continue the work they have started.

"I think they are taking us seriously, but I don't think they have an organized effort to educate the Jewish community about the benefits of being a Republican," said Karen Steele, an Orthodox Republican delegate from Washington, who asked Brownback, "Why are so many Jews members of the Democratic Party?"

■

A story in the Sept. 1 issue of the JTA World Report on the continuing gap between Jews and Republicans on social issues may have overreached in its suggestion that United Jewish Communities Chairman Robert Goldberg had trouble finding words of support for President Bush. Instead, it should have reported that Goldberg chose to lavish most of his praise on congressional Republicans. JTA apologizes for any inadvertent misinterpretation of Goldberg's remarks.



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Jewish major leaguers receive their due

By PETER EPHROSS

COOPERSTOWN, N.Y. (JTA) — Sandy Koufax isn't the only major league baseball player who refused to pitch on Yom Kippur.

It was the fall of 1963, and Larry Yellen was slated to make his major league debut for the Houston Colt .45s against the New York Mets when he received a call from his mother.

"Larry," Yellen remembers his mother saying. "I read about it in the paper. You're embarrassing us. It's Yom Kippur."

Yellen hewed to the fifth commandment and respected his mother's wishes: He told his general manager that he couldn't pitch and sat the game out.

Yellen's story hasn't received much publicity, most likely because his major league career was short — in fact, he only pitched in 14 big league games before his career ended in 1964.

But the cloud of obscurity surrounding Yellen and other Jewish players is beginning to clear.

■
A series of events — sparked by the publication of the first-ever complete set of Jewish major leaguer baseball cards and culminating in a historic two-day event held at Baseball's Hall of Fame in upstate New York this week — is shining the spotlight on professional Jewish ballplayers.

It all began with a frustrated baseball card collector.

Depending on which list you choose to follow, there have been somewhere between 140 and 160 Jews who have played major league baseball since the late 19th century.

In 1999, while assembling his collection of Jewish players' cards, Martin Abramowitz realized that a host of players were not included — either because they played in an era when cards weren't produced or because they didn't play long enough to merit one.

After he complained about the players who didn't have cards, his son Jacob suggested he make his own.

The result: a 142-card set — available at www.ajhs.org — that could sell out its run of 15,000 by the end of Chanukah.

Like Yellen, many of the Jewish players who have played major league baseball are obscure, known only to the most ardent followers of Jewish sports.

None of them enjoyed careers as spec-

tacular as Hall of Famers Koufax or Hank Greenberg, a slugger in the 1930s and 1940s, but most hung around in the big leagues for a bit longer than Yellen.

There has been a renaissance of Jewish major leaguers in recent years. Depending on what standard of Jewishness is applied, there are currently between 10-12 members of the tribe playing pro ball.

Perhaps just as important, baseball has served as a microcosm of the American Jewish experience.

Like many of the professions in which Jews have worked, baseball was a field — a particularly public one — in which Jews tried "to make a name for ourselves while maintaining a sense of Jewish identity," Abramowitz says.

Harry Danning, 92, is the oldest living testament to that balancing act.

Danning, an All-Star catcher for the New York Giants in the 1930s, said he wasn't bothered too much as a Jewish player. After all, he says, there were three other Jews on the team.

Sure, he says, there were "bench jockeys" who needled him about his large nose — "Pitch under his nose, he can't see the ball," he remembers them saying — but they got on all the players, he says.

And once, when a hotel in Florida refused during spring training to house Danning and another Jewish Giant, Phil Weintraub, the team's manager, Bill Terry, said he would house the entire team elsewhere unless the hotel took the whole squad. The hotel acceded to Terry's request.

■
Danning, who lives in Valparaiso, Ind., was unable to attend the conference because of his age.

Aware that a few players have died in the past year alone, Abramowitz is already planning his next project: creating an archive of interviews with ex-Jewish major leaguers.

