

## IN THE NEWS

## House approves Israel, Palestinian aid

The U.S. House of Representatives approved aid for Israel and the Palestinians.

The foreign operations appropriations bill was approved 393-32 on Tuesday.

Israel, as usual, was the biggest single beneficiary of the assistance, receiving \$2.52 billion — \$2.28 billion in military assistance and \$240 million in economic assistance.

The House also acceded to President Bush's request for \$150 million for the Palestinians, in addition to the \$150 million already agreed to in another request earlier this year.

The Palestinian aid has tough oversight provisions attached to it.

## Israeli soldier killed by Hezbollah

An Israeli soldier was killed in clashes with Hezbollah.

Four other soldiers were wounded in clashes Wednesday between Israeli troops and members of the Shi'ite terrorist group.

The clashes began when Hezbollah fighters infiltrated northern Israel.

Israeli soldiers responded with gunfire.

Hezbollah also fired mortars into the Shebaa Farms region.

Israeli warplanes responded with an airstrike on Hezbollah positions in southern Lebanon.

## Palestinian terrorist is slain in Gaza Strip

Israeli forces killed a Palestinian terrorist outside a Gaza Strip settlement.

Security sources said troops fired Tuesday on two Palestinians who were planting a mine outside the Morag settlement, killing one of them.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the failed attack.

On Wednesday morning, Palestinians fired three mortar bombs against the Netzarim settlement, causing no casualties.

**The JTA World Report will not be published on Tuesday, July 5.**

# WORLD REPORT

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## Aid proposals put Egypt on notice that U.S. is rethinking relationship

By RON KAMPEAS

**W**ASHINGTON (JTA) — Egypt's role in smoothing Israel's upcoming pullout from the Gaza Strip is helping to protect it, for now, from a tectonic shift in how the United States treats dictatorships.

Longstanding efforts in Congress to call Egypt to account for its failure to cultivate a free, democratic society are bearing fruit, though they fall far short of the sweeping changes some have sought. Sponsors say the restraint is due to Egypt's active role in Israeli-Palestinian peace efforts.

Two recent congressional votes taking aim at U.S. aid to the most populous Arab nation have particularly rattled Egyptian diplomats here.

Egypt "has a large degree of anti-Semitism — widespread, state-sanctioned anti-Semitism," said Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-Md.), the minority whip in the U.S. House of Representatives. "It has not been as helpful in the Middle East as it can be."

Egypt's recent acceleration of some reform efforts and its role in helping the Palestinians prepare to stabilize Gaza after Israel leaves in August are the major factors preventing it from earning a substantially tougher rebuke from Congress.

"It has played an important role in assisting the Israelis and Palestinians as Israel prepares to disengage from Gaza," said Rep. Robert Wexler (D-Fla.), a senior member of the House International Relations Committee who opposed one of the measures targeting Egyptian aid.

Israel and pro-Israel groups are stepping back from the fight, not wanting to anger

Egypt but appreciative of the momentum in Washington for reform in the Arab world.

Much of the ideological impetus comes from the Bush administration, which has made democratization in the Arab and Muslim world a second-term priority.

Yet as committed as the administration is to democratic reform in Egypt, Bush officials have made clear that the administration doesn't want the U.S.-Egypt relationship challenged for now.

U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has said she does not want Congress to change the modalities of aid to Egypt. But she also said the administration is monitoring the situation.

"More needs to be done," she said just before her most recent Middle East tour, which included a tough speech in Cairo. "The trend line here is the positive development. And it's

one that we're going to encourage, and we're going to encourage that they take this development, this step and push it as far as they possibly can so that, as the reforms continue, Egypt will eventually get to completely open and contested elections."

In a voice vote last week, the Appropriations Committee — the most powerful committee in the House — decided that half of the \$50 million Egypt gets for democracy programs should go through non-governmental organizations, and that a portion of the \$50 million it gets for educational programs should be earmarked for projects encouraging academic freedom.

The amendment was a rebuke to Egypt's government, which likes to keep a tight administrative rein on any reform efforts

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NEWS ANALYSIS

## ■ *Some in Washington are questioning the U.S.-Egypt alliance*

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and in the past has prosecuted officials of nonprofits that encourage democratic reforms.

A week earlier, the International Relations Committee approved a State Department authorization bill that completed a long-standing effort by its ranking member, Rep. Tom Lantos (D-Calif.), to shift \$120 million in military aid to civilian assistance; prevent long-term financing of military purchases; and impose democratization conditions on the economic assistance.

Both bills represent a small portion of the \$1.8 billion Egypt receives each year — \$1.3 billion in military aid and close to \$500 million in economic assistance — second only to the \$2.5 billion Israel receives in mostly military assistance each year.

