

IN THE NEWS
**Abbas, Sharon
could meet again**

Mahmoud Abbas said he expects to meet Ariel Sharon before Israel withdraws from the Gaza Strip in August.

The Palestinian Authority president has met the Israeli prime minister twice since succeeding the late Yasser Arafat, but the last summit, in June, was marred by mutual recrimination over renewed fighting in Gaza.

Israeli officials said no date has been set for a third summit.

**Gaza handover
report disputed**

Israel denied a report that it has not finalized a deal with the Palestinian Authority on what to do with evacuated Gaza Strip settlements.

The New York Times on Wednesday quoted an Israeli official as saying that the government has yet to decide whether to demolish houses it evacuates during the upcoming Gaza withdrawal and what should happen to the rubble — despite an announcement by U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice that a deal on the issue had been secured.

**Report: Circumcision
may reduce HIV risk**

Circumcision may reduce the risk that men will contract HIV through intercourse with women.

The Wall Street Journal reported Monday that French and South African researchers have apparently found that circumcision reduces the risk of contracting HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, by 70 percent.

The board monitoring the research halted the study in February because it decided that to continue without offering the uncircumcised group circumcisions would have been unethical.

But some researchers interviewed by the Journal stressed caution because the study's findings have not been published yet.

WORLD REPORT

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Lawyer: Franklin stumbled into investigation of AIPAC officials

By RON KAMPEAS and MATTHEW E. BERGER

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Lawrence Franklin, the Pentagon analyst at the center of the government's espionage case against two former employees of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, "walked onstage" into an ongoing investigation of AIPAC officials, according to his attorney.

Plato Cacheris, one of Washington's best-known espionage lawyers, told JTA in a recent interview that he is representing Franklin for free because he feels his client was unfairly targeted.

"I felt for him," Cacheris said. "I felt he was unfairly put upon."

Franklin was indicted last month on charges that he conspired to reveal classified information to two AIPAC officials, former policy director Steve Rosen and former Iran analyst Keith Weissman, and an Israeli Embassy employee.

Franklin's trial is set to start Sept. 6. The midlevel Iran analyst has pleaded not guilty.

"Franklin walked onstage; there already was an investigation going on not involving him," Cacheris said.

Prosecutors and other government officials have refused to comment on the case.

The information that Franklin allegedly relayed to Rosen and Weissman centered on Iran's activities in post-invasion Iraq.

Cacheris' assertion that Franklin was an accidental target in the case reinforces the perception held by those close to the defense of Weissman and Rosen that the two former AIPAC employees were the FBI's original targets.

Indeed, Franklin's indictment cites as evi-

dence apparently tapped phone conversations of Rosen even before he met Franklin, suggesting that the government stumbled across Franklin in the course of tracking Rosen.

Another source familiar with the government's case against Rosen says an investigation was launched as early as September 2001 because the Bush administration wanted to quash what it believed was a promiscuous culture of leaking in Washington. Rosen was renowned for his access to inside information.

Cacheris would not speculate about the government's rationale for the case. "There seems to me there is something driving it," he said. "What it is, I don't know yet."

Five of the six charges in Franklin's indictment focus on his relationship with Rosen and Weissman; the sixth involves his relationship with Naor Gilon, head of the political desk at the Israeli Embassy in Washington. According to the indictment, Franklin's acquaintance with Gilon predates his meetings with Rosen and Weissman.

Cacheris said a relationship between Gilon and Franklin — two men with a professional interest in Iran — was hardly surprising. He characterized the indictment's implication that Franklin sought something from Israel in exchange for information as "rather flimsy."

The indictment mentions a store gift card Franklin received from Gilon and a letter of reference Gilon wrote on behalf of Franklin's daughter, who was going to visit Israel.

Franklin sought Cacheris' legal assistance late last year after the FBI said it would press charges against him, even though he had cooperated with the government's inves-

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■ *The lawyer representing Lawrence Franklin says his client is unfairly targeted*

Continued from page 1
tigation of Rosen and Weissman.

Asked why Franklin agreed to the FBI's alleged request last June to participate in a sting operation involving Weissman and Rosen without even asking for a lawyer or any quid pro quo, Cacheris smiled.

"Larry's a little bit guileless — maybe a lot guileless — and maybe a bit unsophisticated for a guy with a Ph.D. in Asian studies," said Cacheris, a Southerner with an avuncular manner and a fondness for seersucker suits. "The questions that you would have asked, he didn't ask."

"If he had a lawyer up front, we wouldn't be talking today," Cacheris said.

In the alleged sting on July 21, 2004, Franklin called Weissman and insisted that they meet as soon as possible. When they met later that day at a shopping mall, Franklin told Weissman that Iranian agents planned to imminently kidnap, torture and kill Israeli and American agents in northern Iraq, according to sources.

