

IN THE NEWS

JTS' Schorsch announces retirement

Rabbi Ismar Schorsch, long-time chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary, announced his retirement.

In a letter to the JTS community and supporters Wednesday, Schorsch said he would step down on June 30, 2006, some 20 years after taking the reins at the Conservative Movement's flagship institution. "I do so with more than a tinge of sadness, because throughout my tenure, I have found my work deeply fulfilling," Schorsch wrote. "But I decided long ago to step down while still in top form."

A spokeswoman for the seminary told JTA that a search committee would be formed shortly to find a successor.

P.A.: Israel causes cancer

Israel has been spreading carcinogenic juice and suspicious computers in Palestinian areas, the Palestinian Authority claimed Tuesday.

Such charges, which were typical under P.A. President Yasser Arafat, have resurfaced recently in the P.A.-controlled media, according to the Jerusalem Post.

Palestinian officials also claimed Israel is dumping toxic waste in the West Bank to harm Palestinians.

According to a senior staffer for Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, if P.A. officials are kowtowing to radical elements on the Palestinian street with such ridiculous claims, then they "are not on the way to a state, but rather to another intifada."

Rice to visit Middle East

Condoleezza Rice is traveling to the Middle East ahead of Israel's planned withdrawal from the Gaza Strip.

The U.S. secretary of state will leave Friday and return June 23, visiting Israel, the Palestinian areas, Jordan, Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

Rice will examine Palestinian Authority security preparations to assume control once Israel leaves Gaza.

WORLD REPORT

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Indictment suggests possible case against former AIPAC staffers

By RON KAMPEAS and MATTHEW E. BERGER

ALEXANDRIA, Va. (JTA) — A mid-level Pentagon analyst hoped to move up the Bush administration ladder and influence its Iran policy by relaying classified information to a senior Israeli Embassy staffer and two senior officials of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, according to a federal indictment.

The indictment, unsealed Monday in the U.S. District Court in Alexandria, Va., sheds new light on the depth of Larry Franklin's relationships with Steve Rosen, the former AIPAC policy director, and Keith Weissman, a former AIPAC Iran analyst.

It also sheds light on his relationship with Naor Gilon, the chief political officer at the Israeli Embassy in Washington.

And it details the degree to which Franklin, who was not Jewish, apparently believed in the far-reaching influence of Israeli and pro-Israel officials inside the U.S. government.

Franklin, an Iran specialist, pled not guilty to all six counts in the indictment. His lawyer, Plato Cacheris, did not return calls asking for further comment. Attorneys for Rosen and Weissman and spokesmen for AIPAC would also not comment.

Franklin is charged with conspiring with Rosen and Weissman to communicate classified information, which suggests the two former AIPAC staffers will be indicted as well. Sources close to the men say they expect to be charged next week.

Rosen and Weissman were fired from AIPAC in April because of what AIPAC said was information that arose related to the FBI investigation.

The indictment provides a glimpse into the

government's potential case against the two AIPAC officials. It also suggests the degree to which tapped conversations could reveal how the nation's premier pro-Israel lobby operates. It also reinforces the impression that AIPAC was the original target of the investigation.

And it paradoxically undermines what had until now appeared to be a central tenet of the government's case against Rosen and Weissman — that they relayed classified information to Gilon on Franklin's request.

But according to the indictment, Franklin met with Gilon 14 times, whereas he met with Weissman and Rosen only seven times, together or separately. One question lawyers for Rosen and Weissman likely will raise is why Franklin would need them to reach Gilon.

Rosen and Weissman are identified in the document as unindicted Coconspirators One and Two, respectively. Gilon is identified as Foreign Official of the Embassy of Foreign Nation A. JTA has confirmed the identity of all three individuals.

The meetings with Gilon — like the first charge, relating to the meetings with Rosen and Weissman — are described as a "conspiracy to communicate classified information" and Gilon is called a "conspirator." Otherwise there is no hint of legal action against the Israeli, and he continues to function in Washington as a fully employed political affairs officer, meeting with counterparts in the Bush administration.