Yet any shift underscores the change in Washington's mood toward Egypt. Rep. David Obey (D-Wis.), the ranking Democrat on the Appropriations Committee, who wasn't previously known as a tough Egypt critic, moved the appropriations amendment.

The much tougher International Relations Committee amendment was sponsored by Rep. Chris Smith (R-N.J.), vice chairman of the committee, presenting a bipartisan front with Lantos.

Both bills are to be considered this week by the full house. Lantos, who has been pushing for a shift of funds from military to economic assistance for years, scored a major victory this year by having the language written into the bill, rather than into an amendment, which can be rejected more easily.

Nonetheless, congressional insiders suggest that the language in the State Department authorization bill will be removed by the time it gets through conference with the Senate. Obey's amendment, directing dollars to nonprofits that promote democracy, is likelier to become law and carries more legal heft because it's in an appropriations bill.

While less likely to become law, the Lantos bill is a far more serious challenge to the nature of Egyptian aid.

The Egyptians perceive the assistance as immutable, rooted as it is in the 1979 Camp David peace accords, and believe it is aimed at achieving aid parity with Israel. They would see the attachment of conditions to the aid, and even a minor reduction of military aid, as an insulting reduction in their status.

Hoyer proposed, then withdrew, an amendment to the appropriations bill mirroring the Lantos language — a sign from the second-ranking Democrat in the House that Egypt should be on warning.

Rep. Jerry Lewis (R-Calif.), the committee chairman, "was concerned about Egypt's role in facilitating withdrawal from Gaza," Hoyer told JTA, explaining his reasons for withdrawing the amendment.

Egyptians are belatedly taking heed, according to a lobbyist acquainted with Egypt's efforts on Capitol Hill and who

is well connected to the Bush administration. The country's diplomats are just beginning to understand that a variety of factors have fundamentally changed how U.S. leaders view the U.S.-Egypt relationship.

"The fundamentals of the relationship are being questioned," said the lobbyist, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The end of the Cold War meant that Egypt no longer was the bulwark against

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**Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-Md.)**

Soviet expansionism that it once was; Israel, the region's pre-eminent military power, no longer faces the threat to its existence that once spurred the United States to woo Egypt; and there no longer is a combined Arab oil front threatening the U.S. economy, as there was in the 1970s.

Egyptians say the timing of the amendments is off. Reform has never moved faster in Egypt, where this fall, for the first time in decades, the presidential election will be contested by multiple candidates. Additionally, the government is removing restrictions on nonprofits, listening to pleas from the judiciary to reduce governmental interference.

Wexler agreed that sustained U.S. assistance was the key to moving reform forward.

"It creates stability and a closer dependence on the United States," said Wexler, who, like Lantos, is Jewish. "That's good for America, and good for Israel too." ■

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## Bush orders assets seized

By **RON KAMPEAS**

WASHINGTON (JTA) — President Bush ordered the seizure of assets belonging to Syrian, Iranian and North Korean entities believed involved in the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

The executive order, issued Wednesday, allows the United States to seize the assets of seven entities should the assets in any way come under U.S. jurisdiction.

Four of the entities named in an annex to the order are North Korean, three are Iranian and one is Syrian.

Some of the entities are businesses, while others appear to be government affiliated.

Among the groups: the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, and the Scientific Studies and Research Center, which apparently is Syria's weapons agency. ■

# Russia drops its probe of Jewish group

By LEV KRICHEVSKY

MOSCOW (JTA) — Following a storm of protest from Jewish groups and Israeli politicians, Russian officials have dropped a probe into a Russian Jewish group for publishing a religious Jewish book.

But Russian and U.S. Jewish officials warn that those interested in human rights should remain vigilant to prevent similar incidents in the future.

"The fact that the prosecutors have been seriously considering that case for a long time, isn't that a reason for us to be concerned?" said Rabbi Zinovy Kogan, chairman of the Congress of Jewish Religious Organizations and Communities of Russia, the group that was the subject of the probe. "The prosecutors should not make any legal judgments on religious texts. If someone is unhappy with what some of the traditional texts say, this can be a matter of a voluntary discussion between faiths."

The probe was opened after an anti-Semitic letter was circulated earlier this year attacking the text of the Shulchan Aruch legal code as extremist and anti-Christian. The congress has published a short version of the medieval Jewish text.

The probe astonished Israeli officials and heads of international Jewish groups, who said it reminded them of religious persecution under the czar and of reli-

gious disputations foisted on Jews by the Catholic church in medieval times.

