


**IN THE NEWS**
**Bush: Terror fight will help protect Israel**

America must fight terrorists because they could destroy Israel, President Bush said.

In a long address Thursday to the National Endowment on Democracy, Bush sought to explain a foreign policy that has become bogged down in the Iraq war.

Bush cast Iraq as central to his war on terrorism and cited a litany of catastrophic outcomes should terrorists prevail, among them the destruction of Israel.

**Sharon and Abbas to meet next week**

Ariel Sharon and Mahmoud Abbas are expected to meet Tuesday.

King Abdullah of Jordan, who spoke with Sharon by telephone Wednesday, said the Israeli prime minister agreed to hold the summit Oct. 11.

Aides to Sharon and Abbas confirmed that a meeting was set for next week but said the timing and venue had not been decided.

At the summit, Sharon is expected to urge the Palestinian Authority president to honor his commitment under the U.S.-led "road map" peace plan to crack down on terrorist groups.

Abbas will ask Sharon to free more Palestinian security prisoners as a goodwill gesture.

**Air Force sued on discrimination**

A lawsuit calls on the U.S. Air Force to stop the proselytizing at the Air Force Academy.

Mikey Weinstein filed the lawsuit in a U.S. court Thursday, saying the academy has failed to stop discrimination and harassment of non-evangelical Christian, non-Christian and atheist members of the Colorado Springs, Colo., academy.

The Air Force recently instituted new tolerance guidelines following reports of evangelizing and an overtly Christian atmosphere at the academy.

The Air Force has 20 days to respond to the lawsuit.

■ **MORE NEWS, Pg. 8**

# WORLD REPORT

PUBLISHED WEEKDAYS BY JTA—THE GLOBAL NEWS SERVICE OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE • WWW.JTA.ORG



Matthew E. Berger

Lawrence Franklin, left, leaves a courthouse on May 4 with his attorney, John Richards.

## Former Pentagon man pleads guilty, will testify against ex-AIPAC officials

By RON KAMPEAS

**A**LEXANDRIA, Va. (JTA)—Lawrence Franklin's plea-bargain pledge to cooperate with the U.S. government in its case against two former AIPAC officials was put to the test as soon as it was made.

"It was unclassified and it is unclassified," Franklin, a former Pentagon analyst, insisted in court Wednesday, describing a document that the government maintains is classified. The document is central to one of the conspiracy charges against Steve Rosen, the former foreign policy chief of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee.

Guilty pleas usually are remorseful, sedate

affairs. But Franklin appeared defiant and agitated Wednesday as he pleaded guilty as part of a deal that may leave him with a reduced sentence and part of his government pension.

Franklin's prickliness could prove another setback for the U.S. government in a case that the presiding judge already has suggested could be dismissed because of questions about access to evidence.

Franklin's performance unsettled prosecutors, who will attempt to prove that Rosen and Keith Weissman, AIPAC's former Iran analyst, conspired with Franklin to communicate secret information. The case goes to trial Jan. 2.

The argument over the faxed document

*Continued on page 2*

**BEHIND  
THE  
HEADLINES**

## ■ Franklin pleads guilty in AIPAC case

*Continued from page 1*

furnished the most dramatic encounter Wednesday.

"It was a list of murders," Franklin began to explain to U.S. District Judge T.S. Ellis when Thomas Reilly, a youthful, red-headed lawyer from the Justice Department, leapt from his seat, shouting, "Your Honor, that's classified!"

Ellis agreed to seal that portion of the hearing. JTA has learned that the fax was a list of terrorist incidents believed to have been backed by Iran.

There were other elements of Franklin's plea that suggest he is not ready to cooperate to the fullest extent. The government says Franklin leaked information to the AIPAC employees because he thought it could advance his career, but Franklin says his motivation was "frustration with policy" on Iran at the Pentagon.

Franklin said he believed Rosen and Weissman were better connected than he and would be able to relay his concerns to officials at the White House's National Security Council.

He did not explicitly mention in court that Iran was his concern. But JTA has learned that Franklin thought his superiors at the Pentagon were overly distracted by the Iraq war in 2003 — when he established contact with Rosen and Weissman — and weren't paying enough attention to Iran.

The penal code criminalizes relaying information that "could be used to the injury of the United States or to the advantage of any foreign nation." Frank-

lin's testimony would not be much use to the prosecution if he believed Rosen and Weissman simply were relaying information from the Pentagon to the White House, sources close to the defense of Rosen and Weissman said.

"I was convinced they would relay this information back-channel to friends on the NSC," he said.

In any case, the section of the penal code that deals with civilians who obtain and relay classified information rarely, if ever, has been used in a prosecution, partly because it runs up against First Amendment protections for journalists and lobbyists, who frequently deal with secrets.

A spokesman for Abbe Lowell, Rosen's lawyer, said Franklin's guilty plea "has no impact on our case because a government employee's actions in dealing with classified information is simply not the same as a private person, whether that person is a reporter or a lobbyist."

