

IN THE NEWS
Rockets on Haifa kill 8

Hezbollah rockets killed at least eight people in the Israeli northern city of Haifa.

Most of Sunday's casualties appeared to have been caused by a salvo of mid-range rockets from Lebanon that landed in Haifa's port.

World leaders call for hostages' release

World leaders meeting at the G-8 summit in Russia weighed in on the crisis in the Middle East.

A statement released from the summit Sunday expressed concern about the crisis, "particularly the rising civilian casualties on all sides and the damage to infrastructure."

The statement called on Islamic militant groups to release Israeli hostages believed to be held in Lebanon and the Gaza Strip and to stop shelling Israeli territory.

It also called on Israel to exercise restraint in Lebanon and to withdraw its forces from Gaza.

\$1 million raised for Israeli children

The United Jewish Communities has committed \$1 million toward a Jewish Agency for Israel effort to evacuate children living near fighting in northern Israel.

The effort aims to bring children from Nahariya, Safed and other towns under fire from Hezbollah rockets to attend camping programs in central Israel.

The funds will allow an initial 2,000 children to begin attending agency-run camps this week.

Nearly a dozen North American federations are committing funds to the effort, as are the Jewish Agency, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and Keren Hayesod-United Israel Appeal.

The Jewish National Fund has launched a similar drive to bring children from the north to its camps.

WORLD REPORT

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Who you gonna call? Crisis comes with U.S. influence in region at low

By RON KAMPEAS

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Israel knows whom to blame for starting the conflict now raging on two fronts. The question is whom to call to stop it.

Iran, the main beneficiary of the violence on Israel's northern border, is remote from the consequences. Khaled Meshaal, the Hamas leader who instigated fighting in Gaza, is safe in Syria. And Syria, Iran and Hamas all are outside the sphere of influence of Israel or its closest ally, the United States.

The likely consequence may be that fighting continues for the foreseeable future.

"This is a major, major escalation," said Daniel Ayalon, Israel's ambassador to Washington, interrupting his own press briefing on July 13 with news that Katyusha rockets had reached Haifa for the first time ever. In response, Israeli planes targeted areas around Beirut. Over the weekend, eight Israeli civilians died in Hezbollah barrages and scores of Lebanese were killed by Israeli strikes.

In both Lebanon and Gaza, the fighting began with Arab raids into Israeli territory, in which some soldiers were killed and others kidnapped.

In both cases, the groups are demanding the release of prisoners, but Israel says it will not negotiate with terrorists.

It was hard to see who could break the impasse. President Bush called on Syria to intervene.

"Syria needs to be held to account," Bush said in Germany, where he was meeting with

Chancellor Angela Merkel. "Syria's housing the militant wing of Hamas. Hezbollah has got an active presence in Syria. The truth of the matter is, if we really want this situation to settle down, the soldiers need to be returned and President Assad needs to show some leadership toward peace."

The problem with such an approach is that Bush cannot make the appeal to Bashar Assad directly, since the United States withdrew its ambassador to Syria last year because of Syria's unwillingness to secure its border with Iraq and expel Palestinian terrorist groups.

That signals a larger problem, said David Mack, a vice president of the Middle East Institute, a Washington think tank, and a deputy assistant secretary of state in the administrations of President Bush's father and of President Clinton.

Mack said the Bush administration's tendency to override regional sensitivities — both in pursuing the Iraq war and in pressing hard for democratization — leaves it vulnerable.

"The United States is increasingly irrelevant," he said. "At our own initiative, we threw away any leverage we have in Syria."

It was left to U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan to dispatch a mediation team to the region. In previous Israel-Lebanon crises, U.S. envoys had taken the lead.

Even with the right incentive, it's not clear how much Syria could do: Its leverage in Lebanon has decreased considerably since it withdrew occupying forces a year ago under international pressure.

The resulting vacuum was ripe for
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NEWS
ANALYSIS

■ *Bush cannot approach Assad, having withdrawn the U.S. ambassador to Syria last year*

Continued from page 1

exploitation by Iran, which is feeling increasingly cornered by the international community's attempts to stop its nuclear program, said Shlomo Aronson, a political science professor at Hebrew University.

"The whole thing coincided with the recent pressure on the Iranian regime with regard to its nuclear program," Aronson said. "The Iranians through Hezbollah are warning that if pressure is being put on them, they can bring the Middle East to an explosion. And they are losing nothing, not paying one iota for their behavior."

World powers had set July 12 as a deadline for Iran to respond to economic and development incentives to open its nuclear program to inspectors, or face the likelihood of sanctions. When the deadline passed, the powers — the United States, Russia, Britain, France, Germany and China — referred Iran to the U.N. Security Council for possible sanctions.

