

## IN THE NEWS

### Senate, House agree on Palestinian aid

The U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives agreed on how to spend \$200 million in aid for the Palestinians.

Staff for the two houses of Congress resolved differences Tuesday over \$81 billion in fast-track money, mostly for the Iraq war, but also including the \$200 million for the Palestinians.

Both houses vote on the bill next week, and President Bush has said he will sign the final version.

The bill keeps in a requirement that Bush report twice in the next six months on how the money is spent, but removes House language that would have removed the president's right to waive restrictions on how it is spent.

### Israel freezes West Bank handover

Israel froze its handover of West Bank cities to the Palestinians.

Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz told the Israeli Cabinet on Tuesday that Israel would not hand over any more cities to the Palestinians unless the Palestinian Authority disarms terrorists in cities placed under its control.

Earlier this year, Israel agreed to hand over five Palestinian cities, and so far has transferred two, Jericho and Tulkarm.

Once they received control of those cities, however, the Palestinians said they would not implement their security pledges.

### Palestinian protesters killed

Israeli troops killed two Palestinian rock-throwers during a protest against Israel's West Bank security barrier.

Two army jeeps that entered Beit Lekia, a village slated for fence construction, came under attack by hundreds of locals Wednesday.

Resorting to live fire after nonlethal riot control gear failed to restrain the mob, the troops killed two protesters, aged 14 and 15.

# WORLD REPORT

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## Criminal charges in AIPAC case leveled against Pentagon analyst

By RON KAMPEAS and MATTHEW E. BERGER

**A**LEXANDRIA, Va. (JTA) — Criminal charges against a Pentagon analyst, for allegedly leaking classified Iraq war information to two top officials at the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, raise new questions about whom the FBI is targeting and whether the pro-Israel powerhouse will be harmed as the case unfolds.

Lawrence Franklin, who turned himself in for arrest Wednesday, was accused in an FBI criminal complaint of disclosing classified information "related to potential attacks on United States forces in Iraq" to two U.S. civilians over lunch in an Arlington, Va., restaurant on June 26, 2003.

Franklin's two interlocutors, identified in the document only as "U.S. Person 1 and U.S. Person 2," are Steve Rosen, AIPAC's policy director, and Keith Weissman, its senior Iran analyst, JTA has established. AIPAC fired the two last month in an apparent bid to distance itself from the case.

Read as a whole, the criminal complaint contained some good news for AIPAC. It suggests that beyond the allegations against Rosen and Weissman, AIPAC as an organization had no involvement in leaking any information.

"AIPAC has been advised by the government that it is not a target of the investigation," a source close to the organization told JTA.

On the other hand, the headlines could hinder AIPAC's efforts to project a "back-to-business" face to grass-roots supporters and Washington powerbrokers weeks before

its annual policy conference, and at a time when it is trying to build support for Israel ahead of Israel's planned withdrawal this summer from the Gaza Strip.

The policy conference is AIPAC's annual show of strength, culminating in a dinner expected to be attended by some 5,000 people at which AIPAC leaders shout out the names of dozens of congressmen and Cabinet officials present — nearly 200 last year. If a significantly lower number show up this year, it could be embarrassing.

Franklin, an Iran analyst who lives in Kearneysville, W. Va., was released on a \$100,000 bond after appearing at U.S. District Court in Alexandria, Va. A preliminary hearing was set for May 27.

"He intends to plead not guilty" and expects to be vindicated at trial, said his attorney, John Thorpe Richards.

The criminal charge sheet was the first official accounting of a case that first made headlines last August, when FBI agents raided AIPAC's Washington headquarters and confiscated files belonging to Rosen and Weissman.

"The information Franklin disclosed relating to potential attacks upon U.S. forces in Iraq could be used to the injury of the United States or to the advantage of a foreign country," special agent Catherine Hanna said in drafting the complaint. The damage, she said, could arise from "jeopardizing the viability of the sources and methods."

The information was from a document classified as "top secret," Hanna said.

While the June 2003 lunch appears to

*Continued on page 2*

BEHIND  
THE  
HEADLINES

## ■ *In AIPAC case, criminal charges leveled against analyst*

*Continued from page 1*

be the linchpin of the criminal charges, there are other allegations, including that Franklin leaked classified information to journalists and to an unidentified "foreign official," and that he kept three decades' worth of classified information on his computer hard disk at home.

Reports have suggested that Franklin also met with an Israeli Embassy official. The reference to a "foreign official" might point in that direction.

However, the FBI has not gotten in touch with the Israeli Embassy, representatives say, and Israeli officials continue to maintain that they would never participate in illicit information gathering in the United States.

"Israel does not carry out any operation in the United States that would be liable, God forbid, to harm its closest ally," Israeli Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom told Israel Television. "Therefore all the brouhaha around this matter has nothing to do with the State of Israel."

