

**IN THE NEWS**
**House passes anti-terrorism bill**

The U.S. House of Representatives overwhelmingly approved a bill that would cut off the Palestinian Authority and restrict humanitarian assistance. The House approved the Palestinian Anti-Terrorism Act on Tuesday by a vote of 361-37.

The bill, initiated by Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-Fla.), cuts off the Palestinian Authority and restricting assistance through non-governmental organizations. The bill cites the Hamas government's refusal to renounce terrorism and recognize Israel.

The bill split the pro-Israel community. The American Israel Public Affairs Committee welcomed its passage.

**Rice says anti-Semitism alive**

Anti-Semitism is a "current event," Condoleezza Rice said. The U.S. secretary of state spoke Monday at the swearing-in of her senior anti-Semitism adviser, Gregg Rickman.

"More than six decades after the Holocaust, anti-Semitism is not just an historical fact," Rice said.

**Israel captures Hamas mastermind**

Israel arrested a Hamas fugitive accused of masterminding several major suicide bombings. Sheik Ibrahim Hamed was arrested Tuesday in the West Bank city of Ramallah, ending an eight-year search.

Hamed, 41, is believed to have helped plan Hamas suicide bombings and other terrorist attacks that killed scores of Israelis, including a 2002 attack at the Moment cafe in Jerusalem and the 2002 bombing at a Hebrew University cafeteria.

**Reminder:**  
The JTA World Report  
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# WORLD REPORT

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Eric Draper/White House

President Bush shakes hands with Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert during their meeting May 23 in the Oval Office.

## Olmert and Bush meet in middle, agree unilateral moves second best

By RON KAMPEAS

**W**ASHINGTON (JTA) — One quality President Bush was looking for in Ehud Olmert during their marathon meeting this week was how well Israel's new leader is able to stop, breathe and listen.

Bush administration officials, while clearly focused on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, want to slow down a process that seems to be careening out of control, both in the region and in the halls of Congress.

Taking a break from their five-hour session to address reporters Tuesday, the leaders appeared to have come to an accommodation.

Olmert said he would delay his march toward a unilateral withdrawal from parts of the West Bank, something the Israeli prime minister had said earlier was all but inevitable because he did not see a credible Palestinian peace partner.

**NEWS ANALYSIS**

"I intend to exhaust every possibility to promote peace with the Palestinians according to the road map, and I extend my hand in peace to Mahmoud Abbas, the elected president of the Palestinian Authority," Olmert said, referring to the peace plan backed by the United States. "I hope he will take the necessary steps, which he committed to, in order to move forward."

For his part, Bush warmly endorsed the possibility of unilateral action, as long as Olmert exhausted all other options.

"I would call them bold ideas," Bush said, referring to the unilateral actions Olmert outlined. "These ideas could lead to a two-state solution if a pathway to progress on the road map is not open in the period ahead. His ideas include the removal of most Israeli settlements, except for the major Israeli population centers in the West Bank."

It was the firmest endorsement to date of

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## ■ *Bush backed unilateral action, as long as Olmert exhausts all other options*

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Olmert's plan to go it alone should all else fail.

Emboldened by Bush's endorsement, Olmert said the major settlements "would remain under Israeli control and become part of the state of Israel as part of the final-status agreement." That was the most unequivocal to date statement signaling Olmert's intention to annex the major Jewish settlements.

Bush reiterated his commitment outlined in an April 14, 2004 letter that the United States recognized that some Jewish settlements were realities on the ground and would become part of Israel.

The two men appeared to enjoy each other's company and Bush said the rest of their meeting would be held without advisers — a sign that one goal of the session, to establish a bond, was a resounding success.

"The meeting with Prime Minister Olmert really is, in many ways, a getting-to-know-you session," Tony Snow, Bush's press secretary, said just before Bush and Olmert met.

The two leaders also agreed on the threat posed by Iran's nuclear program. "We're determined that the Iranian regime must not gain nuclear weapons," Bush said. "I told the prime minister what I've stated publicly before: Israel is a close friend and ally of the United States. And in the event of any attack on Israel, the United States will come to Israel's aid." The last time Bush and Olmert met was in 1998, when Bush was the gover-

nor of Texas and Olmert was mayor of Jerusalem.