The essence of Franklin's guilty plea seemed to be only that he knew the recipients were unauthorized to receive the information. Beyond that, he insisted, he had no criminal intent.

Admitting guilt to another charge, relaying information to Naor Gilon, the chief political officer at the Israeli Embassy in Washington, Franklin said that he wasn't giving away anything that the Israeli didn't already know.

The suggestion that Franklin was mining Gilon for information, and not the other way around, turns on its head the hype around the case when it first was revealed in late August 2004, after the FBI raided AIPAC's offices. At the time, CBS described Franklin as an "Israeli spy."

Franklin's claim reinforced an argument put forward by Israel — that Gilon was not soliciting anything untoward in the eight or nine meetings he had with Franklin beginning in 2002.

"We have full confidence in our diplomats, who are dedicated professionals and conduct themselves in accordance with established diplomatic practice," said David Siegel, an embassy spokesman. "Israel is a close ally of the United States, and we exchange information on a formalized basis on these issues. There would be no

reason for any wrongdoing on the part of our diplomats."

Franklin also pleaded guilty to removing classified documents from the authorized area, which encompasses Maryland, Virginia and Washington, when he brought material to his home in West Virginia.

He sounded another defensive note in explaining the circumstances: He brought the material home on June 30, 2004, he said, to bone up for tough questions he often faced from Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and Rumsfeld's then-deputy, Paul Wolfowitz.

Franklin, who has five children and an ill wife, said he is in dire circumstances, parking cars at a horse-race track, waiting tables and tending bar to make ends meet. Keeping part of his government pension for his wife was key to Franklin's agreement to plead guilty, his lawyer told JTA.

Franklin pleaded guilty to three different charges, one having to do with his alleged dealings with the former AIPAC officials; one having to do with Gilon; and one for taking classified documents home.

The language of the plea agreement suggests that the government will argue for a soft sentence, agreeing to Franklin's preferred minimum-security facility and allowing for concurrent sentencing. But it conditions its recommendations on Franklin being "reasonably available for debriefing and pre-trial conferences."

The charges against Rosen and Weissman, apparently based on wiretapped conversations, allege that the two former AIPAC staffers shared classified information with fellow AIPAC staffers, the media and foreign government officials.

The problem with the wiretap evidence lies in the government's refusal to share much of it or even to say exactly how much it has. In a recent filing, the government said that even the quantity of the material should remain classified.

In a Sept. 19 hearing, Ellis suggested to prosecutor Kevin DiGregori that his failure to share the defendants' wiretapped conversations with the defense team could lead to the case being dismissed. ■

**Franklin's guilty plea 'has no impact on our case.'**

**Spokesman for Rosen's lawyer**

### JTA WORLD REPORT

**Daniel J. Krifcher**  
President

**Mark J. Joffe**  
Executive Editor and Publisher

**Lisa Hostein**  
Editor

**Michael S. Arnold**  
Managing Editor

**Lenore A. Silverstein**  
Finance and Administration Director

**Noa Artzi-Weill**  
Marketing Director

JTA WORLD REPORT is published five days a week, except holidays, by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency Inc., 330 Seventh Ave., New York, N.Y. 10001-5010. For more information about how to subscribe by e-mail, fax or regular mail, call (212) 643-1890, or visit our Web site at [www.jta.org](http://www.jta.org).  
© JTA. Reproduction only with permission.

# Lulav shortage shakes Jewish world

By CHANAN TIGAY

NEW YORK (JTA) — American legislators, Israeli officials and Jewish groups are working diplomatic channels in an effort to stave off a looming lulav shortage ahead of Sukkot.

Their efforts follow a surprise move by Egypt, which — after years as the world's primary supplier of the palm fronds that form the spine of the ritual lulav — said it no longer would provide the leaves to suppliers in the United States, Israel and beyond.

"We've got everybody on the case, and I told them to shake a leg," Rep. Gary Ackerman (D-N.Y.) told JTA, pun intended.

Ackerman has raised the issue in meetings with the Egyptian ambassador to the United States and America's ambassador to Egypt, and says he also has put a call in to Osama el Baz, a top political adviser to Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

In addition, Sen. Rick Santorum (R-Pa.) has sent a letter to the Egyptian ambassador urging Egypt to "consider the needs of Jewish communities around the world and allow for a sufficient number of these palm fronds to be exported this year."

Staff members from the office of Rep. Eliot Engel (D-N.Y.) also have voiced concerns on the issue to the Egyptian Embassy.

Israel's Ministry of Agriculture also is in contact with its Egyptian counterpart, which has said that palm-leaf exports had to be cut because removing the fronds damages the trees.

The pressure seems to be having some effect: Israeli officials say they now believe some lulav shipments from Egypt — the source in past years of about 1 million lulavs worldwide — could go forward, and Rabbi Abba Cohen, Washington director and counsel for Agudath Israel of America, said Monday he'd received word from the Egyptians that "a partial release" was in the works.