The Hall of Fame's "Celebration of 143 American Jews in America's Game" — even though there are only 142 cards — was attended by 300 participants from as far away as San Francisco. The event featured a trivia quiz and a clinic for kids,

discussions on Koufax and Greenberg and panels with eight Jewish former players.

It would be easy to say that the event was simply a milestone for Jews "making it" in the United States. After all, the weekend was the first ethnic event held at the hall — and the food served under a tent outside the red-brick building was certainly the first large-scale kosher meal served there.

The truth, however, is that Jewish ballplayers don't fall into simple categories.

Of the eight, two were converts: Bob Tufts, a pitcher with a short-lived career in the 1980s, and Elliott Maddox, a black player who converted to Judaism while playing in the 1970s.

Aside from pitcher Ken Holtzman, who was raised in a Conservative home in St. Louis and had his Bar Mitzvah in an Orthodox shul, none of these Jewish athletes was brought up in an observant family.

Still, the Jewishness of the eight was on display by virtue of their attending the conference, and it was occasionally displayed in odd, funny ways.

■
On the second day of the conference, the players held a clinic for the kids in attendance.

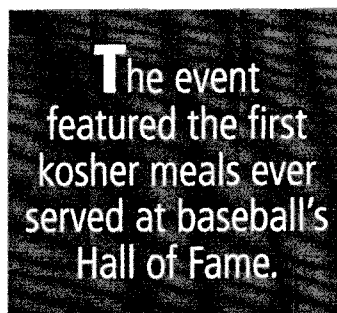
Ron Blomberg, a former New York Yankee whose upcoming autobiography, "Designated Hebrew," takes its title from his having been major league baseball's first designated hitter in 1973, carried on a constant patter as he gave a hitting lesson to a batch of younger kids.

"Do you like regular or do you like egg matzah," he asked the group as one child struggled to hit the ball off a tee.

Parents appreciated the Jewish aspect of the conference.

"Judaism is important in our lives. Sports are important in our kids' lives. I think it's important to connect the two," says Carol Prushan, who came to the conference from Philadelphia with her husband and two sons.

As for the kids — they didn't seem to think Blomberg's question was strange at all. Some of them yelled out "egg," others screamed "regular" as they waited eagerly for their next turn at bat. ■



Reporter's notebook: Out and about in N.Y.

By **RON KAMPEAS**
and **MATTHEW E. BERGER**

NEW YORK (JTA) — It started with a grim parade of names and ended with a song of hope.

A reading of names of victims of terrorism in Israel drew about 700 people to New York's Baruch College on Sunday, the day before the launch of the Republican convention. The event was sponsored by The Israel Project, a group that tries to improve Israel's standing in U.S. public opinion, and the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

A similar reading drew more than 1,000 Jews last month at a Democratic Party event in Boston, but much tougher security restrictions in New York, and a city emptied of many of its denizens, contributed to the lower turnout.

Volunteers held aloft photos of nearly 1,000 terror victims as their names were read out. Survivors of terrorist attacks and families who lost loved ones joined top Jewish community representatives and Israeli diplomats in addressing the crowd.

The event ended with a song by top-40 pop duo Evan and Jaron dedicated to victims of terrorism, called "Isn't it time we cared?"

"We have come here today to remind the world that behind every number are devastated families, behind every statistic are women and men suffering," said Eliad Moreli, who survived a July 2002 bombing attack at the Hebrew University cafeteria.

That was the message Israel Project founder Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi wanted to get across. The Israel Project will air its ads 350 times on CNN, MSNBC, Fox News Channel and local news channel NY1 this week.

"Our target is the journalists covering the convention," she said. "We want to put a human face on what to them are statistics."

AIPAC draws fire, earns praise

They came to praise Israel — and ended up defending its best-known defender.

Over 1,600 people, including a Who's Who of the Republican Party, attended the American Israel Public Affairs Committee-United Jewish Communities event Sunday night at Chelsea Piers in New York launching this year's Republican Party convention.

