

IN THE NEWS

Bush presses Israel on settlement expansion

President Bush called on Israel to stop settlement expansion.

Bush met with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas on Thursday in a bid to move forward the peace process now that Israel has left the Gaza Strip.

Israel must remove unauthorized posts and stop settlement expansion," Bush said in a press conference after the meeting.

He also called on Israel to work with the Palestinians to ease living conditions for the Palestinians.

Israel has suspended some relations with the Palestinians in the wake of the killings over last weekend of three Jewish settlers. [Story, Pg. 3]

U.S.: P.A. should use election law on Hamas

U.S. officials are encouraging the Palestinian Authority to use laws to keep advocates of violence from running in legislative elections.

The United States will not openly advocate banning Hamas and other terrorist groups from running in the January elections, a Bush administration official told JTA, but it is urging P.A. President Mahmoud Abbas to apply 1995 election rules that ban candidates from inciting violence or maintaining ties with terrorists.

Israeli fighter was captured in Iraq

An Israeli is among the more than 300 foreign fighters captured in Iraq by U.S. forces, a U.S. commander said.

But Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch, who divulged the news Thursday, refused to give more details on the Israeli captured.

Most of those captured since April are from Arab countries, with Egypt, Syria, the Sudan and Saudi Arabia leading the way.

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Due to Simchat Torah, the JTA World Report will not be published on Wednesday, Oct. 26, and Thursday, Oct. 27.



WORLD REPORT

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As pressure mounts on Syria, Israel weighs risks and benefits

By LESLIE SUSSER

JERUSALEM (JTA) — As international pressure mounts on Syrian President Bashar Assad's regime, decision-makers in Jerusalem are considering what a Syrian accommodation with the West could mean for Israel.

Assad has been under a cloud of suspicion since the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri in February. Syrian Interior Minister Ghazi Kanaan's "suicide" last week, ahead of a U.N. report on the Hariri murder, further undermined Assad's position.

Israeli intelligence maintains that to extricate themselves from their current predicament, the Syrians may feel a need to comply with American policy goals in the region. That could mean Assad buckling under or a new, more American-oriented regime emerging in Damascus.

In either case, it could lead to pressure on Israel to negotiate a land-for-peace deal with a supposedly reformed Syria.

Making peace with Syria once would have been a top Israeli foreign policy priority. Today, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and most of the Israeli defense establishment are less enthusiastic.

They know peace with Syria would mean giving back most of the strategic Golan Heights, which Israel captured in the 1967 Six-Day War. That's a price they don't believe is worth paying in the current circumstances.

The Israeli establishment believes Assad's grip on power is weakening. If the U.N. investigation into the Hariri assassination incriminates Assad or members of his inner circle, the regime could fall.



GPO/BP Images

Syrian President Bashar Assad, right, speaks to the media as he stands with his wife, Asma, after the April 8 funeral in Rome of Pope John Paul II.

"The Syrians feel the noose tightening around their necks," Israeli Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom has said. The report into the investigation "is closing in on direct Syrian involvement in Hariri's murder."

The assessment in Jerusalem is that a scathing report could lead to international sanctions on Syria, which the already-wobbly Assad regime wouldn't survive.

Even more significantly, the Americans see in Assad's discomfort a major strategic opportunity: Some deft behind-the-scenes diplomacy, coupled with an overt carrot-and-stick policy, may succeed in drawing Syria out of the "axis of evil."

There are rumors that some top Syrian

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NEWS ANALYSIS

■ *Pondering what changes in Syria-U.S. relations could mean for Israel*

Continued from page 1

officials, including a former vice president and a former military chief of staff, have been in touch with Washington about helping to create a regime change. The U.S. administration also leaked reports of a scrapped plan to bomb bases in Syria used by insurgents to launch attacks on American forces in Iraq.

At the same time, there were reports that Washington had made the Assad regime an offer: The United States would stop pressuring Syria if it prevents anti-American insurgents crossing into Iraq, stops meddling in Lebanon, withdraws its support for Palestinian terrorists and stops arming Hezbollah in Lebanon.

All this has led to a debate among Israeli decision-makers over whether Assad's transformation or ouster would be good or bad for Israel. Ha'aretz political analyst Aluf Benn quotes security officials as saying that the best scenario for Israel would be a weakened Assad succumbing to American pressure: There would be no Syrian presence in Lebanon, no Syrian support for Hezbollah or Palestinian terrorist groups and no need to negotiate over the Golan.

If Assad falls, however, the Israelis fear that a successor regime that is closer to Washington would insist on renewing peace talks and demanding Israeli territorial concessions, with wide international support.

Sharon argues that Assad wants negotiations with Israel, not to make peace but to ease U.S. pressure on Damascus. But Sharon has other, deeper reasons for avoiding

talks with Syria: He does not want to put the Golan Heights on the market.