Still, with a significant cut in the number of lulavs reaching distributors still likely, Jewish officials are concerned they may shortly have a "lulav crisis" on their hands for Sukkot, which falls this year in mid-October.

"The Egyptian action will not only create a tremendous shortage, so that some people won't have lulavim, but those who do might have to pay an exorbitant price," Cohen said.

Cohen said his group has been in contact with the Egyptian Embassy, the White House and the State Department on the issue.

Egypt's concerns are backed up by horticulturalists, who say removing the fronds could damage a tree's ability to produce fruit and thrive.

"It is detrimental to the health of the palm to remove the green, productive leaves," said John Begeman, a horticulture agent with the University of Arizona's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. "They are doing the work of the palm in manufacturing food" through photosynthesis.

Date palms typically have 15-20 healthy green leaves at any one time, and removal of leaves should be limited to the dead and dying brown leaves at the trees' base, Begeman said.

The Encyclopedia Judaica translates the Hebrew word lulav as "a young branch of a tree" or "a shoot." The lulav is one of the arba'ah minim, or four plant species, that are joined together and shaken on Sukkot. The others are willows and myrtle, which are bound to the lulav with strips of palm; and the etrog, or citron, which is held beside the lulav as it is waved.

Calls to the Egyptian Embassy were not returned.

Those in contact with the Egyptians say they have been receptive to Jewish concerns. No one interviewed believes that the Egyptian move was politically motivated. They said they hoped the Egyptians might take steps to cushion the blow in light of the appeals.

"We're surely sensitive" to Egypt's needs, Cohen said. "What we're looking for is some way to allow them to pursue what's in their best interest, but at the

same time allow us to adjust and develop or tap into other sources."

Cohen suggested, for example, that instead of cutting off lulav shipments at once, a decrease could be gradual.

While Egypt long has been the major producer of lulavs — the majority come from the El Arish region of northern Sinai — some distributors have

gotten portions of their supplies from California, Arizona and Israel. In light of the news out of Egypt, several Israeli distributors reportedly visited Jordan recently to determine if the Hashemite Kingdom could become a new source.

Palm fronds also play a role in Christianity. On Palm Sunday, the Sunday before Easter, many Christians use bunches of green palm leaves — pruned from date, sago and other palm varieties — as they mark Jesus' entry into Jerusalem in the days prior to his crucifixion. In many churches, the fronds later are burned and their ash used on Ash Wednesday.

Distributors of Christian goods say the Egyptian decision is unlikely to affect Christians this year as the vast majority of their palm supply comes from Florida and Mexico.

Judaica stores that supply lulavs to local consumers are unsure about the status of their orders.

"I'm very nervous about it," said Madelyn Heyman, proprietor of Bala Judaica in suburban Philadelphia.

Heyman said her distributor had promised that the lulavs would arrive — and already had raised the price on them.

"It's very unusual just to raise the price on the one item," she said. "We sell them as a set."

Heyman was able to get relatively inexpensive etrogs, and as such was not planning to raise the price on the lulav-etrog sets.

"I'm hoping that we're all wrong and that there's going to be plenty of supply," she said. "We have to be optimistic at this time."

**We've got everybody on the case, and I told them to shake a leg.**

**Rep. Gary Ackerman**  
(D-N.Y.)

**FOCUS  
ON  
ISSUES**

# In Israel, disengagement was the word

By LESLIE SUSSER

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israel's unilateral withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and the northern West Bank dominated the year 5765. After months of rancorous confrontation with Jewish settlers and other opponents of the "disengagement" plan in the Knesset, the courts and the streets, the government moved in mid-August to evacuate 21 settlements in Gaza and 4 in the northern West Bank.

Despite warnings of possible civil war, the evacuation of Gaza's 9,000 settlers and a few thousand radical supporters took less than a week and was virtually free of serious violence. More than 50,000 army and police took part in the operation, on the assumption that the larger the evacuating contingent, the less force it would have to employ.

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon received warm praise from the international community for going through with his initiative despite strong domestic opposition. The withdrawal left the Palestinian Authority in control of Gaza and was widely hailed as a significant first step toward the establishment of a Palestinian state.

But Sharon's move alienated large sections of his own Likud Party, and left him fighting for his political life.

Sharon argued that the pullout was of vital strategic importance for Israel: It eases the demographic problem, creates better defensive lines, may earn Israel international backing and generates a dynamic that could lead to a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

But Sharon's Likud Party opponents characterized it as a huge strategic blunder: In handing over land to the Palestinians without demanding anything in return, they argue, Israel has encouraged more terrorism.

The disengagement opponents mounted a vigorous campaign. In the months leading up to the withdrawal they lobbied in the Knesset, appealed to the Supreme Court, held mass demonstrations and blocked major roads.

