

IN THE NEWS
**Israeli forces
kill 9 in Gaza**

Israeli forces killed nine Palestinians in the northern Gaza Strip. [See story, Pg. 2]

**Party en route
to Israeli gov't**

The Yisrael Beiteinu Party is on its way to joining Israel's coalition government.

Yisrael Beiteinu leader Avigdor Lieberman and Prime Minister Ehud Olmert agreed on an alliance Monday.

Under the deal, which has yet to be ratified by the Cabinet, Lieberman will be made minister of strategic affairs, a new portfolio dealing primarily with the Iranian nuclear threat. [See story, Pg. 2]

**Jewish groups among
top philanthropies**

U.S. Jewish groups are well-represented in The Chronicle of Philanthropy's annual list of the 400 largest charities.

The list in the publication's Oct. 26 issue, which named the 400 U.S. charities that took in the most money from private donors in 2005, included 23 Jewish charities, down from 26 in 2004.

The United Jewish Communities, the umbrella group for North America's 155 federations, took in \$333,824,000 and was the highest-ranked Jewish group at No. 34.

The United Jewish Communities of Metro-West in New Jersey was the last organization named on the list.

The Jewish Communal Fund moved up the list to No. 54, after increasing its intake by 49 percent since the previous year, to \$203,330,851, according to the chronicle.

The Jewish National Fund made the list for the first time, coming in at No. 359.

Three federations, Baltimore, Philadelphia and Washington, and the San Diego-based Jewish Community Foundation, dropped off the list.

WORLD REPORT

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U.S. Jews skeptical of Arabs, trust Israel on Iran, survey shows

By BEN HARRIS

NEW YORK (JTA) — American Jews are less supportive of a U.S. military strike on Iran than they were a year ago, but they remain overwhelmingly convinced that the Arabs want to destroy the State of Israel.

Those observations emerge from the American Jewish Committee's annual survey of U.S. Jewish opinion, which was released Monday.

Thirty-eight percent of respondents say they support U.S. military action to prevent Iran from getting nuclear weapons, down from 49 percent last year. However, 57 percent support an Israeli strike against the Islamic republic.

David Harris, the AJCommittee's executive director, says he was "struck" by that finding.

"What it means is that a majority of people are prepared to support military action, but by one country and not another country," Harris said. The discrepancy may be explained by an overall lack of Jewish confidence in the Bush administration, he speculated.

The discrepancy on Iran isn't the only divergence in American Jewish opinion on the Middle East. While 81 percent agreed that the Arabs' goal remains the destruction of Israel — and only 38 percent said they believed Israel and the Arabs ultimately would be able to live in peace — a majority of American Jews supports the creation of a Palestinian state.

On this summer's Lebanon conflict, 55 percent approved of Israel's handling of the war, while less than a quarter believed the Jewish state had emerged the winner. Forty-six percent believed the conflict likely would lead to a wider regional war.

The survey, conducted annually since 1997, also found little change in American Jewish political affiliation, with 54 percent of American Jews identifying themselves as Democrats and 29 percent as independents, unchanged from last year.

Jewish Republicans declined slightly, from 16 percent to 15 percent.

Asked which party is more likely to take appropriate action on the war in Iraq, the economy and the war on terrorism, roughly a quarter chose the Republicans, while more than half said Democrats.

Jewish affinity for the Democrats remained strong despite two polls this summer indicating a significant partisan gap in support for Israel and a slew of Republican advertisements through the fall seeking to capitalize on them.

A Los Angeles Times/Bloomberg poll found that while a majority of Americans preferred alignment with Israel to neutrality on the Arab-Israeli conflict, the proportion supporting Israel was much higher among Republicans at 64 percent than among Democrats at 39 percent.

An NBC/Wall Street Journal poll around the same time found an even more sizeable gap: Eighty-four percent of Republicans said their sympathies lay more with Israel than with the Arabs, compared to 43 percent of Democrats.

David Goldenberg, deputy executive director of the National Jewish Democratic Council, says that those polls are misleading and that the AJCommittee survey confirms it.

What the survey "shows is Jewish voters understand that there is little difference, if

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**BEHIND
THE
HEADLINES**

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any, on Israel," Goldenberg said. "But on every other issue that matters to Jewish voters, they just don't feel comfortable in the Republican Party."

Matthew Brooks, executive director of the Republican Jewish Coalition, warns against placing too much stock in the AJ-Committee poll, noting that Jewish support for Republicans is on the rise. Bush commanded 19 percent of the Jewish vote in 2000, rising to 22 percent in 2004.

"You can't use the AJC poll as a predicting model for how people vote," Brooks said. "The only thing that matters is what happens on election day. That's the only poll that matters."

