

IN THE NEWS
Iran in their sights?

Israel and the United States reportedly are preparing a map of Iranian nuclear sites to target with military strikes.

According to the latest edition of *The New Yorker*, Israeli and Pentagon planners are at work identifying as many as 30 sites in Iran believed to be linked to the country's program for weapons of mass destruction.

Magazine correspondent Seymour Hersh suggests that three-quarters of these could be destroyed by air in an operation similar to Israel's strike against an Iraqi reactor in 1981, and the rest tackled by Israeli or U.S. commando teams.

Israeli officials had no comment on the report, but a White House spokesman said the report is riddled with inaccuracies.

Egypt's Mubarak criticizes Sharon

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak chided Israel for its demand that Palestinian violence end before peace talks resume.

"Experience says that it will never be possible that we can go on with negotiations if we say that all violence must stop," Mubarak told reporters Sunday.

"That's why I call on Prime Minister Sharon that he must go on with the peace process."

Thugs attack rabbi on a Moscow street

Moscow Jews were shocked by anti-Semitic attacks against Chasidic Jews late last week.

Alexander Lakshin, the rabbi who is spearheading the anti-missionary activities of the Russian Jewish community, was beaten by a group of youths who shouted "kikes" while kicking him and hitting him with bottles.

Lakshin received multiple head injuries and a bone in his lower back was broken.

Two hours before that incident, an Orthodox couple was attacked nearby.

WORLD REPORT

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Pool/BP Images

An Israeli soldier in the Gaza Strip keeps watch Sunday over a bulldozer that clears a path for his armored personnel carrier during a military operation against Palestinian terrorists.

Abbas' honeymoon is brief as Israel calls for a crackdown on terrorism

By DAN BARON

SDEROT, Israel (JTA) — The optimism that accompanied Mahmoud Abbas' recent election to the post of Palestinian Authority president appears to be vanishing.

In the latest evidence of the pressures that both Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon are facing, a dusty Israeli border town went on strike this week.

Sderot's businesses and municipal services were shut Monday in a strike declared to mourn six residents lost to Palestinian terror and to demand action from the government.

Yeshiva students held a prayer vigil in the main square.

Children, on an impromptu day off from school, spoke of mounting a protest march toward Beit Hanoun, a Palestinian town just over the nearby Gaza Strip boundary favored by Hamas for launching its rocket and mortar salvos.

"Without even noticing, the Israeli government has turned 20,000 townspeople into hostages," said Itzik Ohayon, whose son Afik was killed by a Hamas-made Kassam rocket last year. "I am sorry to say it, but this is not a civilized country."

Many in Sderot, a hardscrabble industrial town that has slumped into poverty during the last four violent years, accused Sharon of ignoring them and of failing to

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■ Optimism for renewed peace talks buckle under the weight of violence

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provide a military solution.

The strike occurred just a day after the prime minister gave Israeli security forces an unofficial *carte blanche* to crack down on Palestinian terrorists. This move would lift restrictions put on them after Yasser Arafat's death last November in an attempt to boost Abbas.

Although Israeli troops killed two Islamic Jihad gunmen who tried to attack their vehicles in central Gaza overnight, this was far from the major sweep many expected. Some observers speculated that Sharon wanted his tough talk to be heard in Ramallah before becoming a fact on the ground.

Abbas responded quickly. Convening ministers for the first time since being sworn in, Abbas ordered Palestinian Authority security forces to prevent all attacks.

"Abu Mazen and the Cabinet gave clear instructions to the security chiefs to prevent all kinds of violence, including attacks against Israel," a Palestinian minister without portfolio, Kadoura Fares, told Reuters, using Abbas' *nom de guerre*.

Israeli officials were cautiously optimistic at the order, the strongest issued by the Palestinian Authority against terrorists since the years of the Oslo peace process. But they emphasized that Sharon wanted to see a crackdown on terrorists before resuming contacts with Abbas, which he suspended after Palestinian terrorists killed six Israelis at Gaza's Karni crossing late last week.

Such a crackdown seemed unlikely. Abbas' office offered no explanation of how

security forces would confront the roving gunmen in Gaza and the West Bank with whom, in many cases, they have family or ideological ties. And spokesmen for the various terrorist groups lined up to say that they would not lay down their arms unless Israel agreed to a cease-fire, although it was unclear what this meant.