Unlike Gaza, also conquered in 1967 and from which Israel recently withdrew, the Golan has real strategic value for Israel and presents no demographic problem. Whereas Israeli strategists once saw Damascus as a powerful and menacing neighbor and considered peace with it a great prize, Assad's Syria is perceived today as an isolated backwater that poses little military threat.

Even Syria's Lebanese proxy, Hezbollah, once used by Damascus to threaten northern Israel, is showing signs of becoming a domesticated part of Lebanese political life.

Ironically, the renewed debate over Syria coincides with the anniversary of the 1973 Yom Kippur War, in which the Syrian and Egyptian armies caught Israel by surprise and threatened its very existence. It was that war that convinced Israelis of the need for peace with Egypt and Syria.

Since then, however, a series of events altered the balance of power to such an extent that Israel no longer feels threatened by its northern neighbor and sees no urgent need to change the status quo. First, in 1977, Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin took Egypt out of the equation by launching peace talks with Cairo.

Syria's weakness when acting alone was confirmed during the 1982 war in Lebanon. Later, in the mid-1980s, the Soviet Union halted arms supplies to Syria,

and Syria lost political backing when the Soviet Union disintegrated in 1991.

Despite Syria's growing military, political and economic weakness, successive Israeli prime ministers continued to put a premium on peace-making with Damascus throughout the 1990s. The turning point came with the death of Assad's father, Hafez, in June 2000.

The younger Assad made a string of blunders that led to Syria's international isolation and made a declining Damascus far less attractive to Israel as a peace partner. Mainly, the younger Assad failed to understand that after Sept. 11 the American administration would show zero tolerance toward regimes that harbored and supported terrorists.

In 2003, during the American invasion of Iraq, Assad further alienated Washington by allowing pro-Saddam forces to use Syria as a platform for attacks on American-led troops. Then, in 2005, domestic unrest over the Hariri assassination — and Syria's suspected involvement — forced Assad to pull Syrian forces from Lebanon.

For Sharon, who came to power in February 2001 in the midst of the Palestinian intifada, the new circumstances meant that the Palestinian track took precedence over the Syrian. That remains the case today.

Sharon sees a great deal of work ahead with the Palestinians, and no need for Israel to accommodate Syria. It will take an inordinate amount of American pressure — or a very different regime in Damascus — for Sharon to change his mind. ■

Israel sees no urgent need to change the status quo with Syria.

JTA WORLD REPORT

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Hamas man says torture led to confession

WASHINGTON (JTA) — A Palestinian American facing trial on charges of laundering money for Hamas says his confession was extracted under torture. Muhammad Salah of Bridgeview, Ill., returned to the United States in 1997 after serving five years in an Israeli prison for his involvement in the terrorist group.

He has been charged in a federal court with laundering \$15 million for the group.

In a bid to keep the confessions that got him jailed in Israel from being used in his U.S. trial, Salah is saying they were extracted by torture and are therefore inadmissible.

The Chicago Sun-Times on Tuesday quoted his lawyers as saying that The New York Times journalist Judith Miller witnessed the confession, and that they expect the government to call her as a witness.

But the Sun-Times quoted Miller in 1998 as saying that she had witnessed the confession, and that it was not made under duress.

The prosecutor in the Salah case, Patrick Fitzgerald, is the same one who arranged for Miller's recent 85-day jailing for refusing to testify in a government leak case. ■

Bush presses Israel, P.A. after meeting Abbas

By RON KAMPEAS

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Getting a fix on President Bush's vision of a resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict depends on how far into the future you want to look.

In the short term, he expects Israel to clamp down on its settlement expansion and resume security and economic talks with the Palestinians.

Further down the line, he appeared to be less confident than ever about the timing of Palestinian statehood.

In his news conference Thursday with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, Bush outlined clear goals for the short term, and laid much of the burden on Israel, demanding an immediate easing of living conditions for the Palestinians.

"Israel must continue to work with Palestinian leaders to help improve the daily lives of Palestinians," Bush said. His statement was seen as a clear rebuke to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's decision this week to suspend security talks with the Palestinians in the wake of the killings last weekend of three Jewish settlers.

He also said the Palestinians must do more to confront terrorists. "The way forward must begin by confronting the threat that armed gangs pose to a genuinely democratic Palestine," he said.

Long term, however, Bush appeared to be backing away from an earlier hope to see a Palestinian state by the end of his term in January 2009 and studiously ignoring Abbas' appeals for a return to final-status talks.

"I believe that two democratic states living side by side in peace is possible, I can't tell you when it's going to happen," Bush said when he was asked about his stated hope last year that he would see a Palestinian state before he left office.

That itself was a revision of an earlier deadline of this year, which he had outlined in 2002 and later became the basis for the "road map" peace plan, put forth by the United States, Russia, the United Nations and the European Union.

"And the reason I can't is because there will be moments of progress and there will be moments of setback," he said.