Harris contends that Jewish voters are willing to let other issues determine their vote, provided they believe both parties are "rock solid" in their support for Israel.

"American Jews, as we have learned, are multi-issue voters," he says.

The survey also reports a slight rise in the percentage of American Jews who said being Jewish is important in their lives, to 61 percent from 55 percent last year, while 74 percent said caring about Israel is a very important part of being a Jew.

Only 26 percent said they think anti-Semitism in the United States is a very serious problem, while 81 percent said achieving energy independence is very important.

The survey of 958 American Jews was conducted Sept. 25-Oct. 16 for the AJCommittee. The margin of error was plus or minus 3 percentage points. ■

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Israel grows impatient on Gaza

By DAN BARON

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israel's patience with the growing menace from the Gaza Strip appears to be wearing thin.

Government and military officials spoke openly Sunday of the need to move fast to stop Palestinian terrorists from turning the coastal territory into a "second Lebanon" threatening southern Israel.

At the heart of the concerns is the so-called Philadelphi route, Gaza's seven-mile-long southern border which, since Israel's withdrawal of soldiers and settlers last year, has seen unbridled arms smuggling from neighboring Egypt.

"When we left the Philadelphi route, I said that abandoning it was to open the gates of hell. We might have to find a way to retake it," Industry and Trade Minister Eli Yishai said Sunday before the weekly Cabinet meeting.

The call was echoed by at least two other ministers. Already, Israeli forces are carrying out pinpoint missions at the border to uncover and destroy underground tunnels that provide the main conduit for Egyptian contraband.

In the southern Gaza town of Rafah, soldiers killed two gunmen Monday who tried to attack Israeli forces working to uncover arms-smuggling tunnels.

Israeli forces also killed at least seven Palestinians in the northern Gaza city of Beit Hanoun. Military sources said the fatalities were members of a Popular Resistance Committees rocket crew that was ambushed by commandos.

However, there is more at stake than the regular rocket barrages by Palestinian terrorists or the fate of an Israeli soldier, Cpl. Gilad Shalit, abducted to Gaza on June 25 in a cross-border raid.

Still recovering from the Lebanon war, Israel wants to stop Hamas and other Palestinian factions from adopting Hezbollah's methods and turning Gaza into a second front against the Jewish state.

"We should prevent Hamas from replicating what happened with Hezbollah in Lebanon. This would have to take place in

the coming days or weeks," said Yom-Tov Samia, a retired Israeli major general who was called up for emergency reserve duty as deputy chief of military forces around Gaza.

Also of concern is Hamas' threat of further kidnappings. P.A. Foreign Minister Mahmoud Zahar told protesters in Gaza over the weekend, "We will abduct more soldiers if Israel does not release Palestinian prisoners."

Samia called for Israel to retake the Philadelphi route and massively expand its buffer zone to enable a large-scale tunnel hunt. This almost certainly would entail razing Palestinian homes en masse along the frontier.

"There is no other way to control Philadelphi," Samia told Army Radio. "We must simply go in there and stay there until peace and quiet reign for 25 straight years."

It's unclear whether Prime Minister Ehud Olmert is in a position to order such sweeping moves. Israelis remember Olmert as the most vocal champion of the

Gaza withdrawal, which was masterminded by his predecessor, Ariel Sharon.

Since the Lebanon war, however, Olmert has made no secret of having to revise his diplomatic vision. With right-wing parties such as Yisrael Beiteinu expected to join the coalition government, the prime minister may have an extra incentive to crack down in Gaza.

An alliance with Yisrael Beiteinu was formalized Monday and the Cabinet will vote on it Wednesday. Lieberman would become minister of strategic affairs, a new portfolio dealing primarily with the Iranian nuclear threat.

Political sources said Olmert likely would convene his Security Cabinet Tuesday or Wednesday to decide about a major Philadelphi operation. But few expect Olmert to initiate such an operation before his trip next month to the United States. Then again, the timing may be hijacked by the Palestinians.

"The decision to embark on an operation will be made in Israel an hour after a Kassam kills two small children in Sderot," Nahum Barnea wrote in Yediot Achronot. ■

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Nahum Barnea

Analyst, Yediot Achronot

Olmert visit to Russia highlights Iran differences

By LEV KRICHEVSKY

MOSCOW (JTA) — Russia and Israel may be on better footing than they were in decades past, but differences between them over Iran's nuclear program still surfaced during Ehud Olmert's visit to Moscow.

Israel has made it clear that it will not tolerate a situation in which Iran gains nuclear weapons, and the Israeli prime minister used talks with President Vladimir Putin last week to urge Moscow to exert its influence to help resolve the international crisis surrounding Tehran's nuclear program.