Franklin reportedly asked Weissman to relay the information to Elliott Abrams, then the assistant national security adviser at the White House in charge of dealing with the Middle East. The presumption was that AIPAC would have better access to the White House than a mid-level Iran analyst at the Pentagon.

The reliability of the information has never been verified, but Cacheris insists Franklin was embroiled in a sting operation.

"He was given a script," the attorney said.

Weissman relayed the information to Rosen, and together they told their boss, AIPAC's executive director Howard Kohr, asking him to pass it on to Abrams, according to multiple sources. There is no evidence that Kohr shared the information with Abrams or anyone else or that he knew it was classified.

The government has assured AIPAC that neither it nor Kohr are targets in the investigation, AIPAC has said.

Cacheris said he does not know if the alleged sting was directed at anyone beyond Rosen or Weissman.

The two AIPAC staffers also relayed the information to Gilon at the Israeli Embassy and to Glenn Kessler, The Washington Post's State Department correspondent, according to sources close to the defense.

Those two conversations are expected to be central to the case against Rosen and Weissman. Indictments against the two are expected to be handed down sometime this summer.

The government will argue that relaying classified information to a foreign agent is an act of espionage and that Rosen and Weissman made it clear in their conversation with Kessler that the information was classified, according to defense sources familiar with the government's case.

Weissman and Rosen will say they did not know that the information was classified and that the government is distorting their conversation with Kessler, according to sources close to the former AIPAC officials.

In August 2004, about a month after the alleged sting, FBI agents raided the offices of Rosen and Weissman at AIPAC headquarters. In January, the government convened a grand jury in Virginia to consider the case.

Cacheris, famous for handling high-profile espionage cases — including those against the FBI's Robert Hannsen and the

CIA's Aldrich Ames — doesn't believe the government has a lot to go on.

The exchanges that Rosen, Weissman and Franklin allegedly had are "very common," Cacheris said. "People in this city are talking every day about stuff they're not allowed to talk about. It's not inappropriate."

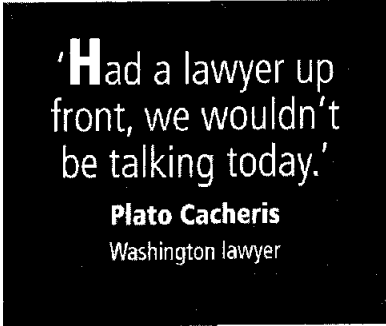
AIPAC fired Weissman and Rosen in March, after months of defending their integrity, citing information that arose out of the FBI investigation.

Franklin also faces charges in West Virginia, his place of residence, where he is alleged to have violated a ban on removing classified documents from the Virginia-Maryland-D.C. region by taking some items home. Franklin was reprimanded in the late 1990s for the same reason but was allowed to keep his security clearance.

Cacheris said he wasn't currently negotiating a deal for Franklin.

"We will not plead to an espionage count because we don't think that is justified," he said.

Cacheris did not rule out agreeing to a plea bargain on a lesser charge in the future.





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Jewish groups endorse immigration

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Sixty major Jewish groups endorsed a declaration calling for the abolishment of immigration restrictions tied to "exaggerated fears."

In a statement released Tuesday by the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society commemorating the 350th anniversary of American Jewry, the groups called for "thoughtful and serious discussion" of immigration and refugee-related issues within Jewish and national contexts.

The statement also called for the devel-

opment of fair immigration policies and said post-Sept. 11 national security needs are not inconsistent with such policies.

HIAS President Leonard Glickman said the statement is "firmly rooted in Jewish history and tradition and applies these lessons to the most pressing public policy questions in the immigration and refugee arena."

Signatories include the Orthodox Union, the Union for Reform Judaism, the American Jewish Committee and B'nai B'rith International.

British Jewish groups join G-8 rally

By DANIELLA PELED

LONDON (JTA) — Jewish participants in the huge rallies that preceded the G-8 summit hope their presence will highlight the Jewish community's involvement in wider social issues.

"This is such an important statement for the Jewish community to make as a whole, liberal and Orthodox," said marcher Anne Clark, from London's Wimbledon Reform Synagogue. "Jewish values reach outside to the wider community, and we don't just look after our own — as Jews we care what goes on in the wider world."

When some 220,000 people created a human circle around Edinburgh over the weekend to support what they considered a fairer deal for the developing world, 100 or so members of the Make Poverty History Jewish coalition formed a link in the vast chain.

It was an especially satisfying achievement since Jewish delegates — who came from 21 Jewish religious, student and social welfare organizations — had been forced to seek creative solutions just to be able to attend the event.