The United States, he added, "is a nation with which we conduct very intimate ties, with exchanges of the most classified kinds of information. So anyone who thinks we were involved — this is completely bogus."

The complaint suggests answers to two major questions that have surrounded the investigation: Who is the target? And to what degree is AIPAC in danger?

The question of a target arose after last year's raids, when it emerged that agents had watched Rosen, Weissman and Franklin chatting over a meal at Tivoli in June 2003. Was the FBI agent in the restaurant following Franklin, or Rosen and Weissman?

The arrest Wednesday lends support to the theory that Franklin had been the target of an investigation that reportedly was at least a year old at that lunch meeting.

Franklin's enthusiasm for a tough line against Iran had drawn the attention of colleagues in the Pentagon.

JTA previously has reported that Franklin had been under scrutiny since he allegedly met in December 2001 with former Iranian spy and arms merchant Manucher Ghorbanifar, who was on a CIA "burn list" of people who could not be contacted, according to intelligence community sources.

AIPAC could take heart from the fact that the criminal complaint did not mention the organization, or even suggest any organizational affiliation for the two "U.S. Persons" Franklin met with.

Still, the complaint raised at least as many questions as it answered:

- What now for Rosen and Weissman? Leaking classified information has much clearer legal ramifications than receiving it, since reporters in Washington routinely receive and relay classified information to their readers.

The complaint makes clear that the exchange in the restaurant was "verbal." It's unclear what, if any, charges could be brought against Rosen and Weissman for simply listening to Franklin unload.

On the other hand, the FBI had a clear interest in Rosen and Weissman, evidenced by the August raid at AIPAC headquarters and another one in December, and by the appearance earlier this year of top AIPAC staffers before a federal grand jury.

It was information arising out of the

grand jury encounters that led AIPAC to fire the two men, AIPAC has said.

Rosen's lawyer said in a statement that no documents were exchanged, which dovetails with the FBI's claim that the exchange was verbal.

"Steve Rosen never solicited, received or passed on any classified documents from Larry Franklin, and Mr. Franklin will never be able to say otherwise," Rosen's lawyer, Abbe Lowell, said in a statement.

• U.S. Attorney Paul McNulty convened a grand jury in the case; why didn't he bring an indictment

instead of a criminal complaint, which carries less weight?

One answer could be that the FBI and Justice Department have been burned by reporting that depicts the case as a politically motivated jeremiad against Jewish lobbyists and/or neoconservatives such as Franklin. Indictments often are sealed, but a criminal complaint allows the FBI to explain at length why it feels charges are justified.

• Finally, what did Rosen and Weissman learn at the Tivoli lunch? Until now, sources close to the two have suggested that the information related to White House policy on Iran — which, after all, was the specialty of both Franklin and Weissman — and that it had a relatively low secrecy classification. Hanna, the FBI special agent, alleges that the information was top secret, and related to dangers posed to U.S. troops in Iraq.

A former FBI official said the complaint suggests a larger investigation, but gives few clues about where the probe starts and ends.

"My best estimate is this was part of an already existing investigation, and from their perspective, they got lucky," the former official said. "They were either following Franklin or they were following these two guys," he said, referring to Rosen and Weissman.

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# Power balance continues to shift in Lebanon

By GIL SEDAN

JERUSALEM (JTA) — As Syria formally pulled its troops out of Lebanon last month, the Lebanese and the Syrian chiefs of staffs gave speeches to mark the occasion. The words they used were flowery, but their faces were grim.

The military ceremony at Rayak, an air force base in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley, marked the end of Syria's control of Lebanon after almost 30 years.

Syria completed its retreat from Lebanon on April 26. It was forced out by a campaign of unprecedented street protests and heavy international pressure, including an American naval show of force off the shores of Beirut that featured U.S. warships.

If, indeed, Syria was responsible for the Feb. 14 assassination in Beirut of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, its leaders seriously miscalculated. Hariri's murder united Lebanon's Christian, Druse and Sunni communities, who for years had meekly accepted the Syrian yoke, to demand that Syria leave Lebanon.

As a U.N. team in Damascus gathers details about troops, assets and intelligence to verify that Syria's withdrawal is complete, opposition forces fear the Syrian story is far from over.

In Israel, legislator Efraim Sneh of the Labor Party agrees with that assessment.

Syrian President Bashar "Assad's only real interest is to keep the Alawi minority in Syria in power," Sneh told JTA. "He will do everything necessary to achieve that goal, if need be by renewing intercommunal strife in Lebanon or by encouraging Hezbollah to heat up the border with Israel."

On the other hand, some believe Assad will prefer a lower profile just now and so will avoid confrontation with Israel and the United States.

