

Genocide measure losing support

(JTA) -- Nearly a dozen U.S. lawmakers have turned against a congressional resolution recognizing the Armenian genocide. The resolution on the World War I-era massacres of Armenians, which until Tuesday had seemed certain to pass, is now very much in doubt, The New York Times reported.

In explaining their shift, some legislators acknowledged that concern for U.S. objectives in the Middle East could be compromised by the resolution. The Turkish government has spent millions lobbying to defeat the measure.

The shift was prompted in part over reports that Turkey's Parliament is considering authorizing incursions into Kurdish areas of northern Iraq to attack separatists of the Kurdish Workers Party, or PKK. The rebels have been fighting for more than two decades for autonomy in Turkey's Kurdish-dominated southeast. The United States opposes Turkish incursions, but Syrian President Bashar Assad told reporters Wednesday that Turkey has every right to act against the separatists, according to The Associated Press.

Olmert, Putin to discuss Iran

(JTA) -- Ehud Olmert will travel to Russia this week for top-level talks about Iran's nuclear program. The Israeli prime minister was scheduled to make a one-day visit to Moscow on Thursday at the

behest of Russian President Vladimir Putin, himself freshly returned from a summit with his Iranian counterpart Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Putin has called for a diplomatic solution to the standoff over Iran's nuclear program and made clear he would oppose any preemptive military action by Israel or the United States. Israeli political sources said Wednesday that Olmert would reiterate Israel's concerns to the Russian president, as well as ask that Moscow scale back its defense ties with Iran and Syria.

Israel, U.S. discuss missile defense

(JTA) -- Israel and the United States agreed to boost cooperation on missile-defense projects. U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates hosted his Israeli counterpart, Ehud Barak, at the Pentagon on Tuesday for talks on a range of bilateral issues, including joint plans for an integrated system to fend off the various missile threats to the Jewish state. The sides agreed to step up work on David's Sling, a system designed to shoot down rockets of the kind used by Hezbollah guerrillas in Lebanon.

Israel is separately developing another system, Iron Dome, for dealing with shorter-range Palestinian rockets. Israel and the United States also plan to upgrade Arrow, Israel's ballistic interception system, so it might more effectively intercept any future salvo of Iranian long-range Shehab missiles or Syrian Scuds.

Barak has said Israel should ensure it has a full missile defense apparatus in place before making any major territorial concessions to the Palestinians in the West Bank.

Rice meets Mubarak in Egypt

(JTA) -- Condoleezza Rice met with Egypt's president to secure his support for Middle East peace talks. Rice traveled to Cairo Tuesday for her meeting with President Hosni Mubarak, who in the past has been involved in mediation attempts between Israel and the Palestinians. Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Ghelt accused Israel of trying to sabotage the peace effort and suggested the planned November peace conference be postponed.

Olmert: Jerusalem not on table

(JTA) -- Prime Minister Ehud Olmert promised Orthodox Jewish leaders that Jerusalem was not up for discussion in forthcoming negotiations with the Palestinians. In response to a letter from the Orthodox Union insisting that Olmert not cede portions of Jerusalem to the Palestinian Authority, Rachael Risby-Raz, Olmert's Diaspora affairs adviser, said the prime minister would keep the city united.

The Orthodox Union wrote to Olmert following a speech Oct. 15 in which he appeared to consider ceding parts of the city to the Palestinians.

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