



IN THE NEWS

Sharansky wins Likud endorsement

Members of World Likud selected Natan Sharansky as their candidate for the Jewish Agency chairmanship.

The former Cabinet minister will face off against Ra'anana Mayor Zeev Bielski, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's candidate, when the Zionist General Council votes Wednesday for chairman of the agency and the World Zionist Organization.

Clash leaves soldier, terrorist dead in Gaza

An Israeli soldier and a Palestinian terrorist died in a Gaza Strip clash.

Gunmen from Islamic Jihad and Fatah opened fire on Israeli troops and contractors as they worked on the security barrier along Gaza's border with Egypt on Sunday, killing a soldier and wounding two others.

Troops returned fire, killing one man.

Israel says sorry for China arms sales

Israel apologized to the United States over its arms sales to China.

"If things were done that were unacceptable, then we are sorry, but these things were done in the utmost innocence," Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom told Israel Radio on Sunday, referring to Harpy attack drones sold to China in what the Pentagon deemed a violation of its export limitations on the Jewish state.

"The United States is our biggest ally and nothing was done with the intention of harming U.S. interests."

Last week, Israel dismissed Defense Ministry Director-General Amos Yaron from bilateral deals with the Pentagon after U.S. officials said they found him unreliable.

Israel has denied wrongdoing in the Harpy deal, saying the U.S. misinterpreted its routine maintenance work on the Chinese drones as an upgrade that could threaten the strategic balance in Asia.

WORLD REPORT

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New revelations in AIPAC case as indictment of staffers expected

By RON KAMPEAS and MATTHEW E. BERGER

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Two former staffers at the American Israel Public Affairs Committee facing indictment on espionage charges shared allegedly classified information at the crux of the case against them with AIPAC's executive director as soon as they received it, JTA has learned.

Howard Kohr had no idea that the information in the July 21, 2004, e-mail from Keith Weissman, then AIPAC's Iran analyst, was classified, multiple sources said, and the government has told AIPAC that Kohr is not the subject of any investigation. Kohr did not further disseminate the information, sources familiar with the events said.

A spokesman for AIPAC categorically denied any wrongdoing.

"No current employee of AIPAC knew that classified information was obtained from Larry Franklin," the Pentagon analyst who allegedly gave Weissman the information, "or was involved in the dissemination of such information," spokesman Patrick Dorton said. "AIPAC does not seek, use or request anything but legal and appropriate information as part of its work."

Weissman and Steve Rosen, AIPAC's former policy director, could be indicted this month or next for allegedly passing information to an Israeli Embassy official, Naor Gilon, the chief political officer. AIPAC fired Weissman and Rosen in March because of information it says arose out of the investigation.

The government is considering a public arrest of Rosen, sources say, a signal of the tough posture it plans to take on the case. Such hardball tactics — which included two public raids of AIPAC offices — have prompted new

criticism and questions from Jewish leaders.

Some fear that the case will inhibit the functioning of Jewish organizations and others that deal with the executive branch.

"Not just Jewish organizations, but lobbyists in general," said Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League. "Lawyers will be telling their clients, 'Let's look at practices.'"

The revelation of the e-mail to Kohr raises questions about the intentions of Rosen and Weissman in obtaining and sharing the allegedly classified information. The FBI knows about the e-mail, sources told JTA, and its existence apparently was the subject of much scrutiny by a grand jury convened in January to consider the case.

The apparent rush by Weissman and Rosen to tell their boss the new information could reinforce the defense contention that they were not lone wolves bent on espionage — as sources close to the defense believe the government plans to argue — but lobbyists sharing inside information, as was their job. That is to be the crux of the two men's defense, sources said.

The revelation of the e-mail to Kohr also raises the question of why AIPAC fired Rosen and Weissman after months of defending their integrity. Some AIPAC donors and Jewish community leaders have asked whether it was appropriate for the organization to fire the two if the acts at the center of the investigation were part of their daily routine as lobbyists.

However, a source close to AIPAC suggested that what the men did was far from routine.

"Rosen and Weissman were dismissed because they engaged in conduct that was not part of their job and was beneath the standards of what AIPAC expects of their

Continued on page 2

■ *Indictment of staffers expected in AIPAC probe*

Continued from page 1

employees," the source said.

Franklin, the Pentagon Iran analyst who allegedly told Weissman that Israeli agents supposedly in northern Iraq faced grave danger, pled not guilty June 13 to relaying classified information to Rosen, Weissman and Gilon at on earlier occasions.

Sources close to the defense say the U.S. attorney's office in northern Virginia plans on an aggressive prosecution, especially of Rosen. Prosecutors have indicated they want Rosen arrested and "perp walked" — led into the courthouse in handcuffs — for the cameras, the sources say, and may object to bail.