Olmert said he would meet with Abbas soon, reversing his earlier dismissals of the P.A. president as ineffectual. In a CNN interview Sunday, Olmert said the landslide victory of the Hamas terrorist group in Palestinian Authority elections in January profoundly undercut the authority of Abbas, a relative moderate who leads the rival Fatah Party.

"Mahmoud Abbas was deprived of all his powers," Olmert said Sunday. "He is powerless. He is helpless. He is unable to even stop the minimal terror activities among the Palestinians, so how can he seriously negotiate with Israel and assume responsibility for the most major, fundamental issues that are in controversy between us and them?"

In that view, Olmert has a powerful ally: the U.S. House of Representatives, which voted overwhelmingly Tuesday to cut off aid to the Palestinian Authority. Like Olmert, the House largely ignores Abbas as an alternative.

In fact, the provisions of the bill the House passed, which also severely limit humanitarian aid and restrict the movement of Palestinian officials in the United States, would outlive a Hamas government.

The bill, approved 361-37, split the pro-Israel community in Washington. The American Israel Public Affairs Committee welcomed its passage.

"Today Congress made it clear that Hamas' decision to continue its support for terrorism has direct and immediate

consequences," said AIPAC, which lobbied hard for the bill.

Americans for Peace Now, the Israel Policy Forum and Brit Tzedek v'Shalom

all opposed the bill, saying its restrictions would burden peacemaking. Peace Now said the bill "is an exercise in over-reaching that will undercut American national security needs, Israeli interests and hope for the Palestinian people."

The Bush administration, which believes the Hamas government might

not live out the year, fears the bill would tie its hands in a region the president still hopes to transform before his departure from office.

Bush would rather Congress keep out of the matter. Knowing that's out of the question, however, he has favored a Senate version of the bill that grants him greater leeway in dealing with the Palestinians. The Senate version, with 87 co-sponsors, is guaranteed passage, and will likely prevail in the House-Senate conference.

Olmert has made no secret of his preference for congressional action; he was slated to address both houses on Wednesday in a rare appearance by a foreign leader, and his top diplomats have endorsed the House bill.

Olmert also was due to meet Jewish leaders Wednesday afternoon.

Meanwhile, some of the tensions a further Israeli withdrawal would engender followed Olmert to Washington. About 150 American Jews gathered outside the Capitol on Tuesday to protest any West Bank withdrawal.

**Unilateral action 'could lead to a two-state solution if a pathway to progress on the road map is not open in the period ahead.'**

**President Bush**

## Peretz vows action on outposts

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israel's defense minister pledged a crackdown on illegal settler outposts. Amir Peretz said during a tour of West Bank military facilities Tuesday that "in the very near future" he would order action, as required by the U.S.-led "road map" for peace, against scores of outposts built without govern-

ment authorization. "These settlers give a bad name to those who live in legal communities," Peretz said.

He also voiced outrage over settlers in Hebron believed to have harassed Palestinian children on their way to school, charges that prompted the Israeli army to mount protective patrols.

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# University Jewish studies go secular

By LARRY LUXNER

MIAMI (JTA) — Michael Silver, a Reform Jew from Fort Lauderdale, Fla., and Brandon Greenfield, a Baltimore yeshiva student, might never have met if not for Eugene Rothman's modern Jewish civilization course at the University of Miami.

Both were drawn to the class, but for very different reasons.

"Two winter breaks ago, I went on a birthright Israel trip to look more into my Jewish background," said Silver, a 21-year-old aiming for a career in music engineering.

"I was completely blown away, amazed. When I came back, I started reading books on Judaism and putting Judaism into my regular life. And when I got a chance to take this course, I decided I had some extra time and an easy course load, and would do it, especially since the people I live with are all non-Jewish."

Greenfield, 23, has never been to Israel but has followed Orthodox tradition since he was 16. He attended Ner Israel Rabbinical College in Baltimore for four years, as well as summer school at the University of Miami during that time.

"Jewish schools are really strong in Talmud, whereas other areas like modern Jewish literature or philosophy are rarely taught as part of the curriculum," he said. "Before, during the Middle Ages, everything was under the umbrella of religion. Now, religion is just one of many ways of forming your Jewish identity."

Both Silver and Greenfield graduated this month from the University of Miami, which is one of 25 institutions in the United States and Israel now receiving funding from the Posen Foundation, a non-profit organization based in Switzerland. Under the foundation's Posen Project, each institution receives \$50,000 per year, for up to three years, to teach courses on secular Jewish culture.