Throughout his remarks Thursday, Bush voiced a greater appreciation of the

intractability of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict than he publicly has before.

"I understand it's hard," he said at one point. "Things don't happen overnight. Old feuds aren't settled immediately. And it takes a while."

He also alluded to an element in short supply after four years of violence — trust.

A lot of these issues that have been "very difficult for a long period of time become easier to resolve as there's more trust between the parties," Bush said. And trust becomes a permanent part of the political process "as action on the ground takes place."

Such talk threw cold water on Abbas' repeated pleas for a fast track to final-status talks.

In his remarks, Abbas urged Bush to revive "talks on permanent-status issues regarding Jerusalem, refugees, settlements, borders and water in order to reach, at the end, peace, which would allow for the establishment of an independent democratic Palestinian state on all the territories occupied in 1967."

Bush would not take the bait, but Abbas still left with a few plums.

Bush was blunt about his demand that Israel freeze settlement expansion.

"Israel should not undertake any activity that contravenes its 'road map' obligations or prejudices the final-status negotiations with regard to Gaza, the West Bank and Jerusalem," he said.

"This means that Israel must remove unauthorized posts and stop settlement expansion."

The U.S. president also was uncompromising on the barrier Israel is building to protect itself from security attacks. Israeli officials have insisted recently that Israel is doing all it can to keep it from impinging on the lives of Palestinians, but Bush didn't appear to buy it.

"Israeli leaders must take into account the impact the security barrier has on Palestinians not engaged in terrorist activities," he said.

He also backed a link between the West Bank and Gaza, reopening the crossing between Gaza and Egypt and reopening the Gaza seaport. Israel wants security

guarantees in place before it agrees to any of the projects.

Bush also suggested he would use U.S. muscle to back his demands.

"We are holding people to account on the pledges that both the Palestinians and the Israelis have made on the road map," Bush said. "And we do so publicly, and we do so privately."

Bush also said he would extend the mandates of the U.S. economic and security

envoys to the region, showing that he was not backing away from the region.

Bush sidestepped Israel's demand that the Palestinians keep Hamas and other terrorist groups from participating in legislative elections in January.

On that score, he accepted Abbas' commitment to keep "armed gangs" from disrupting the elections — which falls far short of a ban on Hamas. Abbas repeated a pledge to introduce legislation to disarm militias after the elections.

The American Israel Public Affairs Committee, the pro-Israel lobby, had been lobbying Congress and the media all week to call for a ban on Hamas.

A State Department spokesman later suggested that Bush did not want to be seen as interfering in the Palestinian electoral process.

"From our perspective," State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said, "how the Palestinian political process unfolds and evolves is a question for the Palestinian people."

The United States would be hard-pressed to keep Hamas out of elections, considering that it turned a blind eye to armed militias running in recent Lebanese and Iraqi elections, said Robert Blecher, who heads a team seeking solutions to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict at Strategic Assessments, a Washington think tank.

"The United States has had a hard time coming to a position on this," Blecher said. "It's caught between a rock and hard place — there are pretty clear parallels."

Israeli officials said Bush's demands of Israel were expected. And they took heart in Bush's emphatic endorsement of the success of Israel's withdrawal last month from the Gaza Strip.

Things don't
happen overnight.
Old feuds aren't
settled immediately.
President Bush

Reform Torah translation gets rave reviews

By CHANAN TIGAY

NEW YORK (JTA) — In the past, when Rabbi Elyse Frishman sought to draw meaning from Torah passages for her congregation, she'd sometimes resort to translating the biblical text herself. The translation and commentary then in use in most Reform congregations, she says, didn't always do the trick.

"Often when I would translate from the Hebrew, I would indicate that we weren't using the text translation that was in the other commentary," says Frishman of the Barnert Temple in Franklin Lakes, N.J. That book, she says, "had a sense of being distant."

But with the recent release of the "Revised Edition of The Torah: A Modern Commentary" — which now is being used in many Reform-movement pews — Frishman doesn't have that problem. The book is published by URJ Press.

"The book is really a response to what we need," she says. "There was a lot of thought that went into considering what would be most helpful to a community that wanted to study together."

Those responsible for editing the revision say that the original 1981 version — compiled from a series of individual volumes, mostly by Rabbi W. Gunther Plaut — has been updated and improved in about 40 ways.

Among the new features are:

- text organized by parshah, or the weekly portion, rather than thematically, as in the prior edition;

- clearer, easier-to-read Hebrew text;

- closer visual correlation of the Hebrew text with the translation;

- revised scholarly essays on the relationship between the Torah and ancient Near Eastern literature;

- new Genesis translation by the late Rabbi Chaim Stern;

HIGH HOLIDAYS FEATURE

- incorporation of a revision by Plaut of his 1974 Genesis commentary;

- inclusion of Plaut's Haftarah commentary;

- subject index; and

- thicker, more opaque paper;

In addition, the volume, which uses the Jewish Publication Society's translation for Exodus through Deuteronomy, has been rendered "gender sensitive" — or, as Rabbi David Stein, the general editor of the revised edition, calls it, "gender accurate."

