

IN THE NEWS

Iran reported to U.N. council

The U.N. nuclear watchdog reported Iran to the U.N. Security Council. The Islamic republic suspended cooperation with International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors after the report Saturday, following three years of IAEA efforts to affirm that Iran's nuclear program is peaceful and increasing evidence that Iran is planning to manufacture a bomb.

The vote passed 27-3 on the 35-member IAEA board. The resolution also seeks "the objective of a Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction," an oblique reference to Israel's nuclear arsenal.

Jews drawn into cartoon controversy

An Islamic Web site in Europe posted anti-Semitic political cartoons in response to the Mohammed cartoon controversy raging in Europe.

The cartoons were posted on the Arab European League Web site, arabeuropean.org. Two cartoons found Sunday on the site denied the Holocaust.

In another reaction to the cartoon controversy, hundreds of Palestinians burned Danish and German flags and stormed buildings belonging to European institutions in the Gaza Strip.

Olmert: No probe into settler violence

Israel's acting prime minister said a probe into violence at a settler protest last week is unnecessary.

Ehud Olmert said at Sunday's Cabinet meeting that accusations of excessive force by the police during the Feb. 1 evacuation of the West Bank outpost of Amona should not be investigated because he doesn't want to politicize the event.

More than 200 people, including three Knesset members, were injured in the violence. On Sunday night, tens of thousands rallied in Jerusalem against what they called an excessive use of police force in quelling the riots.



WORLD REPORT

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U.S. aid to the Palestinians: How much and who gets it?

By RON KAMPEAS

WASHINGTON (JTA) — "We're obviously not going to give aid to a terrorist organization," U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice says.

"I will work with my colleagues to undertake all necessary steps to prevent U.S. foreign aid from being diverted to Hamas," Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-Fla.), an influential congresswoman, adds.

Now that the Palestinians have elected Hamas in a landslide, it seems like compelling arithmetic: U.S. assistance to the Palestinian Authority equals U.S. support for terrorism. That logic explains the pledges in recent days from the administration and Congress to cut off aid to the Palestinian Authority.

In fact, a closer look at how U.S. money has reached the Palestinians since 1993 suggests the formula is more like algebra. U.S. assistance is subjected to several stringent layers of oversight, and none of it goes directly to the Palestinian Authority. In addition, there are already strict laws in place banning funding for Hamas, which is listed by the United States as a terrorist group.

Though U.S. aid funding isn't going directly to the Palestinian Authority, it does keep the P.A. from having to fund these projects. This frees up the Palestinians to spend their budget in other ways.

"If the international community will stop only direct budgets and not indirect funds, Hamas will find a way" to fill the gaps and continue funding its militia, said Israeli Brig. Gen. Michael Herzog, currently in Washington as a fellow at the Washington Institute of

Near East Policy. Herzog suggested Hamas would turn to Iran to keep its militia funded.

That indirect, "in kind" assistance is what State Department bureaucrats now considering the disbursement of aid to the Palestinians are weighing.

The deliberations come as the legislature dominated by Hamas, which calls for Israel's destruction, negotiates a government with Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian president favored as a relative moderate by Israel and the United States.

■

A look at how the money gets to the Palestinians suggests a number of avenues where assistance could continue, and other areas where it is likely to stop, according to Larry Garber, the director from 1999-2004 of the West Bank/Gaza Strip office

of the U.S. Agency for International Development, which administers all U.S. aid to the Palestinians.

"My guess is that where there's enough of a segregation between the government and Hamas people, particularly for ongoing projects, there will not be an effort to terminate them — they'll keep those things going," said Garber, who now directs the New Israel Fund, which promotes civil rights and co-existence projects in Israel.

Since 1993, the Palestinians have received more than \$1.5 billion in assistance through USAID, the organization says. Of that, \$371 million has been for humanitarian or emergency assistance, including the purchase of food and medicines.

The rest has gone to infrastructure development, such as renovating and building schools, revamping water distribution,

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BEHIND
THE
HEADLINES

■ How much funding do the Palestinians get from the Americans, and where does it go?

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reforming health care, and promoting democracy and an independent judiciary.

An internal USAID document says that in 2003, U.S. donations represented 48 percent of such assistance. That doesn't include the approximately \$127 million the U.S. funneled to Palestinians in 2004, the most recently accounted year, through the U.N. Relief and Works Agency, the principal body administering refugee assistance to the Palestinians.

Last year, President Bush persuaded Congress to double to \$150 million the \$75 million in annual assistance the Palestinians had received since 1993, and to provide an additional \$100 million in emergency supplemental funds.

