

## IN THE NEWS

## Israel offers earthquake aid

Israel offered aid to earthquake-struck Pakistan. Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom told the Cabinet on Sunday that he had extended an offer to send emergency personnel and equipment to victims of the tremor that struck Pakistan and India, but that no response had been received.

Islamabad, which only recently broached normalization with Jerusalem, is seen as unlikely to take up the aid offer.

## UJC names new D.C. official

William Daroff was named the new director of the Washington office of the United Jewish Communities.

Daroff, who is currently the deputy executive director of the Republican Jewish Coalition, will serve as vice president for public policy and director of the Washington Action Office of the UJC, the umbrella organizations for North American Jewish federations.

Daroff, an attorney, was active in Ohio Republican politics before joining RJC, served in the Energy Department in the administration of the first President Bush and worked as an assistant to former Ohio Gov. George Voinovich.

"My Republican background and relationships will help open doors for UJC," Daroff told JTA.

"Throughout my professional career, I've made successful attempts to build relationships across the political spectrum."

## Israeli troops kill Palestinian terrorist

Israeli troops killed a West Bank terrorist.

The Al-Aksa Brigade gunman was shot dead Sunday in a clash with troops patrolling a village north of Nablus.

**Due to Yom Kippur, the JTA World Report will not be published Friday, Oct. 14.**

# WORLD REPORT

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## After five years of intifada, Israel looks to more unilateral steps

By LESLIE SUSSER

**J**ERUSALEM (JTA) — Five years after the intifada began, a debate is raging in Israel over how to build on the current lull: re-engage the Palestinians in peace talks or make further unilateral moves like the recent withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and northern West Bank.

For now, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon rules out further unilateral steps. But several of his closest advisers argue that by around mid-2006, there will be no choice.

Unilateralism as a strategy has been developing slowly since the intifada erupted at Rosh Hashanah five years ago. It stemmed from a perception that the violence proved there was no peace partner on the Palestinian side, and it received major support from the way the international community hailed Israel's unilateral withdrawal from Gaza.

The international acclaim underlined the extent to which Israel's diplomatic standing has been transformed since Sept. 28, 2000, when the intifada is considered to have begun.

Israel's peace strategy had imploded after the collapse of the Camp David peace conference, and when the intifada erupted Israel was accused of using disproportional force to fight it. There was widespread sympathy for the Palestinian underdog.

Over the next five years, however, support for the Palestinians slowly eroded. The attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, delegitimized terrorism as a means of pursuing political goals; the Karine A affair, in which Yasser Arafat lied to the Bush administration about a Palestinian attempt to smuggle weapons from

Iran, discredited the Palestinian leader; and Israel's success in combating Palestinian terrorism and Sharon's unilateral withdrawal from Gaza restored Israel's diplomatic standing in the world.

The transformation in Sharon's own political fortunes was equally impressive. Five years ago his political career seemed to be over: He was seen as no more than a caretaker leader of the opposition, a has-been holding the fort for Benjamin Netanyahu, a younger and more dynamic former prime minister who was expected to regain the top post.

Moreover, many blamed Sharon's visit to Jerusalem's holy Temple Mount on Sept. 27, 2000, for the outbreak of the intifada. Yet four months later, against all odds, he was prime minister.

As national leader, Sharon carried out two major unilateral acts: the building of the security fence to stop terrorist infiltration into Israel, and the withdrawal from Gaza and the northern West Bank.

The gains for Israel were enormous: The obvious pain of withdrawal won Israel great international respect and support, and the Palestinians understood how serious Israel was about creating conditions for a territorial solution to the conflict.

The pullout set in motion a two-state dynamic, Israel and Palestine, and eased Israel's demographic concerns. The lull in the fighting led to a marked improvement in the Israeli economy. And while Palestinian violence still simmered, the fact that Israel had pulled out of Gaza is expected to give it greater leeway in retaliating.

These gains have members of Sharon's in-

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NEWS  
ANALYSIS

## ■ *Whether Israel will look for peace talks or again act unilaterally remains unclear*

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ner circle, like Eyal Arad and Eval Giladi, talking about unilateralism as a strategy. In a talk at the Herzliya Interdisciplinary Center on the fifth anniversary of Sharon's Temple Mount visit, Arad argued that without progress on the Israeli-Palestinian peace track, unilateralism could become a strategy.

"If we see over time that the impasse continues, then even if Israel's diplomatic situation is good we might consider turning disengagement into an Israeli strategy," he declared. Without a serious Palestinian partner, "Israel would determine its borders independently."