They failed at every turn.

Their court struggle ended June 9, when the Supreme Court denied petitions against withdrawal. And any hope they may have had of intimidating the authorities by sheer numbers evaporated when police successfully prevented an estimated 200,000 demonstrators from marching on the Gaza settlements from the nearby village of Kfar Maimon in late July.

The anti-disengagement forces finally won a victory when Finance Minister Benjamin Netanyahu resigned Aug. 7 — granted, just 10 days before the withdrawal was to begin — and announced that he would challenge Sharon for the Likud leadership and the premiership.

Netanyahu, a former prime minister, argued that in pushing through disengagement, Sharon had abandoned Likud principles and no longer was fit to lead the party or the nation. Netanyahu's challenge sparked speculation about a possible split in the ruling Likud Party and a significant realignment of Israel's political map.

There were dramatic developments on the Palestinian side too. Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat, who was seen both by Israel and the United States as personally responsible for ongoing Palestinian terrorism, died Nov. 11, paving the way for the emergence of a more moderate Palestinian leadership.

Mahmoud Abbas, who was elected Jan. 9 to succeed Arafat, immediately renounced terrorism as inimical to the Palestinian cause. On Feb. 8, at a summit meeting at the Egyptian resort town of Sharm el-Sheik, Sharon and Abbas announced a cease-fire, ostensibly ending the bloody intifada after more than four years.

Five weeks later, at a meeting held under Egyptian aegis in Cairo, Hamas and other Palestinian terrorist groups agreed to abide by the cease-fire until the end of 2005. As a goodwill gesture, Israel released 500 Palestinian prisoners in February, and 400 more in early June. Israel also handed over the West Bank cities of Jericho and Tulkarm to full Palestinian control in March.

In early May, however, Israeli Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz decided to freeze further planned hand-overs on the grounds that the Palestinian Authority was ignoring its commitments to dismantle terrorist groups and arrest or disarm wanted terrorists.

Despite the cease-fire, sporadic terrorist attacks continued.

The disengagement from Gaza and renewed dialogue with the Palestinians under Abbas led to improvement in Israel's international and regional standing. In February, the Jordanian ambassador, recalled soon after the outbreak of the intifada in September 2000, returned to Israel. Egypt, the only other Arab country to have made peace with Israel, sent its ambassador back in March.

In April, Russia's Vladimir Putin paid the first-ever visit to Israel by a Soviet or Russian president. In July, Sharon — for years the butt of sharp criticism in Europe, especially France — was feted in Paris by the French government and lauded in the French media.

On Sept. 1, barely a week after the evacuation of the Gaza settlements, Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom met publicly in Istanbul with his Pakistani counterpart, prompting speculation about imminent ties between Israel and the huge Muslim nuclear power, which had ostracized Israel in the past.

The cease-fire with the Palestinians and the disengagement helped the Israeli economy recover from the battering it took during the intifada, growing by about 4 percent for the second straight year. ■

Long the butt of criticism in Europe, Ariel Sharon was feted in France.

5765:  
A YEAR OF  
POLITICS AND  
PROMISE



Brian Henderl

Protesters take part in an anti-withdrawal rally in the southern Israeli town of Sderot on Aug. 2.

# In Europe, searching for a more assertive voice

By RUTH ELLEN GRUBER

ROME (JTA) — The 60th anniversary of the end of World War II and the 15th anniversary of the fall of communism took place this year amid a ferment of transition and concern within Europe as a whole, as well as within European Jewry.

A host of world leaders took part in solemn, high-profile ceremonies such as one at Auschwitz in January that marked the 60th anniversary of the liberation of the notorious death camp in 1945.

Jews in Europe, meanwhile, grappled with sometimes-turbulent internal conflicts and struggled to move out of the shadow of the Shoah and find effective means of asserting their identity and articulating a coherent, collective and positive voice.

They sought a strategy to deal with aging and assimilating populations and respond to anti-Semitism and anti-Jewish, anti-Israel fallout from conflicts in the Middle East.

Like other Europeans, they dealt with new political uncertainties in a continent where the hard-fought European Union constitution failed to win unanimous ratification.

Along with their fellow citizens, they also confronted the specter of anti-Western Islamist terrorism: Three Jews were among the victims of the July 7 suicide attacks on London's public transit system that left more than 50 people dead.

The death of Pope John Paul II in April, and the election of German Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger as Pope Benedict XVI, also posed questions.

John Paul had made fostering Jewish-Catholic relations a cornerstone of his 26-year pontificate. In his first months in office, Benedict pledged to follow this course and drew praise from Jewish interfaith activists.

Nonetheless, an ugly spat in July over the Vatican's attitude toward terrorism and Israeli policy toward the Palestinians plunged bilateral relations between Israel and the Holy See to their lowest point in years. Benedict later visited a synagogue in Cologne in his first visit to his native Germany since his selection as pope.