"I find the gender-accurate translation exciting because it reflects a serious new engagement with the Hebrew text," Stein says.

The ascription of gender-sensitive language took several forms in the translation and is explained in detailed charts included in the book's preface. Whereas the King James Bible translation renders Numbers 24:8 as "God brought him forth out of Egypt," for example, the new translation of this verse reads, "God who freed them from Egypt."

Where the King James version has "they shall die to the last man" for Numbers 14:35, the new translation has "until they are finished off."

Sometimes, though, the revision uses a gender-specific term where the King James version had neutralized the translation. Such renderings are based on more accurate contextual understandings of particular verses.

In the King James version, for example, Exodus 30:12 is translated, "When you take a census of the Israelite people according to their enrollment." In the revised edition the verse reads, "When you take a census

of the Israelite men according to their army enrollment."

And in the case of the word "God," translators used several of what Stein's preface calls "God-language strategies." "His people," for example, becomes "God's people." "His voice" becomes "the divine voice."

"The fact that we worked very hard to create a gender-sensitive translation, I think, is a

reflection of what the Reform movement is," says Rabbi Hara Person, editor in chief of URJ Press. "It was done very, very carefully with scholars and research."

Many in the Reform movement are saying that the very need for a revision reflects a movement deeply engaged in Torah study.

"We have declared that the goal of our movement is 'Torah at the center,'" Rabbi Eric Yoffie, the president of the Union for Reform Judaism, writes in his foreword to the revision. "That is, keeping Torah at the center of our lives as the best path and first step to securing the Jewish future."

Since it was founded some 130 years ago, Reform Judaism has evolved from a German Jewish movement advocating the Enlightenment and emancipation from ritual to one seeking a deeper engagement with tradition and more active participation in Jewish ritual life.

The approach seems to be working: The initial printing of 7,500 copies sold out fast, and URJ Press went straight to a second printing of 7,500. The book is now in its third run, about 10,000 copies.

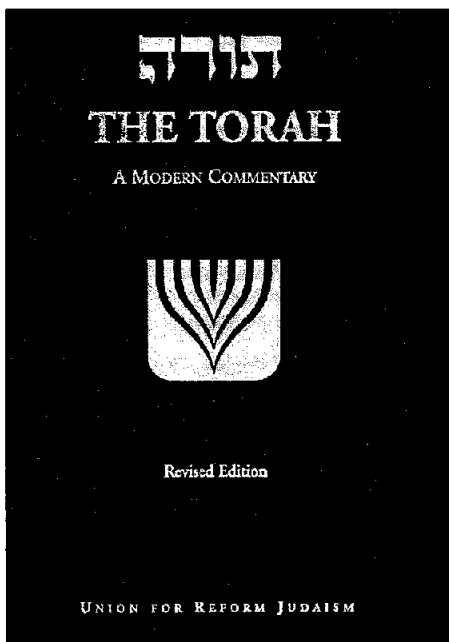
Plaut could not comment for this article because he now suffers from Alzheimer's disease. However, his son, Rabbi Jonathan Plaut, says that by using both his father's Torah and Haftarah commentaries and by organizing the edition according to parshah divisions, the editors have made this edition "an important and useful tool for both study and worship."

Observers agree that after nearly a quarter-century in print, Plaut's commentary still strikes a chord.

"The commentary itself, for the most part, still holds up beautifully," Person says. "It's still up-to-date and valid."

The new Torah commentary is 'really a response to what we need.'

Rabbi Elyse Frishman
Barnert Temple, Franklin Lakes, N.J.



URJ Press

The Reform movement's 'Revised Edition of The Torah: A Modern Commentary.'

Israel Folktale Archive preserves Jewish tales

By DINA KRAFT

HAIFA, Israel (JTA) — “This is our holy of holies,” says Idit Pintel-Ginsburg with great reverence as she opens the door to a small, windowless room where rows of long shelves are lined with hundreds of cardboard files.

Inside the carefully marked boxes are 23,000 folk tales from 80 ethnic groups, collected over the past 50 years. This precious material is the lifeblood of the Israel Folktale Archive — a comprehensive repository of tales drawn from the folklore of Jews who immigrated to Israel from countries around the world, from Afghanistan to Poland. Also documented are stories from Israel’s Arab population — including Bedouin, Christian, Muslim and Druse folklore.

“There are many communities in Israel with nothing but an oral tradition. The literature from places like Kurdistan, Afghanistan, western Asia and Ethiopia, for example, had no written literature,” explains Dov Noy, who founded the archive in 1955, when he was a young doctoral student in Jerusalem. “Everything was oral, and I wanted to document them in an archive.”