Iran is Hezbollah's principal backer and reportedly helped the terrorist group develop the longer-range rockets that now have reached Haifa, 20 miles from the Lebanese border. Israel also is concerned that Hezbollah will spirit the soldiers away to Iran.

The timing was exquisite from Iran's point of view: Bush is to join other leaders of industrialized nations this weekend in St. Petersburg, Russia, and Iran's nuclear development was on the agenda.

Hezbollah's attack now clouds the issue.

Aronson said he didn't believe Israel would take the conflict to Syria or Iran because it risked an uncontrollable escalation.

Instead, Israel was pounding Lebanon from the sea and air and was believed to be preparing a ground invasion.

Israel's actions were aimed at forcing Lebanon's government, led by Fouad Siniora, to implement U.N. Security Council resolutions requiring it to disarm Hezbollah and exercise control in the southern part of the country.

"Take responsibility as a country," Maj. Gen. Uri Adam, the Israel Defense Forces' northern commander, said in a press conference near the border.

That might not be realistic, given the fragility of Siniora's government and the fact that it includes Hezbollah Cabinet ministers.

Bush, for his part, is invested in the viability of a Lebanese government that can function without Syria.

Whatever Israel does "should not weaken the Siniora government in Lebanon," Bush said. "We're concerned about the fragile democracy in Lebanon."

Democrats in Congress signaled that they would resist pressures on Israel to end its attack.

"Israel has an inherent right to defend itself, and the United States supports our ally," said a joint statement from Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), the U.S. House of Representatives' minority leader, and Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-Md.), the minority whip.

For now, Israel's actions were uniting Lebanese behind Hezbollah, said Bassel Salloukh, an assistant professor of political science at Beirut's Lebanese American University.

"I don't see any pressure in Lebanon to hand over the soldiers," he said. "Even figures like Walid Jumblatt,"

the Druse leader who has called for Hezbollah to disarm, "are coming out and saying we need to close ranks now that there are foreign forces in Lebanon."

Further down the line, though, there may be political repercussions for Hezbollah, Salloukh said.

"Hezbollah has a lot of questions to answer about the timing of the operation," he said, noting the fragility of Siniora's coalition. "In their constituency in Lebanon, they have not lost credibility. With others, it's another story — but Hezbollah may not care." ■

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David Mack

Vice president, Middle East Institute

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Nazi killer to be deported

WASHINGTON (JTA) — The U.S. government moved to deport a Wisconsin man who admitted to a role in a Nazi mass killing in 1943.

Alice Fisher, an assistant attorney general, announced last Friday that the Justice Department and the Department of Homeland Security asked a federal immigration judge in Chicago to deport Josias Kumpf, 81.

A charging document filed with the immigration court asserts that Kumpf served as an armed SS Death's Head guard at Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp in Germany; at the Trawniki SS Labor Camp in Nazi-occupied Poland,

where 8,000 Jewish men, women and children were murdered in a single day in 1943 as part of a mass-murder operation involving 42,000 victims at three camps; and at construction sites in France at which prisoners built launching platforms for Germany's V-1 and V-2 missiles.

Kumpf's role "makes him ineligible for the privilege of living in the United States," Fisher said. "We will remove him as swiftly as the legal process allows."

Earlier this year, the U.S. Court of Appeals unanimously affirmed a district court decision revoking Kumpf's U.S. citizenship. ■

A brief history of Hezbollah

By GIL SEDAN

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Hezbollah's evolution from its creation after Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon to its current role in provoking a major military confrontation underscores how far the group has come and how it continues to be a force with which Israel must contend.

Under the leadership of Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, Hezbollah is one of the strongest

THIS WEEK

MONDAY

- Jewish group rally in New York City in support of Israel.
- Friends of Alan Senitt, the young British Jewish leader murdered last week in Washington, organize an evening memorial service at a Washington synagogue.

TUESDAY

- A resolution expressing solidarity with Israel during the Hezbollah crisis is expected to be considered by the U.S. House of Representatives.
- Sen. Rick Santorum (R-Pa.) hosts a "Jewish Leadership Summit" in Washington for his constituents.
- Rep. Tom Lantos (D-Calif.) hosts a Capitol Hill hearing marking 12 years since the bombing of the AMIA Jewish community center in Buenos Aires.
- Arab-American groups organize a rally outside the White House protesting Israel's strikes against Lebanon.

WEDNESDAY

- Judge T.S. Ellis, a federal judge, announces a new date for the trial of two former AIPAC lobbyists.
- Washington's Jewish Community Relations Council organizes a rally for Israel at Freedom Plaza, three blocks from the White House.
- Christians United for Israel, a new evangelical movement, lobbies Congress in defense of Israel. Organizers expect 3,000 participants.