Against this background, the European Jewish Congress, which represents Jewish communities in nearly 40 countries, in June elected a president who pledged to lead European Jewry in new directions.

Pierre Besnainou, a Tunisian-born French businessman, said the EJC has a multifaceted mission: to fight anti-Semitism in Europe, explain what Israel is about both to European politicians and the general public, and establish broader dialogue between European Jews and Muslims.

"It is hard to put into words just how much the situation of European Jews is affected by the relations between Europe and Israel," Besnainou, 50, told the Israeli newspaper Ha'aretz.

"We've gone through a very tough time in the past four years, in which the media has attacked Israel. People often told me, 'Your prime minister, Ariel Sharon,'"

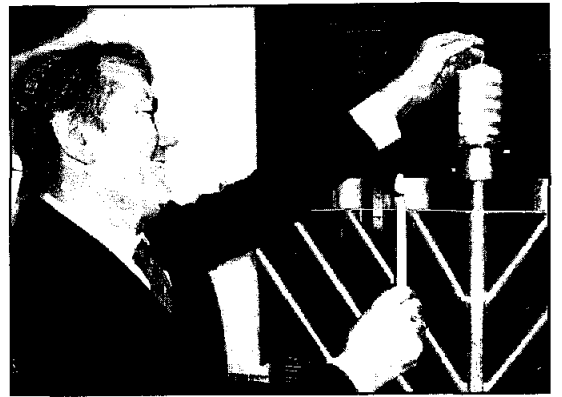
he said. "I had to remind them that my prime minister is the prime minister of France."

Before his election, Besnainou had angered American Jewish leaders with sharp attacks on what he called the "presumptuous" and "somewhat patronizing" involvement by American Jewish organizations in European Jewish affairs.

On a more grass-roots level, the year was marked by initiatives aimed at broadening effective cooperation in areas such as Jewish education, volunteerism and culture, as well as by episodes of sometimes ugly conflict and power struggles that split some Jewish communities.

Some 150,000 people attended simultaneous events in more than two dozen countries on the annual European Day of Jewish Culture in September, and the London-based European Association for Jewish Culture awarded grants to a roster of artists and performers whose work reflects the Jewish experience.

Also in Britain, an attempt by a prominent academic union to boycott two Israeli universities because of Israel's treatment of the Palestinians was rolled back, but was seen as an ominous sign of perceptions of Israel on the continent. A further incident



Vladimir Matveyev

Viktor Yushchenko lights a menorah at Kiev's Brodsky Synagogue on Dec. 9, shortly before becoming Ukraine's president.

in which London Mayor Ken Livingstone insulted a Jewish journalist — comparing him to a concentration camp guard — and then refused to apologize also unsettled British Jews.

In some countries, Jewish lay and sometimes religious leaders came under criticism for weakness, lack of vision or even financial impropriety. In particular, Jews

in Prague remained bitterly divided in the wake of continuing battles between rival factions, and in Budapest, the president of the Hungarian Jewish Federation stepped down after his reform program was defeated.

In Zagreb, Croatia, the decision by the community board to fire the rabbi touched off a spiral of acrimonious accusations among rival communal leaders.

Conflicts between Orthodox and Reform Jews deepened in some countries, too, and some religious leaders came under criticism for being too exclusive and stifling pluralism.

The Chabad-Lubavitch movement gained influence across the continent, in some places setting up or sponsoring activities and institutions that paralleled those run by established Jewish communities. In Budapest, a Chabad-backed congregation was officially registered by the government as the revived incarnation of a prewar stream of Hungarian Jewry. ■

5765:  
A YEAR OF  
POLITICS AND  
PROMISE

'It is hard to put into words just how much the situation of European Jews is affected by the relations between Europe and Israel.'

**Pierre Besnainou**

President, European Jewish Congress

# Lay-led congregations soldier on without rabbis

By SUE FISHKOFF

PACIFIC GROVE, Calif. (JTA) — During the week, Dr. David Kolinsky practices family medicine in this sleepy California coastal town. But on Saturday mornings he dons his tallit and leads Shabbat services for Congregation B'nai Torah, a Conservative congregation in neighboring Monterey.

Kolinsky serves as spiritual leader and president of B'nai Torah, which has been lay-led since it broke off from a nearby Reform temple 13 years ago.

Visiting rabbis have passed through, but with just 24 dues-paying members, there's no budget to hire even a student rabbi. The congregation also lacks a building — it rents a small room in a local church, where it stores its two Torah scrolls and where, every Saturday morning, the stalwarts wait to see whether a minyan will show up.

"Probably half our members are happy without a rabbi, and the rest would like one if we could afford it," Kolinsky says. "Many synagogues have gone through a process of professionalization, where unless you do something of professional grade, you have no right to represent your community before God. Here, everyone does their best. If someone wants to try, the answer is always, come up and do it."