The result is a priceless treasure trove of diverse stories — some simple, some fantastical — of angels, kings, hidden righteous men, fortunes lost and found, blood libels, talking cats, even cloves of garlic that turn to gold. All of the tales have one thing in common — they all shed light on what it is to be human.

Noy, who won the coveted Israel Prize — the most highly regarded award in the country — for his painstaking work safeguarding the folklore of the inhabitants of the Jewish state, was originally regarded with skepticism in academic circles. In the 1950s, when Noy first began recording stories, the social policy of the state was to create a melting pot where Jews from around the world would shed their individual Diaspora identities and become “Israelis.”

The cultural focus was not the recent past or the teeming cities, colorful towns and tiny shtetls that immigrants came from, but the biblical past. And if any ethnic culture was embraced, it was Ashkenazi culture — not that of the Mizrahi Jews, who came to Israel from North African and Arab countries.

“It was very avant-garde at the time because what he wanted to do was to recognize all ethnic groups as meaningful groups at a time when there was a policy that Israel should be a melting pot that asked all immigrants to forget their dress and culture from the past,” explained Pintel-Ginsburg, the academic coordinator of the archives. “To focus on folklore at the time was radical.”

Despite a lack of support, Noy pressed forward, convinced that if the thousands of oral stories were not collected they might be lost forever.

The archive recently celebrated its 50th anniversary with a festive day of speeches and the presentation of research papers. The event was held at the University of Haifa, where the archive is housed.

Inside the archive’s storeroom, where the stories are collected and organized by year, Pintel-Ginsburg carefully lifts a piece of yellowing paper covered in handwritten notes out of a cardboard file. It is the archive’s first recorded story, “Two Brothers and Their Luck,” taken down from an immigrant from Turkey in 1956.

The lively tale of two brothers quarreling over a pair of fruit trees was recorded by one of the archive’s original team of volunteers. Today, stories are still collected by a volunteer staff. Between 200 and 400 folk tales are recorded each year.

The archives’ collection is believed to be the largest of its kind and serves as a research tool for academics both in Israeli universities and abroad.

The folk tale, usually of anonymous authorship and sometimes containing fantastical or legendary elements, is typically concerned with the mundane traditions of daily life. Folklore often links the practical and the esoteric into one narrative thread. Folk tales sometimes express hidden wishes, secret hopes and impossible scenarios that give justification for life and help listeners or readers reflect on human behavior and learn the best ways to act in certain situations.

Certain themes appear repeatedly in



Israel Folktale Archive

Israel Radio records a story in Ashkelon in the 1960s. Dov Noy, founder of the Israel Folktale Archive at far left.

stories across cultural lines — hospitality, helping the poor, and various aspects of morality.

In the folk tales that emerged out of the incalculable pain and suffering wrought by the Holocaust, the theme of being miraculously saved at the last minute appears again and again, said Pintel-Ginsburg.

In the late 1970s, Noy began hosting storytelling nights for Moroccan

Jews and immigrants from other Middle Eastern countries in several northern Israeli towns — helping to spark previously unheard-of interest in Mizrahi culture.

In recent years, the archive has also begun collecting recurring jokes and stories related to army life and even terrorist attacks — part of an initiative to capture the ongoing oral tradition in contemporary Israel.

Among the more recent tales collected are those of Jewish immigrants from Ethiopia and from the countries of the former Soviet Union.

Noy described his mission during the early years of the archive, writing, “We ventured out to collect, preserve and study widespread cultural traditions among the various ethnic groups in Israel. Along with the dry scientific items — data to be recorded, catalogued and preserved on the archive’s shelves — we also found individuals: the storyteller and his listeners, the narrator and his public who drank his words with thirst, an individual and his fate, a human being and his world.”

Stories of
righteous men
and quarreling
brothers coexist in
the archive.

Israel, Turkey look at oil and water deals

By YIGAL SCHLEIFER

ISTANBUL (JTA) — A recent visit to Turkey by Israel's infrastructure minister has given a renewed push to several projects that Israeli officials believe could have an important regional impact.

The primary reason for Benjamin Ben-Eliezer's visit was to sign a \$360 million deal for a Turkish company to build a power plant in Israel. But the minister also used the visit to discuss the possibility of cooperation on a number of far-reaching energy and water projects.

"These are strategic projects at a very high level," Pinchas Avivi, Israel's ambassador to Turkey, told JTA. "Now we are entering into a phase of taking it from a nice idea to something that can be put into effect."

One proposed plan is the construction of a pipeline to bring water from Turkey to Israel. Israel last year signed a 20-year deal to import drinking water from a plant on Turkey's Manavgat River.

The original idea was to ship the water to Israel using large tankers, but that proved prohibitively expensive. Instead, Israeli officials are suggesting a pipeline of plastic tubing that would be partially submerged in the Mediterranean Sea. Turkey currently is building a similar pipeline to bring water from its southern mainland to Northern Cyprus.

