



IN THE NEWS

Down on the farm with Sharon and Abbas

Ariel Sharon is expected to meet Mahmoud Abbas within days.

Spokesman Ra'anana Gissin said Wednesday that the meeting could take place at the Israeli prime minister's Sycamore Ranch in the Negev within a week.

According to Gissin, aides to Sharon and the Palestinian Authority president discussed a possible follow-up meeting in Ramallah, the West Bank site of the Palestinian government.

'Quartet' to convene in London next month

The Quartet of "road map" peace mediators is to meet at a Palestinian conference early next month. Representatives of the United States, European Union, United Nations and Russia will attend the March 1-2 forum in London, dedicated to discussing ways of reviving the Palestinian Authority's economy and instituting governmental reforms, officials said Wednesday.

It was not immediately clear to what extent the Quartet would discuss the "road map" peace plan.

Israel is not attending the London conference.

Israeli officials had expressed concern that the meeting would become a forum to press Israel to make concessions to the Palestinian beyond what has been agreed.

Jewish sites get security dollars

Maryland's governor said he would earmark additional federal homeland security funds for Jewish sites in the state.

Robert Ehrlich announced Wednesday that Jewish sites, including several Jewish day schools and synagogues in three counties, would receive much of the state's allotment of more than \$1 million in homeland security funds.

Jewish organizations have pushed to get federal homeland security money, citing increased threats to Jewish institutions.

WORLD REPORT

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In the United States and Israel, Jews raise money for tsunami aid

By RACHEL POMERANCE

NEW YORK (JTA) — As millions of Americans tuned in to the Super Bowl on Sunday for a night of football and booze, Chabad-Lubavitch rolled out a different kind of game plan.

Administrators at the Chabad house that serves the beaches of Jacksonville, Fla., had realized that almost as many people would converge on the city for the Super Bowl — some 200,000 — as were killed in the Indian Ocean tsunami on Dec. 26.

That simple equation inspired "Tidal Wave of Goodness," a move to collect some 200,000 signed pledges of good deeds to be done.

"So much negativity was created with the tsunami," said Rabbi Nochum Kurinsky of Chabad @ the Beaches, which partnered for the project with Chabad of Northeast Florida. "We figured we could try to counteract that a little bit."

In the days leading up to the Super Bowl and outside the game itself, Chabad had 10 volunteers with clipboards going around the city asking for pledges. They received close to 3,000 pledges.

The effort is just one of many Jewish responses to the disaster.

Both in Israel and in the United States, Jewish groups are working in coordinated campaigns to respond to the crisis.

In this country, the Jewish Coalition for Disaster Relief's tsunami response unit is accepting proposals from relief groups to determine how to allocate the \$800,000 it has raised so far.

The 37-member coalition plans to make allocation decisions by the end of the month

and to give special attention to Israeli organizations working on the ground in Southeast Asia.

Meanwhile, Jewish organizations that have raised funds themselves are making some allocations independently.

The American Jewish World Service has raised some \$8.5 million. About \$1.5 million has been distributed for immediate needs such as shelter, burials and cooking supplies.

The bulk of the funds will go toward long-term reconstruction projects such as refurbishing devastated fishing industries and trauma counseling, said Ronni Strongin, director of the group's public relations.

The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, which runs the disaster relief coalition, has raised more than \$15 million, much of it from Jewish federations. The JDC has donated \$500,000 to the coalition.

On its own, the JDC has donated \$800,000 for immediate relief and is planning another allocation for long-term infrastructure projects.

Several other Jewish groups are continuing to raise funds. They include Hadassah: The Women's Zionist Organization of America, the Union for Reform Judaism and the American Friends of Magen David Adom.

Organizations and individuals have crafted creative approaches for the cause. The American Jewish World Service, for example, tried to auction a bottle of Thomas Jefferson's wine on eBay.

The bottle of Chateau Margaux 1787 was estimated to be worth \$500,000, but it didn't sell because the top bid of \$7,700 failed to meet the minimum asking price. The group

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■ American and Israeli Jews aid tsunami victims

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may pursue other auction possibilities.

Chabad of Thailand, which has distributed food, hygienic supplies and cash to villagers, is organizing a toy drive at www.tsunamitoydrive.com. Some 120 schools across the United States are participating.

Chabad also is creating vocational schools in Thailand to train teens and adults in woodworking, so they learn skills while rebuilding their villages. Chabad, which says it is working closely with local authorities, also is buying vans to transport aid workers in hard-hit regions.

Israel is offering its unique expertise in emergency response. The Zaka service, for example, helped identify bodies in the immediate aftermath of the disaster.

The Israel National Emergency Coalition has launched a national fund-raising drive.