Among U.S. congregations, B'nai Torah is still in a tiny minority: Most congregations from all streams have rabbis, unless they're too small or isolated to attract one. Those that can't afford full-time clergy usually hire visiting or student rabbis.

But the number of lay-led congregations is on the rise nationwide, movement leaders say. Much of that is due to economics — it's expensive to hire rabbis and cantors, and many older congregations in economically depressed regions have dwindling memberships.

"It's costing more and more each year to hire a rabbi, so congregations of 100 to 150 families are finding it harder," says Jay Weiner, United Synagogue for Conservative Judaism's director for northern California and the Pacific Northwest.

Demographic change also creates congregations in new parts of the country, as young Jews move west and north, and their parents retire south. And some congregations consciously choose to forego clergy; they just want to run their own show.

"By and large, the congregations that

don't have rabbis do it because they don't have a choice," says Rabbi Victor Appell, a small-congregation specialist for the Union for Reform Judaism. "Because of their size or location, it's a challenge to find a rabbi to serve them. But that puts them in the position of becoming self-reliant. If you asked many of them now whether they'd want a rabbi, I'm not sure they'd say yes."

According to Jewish law, congregations don't need rabbis. U.S. law re-

quires clergy — or other state-sanctioned representatives — to officiate at a marriage, but other than that, any Jew — male in Orthodox circles, male or female in other congregations — can lead services, name a baby or run a funeral.

Still, most congregations choose to hire a professional.

"It's the preferred course of action," says Steven Huberman, director of regional and extension activities for the United Synagogue for Conservative Judaism. "Congregations do prefer professionally trained clergy. They look to them as pastor, spiritual stimulant, lifestyle catalyst—it's difficult for lay leaders to do all that on a regular basis."

Congregations also turn to rabbis to decide points of halachah, or Jewish law. Clergy can mediate between warring factions in a congregation, or decide delicate questions such as the role of interfaith families, or whether it's time to take down or put up a mechitzah, which divides men and women at Orthodox services.

The number of lay-led congregations varies from movement to movement. Roughly speaking, the Reconstructionist movement has the highest percentage, the Orthodox Union has the least and the Reform and Conservative movements fall in the middle.

Rabbi Moshe Krupka, executive director of programming for the Orthodox Union, says "very few" of his 900-plus congregations operate without rabbis. They are mostly newly formed congregations that hire rabbis as soon as they can afford to.

"In the Orthodox world that puts a high

premium on Torah, mitzvot and spiritual growth, to have someone who will infuse the community with a sense of mission and scholarship, it willy-nilly becomes a necessity" to have a rabbi, he says.

The highest percentage of lay-led congregations is in the Reconstructionist movement. Since its inception, the movement has emphasized the importance of empowering lay leadership and looks at rabbis

more as educators and consultants than as pulpit heads.

Rabbi Shawn Zevit, director of outreach and external affiliations for the Jewish Reconstructionist Federation, says 30 to 40 of its 107 congregations operate without rabbis. Even so, he believes many of those congregations would hire rabbis if they could afford it.

Very few Conservative congregations function without rabbinic support, according to Huberman. He says the United Synagogue is unable to place rabbis in only about 5 percent of its 750 affiliated congregations.

The percentage is slightly higher in the Reform movement. Between 75 to 100 of the 900-plus congregations in the Union for Reform Judaism don't have full-time rabbis, according to Appell.

Size matters: Most lay-led congregations are very small, which in the Reform and Conservative movement generally means fewer than 150 members.

Place matters, too: Lay-led congregations are more numerous in regions with smaller Jewish populations, "more often in the South, sometimes in the Midwest," Appell says.

Many of these congregations used to be larger and more prosperous. They were built in the late 19th or early 20th century by Jewish merchants and professionals who followed the general population shift westward.

When the industries supporting these towns dried up, so did their Jewish communities. The children and grandchildren of the original settlers moved to cities with greater job opportunities, leaving behind tiny congregations maintained by a handful of elderly Jews.

If you asked many lay-led congregations whether they'd want to hire a rabbi, 'I'm not sure they'd say yes.'

**Rabbi Victor Appell**

Union for Reform Judaism

**HIGH  
HOLIDAYS  
FEATURE**

## FIRST PERSON

## Holding onto Zionist dream after Gaza pullout

By JONATHAN UDREN

**E**FRAT, West Bank (JTA) — For my new wife, Dena, and me, Israel's recent withdrawal from the Gush Katif communities in the Gaza Strip was a sour twist of fate.

While families were being expelled, we were moving into our first home together in Efrat, a West Bank community 8 miles south of Jerusalem. Suddenly, so many of the questions that I thought I had answered, both for myself and from our friends and family, took on new life.

Two days after our June wedding in Pittsburgh, we rushed back to Israel to start our new life together. Our plan was to sublease an apartment in Jerusalem for a month until our new residence in Efrat was ready. After hearing our plans, our families immediately expressed their concern about our safety. We explained that Efrat, the largest community in the greater Etzion bloc, with more than 6,000 residents, has thankfully remained quiet during the intifada. Their second concern was, "Isn't that an area that Israel is going to withdraw from?"