With both the march and rally held on Shabbat, the coalition — which took as its slogan the phrase from Deuteronomy, "Justice, justice shall you pursue" — needed to find ways to allow all its delegates to participate, whatever their level of religious observance.

Edinburgh's small Jewish community rallied to host the visitors, providing them with kosher food and accommodations within walking distance of the event. Separate services were held at the Orthodox Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation and at a liberal shul, but the two institutions combined to hold a kiddush with food and song last Friday night and Saturday morning.

Coalition members took part in panel discussions during the day on Saturday but eschewed the use of amplification. Arrangements were made for a church along the march route to provide water for participants who could not take drinks with them.

In addition, "Make Poverty History" kippot — manufactured by families in Argentina affected by the country's economic downturn — enabled observant marchers to make a statement without

having to carry anything on Shabbat.

"It is superb that both liberal and Orthodox are here," said Jackie Richards, coordinator of the North London Progressive Jewish Community. "I hope it's the beginning of greater things for the whole of the Jewish community in the U.K. to focus on something so important, and I hope we can learn from that in the future."

The Jewish coalition had been active for months to raise community awareness of the Make Poverty History issue and to mobilize Jewish involvement in a campaign they felt reflected Jewish values of charity and social justice.

In March, representatives delivered a giant postcard to 10 Downing Street calling on British Prime Minister Tony Blair to increase aid to the world's poorest countries, cancel their debts and improve trade terms.

Those three crucial elements of the coalition's campaign gel with the Jewish vision of tzedakah, or charity, according to Julie Blane, executive director of MaAfrica Tikkun U.K., a Jewish-founded development agency based in South Africa, and a coalition member.

"Our teachings say that giving tzedakah is an obligation, and the root of the word is tzedek, justice," Blane said. "It's not about handouts, it's about helping people to help themselves. Maimonides specifically talks about different levels of tzedakah, and the highest is to give someone the resources to enable a person to stand on their own two feet."

Saturday's march took place in a noisy, festive atmosphere, with the sun blazing down and drummers and stilt-walkers mingling with people of all ages clad in white, the symbol of the campaign.

Shop fronts along the city's main thoroughfares were boarded up, but the day passed almost entirely without incident, though protests by anarchists several days later led to clashes with police.

Still, it was a highly politicized occasion, with many protesters carrying placards proclaiming President Bush

the world's "No. 1 Terrorist" and a liberal sprinkling of Palestinian flags in the crowd.

Some members of the Jewish coalition had been apprehensive about the tenor of the event, based on rallies against the Iraq war that featured fierce anti-Israel sentiment. Many felt such fear may have discouraged other Jews from attending.

George Wilkes, 37, a history teacher from Cambridge, admitted

he anticipated some friction because of the kippot.

"I expected people would think, Oh, Jews are on the wrong side of every conflict," he added.

Hannah Hottschneider, 33, from Edinburgh, admitted to sharing Wilkes' reservations, because "a lot of left-wing groups have swung to be very anti-Israel."

"But I'm impressed by how peaceful it is," she said of the rally.

The Jewish activists felt it was vital for a Jewish voice to be heard in a campaign that captured the imaginations of millions of people around the world.

"Jews have a special role with regard to persecution," added Baruch Solomon, 43, a Londoner working with coalition member Tzedek, a U.K. Jewish overseas development body. "If we complain that people didn't stand up for us in the Holocaust, then we should stand up for other people now."

Danny Casson, chief executive of World Jewish Aid, a development agency that is a division of World Jewish Relief and was a driving force behind the coalition, described the Edinburgh event as a valuable example of successful cross-communal cooperation and Jewish involvement in wider social justice issues. He hopes to build on that.

"We want to keep the coalition together, to push education about poverty in the world, and possibly team up with other faith groups," Casson said. "It's now for us to work together to present a united front, and to put the positive face of Judaism forward. It's really important there is a Jewish voice out there."

'Jews have a special role with regard to persecution.'

Baruch Solomon

London resident

NEWS IN BRIEF

NORTH AMERICA

Darfur coalition to have prayer weekend

A coalition of religious groups that includes a number of Jewish organizations is holding a prayer weekend for Darfur.

The weekend, sponsored by SaveDarfur.org and backed by both houses of Congress, features prayers composed for Jews, Christians, Muslims and other faiths.

Jewish members of the coalition include all the religious streams, the American Jewish Committee and the United Jewish Communities.

Texas governor apologizes

Texas Gov. Rick Perry apologized to the Jewish community for inviting a messianic rabbi to speak at an official function.

Perry expressed regret to Jewish leaders on June 29 for having David Stone, a self-proclaimed messianic rabbi, give the benediction at a June 5 bill-signing ceremony, the Texas Jewish Post reported.