Of the \$100 million, \$50 million has already been transferred to USAID for projects.

A Capitol Hill source said the administration had discussed with members of Congress the possibility of striking the \$150 million from the administration's formal budget presentation in the wake of the Hamas victory. A senior administration official suggested such talk was "premature."

All of the USAID money is subject to stringent congressional oversight.

Congress, which has become wary of the profound corruption that pervades some Palestinian institutions, demands reports every six months on how every cent is spent. A number of international bodies also monitor U.S. assistance in their reviews of how donor money is spent.

In recent years, Bush — seeking to accelerate the aid process — has bypassed Congress using national security waivers on three occasions, getting a total of \$90 million in direct assistance to the Palestinians.

But even that money is spent under strict U.S. oversight and without Palestinian Authority interference. The money is deposited into a bank account accessible only to USAID officials, who approve projects and hire the contractors to carry them out.

That distinguishes U.S. funding from other nations, which often give cash directly to the Palestinian Authority.

That doesn't mean there aren't projects that will now, as Garber put it, be considered "problematic" under a Hamas regime.

"One example is, a contractor adds to a school or builds a school that's run by the Ministry of Education," he said. A school run according to Hamas' philosophy, shot through with a virulent strain of anti-Semitism, is likely to prove a hard sell to the Bush administration.

Other projects are likely to survive, Garber suggested, because they represent long-term investments with payoffs four or five years down the line. By that time, Hamas could be out of government.

That thinking is reflected in an internal USAID document published last August and recently obtained by JTA. It is entitled "Towards a viable, democratic Palestinian State, 2005-2008."

One section outlines plans for developing a sturdy economy, "including services, tourism, agriculture and agribusiness," the document says. Other long-term projects include water infrastructure, including desalination, well-drilling, and sewage; a health system; and road building.

Garber said one formula for continuing such projects would be for a Hamas

government to appoint non-Hamas members to administer those projects.

"There may be some wiggle room because not all the candidates are formally Hamas," Garber said. "Some of the businessmen and academics recruited by Hamas, many of them are not members of Hamas."

Still, it is clear that some priorities will be shifted. The USAID officials who authored the document anticipated governance by a Western-leaning Fatah party led by Abbas, and some of their ambitions now seem oxymoronic. One program "aims to divert youth away from extremism and into productive roles in the economy and society."

With Hamas running the government, marginalizing "extremism" is likely to be a much harder sell.

AIPAC backs Palestinian aid ban

WASHINGTON (JTA) — The American Israel Public Affairs Committee is backing a bill that would cut all aid to the Palestinian Authority except for humanitarian assistance.

The bipartisan U.S. House of Representatives bill, initiated by Reps. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-Fla.) and Tom Lantos (D-Calif.), would ban direct aid to the Palestinian Authority and impose tough strictures on assistance to non-governmental organizations. It explicitly allows humanitarian aid, however.

The bill comes in the wake of the recent landslide victory by Hamas, a terrorist group, in Palestinian elections. Another bill, circulated by Rep. Anthony Weiner (D-N.Y.) would prohibit such aid. The Ros-Lehtinen bill also would reduce U.S. funding for the United Nations commensurate with the portion of the U.N. budget spent on aid to the Palestinian Authority.

It is not clear from the bill, which has yet to be made public, whether that would include funding for the U.N. Relief and Works Agency, the principal caretaker for Palestinian refugees. Ros-Lehtinen said the bill's drafters are still negotiating with the Bush administration, which wants more waivers. Currently, the bill only allows Bush to waive a ban on visits by P.A. officials.

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Nationalist Russian youths mark Holocaust

By LEV KRICHEVSKY

MOSCOW (JTA) — A Kremlin-backed youth group that previously alarmed human rights watchers with its attacks against liberal politicians has held a Holocaust-remembrance event.

About a dozen young men clad in red

THIS WEEK

MONDAY

- President Bush unveils the U.S. budget for fiscal year 2007. Jewish groups are concerned about reports that social services will be cut back. Palestinians will be watching to see whether the budget maintains current levels for the Palestinian Authority.

- PBS affiliates broadcast "Bonhoeffer," a German documentary about Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a German theologian who resisted the Nazis and protected Jews. The airing marks the 100th anniversary of the birth of Bonhoeffer, who was executed by the Nazis in World War II's final days.

TUESDAY

- A centennial celebration of the life of American Jewish novelist Henry Roth will take place at the American Jewish Historical Society in New York City. Discussions and readings will examine the life and works of Roth, the author of the immigrant novel "Call it Sleep."