The indictment suggests that Gilon at times pressed Franklin for further information, and that on one occasion, Franklin incorporated Gilon's views into a memo for Pentagon higher-ups. The exchanges of information had to do with Iran's nuclear capabilities.

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■ *Indictment suggests Pentagon official saw AIPAC as influential in U.S. government*

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ties and its actions in post-war Iraq.

The sources close to Rosen and Weissman said they saw the 20-page indictment as good news from their perspective. Nothing in the document suggests positive proof that Rosen and Weissman relayed any classified information to a foreign official, which would be key to establishing an espionage case.

One passage, however, suggests that on at least one occasion Franklin told them the information they were getting was "highly classified."

Rosen and Weissman reportedly expect to be charged for another incident, not related in this document, that occurred in July 2004.

At that time, Franklin, allegedly working undercover for the FBI, told Weissman about an imminent threat against Israelis in northern Iraq. In that case, Weissman allegedly relayed the information to Rosen and they in turn allegedly passed it onto Gilon.

The Israeli Embassy said that nothing in the indictment explicitly states that Gilon knew he was on the receiving end of classified information.

"Our diplomats conducted themselves professionally according to established diplomatic practice and did not do anything to contravene these standards," Israeli Embassy spokesman David Siegel said after reviewing the indictment.

The document says Franklin was not specifically authorized to meet with foreign officials, but Gilon would not necessarily have known that.

In addition to the two conspiracy charges, Franklin is also charged with four counts of communicating classified or national defense information on his own. Judge T.S. Ellis set a trial date for Sept. 6.

Separately, Franklin was charged in a West Virginia federal court with mishandling classified information. He allegedly brought documents to his home there, outside of the acceptable jurisdiction.

The document unsealed Monday paints Franklin as a figure eager to advance up the political ladder. He allegedly presses Rosen to put a good word in for him at the National Security Council, where the AIPAC official apparently had connections. "I'll do what I can," Rosen allegedly tells Franklin, according to the indictment.

Franklin is also depicted in the indictment as eager to influence U.S. policy on Iran, a portrayal that dovetails with accounts from other sources who say Franklin was frustrated with colleagues at the Pentagon who seemed obsessed with postwar Iraq, to the extent even of co-opting Iran.

A telling element of the alleged meetings with Gilon is that they seemed to take place in the open. Franklin and Gilon allegedly communicated over their office phone lines, which Gilon surely would have expected to be monitored.

On one occasion, Franklin and Gilon met near the embassy, according to the indictment, which also said they routinely met at the Pentagon Officers' Athletic Club, where Franklin, a colonel in the U.S. Air Force Reserve, was eligible for membership.

Gilon may have solicited information from Franklin, but does not otherwise appear to have behaved like a "handler." According to the indictment, Franklin had to press Gilon several times to write a letter on behalf of Franklin's daughter, who planned to travel to Israel. On one occasion, Gilon handed Franklin a gift card — the sole payment the FBI could apparently pin down.

The alleged meetings with Rosen and Weissman are not much more surreptitious, but the account in the indictment suggests that the government has a trove of information on the functioning of AIPAC — an organization that is vigorously shy about exposing its lobbying practices. Rosen is recorded

as telling someone over the phone, en route to his first meeting with Franklin in February 2003, that he is excited to meet with a "Pentagon guy" who is a "real insider."

About a month after that initial meeting, Franklin allegedly faxed Rosen an addendum Franklin wrote for a classified internal policy paper on Iran. According to the indictment, Franklin re-typed the addendum before faxing it, suggesting that Rosen would not have seen the original document — and would therefore not have known that it was classified.

Rosen and AIPAC shared Franklin's con-

cerns that the administration was ignoring the possible threat from Iran, and within days of receiving the document, Rosen allegedly told a journalist that this is a "considerable story" and that "I'm not supposed to know this," according to the indictment.