Such events usually are dedicated to praising Israel's friends in Congress and in the administration, but the spotlight was turned on the normally camera-shy AIPAC because of allegations that two of its staffers were involved in the leaking of classified Pentagon documents.

"AIPAC and its support for Israel is so important to all of us," UJC chairman Robert Goldberg said.

Attendance had climbed from an anticipated 1,200 to 1,600, organizers said, with a flood of RSVPs over the weekend after the news broke.

"The record turnout demonstrates our community stands united," Goldberg said.

Others chimed in their support.

"I've worked closely with AIPAC for more than a half century," said Sam Fox, national chairman of the Republican Jewish Coalition. "I know AIPAC; it is an organization in my experience that had reflected the very best qualities of professionalism."

Leaders of the National Jewish Democratic Council also spoke glowingly of AIPAC's leadership and professionalism, as have U.S. House and Senate members participating in forums with AIPAC board members all week at the convention.

"While the House will want to look carefully at any allegations that might endanger our national security, it will begin that look with a record of great confidence in our relationship with AIPAC and our strongest ally and the only democracy in the Middle East, Israel," said House Majority Whip Roy Blunt (R-Mo.).

Also speaking out were the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York and former House Speaker Newt Gingrich.

Sen. Arlen Specter (R-Pa.) told JTA on Wednesday that an FBI investigation of allegations that AIPAC received classified documents from an Iran specialist at the Pentagon is a "smear."

A dozen senior Democrats and Republicans sent AIPAC letters and statements reassuring the group of their support.



Ronald L. Glassman

Sen. Norm Coleman (R-Minn.) and Judith West, a Republican Jewish Coalition official, at an RJC event in New York this week.

"I know AIPAC, I know the AIPAC leadership," said Sen. Bill Frist (R-Tenn.), the Senate majority leader. "It is an outstanding organization."

Across the aisle, Sen. Tom Daschle (D-S.D.), the minority leader echoed: "America is better and stronger for" AIPAC's work. "It is vital work — work I know AIPAC will continue to lead effectively."

Enough with the phone booth jokes

The big news for the Republican Jewish Coalition is how big it got. Speaker after speaker at its keynote event Monday marveled at the packed ballroom at the Plaza Hotel.

"Thank you all for demonstrating for the first time that the term Jewish Republican is not an oxymoron," Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), the party whip, told the crowd.

Sam Fox, the national chairman of the RJC, echoed, "I don't know if there's been a time in my life when I've been in a room with so many Jewish Republicans."

Fun as it was relishing such a novelty, Sen. Rick Santorum (R-Pa.) found something else to enjoy when he was asked to speak first.

"Let me savor this," he said. "This is the first time I've been introduced at a Jewish event before Sen. Arlen Specter," the senior Pennsylvania senator who is Jewish.

Not that everyone in town was happy

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with the spectacle: Across the street from the Plaza, several dozen members of Jews for Racial and Economic Justice handed out "shanda" awards to Jewish Republicans, and shouted out, "Hey, hey Republican Jews, John Ashcroft hates you too."

Rudy waxes eloquent on Israel

In a speech endorsing President Bush's American vision, Rudy Giuliani tithed one-tenth of his time to Israel.

The former New York City mayor, overwhelmingly the most popular Republican among Jews, referred to Israel twice in his Republican Party convention speech Monday night. Both Israel mentions topped 300 words in a 3,000 word speech.

Giuliani said the terrorism that struck the United States on Sept. 11, 2001 had its roots in the terrorism Palestinians employed against Israelis — and in the subsequent releases of the terrorist perpetrators by European governments.

He cited the attacks on Israeli athletes at the 1972 Munich Olympics and on the Achille Lauro, an Italian ocean liner, in 1985, in which a handicapped American Jew was killed.

"How else to explain Yasser Arafat winning the Nobel Peace Prize when he was supporting a terrorist plague in the Middle East that undermined any chance of peace?" Giuliani said.