A longer-term approach is planned by the Israel Crisis Management Center/Selah, which aids victims of terrorism. The group plans to send three teams to the region in coming months.

The group plans to offer nonverbal therapy for tsunami victims, executive director Ruth Bar-On said.

"Nonverbal methods very often can make people more aware and able to communicate their pain," and help get around language barriers, she said.

Dr. Esti Galili, who directs the child and adolescent unit of the psychiatry department at Hadassah Medical Center in Ein Kerem, also lent her expertise to victims.

She was in Sri Lanka last month with a group of mental health professionals dispatched by Israel's Health Ministry at the request of Sri Lanka, which has only 35 psychiatrists.

The group tried to both identify with and empower their Sri Lankan counterparts, many of whom were trying to care for others as they suffered through the loss of their own family members.

"Some of my Israeli colleagues explained how they lost their families in the Holocaust, but that they, their descendants, are living testimony of man's ability to go on with life when so much is destroyed," Galili said.

In fact, one of the female psychiatrists in Sri Lanka told Galili that she had given her son a copy of "The Diary of Anne Frank" after the disaster.

Israel's work has been noticed. Work-

ers for the relief agency Magen David Adom were allowed to wear their own uniforms — featuring a red Star of David — for the first time in an emergency relief operation outside of Israel.

U.S. Reps. Steve Israel and Joe Crowley, Democrats from New York, were touring the region when they stumbled on an Israeli flag on a Sri Lankan coastal road.

Israeli relief workers were feeding hundreds of orphaned children and coordi-

nating a sack race, which the congressmen joined, Israel said.

"You saw these kids counting down in Hebrew, laughing," Israel said. "I don't know of a single child among them who could ever be affected by anti-Israel propaganda after this."

(JTA Washington Bureau Chief Ron Kampeas contributed to this report.)

'So much negativity was created with the tsunami. We figured we could try to counteract that a little bit.'

Rabbi Nochum Kurinsky

Chabad @ the Beaches

CIA to release more Nazi papers

By CHANAN TIGAY

NEW YORK (JTA) — The CIA's decision to interpret a law requiring national agencies to divulge more information about Nazis more broadly has raised hopes that a more accurate picture of American dealings with Nazi war criminals may follow.

"This is a major development, one that could finally fully open the book on our government's close ties to Nazis," said Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-N.Y.), who sponsored the Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act, a 1998 law, in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Members of the Nazi War Crimes Interagency Working Group, U.S. legislators and Jewish officials expressed outrage last week at the CIA's refusal to declassify what might be hundreds of thousands of pages of information on Nazi war criminals.

But the intelligence agency made an about-face late last week, sending a letter to the chairman of the working group essentially acceding to their demands for a more liberal reading of the Disclosure Act

and a more extensive declassification. A copy of the letter was obtained by JTA.

"Our goal is to be as flexible and as forward-leaning as possible in the review and declassification of these documents," CIA spokesman Paul Gimigliano told JTA. "The question we ask ourselves in dealing with issues of review and declassification is not what can we withhold, but what can we release."

The 1998 legislation requires the CIA and other national agencies to release classified information about Nazi war criminals to the working group, which publicizes the information in reports and at the National Archives.

On Monday, members of the working group met with the CIA in Langley, Va., a meeting that Elizabeth Holtzman, one of the working group's three civilian members, said was "a sign of cooperativeness and professionalism instead of obstructionism and bureaucratic naysaying" on the CIA's part.

"This is very good news in my view, but of course the proof will be in the pudding," Holtzman told JTA after the meeting.

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Dershowitz defends Israel at Columbia

By RACHEL POMERANCE

NEW YORK (JTA) — Israelis and Palestinians may one day manage to resolve their differences — but it's likely that their supporters at Columbia University will still be fighting each other.

It sounds like a sad joke, but Alan Dershowitz is serious.

"The kind of hatred that one hears on campuses like Columbia, and especially Columbia, is a barrier to peace" and encourages terrorists, the famous Harvard law professor told hundreds of students at Columbia University's student union Monday, comparing the progress being made in the Middle East with the polarized atmosphere at the Manhattan university.

Ever since the public screening a few months ago of "Columbia Unbecoming," a documentary film in which pro-Israel students claim they have been harassed for their views by their Middle Eastern studies professors, the campus has been embroiled in a crisis that has captured national attention.

Columbia's administration has responded to the charges by appointing five faculty members to a committee that is hearing testimony and is slated to report its findings by the end of the month.

But pro-Israel advocates and students say the committee members are not free of bias, noting that two of them have signed petitions calling for the university to divest from companies that do business with Israel.