Initially, this question seemed as easily pushed aside as the concern for our safety. Even under Ehud Barak's proposed plan in 2000, which included removing a large majority of communities in the West Bank, Efrat and other parts of the Etzion bloc would still have been maintained. And currently, as far as the planned security fence is concerned, we are situated well inside.

But now, after Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, I feel less secure about the future of Gush Etzion. It's not that the area is being discussed as a future point of evacuation. But suddenly the future of any residence outside the pre-1967 border seems so unclear. I am left feeling jaded after watching footage of families forced from their homes and communities, and my sense of security has been challenged in a deeper way than any terror threat.

Despite my sadness about the present, and my fears about the future, my idealism is not so quickly dashed. We will keep dreaming and I hope the same will be true for the former residents of Gush Katif. ■

## Jewish athletes grace calendar

By RICHARD ASINOF

**BOSTON (JTA)** — What do a hockey goalie, a pole-vaulter, two fencers, a marathoner and a kayaker have to do with the coming Jewish New Year?

They are female Jewish athletes whose images grace a new 5766 calendar, Jewish + Female = Athlete: Portraits of Strength from around the World, produced by the Hadassah-Brandeis Institute, celebrating 14 current stars and 13 legends from the past in a tribute to the accomplishments of Jewish women in sport.

"Jewish girls deserve to grow up knowing that strength is beauty," Shulamit Reinharz, the founding director of the Hadassah-Brandeis Institute, told JTA in a recent interview. "And Jewish children of both genders should look at these amazing athletes as role models."

The calendar — and a larger-than-life, free-standing traveling exhibit available to schools, synagogues, libraries and community centers — was officially launched at a Sept. 18 celebration at Brandeis University.

The calendar celebrates in action photography contemporary Jewish female athletes from around the world and also pays tribute to the stories of Jewish female athletes who were pioneers in breaking down barriers.

For instance, the month of April, Nisan-Iyar, highlights Israel's professional tennis star, Anna Smashnova. It also details the "herstory" of Angela Buxton, the only Jewish woman in history to win at Wimbledon.

Buxton overcame pervasive anti-Semitism in the tennis world. She teamed with the black player Althea Gibson, winning the women's doubles championships at Wimbledon and the French Open in 1956. Buxton went on to become the co-founder of the Israel Tennis Centres.

The "cover girls" for the calendar are Sada and Emily Jacobson, sisters and saber fencers from Atlanta, Ga., who both competed in the 2004 Olympics — Sada won a bronze medal — and have each won NCAA championships. In the photograph the two sisters are shown fencing in an open field. "You can't win just by being the

strongest and the fastest. You also have to be the smartest," said Emily Jacobson, in a quote accompanying the picture.

A senior at Yale University, Sada Jacobson told JTA it was a "big honor" to be on the cover on the just-published calendar.

Jacobson said fencing "is a great sport because it incorporates the physical with the intellectual. She and her sister, she continued, are "extremely" competitive. "When

we fence each other, it's all business. We go to win. But when the bout is over, we're back to being sisters. We cheer each other on and try to help however possible," Jacobson said. She added that she hopes she can serve as a role model for younger athletes.

All of the women were chosen both for their athletic prowess and pride in their Jewish identity, ac-

cording to Reinharz. The decision to focus on Jewish female athletes is credited to Nathalie Alyon, who worked for the Hadassah-Brandeis Institute.

This year's calendar is the latest in a series produced by the Hadassah-Brandeis Institute to create a new image of Jewish women. A previous calendar featured female rabbis from around the world.

Reinharz explained that the genesis of the calendars was an effort to change the stereotypes surrounding the images of Jews — both in the Jewish and non-Jewish communities. "What's the typical image of a Jew?" she asked rhetorically. "All too often, it's of a bearded older man praying or blowing the shofar."

The images of female athletes portrayed in the calendar provide a sharp contrast with that stereotype — Zhanna Pintusevich-Block, a sprinter from Ukraine, in mid-stride, arms pumping, and Jillian Schwartz, a pole-vaulter from the United States, soaring over the bar, nothing but blue sky above her muscular body.

"When we're looking at these women, we're looking at their bodies, for sure," said Reinharz. "It's also important for us that you look beyond the picture and see people who have accomplished so much, as humans who have a history, using their minds to figure out what's required to achieve success, using their emotions to go the extra mile." ■

'Jewish girls deserve to grow up knowing that strength is beauty.'

**Shulamit Reinharz**

Founding Director,  
Hadassah-Brandeis Institute

# NEWS IN BRIEF

## MIDDLE EAST

### Abdullah delays visit

Jordan's King Abdullah postponed a trip to Israel and the West Bank. Abdullah had been due to fly in this month for talks with Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, but officials said Tuesday that the visit had been put off indefinitely.