But there was no talk of civil war in the West Bank and Gaza, a bright spot for Abbas, who some political experts fear could be at risk of assassination given his calls to end armed attacks. One media report said the Palestinian Authority president sought to incorporate gunmen from the Al-Aksa Brigade, a terrorist group

linked to Abbas' Fatah movement, into his security forces, a tacit bid for calm that Israeli officials were not quick to rule out.

Sderot residents said they want some stability after days spent waiting for the wail of custom-designed radars that warn of incoming rockets.

Many are concerned that the security situation will only worsen after Israeli troops and settlers leave Gaza under Sharon's withdrawal plan.

"The army can go in hard, and do what needs to be done," said Sderot's deputy mayor, Shai Ben-Yaish.

"But then we have to find some sort of peace settlement. There is no way of avoiding negotiations, in the end." ■

'The Israeli government has turned 20,000 townspeople into hostages.'

Itzik Ohayon
Sderot Resident

Young Brits back Harry's costume

By DANIELLA PELED

LONDON (JTA) — The publication of pictures showing Prince Harry wearing a Nazi uniform at a costume party caused outrage around the world.

But it seems that most of his British peers can't see what all the fuss is about.

In the days following the furor, a poll published by the Sunday Mirror newspaper showed that although 71 percent of those interviewed thought Harry was wrong to wear the costume, which featured a swastika armband, more than half of those between 18 and 24 said the choice of outfit was acceptable.

The results were particularly dispiriting because they followed a recent BBC survey in which 60 percent of those younger than 35 claimed never to have even heard of Auschwitz.

But the subject has been a compulsory part of the national curriculum for 11- to 14-year-olds since 1991.

Although the 20-year-old prince was far from an outstanding student during his education at Eton College, one of the most prestigious private schools in Britain, he could not have avoided being taught about the Nazi genocide.

Britain also has a wealth of resources for Holocaust education, including the Beth Shalom Holocaust Centre in Nottinghamshire and Europe's largest permanent

exhibition on the Holocaust. The latter exhibit opened at London's Imperial War Museum in 2000 and is visited by 25,000 schoolchildren each year.

Established in 1988, the Holocaust Educational Trust runs teacher-training courses and an outreach program for schools, taking high school seniors to Auschwitz.

But an effective strategy for Holocaust education takes time to develop, trust spokeswoman Emma Sandler said. "Students need to know that it is relevant today, not just a history lesson. It's about tolerance, prejudice, anti-Semitism."

That means ensuring that the lessons of the Holocaust and World War II are not only taught but understood. Sandler pointed to encouraging new developments, such as the U.K. citizenship curriculum introduced in the last two years, which covers issues of justice, democracy and human rights.

Community leaders also hope that a high-profile event such as Holocaust Memorial Day, which falls on Jan. 27 and first was marked in 2000, can help to remedy the public's apparent lack of awareness of the Holocaust on the eve of the commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

A series of high-profile media events, including a BBC broadcast of the official national ceremony, will bring the issue of the Holocaust directly into people's lives. ■

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THIS WEEK**TUESDAY**

■ The Senate launches confirmation hearings for Condoleezza Rice. She is expected to be quickly confirmed as secretary of state so that she can launch efforts to spur forward Israel-Palestinian negotiations. She plans to visit the Middle East in March.

■ The Reform movement launches an interfaith initiative. A seven-session curriculum, "Open Doors, Open Minds," aims to partner Reform temples with neighboring churches for dialogue. The first four synagogues to run the program are in Chicago.

■ The North American Alliance for Jewish Youth continues its three-day annual conference on informal Jewish & Zionist education. Some 400 Jewish professionals, from camp directors to Jewish Community Center staff, from the United States, Canada and Israel will converge under the theme "Jewish Journeys."

■ The International Raoul Wallenberg Foundation commemorates the 60th anniversary of the disappearance of the Swedish diplomat who saved Jews during World War II. A major component will include a campaign to obtain 100,000 signatures worldwide, which will be presented to U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan urging him to help resolve the unresolved case.

■ The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous has partnered with the New York City Department of Education to hold an intensive one-day seminar on the Holocaust that will help 60 public high school teachers from throughout the five boroughs to teach the subject more effectively. The program will take place at the Simon Wiesenthal Center/New York Tolerance Center in New York City. The program will focus on Auschwitz, the notorious Nazi death camp, which was liberated 60 years ago this month.

■ A group of 160 Jewish leaders will meet with the pope. The group, including rabbis, cantors, diplomats and other Jewish officials from the United States, Israel and Europe, will meet Pope John Paul II at the Apostolic Palace in Vatican City. Pave The Way, the ecumenical organization sponsoring the trip, is billing the papal audience as the largest-ever meeting of Jewish leaders with a sitting pope.