Israeli officials have said the pipeline could be extended to water-poor Jordan and the Palestinian Authority, giving the project a role in improving regional stability and possibly attracting foreign aid for its construction.

Another idea that was discussed, according to Israeli officials, is a proposal to use Israel as a transit point for oil arriving in Turkey via the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan, or BTC, pipeline. That's a \$4 billion, 1,093-mile project that will bring Caspian Sea oil and natural gas to Turkey's Mediterranean coast from Azerbaijan via Georgia.

The BTC ends at the Turkish port of Ceyhan, but attention now is being turned to how the pipeline could benefit Israel, both as a source of energy supplies and by creating an opportunity for

Israel to become a player in getting BTC oil to thirsty markets in Asia.

Israel's location and small size may turn out to be a strategic advantage. Since the largest oil tankers can't sail through the Suez Canal, oil pumped at Ceyhan and headed to Asia would have to make a lengthy trip around Africa. Pumping is expected to begin later this year.

One alternative under discussion is to transport the oil across Israel from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea, where it would be loaded onto tankers heading for Asia.

"This definitely will create more opportunities," said Brenda Shaffer, a professor of Asian studies and political science at Haifa University. "There's more oil flowing into the Mediterranean only a day's boat ride from here. There's growing demand in Asia. If Israel is clever about it, it could market this not only commercially but also politically in a way that could improve regional security and stability."

For Turkey, which has few energy supplies of its own, the pipeline is the first step in its effort to become a major energy player, not as a producer but as a transit point. As countries look to diversify their energy sources, Turkey hopes to establish itself as a kind of energy supermarket, betting that controlling oil and gas routes will turn out to be as strategically valuable as producing the stuff.

"Geographically Turkey is endowed with advantages, so we would like to use those advantages to give Turkey a role as a supplier of energy resources that are located in the east and move those energy resources to the markets. It gives Turkey relevance," said a senior Turkish Foreign Ministry official involved in energy issues.

Israel's 158-mile Eilat-Ashkelon Pipeline, or EAP, could be used to transport the oil from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea. Built in 1968, the pipeline originally was designed to ferry oil from the shah's

Iran in the opposite direction, from east to west.

The BTC "builds a strategic alliance that is good for Israel. But now Israel has to complete the task, to use the Eilat-Ashkelon pipeline to ship oil to the Red Sea, and from there to the ultimate consumers in the Far East, including Japan," said Ephraim Sneh, a Labor Party legislator and former Israeli transportation minister.

But Barry Swersky, the Israel-based co-chairman of the oil company Big Sky Canada, which works in Central Asia, said questions remain about whether the shipping and oil worlds would accept Israel as a significant transit point for crude oil.

"Will ships be blacklisted? Will ship owners perceive that they will be blacklisted?" he asked.

Swersky also pointed out that work is being done on the Suez Canal to allow it to accommodate larger tankers, which could take away the EAP's competitive edge.

Egypt also operates the Sumed pipeline, a Suez Canal bypass that takes mostly Persian Gulf oil to the Mediterranean. The EAP's edge would be further eroded if Egypt reverses the flow on the Sumed.

More significant, Swersky said, is the question of how increased oil-tanker traffic would impact the environmentally sensitive Gulf of Aqaba.

"I'm not sure if there's serious thinking about up and turning a holiday resort into a serious oil port," he said. "There should be a serious examination while there is time."

Despite the absence of any announced deals, the company that runs the EAP recently made a significant upgrade on the pipeline that allows for the flow to be reversed, making it possible to pump oil from Ashkelon to Eilat.

Meanwhile, India's minister of petroleum and natural gas, Mani Shankar Aiyar, recently suggested that Azeri oil could be delivered to his country via Israel.

'If Israel is clever about it, it could market this not only commercially but also politically.'

Brenda Shaffer

Professor, Haifa University

**BEHIND
THE
HEADLINES**

PROFILE

U.S. female rabbi brings Yiddishkeit to the Navy fleet

By CHANAN TIGAY

NEW YORK (JTA) — As a rabbinical student in New York, it seemed unlikely to Daniella Kolodny that she'd be leading High Holiday and Sukkot services on an American military base in Yokosuka, Japan, as she is doing this year.

On the other hand, considering that Yokosuka is on land, it was probably a more likely place to be leading a congregation than the spot in the middle of the Persian Gulf where Rabbi Kolodny, now a lieutenant in the U.S. Navy, spent Passover this year.

She marked the Jewish celebration of liberation from Egypt aboard the U.S.S. Carl Vinson, an aircraft carrier then on duty in the Middle East.

"If you want to talk about galut," or exile, "and the edge of the Diaspora, that's what it is," she says of life on the ship. "People there are quite devout. We were not so far from Bavel," or Babel, which was in modern-day Iraq, "but in many ways, we were far from anything Jewish."