They cited recent Palestinian infighting in Gaza as the reason.

### Shalom writes for peace

Israel's foreign minister published an editorial in an Indonesian newspaper calling for rapprochement with the Muslim world.

"Israel does not see Islam as an enemy, and has never seen it as such. On the contrary, history has shown us that Jews and Muslims lived in peace, harmony and friendship for many years in the past. This should be the aim in the future," Silvan Shalom wrote this week in the Jakarta Post. "At this time of renewed hope for progress toward peace in the Middle East, we believe that the time is ripe to promote dialogue with all countries."

The publication of an article by a senior Israeli official was unprecedented for Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim country, which has no ties with Israel.

Shalom has vowed to capitalize on global goodwill garnered from the recent Gaza Strip withdrawal to normalize Israel's relations with the Arab and Muslim world.

### Soldier stabbed at checkpoint

A Palestinian woman was shot dead while carrying out a stabbing attack at an Israeli army checkpoint in the West Bank.

The Al-Aksa Brigade said it sent the mother of five on a "suicide mission" to the Hawara checkpoint outside Nablus on Tuesday.

The terrorist managed to stab and wound a female soldier before she was killed by troops.

On Wednesday, a 17-year-old Palestinian attacked soldiers with a knife at nearby Beit Furik checkpoint.

He was disarmed and arrested.

## WORLD

### Blair: Iran may be helping Iraq bombers

Iran or Hezbollah could be providing some of the explosives used in bombings against British soldiers in Iraq, Tony Blair said.

The British prime minister said Iran may have supplied the explosives in order to intimidate Britain into lessening its pressure on Iran's nuclear program, but Blair said Britain would not be intimidated.

### Bolton: UNRWA might disappear

The United States is considering a proposal to fold the main Palestinian relief organization into the broader U.N. refugee assistance arm, John Bolton said.

Testifying in Congress last week, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations said the idea of folding the U.N. Relief and Works Agency into the U.N. High Commission for Refugees was under discussion.

"I think it's appropriate now that we're beginning to think about what to do with UNRWA as we get to a two-state solution," Bolton said.

He cited the precedent of Cambodian refugees in Thailand who were served by the U.N. Board of Relief Organization.

When the status of Cambodia was resolved in the early 1990s, refugees went back to Cambodia and UNBRO was abolished.

### Syria joins nukes board

Syria, Egypt and Libya joined the board of the U.N. nuclear watchdog.

The three nations joined the International Atomic Energy Agency board last week as part of a routine two-year rotation of 10 countries, just six weeks before the IAEA's next considers Iran's nuclear weapons program.

There was only one Arab nation, Tunisia, among countries departing the board, and Pakistan — known for its resistance to nuclear scrutiny — also is leaving.

IAEA officials do not believe the new nations will alter the majority on the 35-member board that favors tougher scrutiny of Iran.

### More Gaza aid seen

The European Union offered to boost aid to the Palestinian Authority for rebuilding the Gaza Strip.

E.U. official Benita Ferrero-Waldner said Wednesday that the 25-nation bloc, already the Palestinians' biggest foreign donor, would be willing to increase aid focusing on Gaza if other countries do the same.

The European Union currently plans to give the Palestinian Authority some \$335 million for 2005.

## NORTH AMERICA

### Bush: Syria, Iran must be held accountable

Regimes that harbor terrorists, including Syria's and Iran's, must be held to account, President Bush said.

"State sponsors like Syria and Iran have a long history of collaboration with terrorists and they deserve no patience from the victims of terror," Bush said in a major foreign-policy address Thursday at the National Endowment for Democracy in Washington.

The United States says Syria continues to harbor Palestinian terrorist groups.

### Palestinian state discussed

President Bush said he wants a Palestinian state that does not look like "Swiss cheese," a senior Palestinian official said.

Rafiq Al-Husseini, chief of staff to Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, is in Washington this week to prepare for the Abbas-Bush summit Oct. 20.

Al-Husseini was surprised Wednesday by a last-minute invitation to meet with Bush and Karen Hughes, a close Bush adviser dealing with U.S. diplomacy in the Arab world.

"We talked about what the Palestinians under President Mahmoud Abbas are trying to do and trying to achieve, what President Bush's vision is all about, and what" Bush's "commitment to the Palestinian cause is in terms of establishing a viable and contiguous Palestinian state," Al-Husseini said afterward at a briefing at the Palestine Center, a Washington think tank.

### Challah for Mississippi

The United Jewish Communities and Chabad worked together to provide challah to Jewish communities in Mississippi for Rosh Hashanah.

On Sunday, the UJC, the umbrella organization for North American Jewish federations, received a request from the Jewish communities in Davenport and Biloxi for challah, as their usual suppliers were out of reach.

The UJC contacted Chabad's Hurricane Relief Crisis Committee, which sent 1,200 challahs to the two communities.