Prosecutors let Franklin turn himself in, and they intend to make the same allowance for Weissman, the sources said.

■
A spokeswoman for U.S. Attorney Paul McNulty would not comment, nor would lawyers for Rosen, Weissman or Franklin.

The notion that Iranian agents planned to kidnap, torture and kill Israelis and American agents in northern Iraq allegedly was fed to Weissman on July 21, 2004, by Franklin as part of an apparent FBI sting of Rosen and Weissman.

The crux of the government's case, defense sources say, is the conversation Rosen and Weissman allegedly had the same day with Gilon. Prosecutors are likely to say that conversation violated the 1917 Espionage Act, which could be interpreted as banning the relaying of classified information to a foreign power.

Rosen and Weissman will claim that they did not realize at the time that the information was classified, defense sources say.

Sources say Kohr did not know that Rosen and Weissman called Gilon and Glenn Kessler, the State Department correspondent for the Washington Post, subsequent to Kohr's meeting with the two staffers and his receipt of the e-mail summarizing the information on Iraq. Sources close to the defense contend that such contacts with the media and Israeli diplomats were routine.

AIPAC officials say they have been assured by the government that investigators aren't targeting the organization or any current staffer, including Kohr.

"We now know directly from the government that neither AIPAC, nor any of its current employees, is or ever has been the target of this investigation," Kohr said in a May 22 speech at the AIPAC policy conference in Washington.

Franklin is accused of relaying classified information to Rosen, Weissman and Gilon in 2002 and 2003. By July 21, 2004, he was cooperating with the FBI.

He later suspended that cooperation, which led the FBI to reinstate its case against him.

■
Defense sources say that if indictments against Rosen and Weissman come down, some of their other contacts with Franklin also will be raised, but the July 21 sting is the core of the government's case.

Weissman allegedly called Franklin early on the morning of July 21 after months of no contact between the two men, part of a routine that included cold-calling multiple sources inside government. Franklin allegedly said he had urgent information and asked to meet Weissman outside a department store at the Pentagon City mall in Arlington, Va., a subway stop away from the Pentagon.

Franklin allegedly told Weissman that intelligence agencies were suppressing the Iranian plot to kill the Israelis and Americans, and he asked Weissman to relay it to Elliott Abrams, then an assistant national security adviser at the White House.

According to this reasoning, Abrams was likelier to listen to one of Washington's premier lobbying groups than to a mid-level analyst at the Pentagon.

Franklin also allegedly told Weissman that U.S. intelligence had not shared the

information with Israeli officials.

After the meeting, Weissman allegedly told Rosen, who thought the information important enough to meet immediately with Kohr. In a brief meeting, Rosen allegedly asked Kohr to relay the information to Abrams.

Kohr asked Weissman to summarize the information in an e-mail, sources said.

There is no evidence that Kohr relayed the information to Abrams. A spokes-

man for Abrams would not comment.

Jewish organizational leaders are asking tougher questions about the investigation, which first came to light when FBI agents raided AIPAC offices on Aug. 27, 2004, but which apparently had been under way since at least September 2001. It intensified after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, when the government took more vigorous action to stop leaks.

The ADL's Foxman raised a number of concerns about the government's case: Why target the pre-eminent Jewish lobby? Why, after years of tracking Rosen and AIPAC, did the government need to resort to a "sting" designed to appeal to Rosen and Weissman's "higher motives" — i.e., a desire to save Israeli lives?

Foxman said he believes Rosen and Weissman eventually will be vindicated, but that the vigorous prosecution could chill the effectiveness of Jewish organizations that deal with the government.

Lewis Roth, assistant executive director of Americans for Peace Now, agrees.

"It will impact the way people in the executive branch interact with groups in the non-profit world that are doing foreign policy," he said. "They will be a lot more hesitant to have normal interactions."

He also expressed concern that the "dual loyalty" canard about American Jews would be resuscitated.

Even among Jewish groups that often are at odds with AIPAC on policy issues, there is concern that the two staffers were set up for essentially fulfilling the commandment of "pikuach nefesh," or the saving of lives at all costs.

Kohr pledged at the conference to introduce "policies and procedures" that would guarantee accountability and transparency. ■

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THIS WEEK**TUESDAY**

■ The American Jewish Press Association holds its annual conference through Friday in Boston. Highlights include a panel on the role of Jewish media in building community and the presentation of the annual Rock-over Awards for the best Jewish journalism.

■ The Zionist Organization of America begins its annual mission to Washington. The two-day program will draw some 150 participants who will lobby their members of Congress.

■ The Zionist General Council meets in Jerusalem through June 24. The group will select the new chairman of the World Zionist Organization and the Jewish Agency, who represents Israeli and Diaspora Jewry.

■ Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas meet. One issue on the agenda will be coordination of Israel's upcoming Gaza Strip withdrawal.