"This is an historic process," Maj. Gen. Yisrael Ziv, the Israel Defense Forces' outgoing chief of operations, told Israel's Ma'ariv newspaper.

However, he added, "Syria has not relinquished for even a moment its influence in Lebanon and its wish to return there. They build their continuous influence there in other ways."

Most of Syria's allies remain in place. Lebanese President Emile Lahoud, a Syrian puppet, shows no sign of stepping down voluntarily.

In fact, it was Syria's demand to extend

Lahoud's tenure, pushing through an unpopular amendment to Lebanon's constitution last September, that led Hariri to resign the premiership and make common cause with the anti-Syrian opposition.

Some believe the Syrian withdrawal will improve Israel's regional position.

"The Syrian withdrawal is good for Israel because it weakens the Syrian regime and puts Hezbollah in a trap," said Professor Eyal Zisser, head of Middle East studies at Tel Aviv University. "They know they may be next in line forced

to disarm. Israel's enemies are weakened, and Israel does not need to move a finger."

But obstacles remain. Syria continues to deploy hundreds of intelligence agents in Lebanon; its ally Hezbollah continues to operate as an armed militia, with an arsenal of rockets aimed at Israel, independent of the Lebanese government; and teams of Iran's Revolutionary Guards still operate freely in Lebanon.

"According to one school of thought in Israel's intelligence forces, the Syrian military presence in Lebanon contributed to the relative stability of Lebanon," defense analyst Ze'ev Schiff wrote in the Israeli newspaper Ha'aretz. "Without the strong hand of Syria, Lebanon could slide into internal strife, which could even lead to a civil war, just as happened in the 1970s."

Israel wanted Syria out of Lebanon, and got its wish, said Thayer Abu-Saleh, a political scientist who describes himself as "a Syrian living in the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights."

But other developments Israel would like to see in Lebanon — the dismantling of Hezbollah, deployment of Lebanon's army in the south and an Israel-Lebanon peace treaty — remain remote, he said.

Ever since it helped end Lebanon's civil war — after years of stoking it — Syria has been Lebanon's key power broker. When Hariri was able to re-establish Lebanon as one of the economic hubs of the Middle East, it was thanks in part to the stabilizing effect of Syria's military presence.

"The security of Lebanon is linked to that of Syria and vice versa," Druse

leader Walid Jumblatt, one of the leaders of Lebanon's opposition, has said. "We do not want, God forbid, to become a center for plotting against Syria."

Lebanon's opposition hopes that as Syrian troops leave, they will take with them the corruption and bribe-taking that characterized their occupation. But Syria is unlikely to give up the economic benefits of its forced partnership with Lebanon.

Among those benefits are jobs for Syrian workers, who send some of their wages back home

to their families, a much-needed source of capital in a desperately poor country.

One of the changes in Lebanon is the new coalition between the country's Christian Maronite and Druse minorities.

In 2001, the Maronites, Syria's strongest opponents in Lebanon, marked a formal reconciliation with their traditional Druse foes to form an anti-Syrian alliance. Hariri's tacit association with the opposition promised to bring his Sunni community on board.

Since June 2001, Syria has carried out a series of troop redeployments in Lebanon, cutting its military presence from 40,000 troops to the 15,000 that were there before the final withdrawal.

Lebanese parliamentary elections are scheduled to be held by the end of May. The Lebanese opposition is calculating that it will win those elections, overturning the pro-Syrian majority in Parliament. That would limit Syria's ability to dictate events in Lebanon and almost certainly would end Lahoud's presidency.

Hezbollah, the powerful and aggressive representative of Lebanon's Shi'ite community, avoided the rallies opposing Lahoud and seeking to force Syria out of Lebanon. Shi'ites even mounted a huge rally calling on Syria to stay.

Ziv, the IDF general, said the Syrian withdrawal could have unforeseen consequences.

"The Syrian pullout brings the Iranians back to the picture," he said. "Syria out, Iran in. The Iranians will work directly with Hezbollah. Whereas in the past we could exert pressure on Syria to tame Hezbollah, we have less leverage on Iran."

'The Syrian withdrawal is good for Israel because it weakens the Syrian regime and puts Hezbollah in a trap.'

Professor Eyal Zisser  
Tel Aviv University

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### WORLD

#### Israel honors Holocaust victims

Holocaust Martyrs and Heroes Remembrance Day began in Israel.

The annual event, which this year coincides with the 60th anniversary of the defeat of Nazi Germany in World War II, was launched with a torch-lighting ceremony by Holocaust survivors at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem.

In an address carried live on Israeli media, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said the Jewish state was founded to prevent a repeat of the Nazi genocide.

"The world will not find us unprepared again. Never again," he said.

Sharon is to fly to Poland on Thursday, along with a group of Holocaust survivors and their grandchildren, to take part in the March of the Living at the site of the Auschwitz death camp.