Since the outbreak of the Palestinian intifada over four years ago, U.S. college campuses have seen intense debate on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

In many cases, the on-campus debate has spawned criticism of Israel that borders on anti-Semitism. It's not uncommon to hear Zionism compared to the worst racist or fascist regimes.

Columbia, home of the late professor Edward Said, a former member of the Palestine National Council, has seen strong anti-Israel rhetoric.

Outside Columbia's student union Monday, students associated with a campus Marxist group protested Dershowitz's speech. They distributed leaflets that read, "Down with the Zionist witchhunt against MEALAC," the Middle East and Asian Languages and Cultures department accused of flagrant, endemic anti-Israel bias.

"Columbia University is today ground

zero in a right-wing witchhunt designed to intimidate and drive out any professor who does not toe the line of support to the State of Israel," the pamphlet read.

Defending Israel has become Dershowitz's latest mission. Two years ago he wrote "The Case for Israel," which was intended as a handbook for pro-Israel student activists.

Speaking at Columbia put him at the heart of the most high-profile college debate on the conflict.

Columbia is still "an exception, but it's the wave of the future unless something can be done," Dershowitz told JTA.

"Columbia is Europe on the Hudson," he said, a reference to Europe's increasingly anti-Israel sentiment.

Dershowitz's speech Monday was sponsored by the David Project, the Boston-based advocacy group that produced "Columbia Unbecoming."

The group's representatives tried unsuccessfully last week to find a professor to introduce Dershowitz. Excuses ranged from too little notice to the excessively political nature of Dershowitz's message.

University President Lee Bollinger was invited, as were leading administrators and members of the investigative committee, but it appeared that they were not in the audience.

Dershowitz's speech came as the documentary was screened publicly for the first time in Israel on Saturday at the Menachem Begin Heritage Center in Jerusalem.

Dershowitz lambasted the university for a culture of extremism that he said silences pro-Israel students. He also gave audience members some pro-Israel information they might not have learned in school.

He spoke of how Israeli soldiers exposed themselves to great risk by going house to house as they fought terrorists in the Jenin refugee camp.

An air raid would have been easier but would have caused more civilian casualties. In the end, 23 Israeli soldiers lost their lives in Jenin because of the attempt to reduce Palestinian casualties.

"Columbia University is failing in its mission to educate its students with nuance

about the Middle East," Dershowitz said.

Judging by the applause, most of the crowd appeared to support Dershowitz, but several students took issue with him. Some raised a sign accusing Dershowitz of supporting torture.

The attack was one of many distortions meant to discredit him, Dershowitz told JTA.

But he urged the audience to stump him with tough questions.

One student suggested that Dershowitz's speech further divided the campus; Dershowitz replied with a challenge to debate a pro-Palestinian professor.

Give the committee a chance to provide an unbiased result, he said. If it doesn't, he said, then an external committee of Nobel laureates should be appointed to investigate the matter.

In the meantime, pro-Israel students should be outspoken, Dershowitz said.

"Do not remain silent. Silence in the face of bigotry is a sin," he said.

The quest for Israel's survival is the most important human-rights struggle of the 21st century, Dershowitz said, urging the audience to join him in the battle.

"Everybody loves a Jewish victim," he said, but the "world has a very hard time with a Jewish state which is strong and able to defend itself."

For some audience members, that message struck a chord.

"After you listen to him speak, you sort of get some pangs of guilt that you've been apathetic about something that's pretty important," said Jonathan Levav, an Israeli assistant professor of marketing at Columbia who approached Dershowitz after the speech to ask how he might help Israel's cause.

Levav says he and other Jewish or pro-Israel professors do not feel intimidated about speaking their minds. But they aren't sure how to respond to the accusations against Israel.

Professors' tenure — and even their jobs — are at stake in MEALAC, Levav said.

Dershowitz framed the matter in broader terms.

"The academy is the future and the academy is the minds and the hearts and the souls of tomorrow's leaders," he said. ■

'The kind of hatred that one hears on campuses like Columbia, and especially Columbia, is a barrier to peace.'

Alan Dershowitz
Harvard Law School

NEWS IN BRIEF

MIDDLE EAST

Rice: Palestinians must follow through

Palestinians must show their seriousness about tackling terrorism, Condoleezza Rice said.

"There are places where the Palestinian security forces are quite capable of acting. And they need to act where they can act," the U.S. secretary of state said Tuesday after meeting in Rome with her Italian counterpart.

Wrapping up her inaugural tour of Europe and the Middle East, Rice also stressed the international community's role in aiding the Palestinians.

At NATO headquarters in Brussels on Wednesday, Rice said she had discussed training Palestinian Authority security forces.