Giuliani also accused Democratic candidate Sen. John Kerry (D-Mass.) of flip-flopping on Israel's security barrier, criticizing it to Arab Americans in October and praising it to Jews in March.

In fact, Kerry's change in position matched Bush's own progression from criticism to endorsement — and both were prompted by Israel's decision to reroute the fence.

Rebbitzin on the dais

Rebbitzin Esther Jungreis, the Orthodox Jewish writer, speaker and matchmaker, delivered the benediction Tuesday night at the Republican convention and said it brought her life full circle from her survival of the Holocaust and arrival in the United States.

"Only in America," Jungreis, 68, an avid supporter of President Bush, said when she learned she had been chosen to speak.

Jungreis likens the war in Iraq to the liberation of the concentration camps and calls Bush "the president of freedom and democracy."

Another echo from World War II

haunted Monday night's benediction — Sheri Dew, a Mormon publisher, once had likened supporters of gay rights to Nazis. She later acknowledged that it was "extreme" to make the comparison.

Jews at the convention might also have wondered at her benediction: "As a follower of Jesus Christ, and on behalf of all who believe likewise, we offer this prayer in the name of Jesus Christ," Dew said.

The next Sandy Koufax?

Of all the things going on in New York during convention week, it would have been easy to overlook Jewish Heritage Day at Shea Stadium on Sunday.

But it's a day Michael Miller isn't likely to forget. Miller, executive vice president of the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York, threw out the first pitch at Sunday's Mets-Dodgers game after no one from the promotion's sponsor, Health Plus, volunteered.

Not all 30,000 fans attending the game were Jewish, but each of them received a white T-shirt that read "Let's Go Mets" in English and Hebrew.

It didn't help the home team, though: The Mets lost to Los Angeles, 10-2.

Asking Jews questions? Why?

Polling is never easy, but try polling Jews, says Frank Luntz, a Republican Jewish pollster.

Each time he asks a question of a respondent, he told an American Jewish Committee gathering on Monday timed for the Republican convention, he gets a question back.

"Who do you prefer, John Kerry or George Bush" is likely to get an incredulous question back: "Bush?"

That's why he offers cut rates to Jewish groups, Luntz said — and then tacks on \$1,500 in "annoyance pay."

A kosher non-debate

Not ready to cede the limelight to their Republican opponents, leaders of the National Jewish Democratic Council came to New York this week.

The NJDC has been pushing for debates between Jewish Democrats and Republicans for some time now, and have been disappointed by a lack of response from Jewish GOP'ers.

They even invited them to come

to a news conference Monday, and when no one showed, the Republican seat was occupied by a man in a yellow chicken suit — a kosher chicken suit, complete with the Empire Kosher Poultry company's logo.

The chicken sat behind names of several Republicans who were invited to attend, including Sen. Norm Coleman (R-Minn.), Rep. Eric Cantor (D-Va.) and the Bush/Cheney campaign's manager, Ken Mehlman.

Crossed signals

Jewish Democrats are complaining that a slab of wood adjacent to the speaker's podium at the Republican convention resembles a cross.

"It is the very height of insensitivity for the Republican Party to feature a cross at the center of the podium of this convention, for the duration of the opening night of the convention," Ira Forman, executive director of the National Jewish Democratic Council, said in a news release.

The waist-high slab on which the gavel rested seemed to have been constructed of differently shaded wooded panels, with the lighter shades resembling a cross, but it was in keeping with the patterns of wood on the podium itself and two additional wooden pillars that held teleprompters.

Spokesmen for the Bush/Cheney campaign dismissed the podium flap as unfounded. Karl Rove, Bush's top political adviser, asked CNN, "Where do they come up with this stuff?"



Barbara Janov

Rebbitzin Esther Jungreis with the Bush twins at the Republican National Convention this week.

Will kidnapping strengthen pro-Arab policy?