Mark Levin, executive director of NCSJ: *Advocates on Behalf of Jews in Russia, Ukraine, the Baltic States & Eurasia*, said it's still unknown what prompted the incident.

"We're all pleased that the investigation was dropped, but it doesn't answer the question of why the investigation was started in the first place," he said. "This is the type of issue that shouldn't occur in a society that is trying to promote tolerance and pluralism."

Levin said his group will emphasize in its meetings with Russian government officials that these types of probes are unacceptable.

Direct pressure on Russia from Israel, local and foreign Jewish groups led to the decision to drop the case, observers in Moscow suggested.

Israeli and Russian media also noted that the news on dropping the probe was released during a visit to Moscow by Israel's trade minister, Ehud Olmert. Ol-

mert was in Moscow for talks on economic relations between the two countries.

Kogan, who was editor of the Russian edition of the *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch*, was questioned by legal officials several times this year.

During questioning last week at the prosecutor's office, Kogan said he had to make a statement that Jews and Judaism do not have any claims against Christianity. He told JTA that he was surprised to find,

among materials in the case, testimony by an academic expert claiming that Judaism regards Christians as idol worshippers.

"If we do not expose such myths, the attacks on us will continue," Kogan said, recalling the first time a case against the Congress and the Shulchan Aruch was opened by the prosecutor's office of the Basmanny district of Moscow in 2002, when a complaint was filed with authorities claiming the Shulchan Aruch was a "fascist" book. ■

(JTA Foreign Editor Peter Ephross in New York contributed to this report.)

**'This is the type of issue that shouldn't occur in a society that is trying to promote tolerance and pluralism.'**

**Mark Levin**  
NCSJ executive director

## Accused Arizona rabbi disappears

By DEBORAH SUSSMAN SUSSEER  
*Jewish News of Greater Phoenix*

PHOENIX (JTA) — Police have few leads in the search for an Arizona rabbi accused of sexually abusing two teenaged girls.

Temple B'rith Shalom in Prescott, Ariz., is quietly carrying on without Rabbi David Lipman, who was reported missing by his family May 24, shortly after the allegations surfaced.

Lt. Pete Hodap of the Prescott Police Department said police have contacted immigration authorities "to make sure that (Lipman) hasn't left the country."

"We're trying to put a flag on his passport," Hodap said, "to hopefully keep him from leaving the country, if that's what his thoughts are."

Detective Robert Peoples said June 14 that there were "no leads yet."

"No news," Peoples said. "Don't know where he is, no one's talking, no one knows, apparently. Unfortunately."

According to Yavapai County's *The Daily Courier*, two girls aged 16 and 14 told police Lipman had been touching them inappropriately.

Peoples said his department received a call May 13 from a Child Protective Services employee who reported possible sexual abuse of the girls. The call prompted a criminal investigation against Lipman, who "admitted to inappropriate touching," Peoples said.

B'rith Shalom placed Lipman on administrative leave May 20 and terminated his employment effective May 27.

Lipman, 55, was hired in the spring of 2002 and moved to Prescott from a position in Rhode Island. He was only the second full-time rabbi to serve Prescott's only Jewish house of worship.

Lipman is the son of Rabbi Eugene Lipman, who was president of the Reform Movement's Central Conference of American Rabbis from 1987-1989. He and his wife, Robyn Tevah, have five children.

Mark Drutz, an attorney and B'rith Shalom member who has been acting as spokesman for the temple, said lay services are being offered on Shabbat, and that the temple's prior rabbi is helping out.

The congregation is receiving institutional support from organizations such as the Union for Reform Judaism, and members of other religions have called to offer assistance.

Drutz told the Jewish News that the situation is "devastating, but the congregation is strong, and it will survive and move forward." ■

# NEWS IN BRIEF

## NORTH AMERICA

### State supports Palestinian reform

The U.S. State Department granted \$2 million from a Middle East reform fund to three Palestinian projects.

Recipients of the money, announced Wednesday by the Middle East Partnership Initiative, include the Search for Common Ground, an international conciliation group, which is funding live broadcasts of the Palestinian Legislative Council on 10 private Palestinian TV stations; a project jointly run by CHF International, the Palestinian Authority and several Palestinian nongovernmental organizations that train Palestinian women entrepreneurs; and a program run by NorthStar Development Partners that trains Palestinian small business owners.

### Conservative rabbis support gays

Some Conservative rabbis launched a Web site supporting the inclusion of gays in their movement.

The site, [www.keshetrabbis.org](http://www.keshetrabbis.org), went online earlier this month and now lists 99 rabbis who support the ordination of gay rabbis and the inclusion of gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender Jews in movement activities and institutions.

