

IN THE NEWS

Israeli soldiers kill Palestinian terrorist

Israeli troops killed a wanted Palestinian terrorist in the West Bank.

Undercover commandos raiding Tulkarm shot the top Islamic Jihad commander in the West Bank, and a comrade, in a clash Monday.

Islamic Jihad vowed to avenge his death.

Israel criticized on Gaza crossings

An international envoy urged Israel to work with the Palestinian Authority to open Gaza Strip border crossings.

James Wolfensohn warned in a letter to the "Quartet" of peace mediators Monday that the dividends of Israel's recent withdrawal from Gaza could be wasted unless border arrangements are made.

Israel has been "almost acting as though there has been no withdrawal," wrote Wolfensohn, the former president of the World Bank who now is an envoy for the Quartet.

Israeli officials said in response that the Palestinian Authority's failure to stem the flow of terrorists across Gaza's southern frontier with Egypt had stymied talks on opening formal border terminals, but that a resolution was in the works.

Wilma prompts sukkah takedowns

Rabbis in southern Florida advised congregants to take down their sukkahs because of Hurricane Wilma.

Sunday's advisory came before the storm hit the region.

In a recorded message sent to synagogue members by telephone, Rabbi Edward Davis of Young Israel of Hollywood-Fort Lauderdale advised congregants late Sunday to take down their sukkahs.

REMINDER: The JTA World Report will not be published on Wednesday, Oct. 26, and Thursday, Oct. 27.

WORLD REPORT

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In rebuke to Israel, U.S. accepts P.A. strategy of co-opting terrorists

By LESLIE SUSSER

JERUSALEM (JTA) — After Mahmoud Abbas' recent meeting in Washington with President Bush, differences have begun to emerge between the United States and Israel over how to move forward on the Palestinian track.

The Palestinian Authority president managed to convince Bush that getting Palestinian terrorist groups to join the political process makes more sense than confronting them head-on, as demanded by the "road map" peace plan.

The Americans also came away from the visit convinced that Israel is not doing enough to help Abbas consolidate his leadership position or to jump-start the stagnant Palestinian economy.

The United States and Israel agree that the Palestinians must end terrorism before there can be significant Israeli-Palestinian progress. Where they differ is over how to achieve their common goal.

The dispute boils down to accommodation versus confrontation. In other words, should the Palestinian Authority try to reach a political arrangement with armed groups like Hamas, or use force to disarm them?

Abbas argues that the way to tame the radicals is to allow them to participate in Palestinian legislative elections scheduled for Jan. 25. That way, he says, they'll become part of the system and less of a threat to its main policy thrusts.

"This strategy stems from Abbas' belief that he cannot use force against the armed militias, lest this cause a civil war. So the

only way to rein them in is by integrating them into the political system," Arab affairs analyst Danny Rubinstein writes in Ha'aretz.

Abbas insists that Israeli demands to prevent Hamas from running in the elections as long as it maintains its armed wing only play into the militants' hands. The Americans agree, and have made it abundantly clear that they have no intention of opposing Hamas participation in the vote, even though they don't like the idea of armed groups taking part in what is meant to be a free, democratic process.

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's government has little faith in the accommodation strategy. Given the American position, however, Israeli officials say they won't do anything to stop Hamas from running in the election.

"It's not in Israel's interest to intervene," Justice Minister Tzipi Livni declared in an Israel Radio interview on Sunday.

Ideally, Livni would like to see the international community tell Hamas that disarming is the price of running in the elections, exploiting Hamas' desire to run.

But she knows that's not very likely, and that ultimately Israel, like the United States, will leave the question of Hamas' participation up to the Palestinians.

That was one of the main achievements in Washington for Abbas, who claims that his strategy is working. He notes that Hamas already has agreed to a cease-fire and to a ban on the public display of its weapons, and says the process of domesticating the militants can be continued after the election, when

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■ *The United States backs Mahmoud Abbas' plan to co-opt Hamas*

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a democratically elected legislature will have the moral authority to disarm them.

As part of its strategy, the Palestinian Authority on Sunday announced a plan to incorporate the Al-Aksa Brigade, the terrorist wing of Abbas' ruling Fatah Party, into the P.A. security services. The Palestinians say Abbas presented the Al-Aksa plan to Bush and won his approval.

But Israeli officials are skeptical: They point out that the plan was first discussed several months ago, but nothing has been done since then to implement it. Moreover, they note that the Al-Aksa Brigade is part of Abbas' own secular Fatah movement, and that it will be much harder to co-opt and disarm the fundamentalist Hamas.

The United States wants Israel to give Abbas' strategy more time. It also is telling Israel to help Abbas by dismantling illegal West Bank settlement outposts, freezing settlement construction and taking steps to improve Palestinians' everyday lives. Mainly, the Americans would like to see Israel lift roadblocks, open border crossing points and release Palestinian prisoners.