"He repeatedly said, 'It's my responsibility. We did not intend to have this man speak as a representative of the Jewish community.' He apologized for having this gentleman there," said Alan Greenspan, an executive committee member of the American Jewish Committee's Dallas chapter.

The ceremony made headlines because it was held in a Dallas Christian school, which critics said was unconstitutional.

Perry said he had no regrets about the location, according to Greenspan.

Official praised for opposing divestment

The American Jewish Congress praised New York State's comptroller for opposing Presbyterian divestment from Israel.

In a letter sent to church leaders Sunday, Alan Hevesi said that divestment is unethical and misguided.

"I am outraged that you would take actions against Israel after failing for decades to divest in companies that do business with the Palestinian Authority, Syria, Iran, Iraq and Saudi Arabia — countries that are known to support and/or harbor terrorists," Hevesi wrote.

WORLD

Legislators tackle anti-Semitism

Officials and activists met in Washington to discuss legislative responses to anti-Semitism.

Organized by the World Jewish Congress, the Sunday forum included lawmakers from the United States, Europe and Israel, as well as diplomats and representatives of numerous nongovernmental organizations.

Rep. Chris Smith (R-N.J.), co-chairman of the U.S. Helsinki Commission, and Gert Weisskirchen of the German Bundestag, vice president of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and representative of the OSCE chairman-in-office on combating anti-Semitism, co-chaired the event.

British Islamist goes on trial

The trial of a British Islamic leader charged with supporting the murder of Jews and others opened this week.

Abu Hamza Al-Masri has pleaded innocent to the charges, which pre-empted a bid by the United States to extradite him.

Al-Masri is the former head of London's Finsbury Park Mosque, which has been linked to terrorist suspects.

Israel won't extradite man to Poland

Israel refused again to extradite a Polish-born Jew who allegedly was responsible for the deaths of 1,500 German prisoners after World War II. A letter sent by Israel's Justice Ministry said there is no reason to extradite Solomon Morel, The Associated Press reported.

Polish prosecutors said the letter argued the statute of limitations on Morel had run out.

Morel commanded the Communist-run Swietochlowice camp after the war.

Polish prosecutors allege Morel caused the deaths of the prisoners by refusing them food and medical treatment, and by carrying out torture.

French Jewish official murdered

The vice president of the Association of Liberal Jews of Toulouse was found murdered in his home last Friday.

A freelance journalist and activist in the community, Rene Itzhak Autard, 60, was found, according to the police, "in a pool of blood, covered with pillows," his face and head beaten numerous times with a blunt object.

The police said they are not ruling out any possible motive, including anti-Semitism, for the murder.

Autard was an active member in the Mouvement des Juifs Liberaux, the French Reform movement of Judaism, and had opened a soup kitchen.

Pope to pray in Hebrew

The pope will say prayers in Hebrew when he visits a German synagogue in August.

The recitation of Hebrew prayers in Cologne would represent Benedict XVI's latest effort to reach out to Jews since he took over as pope in April.

In a related development, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon invited Benedict to visit the Jewish state.

The invitation was offered as Israeli officials presented Benedict with an Israeli stamp depicting Pope John Paul II's visit to the Western Wall in Jerusalem in 2000.

Benedict has not yet accepted or rejected the offer.

MIDDLE EAST

Justice in Jerusalem

The Palestinian Authority extradited an Arab murder suspect to Israel.

The suspect, a resident of eastern Jerusalem who is believed to have fled to the West Bank in May after killing two of his sisters, was handed over to Israeli police by Palestinian authorities this week.

He reportedly confessed to the crime and was remanded for a week.

Israeli media said the man murdered his sisters for "family honor," suspecting them of sexual impropriety.

Indictment in attack on gays

A religious Israeli was indicted for stabbing marchers taking part in a Jerusalem gay pride parade.

Yishai Shlissel, a resident of the fervently Orthodox community of Kiryat Sefer, was charged with attempted murder Tuesday after being arrested during last week's stabbing spree.

Three people who took part in the gay pride parade were wounded.

The suspect was quoted by the media as saying in Jerusalem District Court that he acted on God's orders.

Terror-victim fund closing

The Jewish Agency for Israel will close its fund for Israeli victims of terrorism.

Boaz Herman, director of the agency's Fund for Terror Victims, attributed the decision to the improved security situation in Israel and the fact that the government is expected to operate its own support network for citizens hurt or bereaved by Palestinian attacks.

"As terror attacks decreased, people began looking to other means of aiding Israel," Herman told the Jerusalem Post on Wednesday.

"Now it's up to the government to step up and help the victims." According to the report, the fund distributed \$18 million to 3,000 families during its four years of operation.