Some of the rabbis also support allowing Conservative rabbis to perform gay wedding ceremonies, though not all have signed on to that.

The Rabbinical Assembly, the movement's rabbinic arm, voted in 1992 against ordaining gay rabbis and officiating at same-sex weddings, but will reconsider its approach to homosexuality in March.

### Envoy receives cultural award

Israel's ambassador to the United States received a U.S. government award for advancing the cause of Holocaust remembrance.

Daniel Ayalon was presented Wednesday with the Cultural Pluralism Award from the U.S. Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad.

### Canadian Jewish groups back deportation

Jewish groups in Canada welcomed a decision by Canada's Supreme Court reinstating a deportation order against a man for fomenting hate.

Leon Mugesera was accused of hate-mongering and inciting genocide against the Tutsi minority in a speech he gave in his native Rwanda in 1992.

A federal court previously had overturned the deportation order.

As part of his fight to stay in Canada, Mugesera had alleged a widespread Jewish conspiracy and claimed that Justice Minister Irwin Cotler, Supreme Court Justice Rosalie Abella and other prominent Canadian Jews functioned as a hidden, parallel judicial system.

The court rejected the argument Tuesday.

## WORLD

### Spain removes Hezbollah TV

Spain ordered its satellite broadcaster to pull Hezbollah's TV affiliate from its Latin American broadcasts.

The Industry Ministry's order Wednesday to state-controlled Hispasat to remove al-Manar from its broadcasts comes after French and U.S. decisions last year to remove the station from broadcasts in Europe and North America.

The station raises funds for the Lebanese anti-Israel terrorist group and broadcasts anti-Semitic libels.

### British faith leaders want debt relief

Britain's Orthodox chief rabbi joined other religious leaders to push for anti-poverty measures at next week's G8 summit of industrialized nations.

In a letter to Prime Minister Tony Blair also signed by Protestant,

Catholic, Free Church and Muslim leaders in Britain, Jonathan Sacks called for Britain to play its "fullest part" in pressing for debt cancellation at the meeting in Scotland, which Blair will chair.

### Sharon date for Paris set

Ariel Sharon confirmed that he would accept French President Jacques Chirac's invitation to visit France at the end of July.

The Israeli prime minister's day-and-a-half visit is likely to begin July 27, a source close to Sharon told Agence France Presse.

A protest march against Sharon's visit is scheduled for July 9 in Paris. This will be Sharon's second official visit as prime minister to France.

### Vienna pol blasted for denial

A Viennese politician had his immunity lifted for suggesting that Nazi gas chambers existed only in Poland and nowhere else in the Third Reich.

The Associated Press reported Wednesday that the Vienna City Council voted unanimously to strip John Gudenus, a legislator in the upper house of Austria's Parliament, of protection from prosecution.

Austrian law prohibits citizens from attempting to mitigate Nazi atrocities.

"There is no space in the room for someone who says, 'Ooh, I'm not so sure' " about the Holocaust, said Ingrid Luttenberger, a spokeswoman for Vienna Mayor Michael Haeupl.

### Jewish culture sweeps Krakow

The 15th annual Krakow Jewish Culture Festival is taking place this week.

The festival, which opened Saturday and runs until next Sunday, showcases Jewish musicians from Poland, Israel, the United States and around the world.

The festival includes lectures on Jewish religion, history and culture, dance and calligraphy workshops and a full schedule of other events.

The bulk of festival-goers are non-Jewish Poles eager to learn about Jewish culture.

## MIDDLE EAST

### Clash at Gaza enclave

Israeli troops fired in the air to disperse settler youth who clashed with Palestinians in a Gaza Strip village.

Five Palestinians, a soldier and a settler were hurt in Wednesday's confrontation at Muwasi, a usually quiet Palestinian village inside the Gush Katif settlement bloc.

Tensions in Muwasi have been high since settlers committed to resisting the looming Gaza Strip withdrawal commandeered an abandoned building.

Stone-throwing confrontations that began Tuesday continued into a second day, prompting the Israeli army and police to send in personnel. Eight settlers were arrested.

### The long arm of justice

Israeli security forces captured a Palestinian policeman who allegedly took part in the 2000 lynching of two army reservists.

The Shin Bet lifted a gag order Wednesday on the arrest, which took place in May, of a Gaza-born Palestinian who worked in the Ramallah police station at the time of the lynching.

Two Israeli army reservists who strayed into the West Bank city by mistake were taken to the station, only to be beaten to death by a mob that was allowed in.

Televised images of the lynching on Oct. 12, 2000, were broadcast worldwide, and Israeli authorities swore to bring the perpetrators to justice. There have been several arrests since.