Last month, the foundation announced five new recipients for the 2006-2007 academic year: Brown University, Binghamton University, Miami University of Ohio, Rutgers University and the Graduate Theological Union.

"Selections were made on the basis of a strong proposed core course; an understanding of what it means to teach courses in Jewish secularism or secular Jewish

culture; scholarship in this area; and the ability to integrate these courses over time and make them permanent," said Myrna Baron, executive director of the New York-based Center for Cultural Judaism, which administers the grants.

On Saturday, Felix Posen, president of the Posen Foundation, received an honorary doctorate from Tel Aviv University for his support of Jewish culture and education, particularly to the non-observant.

The Posen Foundation is especially interested in exposing students to the *haskalah* — a period of rapid secularization that began in the 18th century and is also known as the Jewish Enlightenment.

"The *haskalah* marked a dramatic change in intellectual Jewish thought and Jewish life," said Baron, "yet students often don't understand its impact unless it is taught as its own discrete subject."

Rothman, formerly a Jewish studies professor at Carleton University in Canada, says today's universities need to get away from the traditional categories by which courses are organized.

"You have the classics, history, philosophy and world religions, and Judaism comes under the heading of world religions. Therefore, it's taught in a narrow form in which only the religious experience of the Jews is their central defining experience — even though it's a total civilization

and culture," Rothman said.

"Judaism used to be taught only in the religion department," he told JTA. "But the university is now catching up with what's going on in the street. Jews are expressing themselves Jewishly, in ways other than what's happening in the synagogue. Another reason is that there's a breaking down within the university of the old disciplinary boundaries. The buzzword now is multidisciplinary."

The Posen Project began five years ago, and is expected to reach 50 universities over the next few years.

Officials at the University of Virginia, which joined the project in 2005, say their institution has already seen benefits in and out of the classroom.

"The Posen courses and guest lectures have more than enriched our curriculum at

UVa. They have expanded the awareness of our community of learners to include cultural Judaism as a vibrant and diverse heritage, a body of knowledge that is a vital pillar of Jewish Studies," said Vanessa Ochs, the University of

Virginia's Ida and Nathan Kolodiz Director of Jewish Studies.

"The Posen Foundation thinks it's very important to study this phenomenon of a Jew who is basically secular, and teach people," said Haim Shaked, director of Miami's Sue and Leonard Miller Center for Contemporary Judaic Studies. "There is not sufficient education about Judaism for Jewish students who do not consider themselves religious."

## FOCUS ON ISSUES

'Jewish schools are really strong in Talmud, whereas other areas like modern Jewish literature or philosophy are rarely taught as part of the curriculum.'

Brandon Greenfield  
Student, University of Miami

## Pioneering female rabbi retiring

TINTON FALLS, N.J. (JTA) — The first woman ordained as a rabbi in the United States is retiring. Sally Priesand will give up her post next month at Monmouth Reform Temple in New Jersey and become rabbi emerita. Priesand was ordained by the Reform movement's seminary, the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Re-

ligion, in 1972. "I didn't follow this course to become a pioneer or to champion women's rights," she recently told the New Jersey Jewish News.

"I simply wanted to be a teacher of Judaism. That was my motivation." Priesand has survived three bouts of cancer.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### NORTH AMERICA

#### Congressman: UNRWA amendment planned

A U.S. congressman plans to introduce an amendment that would condition U.S. funding of UNRWA on an independent audit. Rep. Mark Kirk (R-Ill.), a member of the U.S. House of Representatives' foreign operations subcommittee, wants to attach the amendment to the foreign operations bill due for consideration in coming weeks, his office said.

Kirk withheld the amendment last Friday, when the subcommittee referred the bill to the full Appropriations Committee, offering instead a statement of his concerns.

Kirk says the U.N. Relief and Works Agency, the main body responsible for Palestinian refugees, is overstuffed, has not had an independent audit in years and does not rigorously seek to ensure that staff members don't affiliate with terrorist groups.

UNRWA says an independent audit by the South African government's comptroller is near completion and claims that any staffers must quit before joining political groups. Israel does not want UNRWA touched for now.

#### Alleged AIPAC informant promoted

The Bush administration promoted David Satterfield, an alleged informant for a former AIPAC lobbyist facing trial in a classified information case.