By PHILIP CARMEL

PARIS (JTA) — Regardless of the fate of two French journalists held hostage in Iraq, appeals from throughout the Arab world for the men's release are likely to reinforce France's pro-Arab foreign policy, observers say.

The kidnapers who took freelance journalist Christian Chesnot and his colleague Georges Malbrunot, a special envoy in Iraq from the daily *Le Figaro*, demanded that France revoke its ban on Muslim veils and other religious symbols in public schools, which took effect when schools opened this week.

The kidnapers, a group calling itself the Islamic Army in Iraq, described the French legislation as "unjust and an attack against Islam and personal liberty."

The group has claimed responsibility for kidnapping and killing other Westerners in Iraq. While the ultimatum to France presented no specific threat to the lives of the journalists, it said the French government had 48 hours to respond to the statement. On Monday, the ultimatum was extended for an additional 24 hours.

French leaders made clear that they had no intention of altering the law, while utilizing France's strong contacts in the Arab World to try to free the hostages.

Within hours, radical Shi'ite and Sunni Muslim groups, ranging from the Cairo-based Muslim Brotherhood to the Lebanese Hezbollah, were lining up to demand the hostages' release. The surge of solidarity for France within the Arab world was unprecedented, particularly since no such support was evident when Egyptian and Lebanese hostages were kidnapped — and later murdered — in Iraq.

Principal among those calling for the hostages' release was Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat, who on Sunday made a personal appeal to the terrorists in an interview with the French public TV channel Antenne 2.

In the interview, Arafat noted that French President Jacques Chirac was "a good friend of the Palestinian people," and said the kidnapped journalists "were helping the Iraqi and the Palestinian cause."

Arafat regards France as a key ally, particularly after French Foreign Minister Michel Barnier recently visited him in

Ramallah, despite pressure from Israel to avoid the Palestinian leader.

France also was a leading player in persuading European Union states to back a motion at the United Nations in July condemning Israel's West Bank security barrier.

Arafat was not alone among Palestinian groups calling for the release of the French hostages.

Hamas issued a declaration Tuesday in which it said the release of the journalists would have "positive repercussions on the political positions of France at both popular and official levels towards Palestinian and Iraqi causes."

While the group reiterated its criticism of the ban on Muslim veils, it noted France's more favorable policy toward the Palestinians "compared with other European countries," as well as its opposition to "the totally partial American support of the Zionist entity."

Still more telling was a call from Hezbollah's television station, Al-Manar, which last month slammed the French government for appealing to French courts to ban Al-Manar's satellite broadcasts because of their anti-Semitic content.

Such remarks appear to confirm the perennial claim by pro-Israel groups in France that French foreign policy is overwhelmingly hostile to Israel.

According to Michel Gurfinkiel, editor-in-chief of *Valeurs Actuelles*, that policy is only likely to be reinforced, whatever the fate of the journalists.

"If they are released, it will only serve to vindicate the pro-Arab policy, and even if they are killed, it will still be clear that 90 percent of the Muslim world stood behind France," Gurfinkiel told JTA.

Michel Darmon, a retired French general who heads the pro-Israel lobby group France-Israel, agreed. "The message is that Michel Barnier gets the total support of the Arab League for the hostages' release," Darmon said, referring to the foreign minister. "They all condemn it to show how moderate they are."

Both men said that the principal damage to France would be internal.

Gurfinkiel said he was disturbed by the position of local "Muslim militants acting

as go-betweens mediating with the French government."

When news of the hostages broke Sunday, Interior Minister Dominique de Villepin called French Muslim leaders to the ministry to appeal for their release.

Messages of solidarity were read out from Dalil Boubakeur, the moderate leader of France's Muslim Council, but also from the more radical Union of French Islamic Organizations, the largest group on the Council

and a body with strong links to the international Muslim Brotherhood.

Darmon slammed De Villepin's move, telling JTA it was "undignified for France's secular republic to call in religious leaders."

While most Muslim leaders have criticized the law banning veils, even the more radical groups say they advised young Muslim girls to obey the law when they returned to school this week.