The following day, in a lecture at Tel Aviv University, the head of Israel's military intelligence, Maj. Gen. Aharon Ze'evi-Farkash, seemed to back up Arad.

"In the next few years, Israel will be forced to carry out more and more unilateral steps to promote its interests," he predicted.

Sharon put out a statement denying that he was considering further unilateral moves, now or ever. The only game in town, he said, is the internationally approved "road map" peace plan, under which Israel and the Palestinians are to negotiate a territorial settlement following a detailed series of interim steps.

If the road map breaks down "there will not be any further unilateral territorial moves," Sharon declared.

Sharon also sent another of his close advisers, Dov Weisglass, to tell Israeli television audiences that one of the great

achievements of the unilateral pullback was that Israel now can sit back and do nothing until the Palestinians fulfill their road map commitments: fight terrorism, disarm terrorist militias and carry out political, security and economic reforms.

For now, the international community, especially the United States, seems to back Sharon. President Bush has intimated several times that the ball is in the Palestinian court. Just late last month, U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice supported the Israeli position that Hamas should not be allowed to participate in Palestinian Authority elections unless it dismantles its militias.

But what happens six months or a year down the road if the Palestinians still haven't got their act together? Will the international community, including the United States, start pressing Israel to make more unilateral withdrawals from the West Bank? And will the same logic that led Sharon and the Jewish state to pull out of Gaza dictate similar moves from the

West Bank, with similar benefits?

Ari Shavit, a political analyst for Ha'aretz, is convinced that the pullout from Gaza has set in motion an inexorable historic force leading to the partition of the Land of Israel — by negotiation if possible, unilaterally if not.

He maintains that the most important political fact in the Middle East this past year has been the emergence of

an Israeli majority, allied to Sharon, that is determined to end Israel's occupation of the Palestinians. This new Israeli majority, Shavit writes, "realizes that only the creation of a separation between the two peoples will end the symbiotic-pathological relationship between them and lead them toward true mutual recognition."

Sharon and the Israeli majority, he says, "have become the most important agents of change in the Middle Eastern arena."

Most Israeli pundits agree that there will be change. The coming year could see whether it will be achieved by negotiation or by further unilateral steps. ■

**A** series of events has eroded sympathy for the Palestinians and increased support for Israel.

## Expectations low for Mideast summit

By DAN BARON

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Neither Israelis nor Palestinians seem to be particularly excited about their latest peace summit.

While political sources said the meeting between Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas is still expected to take place Tuesday, a last-minute cancellation would surprise no one.

"Keeping up contacts is important, but one does not go in without proper preparation," Sharon told his Cabinet on Sunday.

Officials on both sides say the summit could be an important way of building on Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, which was completed last month.

But with Abbas to meet President Bush in Washington on Oct. 20, the main aim for both leaders appears to be garnering foreign kudos.

"Neither side has great expectations of

the summit and that is why the preparations for that meeting have been low profile and without enthusiasm," wrote Yediot Achronot commentator Roni Shaked.

"The Sharon-Abu Mazen meeting is geared solely to pleasing U.S. President Bush and Jordan's King Abdullah."

Abdullah, who is focused on preventing Palestinian unrest from spilling over his borders, announced last week that Sharon and Abbas had agreed to meet at his behest. A summit had originally been set for Oct. 2, but was postponed after Israel answered rocket salvos by Hamas terrorists in Gaza with air and artillery strikes.

The surge in violence underscored Israel's long-standing demand that Abbas crack down on Palestinian terror groups as required by the U.S.-led "road map" for peace. But despite intermittent clashes between his police and Hamas gunmen in Gaza, Abbas has made clear that a crack-down is not in the works. ■

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# California textbook rejected for biases

By SUE FISHKOFF

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (JTA) — In a surprise move, an advisory body to California's board of education rejected a sixth-grade history program that Hindu and Jewish groups blasted as biased, erroneous and culturally derogatory.

During a recent two-day hearing before the state's curriculum development and supplemental materials commission, Jewish critics lambasted the Oxford University Press textbook and related materials for subjecting early Jewish history to a more rigid standard of proof than Christian or Muslim history; for including stories that have traditionally fomented anti-Semitism; and for misstating key concepts of Judaism, presenting it as a religion of reward and punishment rather than one of social justice and morality.

The rejection was a major upset for the prestigious publishing company, which for the first time was trying to enter the lucrative California market for teaching materials for kindergarten through eighth grade.

California is the nation's largest textbook purchaser, and often sets the tone for what is adopted by other states.

David Gershwin of the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles laid out for the commissioners Oxford's depiction of the Exodus. Not only, he said, does the Oxford text note that there is no historical record of the Exodus — a caveat not included in descriptions of the seminal religious events of other faiths — it incorrectly states that the story is important to Jews mainly as a way to set themselves off from other people.