THURSDAY

- United Jewish Communities and the Jewish Council for Public Affairs organize a "fly-in" for Jewish leaders to discuss Israel's Hezbollah crisis with Bush administration officials, congressional leaders and Israel Embassy staff.

SUNDAY

- Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America, holds its 92nd national convention in Nashville through Wednesday.

and best organized bodies in Lebanon. Nasrallah is both a determined man of religion and a master of psychological warfare.

With 20,000 troops and at least 10,000 rockets trained on northern Israel, Hezbollah remains a potent force in Lebanon — the only remaining private militia in fact, after others were disarmed.

Its popular strength also derives from its civilian arm: It runs hospitals, schools, food-distribution centers, orphanages and a television station, partly thanks to an estimated \$60 million in annual aid from Iran.

When Israel invaded Lebanon in 1982 to rout out Palestinian terrorist activity across its northern border, relations between Israel and Amal, a Shi'ite political and paramilitary organization, were cordial.

Amal represented the weakest strata of Lebanese society, and its interests were served by Israel's weakening of Palestinian power in Lebanon.

But soon the young Nasrallah followed his teacher, Abbas Musawi, out of Amal, and the radical group Hezbollah — the party of God — was formed.

Iran sent a force of some 1,500 Revolutionary Guards to help the new organization, whose main focus was to expel Israeli and Western forces from Lebanon.

As anti-Israeli operations in Lebanon intensified, an Israeli missile struck Musawi's motorcade in 1992 and killed him. It was Iran's spiritual leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, who asked Nasrallah to replace Musawi. Today Iran and Syria are Hezbollah's main patrons, supplying the organization with arms and funds.

Running in June 2005 elections, Hezbollah won 23 seats in Lebanon's 128-member Parliament, and holds the Energy Ministry. Some hoped that political power would moderate the group and compel it to act more responsibly, but there has been little indication of a change in Hezbollah's outlook or behavior.

Hezbollah supports the destruction of Israel and cooperates with other militant Islamic organizations, such as Hamas, to promote this goal.

Hezbollah attacks on the Israel Defense Forces were an important factor in Israel's decision to evacuate its southern Lebanon security zone in May 2000.

At first, Hezbollah also targeted other Western forces in Lebanon, particularly the French and Italian multinational peacekeeping force, whose purpose was to stabilize the country.

Hezbollah was believed to be the driving force behind several attacks on

Western targets: the April 1983 suicide bombing at the U.S. Embassy in Beirut that killed 63 people; the October 1983 attack on the U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut that killed 241 troops; and a simultaneous attack on the French multinational force headquarters that killed 58 French soldiers.

During the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon, Hezbollah fought the IDF and the Israel-backed South Lebanon Army. It refused to disarm itself, in violation of the 1990 accords that ended Lebanon's civil war.

Hezbollah also has ignored U.N. Security Council resolutions ordering that it

disarm.

Hezbollah has continued fighting Israel even after the Israeli withdrawal, inventing a claim to the Shebaa Farms area and demanding that Israel evacuate that area too. Israel has refused, claiming that the farms were territory captured from Syria in the 1967 Six-Day War, not Lebanese territory.

The United Nations backed the Israeli position and rejected Hezbollah's claim, but the group has used the dispute as a pretext to launch Katyusha rockets into Israel and occasionally open fire on soldiers along the border.

Shortly after the withdrawal, Hezbollah killed three Israeli soldiers in a cross-border attack and brought their bodies back to Lebanon. The group later kidnapped Israeli businessman Elhanan Tannenbaum, a colonel in the Israeli army reserves, which led to an exchange of prisoners.

Palestinian terrorist groups have been known to draw inspiration from Hezbollah's success fighting Israel, and Israel says Hezbollah increasingly is involved in training and arming Hamas. ■

BACKGROUNDER

Analysts see increased coordination lately between Hamas and Hezbollah.

NEWS IN BRIEF

MIDDLE EAST

Iran said deep in Lebanon

Iran has 200 of its personnel stationed in Lebanon, a senior Iranian military official was quoted as saying.

The London-based Arabic newspaper Asharq al-Awsat on Sunday quoted an unnamed Iranian military official as saying his country had stationed 200 advisers in Lebanon to help Hezbollah fight Israel.

The official was further quoted as saying that in recent years Iran supplied Hezbollah with 11,000 military-grade missiles.