For Israel, the dilemma is how to do these things without leaving itself open to more terrorism. After a mid-October drive-by shooting spree in which three young Israelis were killed in the West Bank, Israel reimposed security restrictions it had lifted in an earlier goodwill gesture — a common cycle over the past decade in which Israeli concessions only leave it more vulnerable to attack.

James Wolfensohn, economic envoy of

the international "Quartet" driving the peace process, believes the key to a better future lies in the economic transformation of Gaza. He has convinced Bush that prosperity is the best way to weaken and co-opt the terrorists.

Though Wolfensohn is aware of Israel's security dilemmas, he's highly critical of what he sees as Israeli foot-dragging on the opening of border crossing points, crucial for Gaza's economic development.

Despite the growing criticism of Israel, however, the United States remains wedded to the notion that the process won't move forward significantly unless the Palestinians stop terrorism. In his Oct. 20 news conference with Abbas, Bush declared that "the way forward must begin by confronting the threat that armed gangs pose to a genuinely democratic Palestine," adding that the Palestinian Authority must "earn the confidence of its neighbors by rejecting and fighting terrorism."

Bush also exerted pressure on the Palestinians by refusing to put a time frame on

their quest for statehood. It might not be during his term, he said, implying that if the Palestinians want a state, they will have to earn it — primarily by ending violence.

Following the Abbas visit, Sharon chose to ignore the criticism of Israel and emphasize the demands the United States is making of the Palestinians.

"The pressure continues to be on the Palestinians to fight terror as a first step," a Sharon spokesman said.

For Israel, the dilemma is how to lift restrictions on Palestinians without leaving itself open to more terrorism.

Sharon also has made clear that he has no intention of taking up Abbas' call for secret peace talks — which, he says, would merely enable the Palestinians to avoid their commitment to crack down on terrorism if they expect to see negotiations.

With no secret channel, and with both Israel and the United States continuing to insist on an end to terrorism as a precondition for peacemaking, prospects for progress are hazy. With America's blessing and Israel's reluctant acquiescence, much is riding on the success of Abbas' policy.

Memorial unveiled in Czech town

By DINAH A. SPRITZER

PRAGUE (JTA) — The Czech Republic has many Holocaust memorials, but perhaps none are as loaded with symbolism, or signify so much about Czech-German-Jewish relations of the 20th century, as a new, monumental Star of David.

The memorial was unveiled Sunday in Usti nad Labem's town park, where a Jewish cemetery stood before World War II, by Mayor Petr Gandalovic and Bedrich Heller, chairman of the town's Jewish community.

"This memorial is the last part of a jigsaw puzzle that the town is putting together on its past, and the mayor is unique in confronting that past," said Tomas Kraus, executive director of the Federation of Jewish Communities in the Czech Republic.

He was referring to Gandalovic's efforts to mark the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II, a controversial issue in a town that saw massacres of innocent victims among its three groups of inhabitants — Jews as well as other Czechs and Germans.

The Memorial to the Holocaust Victims, by Czech sculptor Michal Gabriel, is a six-pointed star partly submerged in the ground. It commemorates the more than 1,000 Jews from Usti killed in the Holocaust.

"It is one of the most powerful memorials we have because, whether intentionally or not, the Star of David half-submerged in the ground suggests that the Jews are rising up and sinking simultaneously, an apt metaphor for their history here," Kraus said.

Gandalovic pointed out that the Jewish community that lived in Usti from the 1860s until 1938 contributed greatly to its industrial, commercial and cultural development.

He pointed to Eduard Jakob Weinmann and Ignaz Petschek, thanks to whom Usti became an important European center of trade in coal, and even had its own stock exchange in the second half of the 19th century.

Usti today is home to about 50 Jews. Some of them are descendants of Jews who survived the Holocaust because they had married Gentiles, keeping them from being sent to concentration camps.

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U.S. emigres worry after unrest in Russia

By MICHAEL J. JORDAN

NEW YORK (JTA) — On the morning of Oct. 13, Galina Shalumova and her family were in their Brooklyn apartment, resting during the Yom Kippur fast.

Galina was puttering around the kitchen while her mother-in-law, Svetlana, was in the next room, watching Russian television beamed in from Moscow.

"Come here, come here! Something is happening. There's war in Nalchik!" Svetlana yelled out.

Indeed, thousands of miles away, their sleepy hometown in southern Russia suddenly had become the top story. The network was reporting that earlier that morning, at least 150 gunmen tried to commandeer eight locations in the predominantly Muslim city.

Gun battles with local police reportedly had claimed dozens of lives. Hostages were being held and corpses were shown lying in the streets.