THURSDAY

■ The UJA-Federation of New York holds its first-ever online auction on eBay, through June 29. Up for bid are a half-day on the set of the Fox show "24," tickets to the MTV Video Music Awards, power dining opportunities with business leaders, fine dining, jewelry and more.

SUNDAY

■ The Jewish Agency for Israel begins its three-day assembly in Jerusalem. The assembly will discuss major policy issues of the Jewish people, including questions of Jewish unity, challenges in aliyah and engaging young Jews, and will hold a memorial tribute to Max Fisher, founding chairman of the Jewish Agency's board of governors. The assembly also will elect a new chairman to succeed Sallai Meridor. Among those scheduled to address the assembly are Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, Knesset member Shimon Peres and former U.S. diplomat Dennis Ross.

■ Jews concerned about bolstering Israel's image gather in Washington through Monday for a two-day training seminar for pro-Israel advocates sponsored by The Israel Project. Organizers say participants will learn cutting-edge skills to foster positive media coverage, including words, phrases and images that make Americans support Israel.

■ Jews across the New York metropolitan area will participate in a day of learning to mobilize against genocide in Sudan, at the Skirball Center for Adult Jewish Learning in New York City. Participants will attend learning sessions led by Jewish educators and leaders to discuss Jewish perspectives on the ongoing crisis in Darfur and strategies for activism and fundraising. Almost 30 Jewish organizations and synagogues across the New York metropolitan area have signed on as sponsors.

Jewish groups silent on Bolton

By **MATTHEW E. BERGER**

WASHINGTON (JTA) — The White House is pressing American Jewish organizations to speak out in favor of John Bolton, President Bush's choice for U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, as Republicans push for votes to approve him.

While Bolton has been criticized by Democrats, he has been well received in the Jewish community, predominantly because he was the architect of the 1991 repeal of an infamous 1975 United Nations resolution denigrating Zionism as racism.

But Jewish groups have not expended much energy on Bolton's behalf. That has angered Bush administration officials who say that Bolton's philosophy on U.N. reform is in line with Jewish community views, and that the community should be backing a nominee who can help Israel in the international body.

The administration also hopes Jewish community support will counterbalance lingering questions about Bolton's past statements and work style, and help him win the necessary votes for Senate confirmation. No date has been set for a vote.

"We are surprised at the half-hearted efforts by Jewish organizations who know that John Bolton is exactly the right guy to bring reform to the United Nations, which is an institution desperately in need of reform," a White House official said.

The lack of effort on Bolton's behalf highlights the dilemmas Jewish groups face in taking policy positions.

While Bolton may appeal to some groups, speaking out for him would pit some Jewish groups against liberal colleagues who are concerned about some of Bolton's actions, and even against some of their own members, who have been reluctant to support a White House appointee because of Bush's stances on domestic policy issues.

When asked about efforts for Bolton, several Jewish groups said they don't take positions on nominations, viewing them

essentially as partisan battles.

Jason Isaacson, director of government and international affairs at the American Jewish Committee, said his organization finds nomination battles "personal and political" and said they don't necessarily advance the AJCommittee's agenda.

"But we're certainly on record in the past as having been grateful to John Bolton on positions he has taken on 'Zionism equals racism' and highlighting non-proliferation," Isaacson said.

The White House has been watching Jewish groups' engagement on the issue for several months, since Bolton's nomination became controversial. But they have become more proactive in recent weeks, calling Jewish organizational officials to

ask what they're doing to back Bolton.

The White House wants Jewish figures to reach out to senators, especially Democrats, extolling Bolton's pro-Israel record. But that has not happened.

Many Jewish organizational leaders said their support of Bolton is known;

indeed, some issued press releases praising his nomination when it was announced in March.

"They know we are supportive of Bolton," said Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations. The conference met June 16 with congressional leaders of both parties, but Bolton was barely discussed.

The American Israel Public Affairs Committee, which brought 5,000 delegates to Capitol Hill last month, didn't push Bolton's nomination in the group's action agenda, even after former White House spokesman Ari Fleischer backed him in a speech at AIPAC's policy conference.

The White House wants AIPAC to make the nomination a priority, and to count the cloture vote for Bolton as part of the group's assessment of senators' records on Israel.

'We are surprised at the half-hearted efforts by Jewish organizations who know that John Bolton is exactly the right guy to bring reform to the United Nations, which is an institution desperately in need of reform.'

White house official

NEWS IN BRIEF

MIDDLE EAST

Rice boosts Gaza plan

Condoleezza Rice said Israel's upcoming Gaza withdrawal will promote peace with the Palestinians.

"A successful disengagement will enhance the security of Israel and it should give a sense of confidence and trust between the Israelis and Palestinians as they look to a better future," Rice told reporters Sunday after meeting Prime Minister Ariel Sharon in Jerusalem.