THURSDAY

■ President Bush is inaugurated. Look for Bush to cite Israel-Palestinian peace and Palestinian statehood in his outline of what he anticipates for his second term. Hundreds of members of the Republican Jewish Coalition will be in town to celebrate, and will have their own rooftop ball Wednesday night to watch the fireworks. Sam Fox, the RJC national chairman, is a co-chairman of the inaugural committee.

Poles look back at Auschwitz

By CAROLYN SLUTSKY

KRAKOW, Poland (JTA) — Each year, the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau by Soviet forces is marked on Jan. 27, but the 60th anniversary has given Poland, site of the most infamous Nazi death camps, a special opportunity for remembrance and reflection.

The anniversary ceremonies, which will be held at the memorial site in Birkenau, will draw an assortment of international dignitaries and leaders. Among those slated to attend are Israeli President Moshe Katsav, Ukrainian President-elect Viktor Yushenko and Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Pope John Paul II, originally from the Polish town of Wadowice, which lies approximately 25 miles from Oswiecim, as Auschwitz is known in Polish, will send French Cardinal Jean-Marie Lustiger — who was born Jewish — as his special envoy.

In addition to world leaders, the most honored guests will be former prisoners of Auschwitz from many countries.

Jaime Ashworth, director of education at the Galicia Jewish Museum in Krakow, said the 60th anniversary is significant because "this might be the last time survivors participate to this extent in Holocaust commemoration ceremonies."

The last roll call at Auschwitz was taken on Jan. 17, 1945. The next day, some 60,000 prisoners were sent out of the concentration camp on death marches, headed to German camps in the west. Approximately 16,000 people were left behind in Auschwitz II, also called Birkenau.

Today more than half a million people visit Auschwitz each year.

Poland has a particularly complicated role in Holocaust remembrance. The Nazis chose Poland as the site of many death camps because it borders Germany and was in the center of occupied Europe.

More Jews — approximately 3.5 million — lived in prewar Poland than in any other country, and Poland lost more Jews than any other nation.

Today Poland is home to anywhere between 5,000 and 20,000 Jews, many unaffiliated with the Jewish community.

Despite Poland's reputation for anti-

Semitism, the country today appears to be confronting its history effectively. According to the U.S. State Department's report on global anti-Semitism, released Jan. 5, "surveys over the past several years showed a continuing decline in anti-Semitic sentiment, and avowedly anti-Semitic candidates have won few elections."

The report continues, "In June, the government held a major international conference to unveil its proposal to open an international center for human rights education in Oswiecim."

The report includes some incidents of vandalism and verbal attacks against Jews but points to a generally favorable trend in governmental support for Jewish projects and communities.

In the post-Communist era, many groups have been created to foster Polish-Jewish dialogue and mutual understanding. Andrzej Folwarczny, a former member of the Polish Parliament, works with the Forum for Dialogue Among Nations. An American, Dennis Misler, moved to Poland several years ago to create the Polish-American-Jewish Alliance for Youth Action, which unites Polish and American Jews and non-Jewish Polish students interested in Jewish history and culture.

In addition, the Polish Jewish community has grown to include Orthodox and Progressive congregations, a choir, several publications and many youth groups and lectures.

Still, Auschwitz remains the focal point of Holocaust history and memory in Poland, and Polish schoolchildren visit it every year.

Joanna Kempinska, 24, remembers learning about Auschwitz in high school.

"When you read about it you just get a sense of it, but when you actually go to see it, you realize someone died here, many people," she said.

Leszek Bizo, 25, from Andrychow, a nearby town, said, "I felt so shocked when I saw the shoes, the hair, in Auschwitz."

The Auschwitz Museum has an extensive educational center, which welcomes visitors and conducts programs year-round. Historians, professors and members of the Jewish community from across Poland teach monthly postgraduate teacher-training courses in Jewish history and the history of Auschwitz there. ■

**Auschwitz remains
the focal point of
Holocaust history and
memory in Poland.**

NEWS IN BRIEF

WORLD

Israel lauds U.N. decision

Israel welcomed the United Nations decision to mark the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

"We're pleased as this is the first time since the establishment of the U.N. that it is commemorating the Holocaust," Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom was quoted as saying in the Jerusalem Post on Monday, referring to the General Assembly session slated for Jan. 24.

"The fact that 30 nations sponsored it and that 138 nations supported it speaks of the place that Israel holds within the world of nations."

Poland celebrates Judaism

Poland completed its celebration of the eighth annual "Days of Judaism" in the city of Katowice.