Scrutiny on Iran's support for its Lebanese proxy has intensified since an Israeli navy ship was attacked off Beirut's coast last Friday. Israel said the missile fired by Hezbollah, which killed four sailors, was Iranian-made. Iran denied involvement.

Tel Aviv residents warned

Tel Aviv was put on rocket alert. Israel's military Homefront Command on Sunday issued an advisory to residents of Tel Aviv to be vigilant for possible sirens warning of incoming rockets.

While Hezbollah's barrages have so far been limited to northern Israel, military officials said the advisory was meant to give residents of Tel Aviv a chance to prepared their bomb shelters should the rocket range extend further south.

Israel believes Hezbollah has rockets capable of reaching as far as Beersheba.

Israeli forces enter northern Gaza

Israeli forces moved back into the northern Gaza Strip early Sunday, clashing with Palestinian gunmen. The Gaza offensive is aimed at recovering a captured soldier and stopping rocket fire into Israeli cities and towns.

Israeli tanks and armored personnel carriers, backed by helicopters with machine guns, moved into farmland near Beit Hanoun, an area often used by militants to launch rockets.

Small groups of militants opened fire at the Israeli forces, but there was no report of casualties.

On Saturday, Israel killed two Palestinians and attacked the Palestinian Authority Finance Ministry.

NORTH AMERICA

Jewish group: Send former presidents

Americans for Peace Now called on President Bush to send his father and President Clinton to the Middle East on a peace-seeking mission.

"President George W. Bush should immediately dispatch a senior presidential envoy or envoys to the Middle East, vested with the authority of the president and empowered to work with parties in the region, the U.N. and relevant world leaders to restore order and renew a political process capable of ending terrorism and violence," Debra DeLee, the group's president, said in a statement.

"For example, former Presidents George Bush and Bill Clinton — who worked together to address a number of crises at home and abroad — could serve in this role."

U.S. gives \$50 million to Palestinians

The United States donated \$50 million for Palestinian humanitarian relief.

David Welch, the top State Department envoy to the region, announced the donation last Friday at a meeting with Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian Authority president.

The U.N. Relief and Works Agency, the organization that administers to Palestinian refugees, will administer the money. The Bush

administration has been looking for ways to get assistance to the Palestinians now that Hamas, a terrorist group, governs the Palestinian Authority.

Senate mandates spending security funds

The U.S. Senate unanimously passed legislation that would release \$25 million in homeland security funds for non-profit groups. The amendment to the Homeland Security Appropriations bill, sponsored by Sen. Arlen Specter (R-Pa.) and Sen. Barbara Mikulski (D-Md.), instructs the Homeland Security Department to disburse \$25 million in 2006 funds by the end of 2007.

The department has not disbursed any funds yet, saying they were reserved for "credible" threats, a standard Jewish groups said was impossible to meet.

The legislation would allow money to be spent on potential threats, and comes a day after Michael Chertoff, the homeland security secretary, told Agudath Israel of America that the policy was a mistake and promised to reverse it.

More than half of the \$25 million set aside in 2005 — the first year funds were allocated to non-profits — went to Jewish organizations, mostly for security measures including barriers and gate systems.

The United Jewish Communities and the Orthodox Union led lobbying for the funds. Mikulski and Specter are also working to include \$25 million in funds in the 2007 budget.

Groups urge stem-cell bill passage

Jewish groups urged the U.S. Senate to pass legislation expanding embryonic stem-cell research.

Hadassah, the Reform Movement and the Orthodox Union wrote separate letters calling on the Senate to approve legislation already passed by the U.S. House of Representatives that would expand federally funded research to include surplus stem cells donated to fertility clinics.

The groups said they backed the legislation because it rejects the use of stem cells culled purely for research. Conservative Christian groups reject any use of embryonic stem cells in research, and another bill circulating in the Senate would shut out any such research.

The Orthodox Union noted in its letter that "Judaism does not accord embryonic cells outside the womb the full status of humankind and its attendant protections." President Bush has threatened to veto the bill.

Gay Jew pays for Jesus campaign

A Jewish businessman is paying for an ad campaign calling for Christian tolerance of gays.

The Metropolitan Community Churches, a largely gay Christian denomination, chose conservative central Indiana for the first of what it says will be a nationwide series of ad campaigns. Billboards read, "Would Jesus discriminate?" Paying for most of the \$100,000 campaign is Mitchell Gold, a furniture designer from North Carolina and gay Jewish activist.

"I've suffered a good amount of discrimination by people holding up their Bible," Gold told The Associated Press in a story published last week.

WORLD

Japan donates \$30 million to Palestinians

Japan announced \$30 million in assistance for the Palestinians.

Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi announced the disbursement in a meeting July 13 with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas in Ramallah.