The scenes conjured up images of Beslan, just 50 miles southeast of Nalchik. There, in September 2004, gunmen allied with extremists from nearby Chechnya took a primary school hostage, a crisis that left 331 people dead, including 186 children.

By this week, Russian police said they had freed all hostages in Nalchik, though reports of sporadic gunfights and arrests continued. Schools remained closed.

The local Jewish community was unharmed in the fighting, but international Jewish groups are keeping a watchful eye on the area and how events impact the Jewish community.

Galina, who immigrated to the United States three years ago with her husband and two children, feared for two sisters who remain in Nalchik with their families. She first called her younger sister Yana, but there was no response.

A call to the youngest sister, Milana, also brought no response. The local government had cut all telephone lines to isolate the gunmen.

"I worried: What could happen to my sisters and their kids? I didn't want anything bad to happen to them," Galina, 32, said in heavily accented English.

Meanwhile, three flights below Galina's apartment, her sister-in-law Nadezhda was relaxing with her family when her teenage brother, Yakov, burst through the door and told her the news.

Nadezhda no longer has immediate family among Nalchik's 2,500 Jews; they've all emigrated. But she does have aunts, uncles and cousins there.

"I was born there, raised there and love Nalchik, so I feel so much pain for that city," said Nadezhda, 24. "It's so beautiful, and I don't want the same story that happened to Chechnya to happen to Nalchik."

That this family would be gloomy about

AROUND THE JEWISH WORLD

the prospects for Nalchik — the capital of Kabardino-Bakaria, a Russian republic bordering Chechnya — isn't surprising: The Caucasus is one of the most volatile corners of the globe.

Conflict after conflict has rocked the region since the Soviet Union disintegrated: two wars in separatist Chechnya; wars in independent Georgia with its breakaway Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions; fighting between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh; interethnic violence in parts of North Ossetia; and separatist violence in Dagestan.

Chechen rebel Shamil Basayev — Russia's most wanted man — reportedly has threatened to inflame the entire region as long as Chechnya remains Russian territory.

Basayev claimed responsibility for the Beslan hostage crisis last year. This week, the media reported his claim of responsibility for Nalchik.

There are some Ashkenazi Jews in Nalchik today, but the community primarily is made up of "Mountain Jews" — religiously conservative and traders by tradition. Spread across independent Azerbaijan and the highland republics of Dagestan, Chechnya, Ingushetia and Kabardino-Bakaria, the Mountain Jews are believed to have arrived from Persia in the fifth century C.E.

The Jewish communities sprinkled throughout the region rarely have been targeted as Jews, save for a rash of kidnappings-for-ransom in Chechnya. But the warfare and general instability have sent Jews on the move.

Several thousand Jews fled Abkhazia,

and hundreds fled South Ossetia. In 1996, the Jewish Agency for Israel airlifted several hundred Jews out of Grozny, Chechnya's capital.

The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, which provides welfare services to more than 1,000 clients in Nalchik, said it had been in touch with Nalchik Jewish leaders after the recent unrest.

Many Jews live in their own affluent

neighborhood on the outskirts of Nalchik, with large homes built from the profits of their import-export businesses.

Indeed, that wealth — and the prospect of losing it — may be one reason many Jews stay put: They worry about selling their homes for peanuts.

At the time of the crisis, some 300 Jews were at Yom Kippur services in a synagogue led by the city's chief rabbi, Levi Shabayev, a Chabad Lubavitch emissary and Nalchik native.

The Moscow-based Federation of Jewish Communities quickly sent "rabbinical reinforcements" — two yeshiva students from Moscow — to pitch in, the federation's executive director, Avraham Berkowitz said.

"In times of crisis, people turn to the synagogue more," Berkowitz said. "To abandon them would be the worst option. It only makes sense to fortify the community."

Meanwhile, the federation is keeping tabs on the situation, he said.

But some worry that it could get worse before it gets better.

"Nalchik is an area where Jews have not had a lot of problems, but that doesn't mean they can't become a target," said Mark Levin, executive director of NCSJ: Advocates on Behalf of Jews in Russia, Ukraine, the Baltic States & Eurasia.

After an entire day with no word on the fate of her sisters, Galina's family grapevine finally produced some results: A cousin in Israel finally got through to the sisters in Nalchik, and then called Galina's parents in Potsdam, Germany — where they've resettled with Galina's three other siblings — who then called Galina to let her know that her sisters and their families were fine.

I don't want the same story that happened to Chechnya to happen to Nalchik.

Nadezhda

Former Nalchik resident

NEWS IN BRIEF

MIDDLE EAST

Sharon aide praises Abbas

Mahmoud Abbas is sincere about wanting peace with Israel, a senior aide to Ariel Sharon said.