#### Report: Anti-Semitism on the rise

Anti-Semitic violence around the world reached a 15-year high in 2004, an Israeli study found.

The annual report of Tel Aviv University's Stephen Roth Institute, released Wednesday, said a significant proportion of attacks on Jewish people and property in Europe and North America were perpetrated by marginalized Muslim immigrants, often in sympathy with the Palestinians.

The study cited 501 violent anti-Semitic incidents in 2004, a sixfold increase since 1989, when the institute began its research.

#### U.S. praised for anti-Nazi efforts

The number of new investigations of World War II-era crimes nearly doubled in the past year, a Jewish group said.

There were 659 new probes into alleged Holocaust criminals, initiated in 11 countries, between April 1, 2004, and March 31, 2005, the Simon Wiesenthal Center said in its fifth annual report of such crimes.

The report praises the U.S. Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations for its efforts to bring war criminals to justice, and singles out Ukraine for doing the least to bring Nazi-era war criminals to justice.

Five convictions were obtained last year.

#### Neo-Nazi jailed

A neo-Nazi was sentenced to jail for planning to bomb a Jewish center in Germany.

A court in Munich sentenced Martin Weise, leader of the far-right group, Southern Comrades, to seven years in prison Wednesday for the foiled plot against the city's Jewish center.

Weise was convicted of planning to bomb the center during a foundation-laying ceremony on Nov. 9, 2003, the 65th anniversary of Kristallnacht.

#### Jewish official speaks to Austrian lawmakers

A Jewish official spoke in the Austrian Parliament to mark the 10th anniversary of a Holocaust restitution fund.

Moshe Jahoda, the Claims Conference's representative in Austria, pressed lawmakers to help elderly Holocaust survivors.

The Austrian National Fund, negotiated by the Claims Conference, has paid more than \$300 million in restitution so far.

#### Russian Jewish group gets new president

An umbrella organization of Russian Jews named a controversial Russian-born Israeli entrepreneur as its new president.

The board of the Congress of Jewish Religious Organizations and Communities of Russia, or KEROR, elected Arkady Gaidamak on Tuesday.

This decision has to be approved by the group's congress, slated for late this month in Moscow.

KEROR says it unites some 90 non-Chasidic Orthodox and Reform Jewish congregations across Russia.

Gaidamak has kept a low profile in the Jewish community and remains virtually unknown to the public.

### MIDDLE EAST

#### Palestinian plebiscite pledge

Mahmoud Abbas vowed to hold a Palestinian referendum on any final peace accord with Israel.

The official Palestinian Authority news agency WAFA quoted Abbas on Wednesday telling visitors to his presidential office that he would not sign a peace accord with Israel unless endorsed by plebiscite, adding that Palestinians would settle for nothing less than statehood in all of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

#### Iran lashes out

Iran said Israel's assumed nuclear arsenal endangers world peace.

Addressing a United Nations conference on the 1970 Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi said Tuesday that Israel "has endangered regional and global peace and security" because it has nonconventional weapons, believed to include atomic warheads.

Iran, which signed the treaty, has been censured by the United States for its pursuit of nuclear technology that can be used to make weapons.

Israel, which has never confirmed having a nuclear arsenal, is not a signatory to the treaty and thus is not attending the U.N. conference.

#### Shin Bet chief bids farewell

The chief of Israel's Shin Bet security service stepped down.

Avi Dichter, who took over the Shin Bet just a few months before the outbreak of the Palestinian intifada in September 2000, formally ended his tenure Wednesday with an appearance at the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee.

Dichter is credited with rebuilding Israel's intelligence network in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which largely had deteriorated after the 1993 Oslo peace accords.

He is to be succeeded by one of his deputies, Yuval Diskin.

### NORTH AMERICA

#### Palestinian loses U.S. citizenship

A U.S. court stripped a Palestinian man of his citizenship for not reporting \$6.4 million in cash withdrawals and for illegally sending the money abroad.

Federal authorities declined to say where Hasan Ali Ayesh sent the money.

Ayesh, who owned a convenience store in Memphis, immigrated to the United States in 1984 and became a citizen in 2002.

#### From Latvia to Sydney to Little Rock

An Australian man who survived the Holocaust by pretending not to be Jewish, and whose life story was the subject of a documentary, discovered a cousin in the United States.

Alex Kurzem survived the war by becoming a mascot for the Latvian Nazis who decided to spare him; when he made his way to Australia after the war he continued to disguise his Jewish roots.

Kurzem recently discovered that a first cousin, Emanuel Krupitsky, also survived and lives in Little Rock, Ark.

The two are slated to appear together Thursday at a Holocaust Remembrance Day event at the Clinton Presidential Library in Little Rock.