But their position still contrasts sharply with France's principal Jewish organizations, which largely have supported the law.

Jewish groups regard the law as a bulwark against rising Islamic fundamentalism, which they see as a principal force in anti-Semitic violence in France.

While the law also bans yarmulkes as well as large crosses in state schools, it is thought unlikely to affect Jewish students since those who might wear yarmulkes likely attend private Jewish schools.

Nevertheless, France's chief rabbi, Joseph Sitruk, recently said he was troubled by the yarmulke banning until he, too, was brought into line by support for the law from his employer, the Consistoire Central, France's principal Jewish religious organization.

By extending the ultimatum Monday evening, the kidnapers seemed to indicate that France's opposition to the war in Iraq and its support for the Palestinians was increasingly likely to win its journalists a reprieve.

The contrast was furthered the same day by news that 20 kidnapped Nepalese workers had been executed by another Iraqi Islamist terrorist group.

Jewish groups regard the law as a bulwark against rising Islamic fundamentalism.

TRANSITIONS

■ June Walker was re-elected president of Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America.

■ Betsy Miller Landis was installed as president of the Jewish Women's Foundation of New York.

■ The Anti-Defamation League appointed Etzion Neuer director of its New Jersey regional office.

■ The Holocaust Memorial Foundation of Illinois named Richard Hirschhaut executive director and museum project director.

■ Fred Greenberg was named director of major gifts for the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews.

■ The American Jewish World Service appointed Phyllis Teicher Goldman as vice president for development, and promoted Tommy Loeb to vice president and deputy executive director.

■ Anita Jacobs was named the Jewish National Fund's zone director for the greater New York area.

■ Henry Kressel was elected to the board of directors of Yeshiva University's Sy Syms business school.

■ Menahem Schmelzer, a professor at the Jewish Theological Seminary, was chosen as a senior distinguished scholar in the Library of Congress' John W. Kluge Center.

■ Leni May was elected chairwoman of the board of trustees of New York City's Jewish Museum.

■ American Friends of Hebrew University named Matthew Ross West Coast regional director.

HONORS

■ Pianist and conductor Daniel Barenboim was honored in Argentina for his efforts toward Israeli-Palestinian reconciliation. The Argentine Islamic Center hosted the Aug. 19 tribute to Barenboim, stressing his collaboration with the late Palestinian intellectual Edward Said. During the tribute — attended by local city officials — Barenboim announced that his orchestra of Israeli and Palestinian musicians will perform next year in Ramallah. During his visit to Argentina, Barenboim — who was born in Argentina and lived there until age 9, and who also holds Israeli citizenship — presented two Bach concerts.

■ May Berenbaum, head of the department of entomology at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, received the Weizmann Institute of Science's Weizmann Women & Science Award.

■ The Covenant Foundation gave its annual Covenant Awards for outstanding Jewish educators to Yosef Abramowitz, Ruth Pinkenson Feldman and Barbara El-lison Rosenblit.

Israelis celebrate, fret after Olympics

By DINA KRAFT

TEL AVIV (JTA) — Doused with champagne and confetti and greeted with loudspeakers blasting "We Are the Champions," the Israeli Olympic team received a hero's welcome home.

The celebrations at Ben-Gurion Airport on Monday capped an emotional two weeks of Israeli attention focused toward the Games in Athens. Any disappointments were overshadowed by the triumph of Gal Fridman's gold in windsurfing and Arik Ze'evi's bronze in judo.

"I am honored to be the first Israeli athlete to bring home an Olympic gold, and I hope there will be many more to follow," Fridman told the roaring crowd. "Remember, there is no such thing as impossible. It's wonderful that the gold medal made everyone so happy."

The Israelis' triumphs were only two of more than a dozen medals won by Jewish athletes at the Games, including two golds earned by Chile's Nicolas Massu in tennis and several more medals by U.S. Jewish swimmers.