The central events, which are organized by the Catholic Church, take place in the city's St. Peter and St. Paul Church, and include films and musical presentations, ecumenical meetings and lectures by rabbis, bishops and members of the Polish Council of Christians and Jews.

Monday's commemoration, which also included discussions about Holocaust history and remembrance, occurred 10 days before the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

War crimes case hits Australia

An Australian of Hungarian origin was accused by the Simon Wiesenthal Center of a war crime.

The center has advised the Australian and Hungarian governments that Charles Zentai is alleged to have committed the crime in Budapest in 1944.

Center officials say Zentai beat a young Jewish man to death in his Budapest army barracks in 1944 after seizing him because he was not wearing the mandatory yellow Star of David.

The center received tips about the alleged incident as part of its Operation Last Chance program, which offers rewards for information on suspected Nazi-era war criminals.

French survivors mark Auschwitz liberation

French survivors marked the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

Sunday's ceremony was the first in a series of events held in France to mark the liberation of the death camp.

At the ceremony, Paris Mayor Bertrand Delanoë pledged to make 2005 a year of Holocaust remembrance, The Associated Press reported.

The official commemoration is to be held in Poland, where Auschwitz was located, on Jan. 27, and events will be held across Europe in the coming days.

Le Pen: Nazi occupation 'not so bad'

Far-right French politician Jean-Marie Le Pen minimized the severity of Germany's World War II occupation of France.

"In France, at least, the German occupation was not particularly inhuman, even if there were a few blunders," Le Pen told a small right-wing French newspaper, *Rivarol*. French Justice Minister Dominique Perben expressed outrage, as did CRIF, the main umbrella group of French Jewry.

Perben has asked for a preliminary inquiry into the remarks.

Le Pen has been convicted of racism or anti-Semitism at least six times.

MIDDLE EAST

Troops quit settlement

Israel pulled troops out of an unruly West Bank settlement. Paratroopers stationed at Yitzhar, one of Israel's most radical right-wing enclaves, left Sunday following a series of confrontations with local settlers, including a man who ran his car into the troops' doctor in what police alleged was a deliberate attack.

Security sources described the pullback as "routine."

The settlement still has its own armed guards and can call regional Israeli forces to its aid should there be a terror attack.

Slogan stirs concern

Far-right Israeli activists put out a bumper sticker threatening Ariel Sharon's life.

Police sources said Sunday the distributors of the sticker, reading "Sharon: Lily Awaits You," could be probed for incitement to murder. The slogan refers to Sharon's wife, Lily, who died in 2000.

According to media reports, at least 5,000 of the stickers were issued by the outlawed far-right group Kach.

Security has been beefed up around Sharon in recent months out of concern he could be assassinated in a bid to defeat his plan to withdraw from the Gaza Strip and parts of the West Bank.

In a related incident, the spokesman of the Yesha settler council, Yehoshua Mor-Yosef, resigned Sunday in what local media described as an ideological dispute.

According to reports, Mor-Yosef opposed recent calls by Yesha leaders for civil disobedience en masse when the government moves to evacuate settlements.

Port of call

The U.S. Navy's Sixth Fleet docked in Haifa for the first time in more than four years. Some 400 sailors are on shore leave in the northern Israeli port city this week, bringing an estimated \$500,000 to local businesses.

The Navy halted its Mediterranean fleet's visits to Haifa after the October 2000 terrorist attack on the USS Cole in the Persian Gulf, but last year Mayor Yona Yahav persuaded it to reverse the decision.

NORTH AMERICA

Chabad spreads the word

Chabad sent a copy of the Hebrew Bible to every Jewish member of congress.

U.S. Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-Fla.) made headlines earlier this month when she could not find a Hebrew Bible for her swearing in; she refused the Christian Bible proffered by House Speaker Dennis Hastert (R-Ill.) and eventually borrowed one from Rep. Gary Ackerman (D-N.Y.).

After hearing of the mishap, the Lubavitch movement distributed chumashim to all 26 Jewish House members and 11 Jewish senators.

Hadassah plans stem-cell drive

Hadassah is planning a nationwide campaign to encourage stem-cell research. Members of the Zionist women's group are planning to lobby for stem cell research and funding in 42 states, 30 of them on March 2.

"The promise of stem cells to cure or alleviate chronic and catastrophic disease may be the greatest medical revolution of the 21st century and it is critically important that money is allocated for its research," said June Walker, Hadassah's national president.

Several states are considering increased funding for stem cell research.