WEDNESDAY

- King Abdullah meets President Bush in Washington. They are expected to discuss Israeli-Palestinian relations after Hamas' recent victory in Palestinian elections.

- The Israel Projects launches a lecture tour featuring an Israeli mother and an Egyptian American mother who talk about their hopes for peace. The tour, which will be launched in Washington, will then travel to some 10 cities on the East and West Coasts.

THURSDAY

- A group of Jewish leaders begins a visit to Azerbaijan. The delegation, under the auspices of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, will meet in Baku with President Ilham Aliyev during the four-day trip. From Baku, the American leaders will fly to Jerusalem.

FRIDAY

- The Israeli, PLO and Jordanian ambassadors to Washington meet on the future of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process after Hamas wins in Palestinian elections. Daniel Kurtzer, the former U.S. ambassador to Israel, is also participating in the Washington event.

white-sleeved nylon jackets spent several hours near the Moscow Choral Synagogue late last month quietly handing out leaflets with "6,000,000" on top to passers-by.

The leaflets listed the names of the Nazi concentration camps and Jewish ghettos during World War II and contained a text urging people to never forget the victims of the Holocaust.

The young men are members of Nashi, or Ours, the well-funded pro-Kremlin youth movement that claims 150,000 members nationwide.

The group was created last March, and its mass events — including a 50,000-strong "patriotic" youth rally in Moscow last May — have attracted wide, mainly negative, media coverage.

By holding the event, the group insisted it was very concerned by the rising tide of xenophobia and anti-Semitism in Russia and wanted to use the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz to raise public awareness about the issue.

"Recent events in Russia have shown that a nationalist card is being played," said Boris Yakemenko, the group's deputy leader for ideology and brother of Nashi leader Vasily Yakemenko, a former Kremlin official.

Yakemenko said the group was concerned by racially motivated murders of foreign students that occurred in Russian provinces and by last month's stabbing attack on a Moscow synagogue.

To make the message look more emotional, the group installed a large poster, a replica of its leaflet listing places of mass extermination of Jews. Next to the poster, Nashi activists put a life-size installation: an entrance to a prewar Soviet apartment, purportedly once occupied by a Jewish family. A door of the apartment was left half-opened; a long black coat and a black hat hang on the coat hanger. A handwritten note pinned to the door said "Don't forget us."

It remained unclear how many of the 3,000 leaflets printed for the event were handed in the few hours activists spent in a quiet Moscow street outside the synagogue braving the cold and heavy snow-

fall. Yet, the event was widely covered by all major Russian media outlets. As with all Nashi events, this one drew a huge television and print media presence.

Nashi bills itself an anti-racism patriotic youth organization that supports the Kremlin.

But liberal media and the human rights community had often described the group as the Kremlin's "rent-a-crowd" against street revolutions, similar to those that took place in 2004 in Ukraine and Georgia.

In speeches and pamphlets, Nashi has previously attacked liberal politicians as agents of Western influence. The group has also targeted business tycoons and bureaucrats.

A spokesman for the Choral Synagogue said the institution did not object to the event because of its positive message.

"When we say similar things, the voice of Jewish organizations is hardly heard," said Vladimir Pliss of the Congress of Jewish Religious Organizations and Communities of Russia.

Organizations and Communities of Russia, an umbrella group that has its offices inside the Choral Synagogue.

"We can only convey our message through non-Jews," he said referring to the Nashi initiative.

But not everyone in the Jewish community agreed.

"This organizations stands for everything I oppose," said Alexei, a Moscow Jewish student recently attending a study group at a Moscow Jewish community center.

"Nashi are just using the banner of anti-fascism, in reality they would do whatever the Kremlin tells them to," said Alexei, who asked that his last name not be used.

"A public group that gets its inspiration from the Kremlin administration doesn't look very trustworthy to me."

A leading human rights activist also said such events should not necessarily be taken at face value.

"Undoubtedly we are talking about a Kremlin project," said Alexander Brod, director of the Moscow Bureau on Human Rights, a group that monitors anti-Semitism and xenophobia in Russia. ■



NEWS IN BRIEF

MIDDLE EAST

Israel to release tax revenues

Israel will release tax revenues to the Palestinians that were frozen after Hamas recently won Palestinian elections.

Israel made the announcement Sunday regarding the \$55 million in monthly customs duties it collects for the Palestinian Authority.

But Israel's acting prime minister, Ehud Olmert, said Israel is unlikely to transfer future tax revenues to a Hamas-led government.

Palestinian stabs, kills Israeli

A Palestinian man killed an Israeli woman during a stabbing rampage in the city of Petach Tikva.