Rosen and Weissman clearly saw Franklin as a valuable asset, according to the indictment. In a meeting at an Italian restaurant in Arlington, Va., on June 26, 2003, Franklin relayed information to them about the threat posed to U.S. forces in Iraq by Iranian intelligence agents and said it was "highly classified."

Later that day, according to the indictment, the FBI tapped Rosen telling Weissman that Franklin had related "quite a story," and describing Franklin as a channel "to keep wide open insofar as possible."

Sources close to Rosen and Weissman's defense say that the real value — and the bulk of the conversation — in the June 26, 2003, meeting was in unclassified information related to the formulation of a tougher Bush administration policy on Iran.

The indictment reinforces earlier reports that AIPAC and Rosen were targeted by the FBI before Franklin.

In fact, Franklin first appears on the radar on Aug. 5, 2002, when the FBI apparently tapped Rosen asking another acquaintance at the Department of Defense about Iran specialists. The contact, who is not identified, recommended Franklin.

Defense sources say they believe AIPAC was targeted as early as 2001 by a Bush administration determined to clamp down on the leaking of secrets, especially following the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. ■

Our diplomats conducted themselves professionally according to established diplomatic practice.

David Siegel

Israeli Embassy spokesman

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At OSCE meeting, Spain stresses the positive

By JEROME SOCOLOVSKY

CORDOBA, Spain (JTA) — It was the whitewashed walls and narrow alleyways of the Jewish Quarter — abutting the magnificent eighth-century mosque held up by more than 850 marble columns — that produced the Jewish sages Maimonides and Judah Halevy.

It's also this sun-baked Spanish city on the shimmering Guadalquivir River that claims the great Muslim and Christian philosophers Averroes and Seneca as native sons.

But centuries later, it was also on these cobblestoned streets that Jews were hunted down and burned at the stake by Christian mobs in an orgy of violence brought on by rabidly anti-Semitic preachers.

After previous meetings in Vienna and Berlin, Cordoba was chosen by the 55-nation Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe as the place to discuss anti-Semitism.

The Spanish hosts hoped the Conference on anti-Semitism and Other Forms of Intolerance would provide an example of how members of different faiths and cultures once were able to live together in peace.

But that's not the whole story.

"They took the good part of the history," said Eli Cohen, a Spanish law student at a university in Malaga. "They chose the time when three cultures lived together. After the Reconquista, and the Catholic monarchs, it was another story."

Indeed, the nationwide religious cleansing carried out during the reconquest of Spain from Moorish rule led by the Catholic monarchs King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, has been the crucible of modern Spanish identity.

For centuries, Spanish children have learned about Ferdinand and Isabella much the way American children learn about George Washington and Thomas Jefferson.

Much has changed, especially in the past 30 years, since Spain's transition to democracy. Schoolteachers no longer tell pupils that the Jews were Christ-killers.

But anti-Semitic stereotypes persist: A recent Anti-Defamation League survey on attitudes toward Jews in 12 European countries found that 54 percent of Spaniards believe "Jews have too much power in international financial markets," and 51 percent believe Jews are "more loyal to

Israel" than to Spain.

Victor Harel, Israel's ambassador to Spain, pointed out in an essay for the Spanish newspaper *El Pais* the litany of anti-Semitic acts registered in Spain last year: A Holocaust memorial in Barcelona desecrated twice, Nazi symbols and an anti-Semitic slogan held up at a Madrid soccer match, the statue of medieval financier Samuel Halevi in Toledo vandalized and burned, elderly Jews in Melilla attacked, a Barcelona education manual that called Israel's security fence "the wall of shame," and a publicity campaign personally backed by the mayor of the town of Oleiros that called Israel's leaders "the new Nazis."

Indeed, Spain's government, particularly the Socialist Party of Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero, has been widely criticized in Jewish and Israeli circles for its perceived bias against Israel.