"I leave this meeting with the sense that President Putin understands better than before the danger that is lurking from Iran's direction, should it succeed in realizing its objectives of arming itself with nuclear weapons," Olmert told journalists Oct. 18 after his talks with Putin and Russian Defense Minister Sergey Ivanov.

Putin did not address Israeli concerns directly, focusing instead on Russia's role in the Middle East peace process. Russia is a member of the diplomatic grouping known as the Quartet — which also includes the United States, United Nations and European Union — trying to revive Israeli-Palestinian peace talks.

Putin's comments dealt mainly with Israel's standoff with Hezbollah, and in fact gave little hope that Moscow would do more to persuade Iran to give up its suspected drive to produce nuclear arms.

"The only way to get out of the vicious circle of violence is to stop making mutual accusations, free hostages and resume peaceful dialogue," Putin said. "Russia, as a member of the Middle East Quartet, intends to assist in a rapid stabilization of the situation and a resumption of the negotiating process."

Olmert's visit to Russia was his first foreign trip since Israel's war against Hezbollah this summer, and came after Israel complained to Russia that weapons Russia supplied to Syria ended up in Hezbollah hands — just as Israel had warned when the deals were struck.

Olmert's visit also came a week before the U.N. Security Council again takes up the Iranian nuclear issue. A draft resolution containing possible sanctions on Tehran is circulating among Security Council

members, which include the United States and Russia, this week.

Russia has been instrumental in constructing Iran's first civilian nuclear power station at Bushehr and has long resisted a push for U.N. sanctions against the Islamic Republic, arguing that sanctions could provoke a regional crisis.

Moscow also supplies Iran with sophisticated conventional weapons. In addition, Russia has sizeable economic interests in Iran in other spheres aside from military, so any international sanctions could hurt Russian companies working there.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov's comments on Iran probably disappointed the Israeli delegation. Lavrov appeared to say that Iran's nuclear program is not a threat to peace and security in the region.

"It is necessary to act on Iran, but that action should be in direct proportion to what is really happening," the RIA-Novosti Russian news agency quoted Lavrov as saying. "And what is really happening is what the" International Atomic Energy Agency "reports to us. And the IAEA is not reporting to us about the presence there of a threat to peace and security."

Still, Russian leaders tried to convince the Israelis of their friendship. Olmert's visit coincided with the 15th anniversary of Israel's re-establishment of diplomatic ties with Russia after the breakup of the Soviet Union. Putin said Israel-Russia ties had been "completely transformed" in re-

NEWS ANALYSIS

'The only way to get out of the vicious circle of violence is to stop making mutual accusations, free hostages and resume peaceful dialogue.'

Vladimir Putin
Russian president

differences.

Israel understands that Russia "has an independent policy in the region," he told reporters in Moscow. "Of course we are not always satisfied with this policy. We have our differences. I have said this openly to President Putin."

During an Oct. 19 meeting with members of the Moscow

Jewish community, Olmert said he has a positive feeling about Russian-Israeli relations.

"At the meeting with the Russian president, I felt his friendly attitude toward Israel, and I'm convinced that our relations and his commitment to Israel's security are absolutely firm," Olmert said. "Our cooperation is developing in different fields and it influences all spheres of our life — political, economical, scientific, technological, cultural and sports."

(JTA correspondent Naomi Zubkova in Moscow contributed to this report.)

Prague terrorist threat confirmed

PRAGUE (JTA) — Prague Mayor Pavel Bem confirmed the rumors that anti-terrorist measures taken there starting Sept. 23 were a reaction to a specific threat to Jewish sites.

The Czech capital went on alert at the start of the High Holidays with a greatly bolstered police presence, but the govern-

ment refused to specify the nature of the threat.

Several Czech media outlets reported that intelligence officers had thwarted a plot by Islamic extremists to hold Jews hostage, then kill them and blow up a synagogue. Meanwhile, the security alert was downgraded at the start of this week.

NEWS IN BRIEF

MIDDLE EAST

Phosphorous bombs used in Lebanon war

Israel confirmed that it used white phosphorous bombs during the Lebanon war. Ha'aretz this week quoted Cabinet minister Jacob Edery as telling a lawmaker that Israeli forces fired an unspecified number of white phosphorous shells at Hezbollah targets during the war.

Security sources confirmed the statement for JTA. The material is designed to wipe out enemy emplacements by causing severe burns. Israel says it abided by international law, which bans its use against civilian targets.

Olmert: Israel preparing for Iran threat

Israeli forces are preparing to deal with the Iranian nuclear threat, Ehud Olmert said. Ma'ariv quoted the Israeli prime minister as saying late Sunday that the lessons of the Lebanon war were being learned and that the armed forces were preparing for future security challenges.