Four others were wounded in the incident aboard a minibus taxi, which police are calling a terrorist attack.

The assailant was overpowered by a crowd before police arrived to arrest him.

The woman killed was identified as Kinneret Ben-Shalom.

Israel kills 3 in airstrike

Israel killed three Palestinians in an air attack on the Gaza Strip.

The three killed in Sunday's attack are believed to be members of the Al-Aksa Brigade, a terrorist group.

Israel said the strike came in retaliation for a Palestinian rocket attack last Friday in southern Israel that left three Israelis wounded.

Settlements cost \$14 billion

Settlements have cost Israelis more than \$14 billion, not counting military expenditures, an independent Israeli study said.

The study, released last Friday by the Research Institute for Economic and Social Affairs, also said the government spends twice as much on settlements as it does on local authorities inside Israel.

The institute, funded by a German group that backs Israel-Arab dialogue, took 18 months to calculate the costs of four decades of settlement in areas claimed by the Palestinians.

The government refused to provide assistance. There are about 250,000 settlers now living in the West Bank.

Israel gets new genealogical center

An institute devoted to Jewish genealogical research and study opened this week in Israel.

The International Institute for Jewish Genealogy at the Jewish National and University Library in Givat Ram, Jerusalem, is described as the only one of its kind in the Jewish world.

The institute is headed by Yosef Lamdan, a former Israeli ambassador to the Vatican.

According to Lamdan, the institute will focus on teaching, research and collaborative projects of practical benefit to family historians.

Jewish genealogy has gained immense popularity across the Jewish world over the last two decades, and especially since the rise of the Internet.

WORLD

Kiev synagogue attacked

Jewish leaders in Ukraine blamed Ukrainian authorities, law enforcement and societal attitudes for an attempted attack on Kiev's central synagogue.

Last Friday night, a man stormed into a Kiev synagogue and disturbed the Sabbath service by shouting anti-Semitic threats.

The incident took place when the Central Brodsky Synagogue in downtown Kiev was full of worshippers.

The man, whom police later identified as Georgy Dobryansky, 53, burst into the synagogue and demanded he be brought to a rabbi.

The guard stopped him at the entrance.

The attacker shouted that he came to desecrate the synagogue and that he hated Jews and wanted to act on their holy day of the week.

Some witnesses reported that a large knife was found on the floor near the entrance.

The man is now in police custody.

Jewish leaders said authorities have not responded properly to previous anti-Semitic and hate incidents.

"We won't be silent," Eduard Dolinsky, executive director of the United Jewish Community in Ukraine, said minutes after the attack occurred.

"The lack of fight against xenophobia and anti-Semitism, in particular against MAUP propaganda, has resulted in what we had today," he told JTA, referring to a Kiev-based university, the Interregional Academy of Personnel Management, or MAUP, whose leadership has a long history of anti-Semitism.

Magazine shuts down after controversy

An economics magazine will be shut down after running an anti-Semitic article.

The promise to shut down Global Agenda was made in a Feb. 3 letter from the head of the World Economic Forum, Professor Klaus Schwab, to the head of the American Jewish Committee, David Harris.

Schwab said the article, which called for an international boycott of Israel, was "inflammatory and venomous."

It will be replaced in the reprinted Global Agenda with an editorial by Schwab about the values of the forum. He added that it will be the last issue of the magazine.

Anti-Semitic leaflets found in France

Anti-Semitic leaflets were found in a French city. More than 100 leaflets were apparently distributed late last month in the city of Caen, in front of the town's synagogue.

The distribution was timed to coincide with the 61st anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

The leaflets were printed on both sides with Nazi symbols.

Local authorities said that they are not ruling out the possibility that the tracts were brought in from outside the region.

NORTH AMERICA

Leading feminist dies at 85

Betty Friedan, whose book "The Feminine Mystique" launched the feminist revolution in the United States, died Saturday at 85.

Friedan died of congestive heart failure in Washington. In "The Feminine Mystique," Friedan used her own experiences as a wife and mother to critique the role of women in U.S. society.

In 1966, Friedan helped found the National Organization for Women, which helped launch feminism.

She was born Bettye Naomi Goldstein in Peoria, Ill.

Court fines pie-thrower

A U.S. court fined a man who threw a pie at Natan Sharansky.

Abe Greenhouse was fined \$200 last week for the September 2003 protest at Rutgers University and ordered to pay another \$155 in court costs.

Sharansky, then an Israeli Cabinet minister, was speaking at the university. His security guards broke Greenhouse's nose, court records said.