That tempered the goodwill from this year's annual OSCE meeting on anti-Semitism.

"I think it's good, but the first thing the government should do, before holding a conference here, before inviting the World Jewish Congress to dinner, is to be impartial in the conflict, so that there would be no questions in the first place," said Cohen, the Spanish student, referring to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Harel, the Israeli ambassador, noted that Zapatero recently visited the Mauthausen concentration camp and instituted a national Holocaust Memory Day on Jan. 27, the day of the liberation of Auschwitz.

He also noted that the Madrid regional legislature has started holding annual Holocaust remembrance ceremonies. These initiatives, Harel said, "deserve praise and recognition."

Rabbi Israel Singer, chairman of the World Jewish Congress, said Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos should be credited for stopping other European politicians who wanted to downgrade the profile of the OSCE conference. But, he noted, Moratinos wasn't motivated purely by altruism.

"Moratinos spoiled their plan because he had his own reasons for doing so," Singer said. "He had a rotten record in Is-

rael, from the time that he was in charge of foreign affairs at the European Union. He had a rotten country's record in the way that the Socialists behave towards Israel, and he figured this is his big opportunity."

"How are we going to tell Mr. Moratinos you can't be good on anti-Semitism?"

Ben Cohen, the ADL's European affairs director,

said Spain's initiatives to discuss European anti-Semitism should reach back further.

He says Cordoba is a good example of how Spaniards are "rejoicing and celebrating their Jewish past," but they need to reflect on the atrocities committed by their forebears. Spain still has no major memorial to the Inquisition or the expulsion of Jews from Spain.

"Walking around Cordoba here, you'll see a statue of Maimonides, you'll see a café named after Judah Halevy, you'll see a shop where you can buy CD's of Ladino music," he said. "But if the average tourist asks, 'Well, what happened to these people? Where did they go? How come they're not here anymore?' you won't find an answer in the streets of this city, because there's no memorial here."

Some Spanish leaders have started taking another look at the country's own history, and the OSCE conference gave them a venue to do so in public.

One of them is Manuel Chavez Gonzalez, a key Socialist Party figure. He is the president of Andalusia, the southern region named after the historic Islamic caliphate of Al-Andalus, which includes Cordoba, Granada and Seville.

On the eve of the Cordoba meeting, Chavez addressed a forum in Seville organized by the Fundacion Tres Culturas, or Three Cultures Foundation.

"It was in this land of Andalusia" that "different cultural influences converged, which enabled a powerful synthesis of wisdom," Chavez said.

He adds: "But Andalusia also saw, after the conquest of Granada and the unification of the peninsula under a single Christian monarchy, the expulsion of the Jews in 1492," and of Muslims who remained in the south in 1609.

"Two great tragedies, and two great historical injustices," he said. ■

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BEHIND
THE
HEADLINES

NEWS IN BRIEF

MIDDLE EAST

Would-be teen bombers nabbed

Israeli security forces cracked a Palestinian terrorist cell that recruited four teenagers for suicide bombings.

Lifting a gag order on the case Wednesday, the Shin Bet security service said four minors from the West Bank city of Nablus had been arrested on suspicion of planning to carry out attacks.

Also arrested were four terrorists from the Palestinians' ruling Fatah Party who recruited them.

Neo-Nazis out of Israel?

A Knesset committee is seeking legal backing to deport Russian-speaking neo-Nazis living in Israel.

The Immigration and Absorption Committee met Tuesday to address reports of neo-Nazi activity among small groups of non-Jewish immigrants, The Jerusalem Post reported.

Israeli police are looking into two such immigrants, nabbed conducting neo-Nazi rituals while serving in the Israeli Army.

One witness told the committee that such activity was not limited to young people, and that some adults in Israel run neo-Nazi Web sites, the Post said.

Coptic comments draw outrage

The leader of the Coptic Orthodox Church discouraged dialogue with Jews.