"Our soldiers will be trained to counter the threats facing Israel, first and foremost the Iranian threat, and we have already begun with that task," Olmert was quoted as telling a gathering of Kadima Party activists.

Israel has voiced support for U.S.-led efforts to curb Iran's nuclear program through the threat of U.N. Security Council sanctions, but has not ruled out pre-emptive military action.

In 1981, Israeli warplanes bombed Iraq's main atomic reactor, dealing a serious blow to Saddam Hussein's quest for the bomb.

Rabin assassin wins conjugal visit

Yitzhak Rabin's jailed assassin, Yigal Amir, won the right to a conjugal visit.

Amir, who is serving a life prison sentence in isolation for shooting the Israeli prime minister at a 1995 rally in Tel Aviv, is expected to hold his first private meeting with Larissa Trimbobler, a woman he married by proxy, on Tuesday.

The move comes after the Shin Bet security service dropped its long-held objections to Amir and Trimbobler spending time together away from prison cameras or guards.

Olmert denounces West's reception of Iran

Ehud Olmert deplored the fact that Western nations do not shun Iran's leadership.

"It is unconscionable that the leader of a member state of the United Nations, who calls for the destruction of another member state, continues to be accepted by the world as a legitimate leader," the Israeli prime minister said Monday at a Tel Aviv conference.

He was referring to Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's calls for the Jewish state to be "wiped off the map." Olmert likened the threat posed by Iran's atomic ambitions to that of the nascent Nazi Germany. "We must not make the mistake of 60 years ago, by ignoring the threats made by national leaders," he said.

NORTH AMERICA

Top Dems slam Carter book

Top Democrats repudiated former President Carter's new book on the Middle East.

Howard Dean, the party chairman; Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), the minority leader in the U.S. House of Representatives; and a number of Democrats in Congress issued statements Monday saying that "Palestine: Peace not Apartheid" did not represent their views. According to advance publicity, the book argues that Israel's settle-

ment policy is principally to blame for the failure of peace initiatives in the Middle East.

"While I have tremendous respect for former President Carter, I fundamentally disagree and do not support his analysis of Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict," Dean said.

Pelosi said Carter is "wrong to suggest that the Jewish people would support a government in Israel or anywhere else that institutionalizes ethnically based oppression, and Democrats reject that allegation vigorously."

Religious rights claimed in Calif. synagogue battle

A northern California synagogue claims its religious rights are being violated as neighbors seek to block its expansion plans.

Congregation Kol Shofar, an 1,800-member congregation in Tiburon north of San Francisco, wants to add two wings to its existing structure for weddings and bar and bat mitzvahs.

Hundreds of neighbors signed petitions objecting to the expansion, and the town planning commission denied the permit.

The synagogue has turned to the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, a national foundation that fights for religious freedom.

Rabbi Lavey Derby told the San Francisco Chronicle that he doesn't believe anti-Semitism is involved, but that not allowing the synagogue to expand will restrict its right to exercise its religion.

The Tiburon Town Council will make its decision Nov. 15.

WORLD

Jewish-owned gallery in Moscow stormed

Russian ultranationalists stormed a Jewish-owned Moscow art gallery. An exhibition of paintings by ethnic Georgian artists was destroyed and the gallery owner injured in Saturday's incident.

The attack on Marat Gelman's gallery took place amid a Russian government crackdown on Georgians living in Russia following a spy dispute with the Caucasus republic.

Gelman, a leading arts expert and political consultant, said about 10 men wearing heavy boots and knit caps burst into the gallery around noon Saturday, put gallery employees against the wall, smashed the artworks and beat him up.

Neo-Nazis arrested in Germany

German police arrested 16 neo-Nazis at a rally in Berlin. Sunday's arrests were made during a rally supporting Michael Regener, leader of the banned skinhead rock group Landser, or Foot Soldiers.

The demonstration was organized by the far-right National Democratic Party, which recently won representation in a second regional Parliament.

Poland installs liberal rabbi

Poland installed its first liberal rabbi since World War II. Uri Regev, head of the worldwide Progressive movement, as Reform Judaism is known in Europe, installed Burt Schuman, 58, as the rabbi of Warsaw's Beit Warszawa congregation at a special Shabbat service over the weekend.

Schuman, a New York native, formerly served as rabbi for a congregation in Altoona, Pa.

London Shabbat boundary is up

Britain's second official Shabbat boundary was erected.

The four-mile perimeter eruv in northwest London will allow Sabbath-observant residents to push baby carriages, wheelchairs and carry items on Shabbat.

An estimated 3,000 Shabbat-observant families live within the Edgware eruv's boundaries.