When Jewish groups asked Oxford to

change that passage to reflect the importance of the Exodus as a story of national and personal liberation, they were rebuffed.

"It is difficult for us to comprehend why the beliefs of other religions are presented without critical comment, while the essential event of Judaism is subjected to a historical analysis that can only be described as disdainful and highly subjective," Gershwin testified.

One Hindu speaker pointed to a chapter called "Where's the Beef?" and said it offended him to have his faith presented "in the manner of an outdated television ad."

Following the public criticism, 14 commissioners voted against adopting the Oxford materials, and one commissioner abstained. Their rejection came as a surprise because a special review committee had recommended its adoption to the commission.

California has mandated the study of religion since 1987. Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism and Hinduism are studied in sixth grade, and Islam is covered in seventh grade.

Oxford is one of 12 publishers whose programs were being considered for adoption by the state of California, which means school districts can use state money to purchase them. The curriculum commission rejected the programs of two other publishers as well, but those had not been recommended by the review committee, which said they did not meet state standards.

The state board of education will make its final decisions on all the programs on Nov. 3.

Although Jewish groups picked out Oxford's materials as the most egregious, none of the publishers escaped criticism.

Jackie Berman, educational consultant of the San Francisco Jewish Community Relations Council, and policy analyst Susan Mogull, spent the last few months poring over the offerings of all the programs vying for the California market.

Speaking for the JCRC's new Institute for Curriculum Services project, they sent

extensive reviews of the proposed materials to state commissioners in late August.

Their reviews said that "many of the texts contain narrations of the Crucifixion that blame or clearly implicate the Jews, presentations of the parable of the Good Samaritan that identify

uncaring passers-by as Jews, and Paul as a persecutor of Christians when he was the Jewish Saul — all of these have been used throughout history as a means of implanting anti-Semitism in young minds."

Berman said that while other publishers "worked well with us"

to resolve issues of concern to the Jewish community, the Oxford team did not.

In a Sept. 27 memo to the curriculum commission, Oxford University Press criticized the Institute for Curriculum Services' concerns as "an apologetic defence of Judaism" and said the Jewish group was "not looking for historical objectivity but a religious agenda."

The Oxford response stated it "is not relevant" to bring up how the Good Samaritan parable may have been used by anti-Semites through history. "Many religious texts in all traditions have been used to justify bad behavior," the memo said.

On the contrary, said Anne Eisenberg of the National Council of Jewish Women. "Teaching religion to sixth- and seventh-graders is a high-stakes challenge," she told the commissioners. "Jew hatred still exists and, in some places, thrives."

"This is a book that millions of children could potentially read," Berman added.

In addition to rejecting the Oxford text, the curriculum commission passed a motion requiring publishers to make changes requested by the Institute for Curriculum Services before their programs can be adopted by the state board in November.

Representatives of Hadassah and the Anti-Defamation League also sent representatives to the Sept. 29-30 hearings.

After the hearing, Oxford University Press representatives said they had "misunderstood" the public comment procedure, and are eager to work with Jewish and Hindu groups to make changes before November, when they plan to resubmit their program to the California state board. ■

Teaching religion to sixth- and seventh-graders is a high-stakes challenge.

Anne Eisenberg

National Council of Jewish Women

## THIS WEEK

### TUESDAY

■ Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas meet Tuesday for the first time since Israel withdrew last month from the Gaza Strip. Sharon wants Abbas to end attacks from Gaza on Israel, and Abbas wants Sharon to open Gaza up to travel for the Palestinians.

■ The Maltz Museum of Jewish heritage opens in Cleveland with a free concert and ceremony. The museum seeks to highlight Jewish history and traditions through state-of-the-art exhibitions. The first special exhibition will be "The Jewish Journey: Frederic Brenner's Photographic Odyssey."

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### NORTH AMERICA

#### Congress approves non-profit security funds

Congress approved an additional \$25 million for homeland security grants to at-risk non-profits.

The measure, part of the overall Homeland Security allocation approved by both houses of Congress last week, repeats last year's allotment for security measures for non-profits at risk of terrorist attack, including synagogues and Jewish community buildings. In this year's allotment, the federal government will administer the money instead of state and local authorities.

The United Jewish Communities, the federations' umbrella organization, led lobbying for the money.

#### Fasting for Darfur

Two Jewish campus groups organized a national solidarity fast for Darfur refugees.

Participants in the Oct. 6 fast, sponsored by Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life and Students Taking Action Now: Darfur, refrained from luxuries such as coffee or movies and donated the money saved to aid refugees who have fled ethnic cleansing in the Darfur region of Sudan.