Pope Shenoudah said he encourages dialogue with Muslims and with other Christians, but not with Jews, adding that "not until Jerusalem is freed from the Israeli presence will the Orthodox Coptic Church go there," according to the American Jewish Committee, which blasted the remarks.

Rabbi David Rosen, the AJCommittee's international director of interreligious affairs, condemned Shenoudah's "hostile, prejudicial comment against the Jewish people in the strongest terms, and called on Christian leaders to communicate their own disapproval of Pope Shenoudah's sentiments."

Koran charges reach Knesset

Israeli lawmakers clashed over allegations that Israeli prison guards defaced Palestinian prisoners' Korans.

Abdel-Malik Dehamsheh of the United Arab List took the Knesset podium Wednesday to demand a full probe of the case by the Internal Security Ministry, which dismissed the complaints lodged last week as baseless.

Interior Minister Gideon Ezra rejected Dehamsheh's call, saying that pages reported missing from several Korans kept at Megiddo Prison in northern Israel had been torn out by the prisoners themselves.

"You should be careful not to disrupt Jewish-Arab relations in the country on the basis of something that is incorrect," Ezra cautioned.

NORTH AMERICA

Bill would create services commission

Rep. Steve Israel (D-N.Y.) introduced a bill Wednesday for a commission to monitor religious freedom in the U.S. military, which would include people inside and outside of government.

The bill comes amid concerns about religious intolerance at the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs.

Israel said the commission would focus on finding how an "ap-

propriate balance may be reached between the personal expression of faith and the constitutional separation of religion and state throughout our military."

Yiddish actress Lillian Lux dies

Noted Yiddish performer Lillian Lux died at age 86. Lux, who started performing in Yiddish plays and musicals in the 1930s, succumbed Saturday to congestive heart failure in a Manhattan hospital, The New York Times reported.

Lux performed often with her husband, the late Pesach Burstein. Along with Burstein and their two children, Lux put on shows as the Four Bursteins.

Among her best-known roles was Feygele in the operetta "A Khasene in Shtetl," the Times said.

She was born Lillian Sylvia Lukashewsky in Brooklyn.

WORLD

Budapest graves vandalized

More than 100 graves were vandalized in Budapest's main Jewish cemetery.

It's not clear when the act of vandalism took place, as the cemetery was closed to visitors between Sunday and Wednesday.

The Budapest Police Department is investigating the incident.

Former Hungarian prime minister Viktor Orban, among others, condemned the destruction of the graves.

French Jewish festival opens

The first Festival of Jewish Cultures of Paris began Wednesday and will last two weeks, with the theme of "Honoring Yiddish." Events include exhibitions, roundtables, concerts, children's activities, plays, films and a conference on Isaac Bashevis Singer.

The festival is being held in the Marais, a Jewish neighborhood of Paris, to recall the era when Yiddish was spoken in the local shops.

The first event is the inauguration of the Place Bernard Lazare, named for the first journalist to stand up in defense of Alfred Dreyfus in 1894.

Former Auschwitz inmate dies on return

A former prisoner at Auschwitz died Tuesday on a "Train of Remembrance" meant to commemorate the 65th anniversary of the first transport to the infamous death camp.

Ludwik Wrona, 84, was imprisoned in Auschwitz on the day it opened in June 1940 and was given the number 457.

The Train of Remembrance was carrying several Auschwitz survivors and their families, along with students from a high school in the Polish city of Tarnow.

The Polish Press Agency reported that Wrona was overcome by the emotion of the trip, and died on the train.

Anti-Semites incite in Ukraine

Calls for strikes against "Zionists" are spreading in an eastern Ukrainian city.

Last week, leaflets blaming the "Zionist regime" for all of Ukraine's problems were distributed in central parts of Donetsk, the center of the coal mining area that overwhelmingly supported former Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich in last year's hotly contested presidential election in Ukraine.

The leaflets called for strikes against the "Zionist regime" and "American influence" in Ukraine.