The State Department last week announced Satterfield's promotion to senior adviser on Iraq to Condoleezza Rice, the secretary of state. Satterfield was promoted from deputy ambassador to Baghdad. Satterfield is cited in the indictment against Steve Rosen, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee's former foreign policy director, and Keith Weissman, its former Iran analyst, as one of three government officials who shared information with Rosen.

#### Interfaith petition against gay union amendment

A coalition including Jewish groups joined to oppose a U.S. amendment banning same-sex unions. Clergy for Fairness, which includes the Anti-Defamation League, the Union for Reform Judaism and the National Council of Jewish Women, as well as representatives of other religions, announced a petition that has already gathered 1,600 signatures and postcards and will be sent to members of Congress.

The amendment passed the Senate Judiciary Committee last week, and will go to the full Senate on June 5.

#### Lloyd Bentsen dead at 85

Former U.S. vice-presidential candidate Lloyd Bentsen, a strong supporter of Israel, died Tuesday at 85. Bentsen, a Democrat, had close ties with the Texas Jewish community during his years as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives from 1949-1955 and as a senator from 1971-1993, when he became President Clinton's first treasury secretary.

He helped integrate Jews into the exclusive River Oaks Country Club in Houston and was behind the first appointment of a Jewish judge, Norman Black, to the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals during the Carter administration. In his retirement, he was a supporter of the Holocaust Museum Houston. Bentsen bucked Reagan administration pressure in 1981 when he voted against the sale of AWACS spy planes to Saudi Arabia, which Israel opposed.

#### Jerusalem resolution in Congress

A resolution commemorating 39 years of Jerusalem's reunification has been introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives. The non-binding resolution introduced by Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen

(R-Fla.) and Rep. Shelley Berkley (D-Nev.) is due to be considered this week by the House International Relations Committee.

The resolution has garnered more than 20 co-sponsors since its introduction Monday night, through lobbying by the Orthodox Union.

#### Toronto federation gets \$50 million

A Toronto family gave \$50 million in stock donations to the city's Jewish federation.

The Jewish Foundation of Greater Toronto, the endowment arm of UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, is now closing in on \$200 million now that it has received the Larry and Judy Tanenbaum Family Endowment Fund.

### MIDDLE EAST

#### Amnesty cites P.A., Israel for 'impunity'

Killings diminished in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, Amnesty International said in its annual report.

Amnesty said 190 Palestinians, including around 50 children, were killed by Israeli forces, and 50 Israelis, including six children, were killed by Palestinian armed groups.

That was a drop, Amnesty said, but it cited both Israel and the Palestinian Authority for not punishing perpetrators. "Impunity remained widespread as P.A. security forces were unable or unwilling to prevent killings and attacks or to apprehend the perpetrators," the group said.

The report echoed this point in the Israel section: "Israeli soldiers and settlers responsible for unlawful killings and other abuses against Palestinians and their property generally had impunity."

#### Egypt: Palestinians helped in Sinai bombings

Palestinians helped fund and train members of an Egyptian terrorist group allegedly behind terrorist attacks in the Sinai Desert, Egypt said.

The statement released by Egypt's Interior Ministry on Tuesday marked the first time that Egypt has linked the Sinai bombings to Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip.

### WORLD

#### U.N. envoy highlights Sudan instability

A U.N. official told B'nai B'rith leaders that the situation in Darfur remains "extremely precarious."

Juan Mendez, the United Nations' special adviser on genocide prevention, called Tuesday for a "reinforced African Union presence for the next six months" and, after that an international force "at least twice as big as what's there now."

The briefing was part of a two-day B'nai B'rith advocacy and education campaign at the United Nations. Government-backed militias in Sudan have massacred hundreds of thousands of civilians, launching a refugee crisis in the Darfur region.

#### China firm on Hamas visit

China voiced hope that by hosting a Hamas official it would not jeopardize ties with Israel.

The Palestinian Authority's foreign minister, Mahmoud Zahar, a senior member of the radical Islamic group, flew Tuesday to Beijing, where he is to attend a Sino-Arab forum. Israel had voiced umbrage over the invitation to China, with which it has good trade relations.

"We value relations with Israel and would like to move forward friendly relations," Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao said.

"It is natural and normal for some countries to have differences on some issues."