The U.S. secretary of state, whose Middle East tour included a visit to the West Bank on Saturday, called on the Palestinian Authority to disarm and dismantle terrorist groups as it pledged under the "road map" peace plan.

Earlier, Rice said Israel should avoid creating "facts on the ground" that could undermine negotiations, an apparent allusion to West Bank settlement expansion.

Ha'aretz reported that Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon would propose to Rice that as part of the looming withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, the international community would pay to have settlements there razed and for Palestinian refugees to be rehoused on the land.

Koran scandal lives on

A Palestinian woman jailed in Israel was caught flushing pages of the Koran down her toilet.

Sunday's incident at Shikma Prison, which comes as the Prisons Service says Palestinian charges that guards desecrated prisoners' Korans are fabricated, ended when a guard fished the torn pages out of the water and confiscated them.

Reports of Koran abuse at U.S. prisons have been linked to deadly global protests by Muslims.

Fighting from the fringes

Fewer than one in five Israeli settlers plans to resist the upcoming Gaza Strip withdrawal, a poll found.

According to a Hebrew University survey published over the weekend, 18 percent of settlers polled said they would resist evacuation from Gaza and the northern West Bank, slated to begin in August.

It was not clear from the poll if this would include violent measures, but settler leaders insist that organized resistance will be passive only.

In a finding that suggests Israelis expect more resistance than may actually occur, the researchers found that 38 percent of the general Israeli population expect "most" settlers to resist evacuation.

Pollard looks to Gaza

Jonathan Pollard donated money to an Israeli pro-settler charity.

Ha'aretz on Friday reprinted a money order for \$18 that the former U.S. Navy analyst, who is serving a life sentence in a North Carolina prison for spying for Israel, sent recently to Keren Katif, a group that encourages Jewish settlement in the Gaza Strip.

According to Ha'aretz, the charity has raised tens of thousands of dollars for settler farms to offset bank funding that has been cut as Israel's withdrawal from Gaza looms.

Israel deepens naval ties

Israel took part in an international submarine rescue drill in the Mediterranean Sea.

An Israeli naval delegation left Sunday for the month-long exercise, dubbed Sorbet Royal, in the waters east of Italy.

As part of the drill, held every three years, delegations from 10 navies will practice rescuing submarine crews stranded underwater.

None of Israel's three submarines is taking part, but its delegation is expected to help act as marooned crewmen.

Moving up in the world

Israel's United Nations envoy was named a vice president of the General Assembly.

The appointment Monday of Ambassador Dan Gillerman marked the first time in 50 years that an Israeli envoy has filled the post, which largely is ceremonial but still wields influence on the U.N. agenda.

"I hope I will be able to affect decision making at the United Nations, although it will not be an easy job," Gillerman, one of 21 new General Assembly vice presidents, told Israel Radio on Tuesday.

His candidacy was submitted by the Western Europe and Others Group, which includes Israel, and went unopposed by Arab states or Iran.

Gillerman ascribed the lack of opposition to the fact that his nomination was backed by the powerful Western nations.

WORLD

Paris wartime archives opened

The police prefect of Paris opened police archives from the period of the Nazi occupation, which have been classified since World War II.

Pierre Mutz signed an agreement with Eric de Rothschild, president of the Shoah Memorial in Paris, that each would share their respective archives on the occupation and collaboration during the war.

Police archives include arrest warrants classifying Jews by name, address, profession and nationality, as well as lists of goods taken during the roundups of 1941.

Over 1,000 documents will be copied onto microfilm and added to the Center of Contemporary Jewish Documentation at the Shoah Memorial.

Hamas arrest in South America

The local leader of Hamas was arrested in an often-lawless frontier area where Brazil, Paraguay and Argentina meet.

Brazilian and Paraguayan news agencies confirmed last Friday that Saïel Bashar Yahya Al Atary and 21 others described as Islamic terrorists had been arrested by Brazilian Federal Police in the city of Foz de Iguazu.

The men were charged with being part of an international ring that committed credit card fraud, counterfeited documents and was involved in drug trafficking.

Australian Jews honored

The government of Australia bestowed a prestigious award on a former JTA correspondent.

Jeremy Jones, immediate past president of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, who served for 10 years as JTA's correspondent from the island continent, was made a member of the Order of Australia.

Jones is one of 15 Jews honored in Australia to celebrate the queen's birthday.

Jones, currently the director of international and community affairs at the Australia/Israel and Jewish Affairs Council, was recognized for his work in multicultural affairs as well as for his contribution to the Australian Jewish community.

Also honored were Rabbi David Freilich, chief rabbi of Perth, and Melbourne-based Justice Alan Goldberg, a federal court judge and governor of the Jewish Museum of Australia.