But athletes winning medals wasn't the only Jewish story at the Games. An Iranian athlete, Arash Miresmaeli, made international headlines after he refused to fight an Israeli competitor, Ehud Vaks, in judo.

But in Israel, a country hungry for good news, the medals were the main story from this year's Games.

Newspapers published commemorative posters of Fridman, a victory laurel on his head, kissing his gold medal. Billboards were posted over major roads, saying "Gal Fridman, You Made the Country Proud," and rabbis spoke of Fridman in their Shabbat sermons.

Ze'evi won the bronze in the under 100-kg category. His face is now also seen plastered in advertising posters across the country, as Israeli companies scramble to use these new Israeli sports heroes to sell their products.

Upon his return to Israel, Ze'evi said Fridman's gold should motivate younger Israelis to push Israeli sports further ahead. He said more corporations should get involved in helping sponsor athletes, not only in the country's favorite sports

like soccer and basketball.

Education Minister Limor Livnat was among the crowd of thronging fans with Olympic fever at the airport.

"I want to thank each and every one of the sports men and women," Livnat said. Referring to the elite Israeli army unit, "You are our sporting equivalent of the Sayeret Matkal, both those who won medals, those who reached finals, and those who didn't. For us, you are all champions."

But none of the Israeli athletes from the former Soviet Union touted as possible medal hopefuls made it to the podium.

Among the disappointments among these athletes was seeing pole vaulter Alex Averbukh, who won the European championship in 2002, reach the finals only to falter at crunch time.

The Siberian-born Averbukh blamed his performance, in part, on what he said was overly intense media pressure to return with a medal.

Michael Kalganov, a kayaker who immigrated to Israel from Uzbekistan and won Israel a bronze in Sydney, fared poorly in Athens, although Roei Yellin, another Israeli kayaker did make the finals.

Gymnast Pavel Gofman also performed beyond expectations when he made the final in men's all-around gymnastics.

The failures led to some soul-searching. Ron Koffman wrote in Ha'aretz that more Olympic success depends upon additional government support for athletes.

"The question is what does the future hold in store for the sport in Israel. Does it plan to invest in the sport, to develop gymnasts or to import gymnasts? One thing is certain, the discipline cannot continue to be carried on one man's shoulders," he wrote.

Reveling in the positive mood following the two medals, Herb Keinon wrote in the Jerusalem Post about Israelis' enthusiasm for their athletes.

"The spontaneity, the brashness, the freshness, the unadorned, genuine, unsophisticated, typically Israeli nature of it all. There are moments in the life of a nation where you revel in its particularity. Now is one of those moments," Keinon wrote.



NEWS IN BRIEF

MIDDLE EAST

Gaza firebomber killed

Israeli soldiers killed a Palestinian who tried to attack them with a Molotov cocktail.

The youth was shot dead Thursday in the Gaza Strip refugee camp of Deir El-Balah, where the army earlier discovered a tunnel apparently dug to facilitate a planned terrorist attack. In nearby Khan Yunis, troops destroyed two five-story buildings that had been used as firing positions by Palestinian gunmen.

Palestinians said dozens of people were made homeless by the demolition.

Sharon objects to new fence route

Ariel Sharon's objections to defense officials' proposals for the southern route of the separation fence are causing delays in its construction, Ha'aretz reported.

The region in question is the southern Hebron Hills, the area from which the suicide bombers who blew themselves up in Beersheba on Tuesday crossed into Israel.

The original fence route left large swaths of land beyond the Green Line on the "Israeli" side of the fence, but after a June ruling by Israel's High Court of Justice, when the government was told it had to give more weight to the effect on Palestinian residents, a new line was planned.

The new route would leave only three settlements, all adjacent to the Green Line, inside the fence's boundaries. Sharon wants to see more West Bank land included on the Israeli side of the fence, and his proposals are to undergo a judicial review prior to government discussion on the subject next week.