Forty-three universities and colleges took part.

### MIDDLE EAST

#### Abbas to attend Rabin memorial

The Palestinian Authority president and prime minister will attend an Israeli conference in memory of Yitzhak Rabin. Netanya Academic College, which is holding a conference marking the 10th anniversary of Rabin's assassination on Nov. 15-16, said Sunday that Mahmoud Abbas and Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Ahmed Qurei are expected to be among foreign dignitaries attending.

Abbas will also deliver a speech — the first by a Palestinian Authority president to an Israeli forum. Palestinian officials conditioned the attendance on maintaining the relative calm that has held since last month's violence in the Gaza Strip ended.

#### Israeli Arab terrorists convicted

Three Israeli Arabs were convicted of planning to blow up towers in Tel Aviv.

The three Taiba residents pleaded guilty at Tel Aviv District Court on Sunday to the plot to bomb the Azrieli Towers last year. They also confessed to planning to sabotage Israeli railway lines during rush hour. Under the plea bargain, they are expected to receive prison sentences of between eight and 15 years.

#### Gaza terminal reopens

Israel reopened a major Gaza Strip border terminal. The Karni Crossing, which was closed last month following cross-border rocket volleys by Gaza terrorists, was reopened Sunday in what officials described as a goodwill gesture for the Ramadan holiday.

Full traffic is expected to resume at Karni, the main commercial crossing into the Gaza Strip. During the closure, Israel has allowed humanitarian aid through a smaller terminal.

#### Al-Qaida keeps Israel until last

An Al-Qaida leader set destroying Israel as the group's final objective in the Middle East.

In an intercepted letter by Ayman Al-Zawahiri publicized over the weekend by the Pentagon, the Al-Qaida deputy chief predicted victory against U.S.-led occupation forces in Iraq, but says that this must lead to the establishment of an Islamic regime in neighboring

Syria, Lebanon and Egypt. After this, the group can wage a battle to destroy the Jewish state, Zawahiri wrote to the Al-Qaida leader in Iraq, Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi.

#### Israel ends daylight savings

Israeli clocks moved back one hour. Daylight-saving time ended Sunday morning in Israel. Daylight-saving time will begin again on March 31.

### WORLD

#### Bishop who defended Jews honored

The Roman Catholic Church honored a German bishop who denounced anti-Semitism during Hitler's rule.

Clemens August von Galen was beatified — the last step before sainthood — on Sunday, The Associated Press reported. Von Galen, who died in 1946, wrote speeches denouncing Nazi policy that were secretly copied and circulated, church officials said.

#### Holocaust lawyer in trouble over prostitute

A lawyer who pressed European countries in Holocaust restitution cases is fighting charges he illegally hired an underage prostitute in Austria.

After reports in several Austrian publications that Austrian prosecutors are looking into the incidents, Ed Fagan is planning a trip to Austria to fight the charges, the Forward reported. Fagan told the newspaper that he does have an ongoing relationship with a woman named Inga; Austrian reports have quoted Fagan as saying Inga told him she was at least 22 years old.

Fagan says he believes the probe is payback for his involvement in filing a lawsuit against the Austrian government in an American court in which Austria is accused of complicity in a deadly 2000 ski resort fire.

#### Unrest at Russian Jewish Congress

A leading Russian Jewish organizations has been roiled by unrest in its leadership.

Several top members of the Russian Jewish Congress voted Oct. 6 to oust the group's head, Vladimir Slutsker, but Slutsker refused to step down, saying that only the group's presidium could vote him out.

Some leading RJC donors accused Slutsker of helping the Russian government deny Moscow's chief rabbi, Pinchas Goldschmidt, entry into the country earlier this month, a charge Slutsker denies.

Some RJC lay leaders who attended the meeting also claimed Slutsker has provoked a controversy with the Moscow Jewish community over property.

A meeting of the RJC presidium to address the matter is scheduled for Nov. 10. Mikhail Fridman, a prominent business tycoon and the main donor to the RJC, suggested that Vyacheslav Kantor, a chemical magnate, should replace Slutsker.

#### Russian cemetery hit

A Jewish cemetery in Russia's second largest city was vandalized last week.

About 50 headstones were destroyed or seriously damaged in a Jewish cemetery in St. Petersburg, local Jewish leaders said. The incident took place early last week and was reported Oct. 6.

The city's Jewish community called on police to investigate the case. According to a release from the Jewish community, the incident may have resulted from an ongoing dispute between two firms who operate the cemetery, which has been desecrated numerous times in recent years.