Kolodny, 39, a 2004 graduate of the Jewish Theological Seminary, the flagship institution of the Conservative movement, is the only active-duty female rabbi in the Navy. When she's not traveling, she works at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md.

On the holidays, she has been deployed to serve both Jewish and non-Jewish members of the American military.

Before rabbinical school, Kolodny — who has a master's degree in Jewish Communal Service from Hebrew Union College — worked for The Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland doing programming for young professionals, and also worked in family programming at a Long Island, N.Y., synagogue.

In her hospital work, Kolodny provides pastoral care for people receiving medical attention. Some of those she helps care for have been injured in Iraq or Afghanistan.

She also serves Jews on staff who are seeking the spiritual guidance of a rabbi. ■

Cleveland gets Jewish museum

By SUSAN H. KAHN
Cleveland Jewish News

CLEVELAND (JTA) — Stroll in the shadow of Jewish-owned factories like Glick Neckwear and Favorite Knitting Mills in Cleveland's long-vanished garment district. Take a seat in an art deco theater where Ethel Merman belts out a song. Round a corner to see Superman bursting through a wall. These are among the sights, sounds and experiences visitors encounter in the new Maltz Museum of Jewish Heritage.

Using state-of-the-art audio, visual and computer technologies, the museum illuminates Jewish history both local and worldwide, setting these traditions and achievements against the backdrop of U.S. and world events. Within its walls, one meets a host of colorful characters whose personal stories are brought to life in film, interactive activities and exhibits of precious artifacts.

Cleveland media mogul Milton Maltz and his wife, Tamar, pledged \$8 million toward the construction of the Beachwood, Ohio, museum, and to begin an endowment. The Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland contributed the remaining \$5.5 million to the museum, which opened Oct. 11. Research support was provided by the Western Reserve Historical Society, and many of the historical documents and artifacts in the museum came from its Jewish archives.

"Although this is seen through Jewish eyes, it is really an American story," says Maltz who, with his wife, Tamar, was the visionary behind the museum.

Beyond chronicling Jewish history, the museum pays homage to the immigrant spirit that, nourished by freedom, built Cleveland and this country.

Although it illuminates large themes, the Maltz Museum is compact. The permanent exhibit occupies 7,000 square feet of the 24,000-square-foot minimalist building, which is faced in luminous Jerusalem limestone. Elsewhere, exhibits throughout the meandering rooms and alcoves engage and inform museum-goers.

The museum experience begins in a light-filled, high-ceilinged lobby hung with eight huge iconic images representing the

museum's major themes. These include dramatic photos of Cleveland Rabbi Arthur Lelyveld, his head bloodied during the 1964 civil rights march in Mississippi, and the smiling face of astronaut Judith Resnick, an Akron native, paired with the Challenger space shuttle in which she lost her life.

Superimposed on these, a multilevel timeline shows the history of the Jews from Abraham onward, placing it in the context of world civilizations and historical events.

In the 60-seat Chelm Family Theater, a short film sets the tone — literally — for the visitor's tour. A hazy close-up of a man blowing a shofar on a deserted hillside gradually dissolves into a sharply focused shot of the Cleveland Orchestra's principal clarinetist, Franklin Cohen, playing Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue." Actor

Peter Strauss narrates this film, which provides an overview of the museum.

Off the main lobby is The Temple-Tifereth Israel Gallery, which showcases treasures drawn from the collection of The Temple Museum of Religious Art. The Temple's collection includes ancient ritual objects, sacred books and scrolls from around the world, textiles dating from the 18th century, Holocaust art, Israeli stamps, paintings, lithographs and sculpture by renowned Jewish artists such as Marc Chagall, Jacques Lipschitz and Isidor Kaufmann.

While the museum has generated much initial excitement in the Cleveland Jewish community, its success will depend on drawing a wider audience and offering reasons for visitors to return. Maltz and Carole Zawatsky, the museum's executive director, say they expect the museum to have regional appeal, drawing 45,000 to 75,000 visitors a year.

Just as he hopes people from other ethnic backgrounds will see some of their own stories reflected in the museum, Maltz also hopes they will want to use its open space to mount exhibits showcasing their own heritage.

"It's wonderful to have this in our own backyard," says Cleveland-area resident Ruth Mayers, who attended the Oct. 11 preview gala. "This will bring an understanding of our history to Jew and non-Jew alike; it is a gift to our children." ■

'Although this is seen through Jewish eyes, it is really an American story.'

Milton Maltz
Museum supporter

NEWS IN BRIEF

NORTH AMERICA

Congressional letter warns P.A. on Hamas

Forty-nine U.S. lawmakers signed a letter warning the Palestinian Authority to ban Hamas from elections or risk damaging relations with the United States.

Rep. Robert Menendez (D-N.J.), the chairman of the Democratic caucus, and Rep. Deborah Pryce (R-Ohio), the chairwoman of the Republican Conference, asked colleagues to sign the letter ahead of P.A. President Mahmoud Abbas' visit Thursday with President Bush.