Jewish terrorist found guilty

An Israeli man was convicted of belonging to a Jewish terrorist organization believed to be behind vigilante killings of seven Palestinian civilians in the past four years.

The conviction of Shahar Dvir-Zeliger, 29, of the West Bank settlement of Adei Ad, was the first in two decades of a Jewish terror organization whose purpose is to attack innocent Palestinians, prosecutor Dan Aldad said.

During Dvir-Zeliger's arrest, police found a large weapons cache in a cave near his home that included M-16 assault rifles, machine-guns, three anti-tank rockets, hundreds of rounds of ammunition and dozens of grenades.

Hunger strike ends

Thousands of Palestinian security prisoners in Israel ended their hunger strike.

Some 3,000 inmates held at 10 jails resumed eating Thursday, ending a liquids-only fast declared Aug. 14. "We were firm with them," Prisons Service chief Ya'acov Ganot said about Israel's refusal to negotiate on the strikers' demands for public telephones and an end to strip searches. Israel accused the prisoners of trying to secure easier communications with Palestinian terrorist groups on the outside.

But a lobby representing the hunger strikers said the Prisons Service had agreed to improve the food served in jails and would consider the demand for inmates not to be separated from visiting relatives by glass partitions.

Justice: Police failed to probe Arab deaths

Israeli police failed to investigate sufficiently the killing of Israeli Arabs by police officers during riots in October 2000, according to a former Supreme Court justice. Theodor Orr criticized the police

internal affairs unit Wednesday, saying it had not fully implemented the recommendations of the report Orr's commission filed last year in the wake of the Israeli Arab riots.

However, Orr also had praise for how police had learned some lessons from the riots.

The riots came in solidarity with the outbreak of the Palestinian intifada.

The commission had recommended that the unit conduct investigations into 10 incidents where police gunfire killed citizens, but no investigation has been completed.

More bus security

Baggage inspection equipment and electronic stalls will be installed on Israeli public buses, Israel Radio reported.

The equipment will be installed in bus and train stations across the country as well in the next several weeks. The \$7 million project is being sponsored by the Chicago-based International Fellowship of Christians and Jews.

On average, about 1.7 million commuters ride the 5,500 public buses that run daily in Israel. A total of 164 people have been killed and 777 wounded in 21 bus bombings during the Palestinian intifada, according to police statistics.

WORLD

Warsaw Ghetto Uprising remains buried

The remains of 11 people believed to be Jews killed during the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising were buried Thursday.

The bones, which will be buried in the Jewish cemetery in the Polish capital, were found several weeks ago during the renovation of a building that stood in Warsaw's Jewish ghetto during the Nazi occupation of Poland, Rabbi Michael Schudrich said.

French Jews lukewarm on Yom Kippur plan

Jewish groups gave a lukewarm response to the possibility that Yom Kippur could become a national holiday in France.

Speaking Thursday at a school near Paris to mark the start of the new school year, Education Minister Francois Fillon said the government was "open to dialogue" on the possibility of creating national holidays for Jews and Muslims.

Fillon's comments were welcomed by the president of France's Muslim Council, Dalil Boubakeur, who said such holidays could "demonstrate that France was not hostile to Islam." Jewish groups appeared less keen on the move.

Frederick Attali, executive director of the Consistoire, France's largest Jewish religious body, told JTA that "there are lots of Jewish holidays and it's no better to go to school on Yom Kippur than it is on Pesach or Shabbat.

"We accept that we're a minority group in a largely non-Jewish country. Why should the whole country take off for the festival of such a tiny percentage of its population?"

NORTH AMERICA

ADL: Probe leaks on spy issue

The Anti-Defamation League called for a probe of leaks to the U.S. media regarding a Pentagon employee accused of passing documents to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee.

"The one clear fact that can be agreed upon is that there was a malicious and targeted leak that is more damaging than the actual allegations of Israeli spying — allegations that in all likelihood are baseless," Abraham Foxman, the national director of the ADL, told Ha'aretz.