Envoys en route

Egypt said it would return its ambassador to Tel Aviv within 10 days.

Egyptian government spokesman Magdi Radi made the announcement Wednesday, but declined to say who would replace Mohammed Bassiouny, who was recalled soon after the Palestinian intifada began in 2000.

Jordan also recalled its ambassador then.

The Jordanian Foreign Ministry said its new ambassador to Israel would be Ma'aruf Al-Bakhit, who had served in Turkey. There was no date given for his posting to Tel Aviv.

The ambassadors' return was one of the fruits of Tuesday's summit between Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas in Sharm el-Sheik.

Terrorist blows himself up

A Hamas terrorist blew himself up by accident in the Gaza Strip.

Wednesday's premature detonation, which killed the 31-year-old man near Khan Younis, came despite pledges by the Islamic group to maintain calm while it considers submitting to a cease-fire called for by Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas.

Israeli military sources said Gaza terror alerts remain high, with the Karni border crossing closed for hours as troops searched for a gunman after an intelligence tip.

The concerns also could delay the opening of the joint Israeli-Palestinian industrial zone at Erez.

Signing up for Gaza

A right-wing Israeli group signed up 10,000 army conscripts and reservists against the Gaza withdrawal plan.

"Our aim is to show the security establishment that they do not have a military with which to carry out the disengagement," protest organizer Noam Livnat told reporters Wednesday after the petition was deposited at the Defense Ministry.

Israeli officials had no comment on the petition, which was put together by the Defensive Shield Movement.

Livnat said the group aimed to double the number of signatures.

At least two left-wing groups have been urging Israeli army reservists to sign petitions saying they would volunteer to help evacuate Israelis from the Gaza Strip and four West Bank settlements under Sharon's plan.

NORTH AMERICA

Arab Bank closes N.Y. branch

The Arab Bank will close its New York branch, which is accused of funneling money to Palestinian terrorists.

The closure was announced Tuesday by the Central Bank of Jor-

dan, which oversees Arab Bank, Jordan's largest financial institution.

The statement did not refer to the spate of lawsuits recently filed in Brooklyn by various victims of suicide bombings in Israel.

The bank has denied the allegations, saying in its statement that the closure reflects the bank's "vision and strategy in the medium- and long-term to focus operations on the Arab region and Europe."

The "climate of operating in the United States at present is not expedient with the bank's strategy and vision," the statement said.

The New York branch's assets are less than 2 percent of the bank's holdings, the statement said.

Columbia under fire

A pro-Israel advocacy group has begun a letter campaign protesting a planned speech at Columbia University by a fiercely anti-Israel poet.

Tom Paulin, an Irish poet who has declared that Israel has no right to exist and has justified suicide attacks on Israeli civilians, will address Columbia's Heyman Center for the Humanities on Thursday.

NORPAC, a pro-Israel political action committee, is asking members to write to Columbia administrators protesting the decision to host Paulin, who said he resigned from Britain's Labor Party because it was Zionist.

The event comes as Columbia is grappling with allegations that anti-Israel faculty in its Middle Eastern studies department have harassed pro-Israel students.

Ex-NBA star linked to terror?

A mosque funded by a former NBA star gave \$80,000 to organizations identified as front groups for Al-Qaida and Hamas.

Hakeem Olajuwon told The Associated Press that he did not know of any links between the groups and terrorism when the donations were made — and that they came before the U.S. government placed the groups, which include the Islamic African Relief Agency and the Holy Land Foundation, on its list of terror supporters.

Olajuwon, a practicing Muslim, is not under federal investigation.

WORLD

Russian Jewish groups speak out

Russian Jewish human-rights groups demanded that lawmakers who signed an anti-Semitic letter be stripped of their parliamentary immunity from prosecution.

In a letter to Prosecutor General Vladimir Ustinov and the speaker of the lower house of the Russian Parliament, Boris Gryzlov, distributed Wednesday, the Moscow Bureau for Human Rights, the Holocaust Foundation and other groups said the condemnation of the anti-Semitic lawmakers that already took place in the Duma should be followed by legal action against those responsible for the letter.

"Otherwise the unrestrained nationalists will again — as it has been the case in the past — feel themselves absolutely unpunished," the letter said.

Nobel's book gets film treatment

A movie based on a novel by Nobel Prize-winning author Imre Kertesz had its premiere.

The film based on the novel "Fateless" was screened Monday night in Budapest as the closing event of the 36th annual Hungarian Film Festival.

The film shows the Holocaust from the perspective of an adolescent boy.

Kertesz, a Hungarian Jew, also wrote the screenplay for the movie.

The international premiere will be Feb. 15, when the film screens in the 55th Berlin International Film Festival.