"Any requirements for groups to disarm or disavow racist ideologies must be made prior to participating in an election, otherwise democracy itself may be threatened," the letter says. "We would strongly support any actions you might initiate now to establish such criteria. If not, and if members of Hamas are elected to positions of influence within the P.A., relations with the United States may well be seriously damaged."

Gun indemnification bill passes

Congress passed legislation opposed by the Reform movement that would protect gun manufacturers from lawsuits.

The legislation passed both houses of Congress on Thursday by wide margins, and President Bush is expected to sign the bill.

Reform movement leaders had written to congressional leaders prior to the vote that the bill restricting lawsuits went against Jewish values.

"The Talmud teaches that 'he who takes one life it is as though he has destroyed the universe and he who saves one life it is as though he has saved the universe,'" the letter said. "The carelessness and ease by which guns take human life directly violate these affirmations of Jewish principle."

Ramadan, Sukkot to be celebrated together

The Jewish federation in New York is sponsoring a joint Ramadan/Sukkot celebration.

Participants in the UJA-Federation of New York event on Saturday will decorate a sukkah outside of a mosque — and then learn about Islam and Judaism in the mosque.

The American Society for Muslim Advancement, the Auburn Theological Seminary, the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York and the Islamic Cultural Center of New York are also sponsoring the event.

Israeli program gets U.S. grant

An Israeli group that promotes Arab-Jewish cooperation in schools received a U.S. grant.

Hand in Hand, which began in Israeli schools, recently received \$400,000 from the U.S. State Department and the U.S. Aid for International Development.

The money includes funding to make its curriculum available in U.S. schools.

Bush approves Homeland Security funds

President Bush signed a security bill that includes \$25 million in funding for at-risk non-profits, including synagogues and Jewish institutional buildings.

The \$25 million of the \$30.8 billion the Homeland Security Appropriations bill signed Tuesday is in addition to \$25 billion budgeted last year.

The United Jewish Communities led lobbying for the funds.

Israeli company pops up in scandal

An Israeli contractor's role in installing cell phone antennas in the U.S. Congress emerged in reporting on a major Washington lobbying scandal.

Rep. Bob Ney (R-Ohio), the chairman of the House of Representatives Administration Committee, awarded Israel's Foxcom the \$3 million contract over LGC Wireless in 2002.

LGC complained, saying it violated Congress' tradition of "Buy American."

Foxcom had donated \$50,000 in 2001 to a charitable foundation run by Jack Abramoff, a Jewish lobbyist who was close to Ney and who is now the subject of several federal investigations for his lobbying practices, The Washington Post reported this week.

MIDDLE EAST

Evangelical Christians blast divestment

A Jerusalem-based evangelical Christian group criticized mainstream Protestant groups for divestment campaigns against Israel.

The International Christian Embassy said Thursday it would fight such efforts, The Associated Press reported.

Also, Dale Neill, the president of the International Christian Chamber of Commerce, said his organization may build a permanent office in Jerusalem as part of efforts to help boost the Israeli economy.

Erekat cancels visit

A top Palestinian negotiator canceled a visit to the United States because of the crisis in the peace process.

Saeb Erekat was due to accompany Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas to Washington this week to meet with President Bush.

Israel suspended security contacts with the Palestinians after terrorists killed three Jewish settlers in the West Bank, and Abbas asked Erekat to stay in the region to smooth relations.

U.S.: P.A. complains to Syria

The Palestinian Authority has complained to Syria about its harboring of terrorist groups, a U.S. official said.

"The Palestinian Authority has spoken to the Syrian government about their support for rejectionist groups and the actions of those rejectionist groups in trying to derail the progress that has been made between the Israelis and the Palestinians in terms of the Gaza withdrawal and looking at what further areas of cooperation they might work on," State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said Tuesday.

WORLD

Diamond dealer missing

Terrorists are suspected in the disappearance of an Israeli businessman in Greece.

Diamond dealer Shmuel Levy, 66, went missing earlier this month while on a business trip to Greece. Police believe he was abducted from his rented apartment.

The fact that his documents and diamonds went untouched has raised the possibility that the motivation behind the incident was political rather than criminal.

Levy's family, noting that several foreigners have gone missing in Greece in recent years, demanded that the Israeli government press officials in Athens to determine what happened to the businessman.

Oral history project tracks Greek Jews

A Jewish oral history project is holding a training seminar in Greece this weekend.

The seminar in Thessaloniki is part of Centropa.org's plan to interview 50 elderly Jews there over the next two years and then create exhibitions, books and films.

Oral history experts from Germany, Israel, Turkey and Greece will work with historian Rena Molho, a specialist on the history of Jewish Thessaloniki, to train the interviewers.

The seminar is sponsored by the German Embassy in Athens, the Claims Conference and the Thessaloniki Jewish community.