"In the meetings with Abu Mazen in which I was present, he spoke of a settlement with Israel — on his terms, of course. He does not want terror. I believe that his statements are heartfelt," Maj. Gen. Yoav Gallant, the Israeli prime minister's outgoing military secretary, told Yediot Achronot in an interview Monday.

"But between that and implementation, there is a huge rift."

Jewish aid to Arab victims

The Jewish Agency for Israel compensated Israeli Arab terror victims.

The Jewish Agency's chairman, Zeev Bielski, met Sunday with four families who lost relatives in a gun attack by an extremist Jew in the Arab town of Shfaram last August, giving each a check for \$5,000.

It was the first time the Jewish Agency's Fund for the Victims of Terror has provided compensation to Arabs.

Israeli ship's crew probed

Israeli police detained the crew of a ship that capsized a Japanese fishing boat.

The Zim company tanker docked in Haifa on Sunday and was boarded by police, who took 22 crew members in for questioning, arresting at least three of them.

The captain, who flew to Israel earlier this month, is already in custody. Seven Japanese fishermen were killed last month when the Zim ship rammed into their boat.

Zim, Israel's largest shipping company, at first denied involvement but then took responsibility, offering compensation to the fishermen's relatives.

The tanker crew is suspected of reckless endangerment and of leaving the site of the crash without offering help to the fishermen.

Israel using remote-control ships

Israel's navy is developing a patrol boat operated by remote control.

The 30-foot-long Protector, armed with radar and a machine gun, is undergoing final tests in Israel's coastal waters and is expected to be incorporated into the navy soon, security sources said Sunday.

The vessel is operate from the shore by controllers who "see" through its cameras and can pilot it and activate its gun.

NORTH AMERICA

Boston synagogues back health care bill

Synagogue members in the Boston area are taking a leading role in a campaign to provide health care for the state's uninsured.

Tens of thousands of signatures have been collected for the Health Access and Affordability Act, which would cover an estimated 80 percent of those in the state who are currently uninsured, estimated at more than 500,000 adults and children, according to John McDonough, director of Health Care for All, which is promoting the legislation.

More than 2,500 signatures were collected at the end of services on Rosh Hashanah at Boston's Temple Israel, according to Rabbi Jonah Pesner, one of the synagogue's associate rabbis and a leader in the effort being backed by the Greater Boston Interfaith Organization.

The legislation is also being supported by the Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Boston.

During the next month, supporters must gather some 65,000 signatures from registered voters as a first step to qualify for the ballot in November 2006, McDonough says.

Catholic document's anniversary marked

An online guide commemorates the 40th anniversary of a document that repudiated the Catholic Church's teaching that Jews are responsible for Jesus' death.

The guide to Nostra Aetate is available at www.adl.org.

The guide includes essays by leading scholars on the document, and a guide on how to teach the document's lessons to Catholics and Jews.

Nostra Aetate came out of the Second Vatican Council, which is seen as a turning point in Catholic-Jewish relations.

WORLD

German neo-Nazi march banned

Authorities banned a neo-Nazi march slated for Munich on Nov. 9, the anniversary of Kristallnacht.

An extreme right-wing group had applied to demonstrate in memory of 16 people killed during Hitler's attempted coup in November 1923.

The local administration ruled it would be an "enormous provocation" to allow neo-Nazis to march with flags through the city on the day when Munich honors the memory of victims of the Nazi dictatorship.

Meanwhile, a self-described reformed neo-Nazi was granted permission to hold a demonstration Nov. 9 to mark the 16th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Ukrainian newspaper sued

A Ukrainian Jewish lawmaker brought a libel lawsuit against a newspaper that has a history of publishing anti-Semitic articles.

Alexander Feldman, who serves as president of the Jewish Foundation of Ukraine, told reporters late last week that he filed a lawsuit in a Kiev court against Silski Visti for publishing articles that "insult the national dignity and religious feeling of Ukrainian Jewry."

An Oct. 7 article headlined "Who Needs 'Mein Kampf' " said the "Judeo-Nazi sect Chabad" was going to "rob the country completely."

The article was written by Eduard Khodos, a former Jewish activist who in recent years gained notoriety in Ukraine for his anti-Semitic pieces.

With a circulation of some 500,000, Silski Visti is one of the most widely read Ukrainian newspapers, catering to rural readers.

In 2002 and 2003, the newspaper published a series of anti-Semitic articles that outraged the Jewish community.

The paper was sued over anti-Semitic articles last year but the case was closed without a verdict.

Charges dropped in Prague

The Prague State Attorney's Office canceled a criminal complaint against the former head of the city's Jewish community.

The office said that the police decision to launch a criminal investigation of former community chairman Tomas Jelinek on suspicion of misusing community members' personal data while in office and abusing his authority was "premature."

Jelinek, a candidate in Nov. 6 elections for the community's 25-member representative board, had charged that the criminal accusations against him filed by his opponents were politically motivated.