

NEWS AT A GLANCE

■ **Ninety-three senators called on the Clinton administration to begin plans for moving the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.** In a letter sent to Secretary of State Warren Christopher, the senators said, "Jerusalem is and shall remain the undivided capital of Israel."

■ **Demonstrators protested the government's ongoing negotiations with the Palestinians as thousands of Israelis attended the funerals of the two Israelis who were killed in a terror attack near the West Bank town of Hebron.** Government officials pledged to continue the peace process. In Washington, President Clinton extended his sympathies to the victims' families. [Page 2]

■ **Three Jewish protesters, wearing skullcaps and bearing placards reading "Buchanan Is a Racist," disrupted a Manchester, N.H., rally where Patrick Buchanan launched his bid for the presidency.** Buchanan dismissed the interruption as an example of "what we're fighting against." [Page 4]

■ **The Senate voted to forgive all of Jordan's remaining debt to the United States by the end of the 1996 fiscal year.** The move represented a victory for pro-Israel activists, many of whom were disappointed when the House of Representatives, in a budget-cutting measure last week, approved only \$50 million in relief for Jordan. [Page 4]

■ **Israeli police blew up an explosive-laden truck near Beersheba after a skirmish with its three Palestinian occupants.** Two Israeli policemen and one Palestinian were reportedly injured. The two other Palestinians escaped.

■ **Heavy fighting was reported in the southern Lebanon security zone, as Iranian-backed Hezbollah fighters fired rocket-propelled grenades at an Israeli army patrol.** There were no reports of injuries. In response, troops from the Israel Defense Force and the South Lebanon Army shelled a mountainous region used by Hezbollah to launch attacks on the security zone. Israeli helicopters also bombarded infiltration routes used by the gunmen to enter the security zone.

NEWS ANALYSIS**Moving toward separation: Rabin weighs plan's details**

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, March 20 (JTA) — This week's terrorist attack near Hebron occurred just as the Israeli government began seriously considering whether to go ahead with plans for an elaborate system for separating Israel from the West Bank.

The prime minister heard a favorable report on the plan at the end of last week from a team of defense and security experts led by Police Minister Moshe Shahal.

This week, Rabin was expected to hear a less enthusiastic assessment from a separate team he commissioned to study the economic aspects of the proposed separation.

Despite the conflicting reports, political observers believe that Rabin and the majority of the Cabinet are close to approving the separation concept.

Rabin had ordered an examination of the separation idea in the wake of a series of terror attacks inside Israel, which culminated in the double suicide bombing near Netanya on Jan. 22 that claimed the lives of 21 Israelis.

With the killing of two Israelis on Sunday in an ambush by Palestinian gunmen on a bus full of settlers near the West Bank town of Hebron, proponents of the separation idea are likely to gain new backing for the proposal.

Those observers who believe Rabin is close to accepting the idea of physical separation point to a controversial statement by Environment Minister Yossi Sarid, who asserted over the weekend that a Palestinian state would effectively come into being within months.

Sarid's remarks on Israel Television were seen as evidence that the Cabinet is indeed moving toward implementing the separation idea.

Sarid, a prominent member of the dovish Meretz bloc, said Palestinian statehood would evolve in practice, though not as a result of political agreements, after elections for the self-governing Palestinian Authority.

Sarid predicted that those elections would be held throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip within months.

Separation line may be prelude to Palestinian state

Israeli and Palestinian negotiators are now hammering out an agreement on terms for those elections, which, along with a redeployment of Israel Defense Force troops, would comprise the next stage of self-rule.

Sarid did not directly link his statehood prediction to the proposed separation plan, but he termed the plan "a positive development that will favorably affect relations between Israel and the Palestinians."

Although the proposed separation line was designed as a security line rather than a divide politically agreed on by the Israelis and Palestinians, it would provide "a clear initial idea" of the borders of a future Palestinian state, Sarid said.

On Sunday, Rabin distanced himself from Sarid's remarks, but pointedly stopped short of denouncing his Cabinet minister for his obviously planned and deliberately provocative utterance.

Sarid's views are "his own, not those of the government," Rabin said.

Rabin's muted reaction strengthened the pundits' assessments that the Meretz minister was reflecting Rabin's own resignation about the prospect of eventual Palestinian statehood.

However, the Labor Party's Knesset faction chairman, Raanan Cohen, insisted that the party still opposes a Palestinian state.

But Sarid's remarks set off a furor in the opposition Likud bloc. Likud spokesmen condemned the comments and said they reflected the true thinking of Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres.

Meanwhile, well-placed government sources, speaking after last week's meeting between Rabin and the Shahal team, said the security elements of the proposed plan include:

• A 212-mile-long security strip, ranging in width from 1 mile to several hundred feet, would be created. The strip would roughly follow the pre-1967 borders, known as the Green Line — except in areas such as the

Gush Etzion settlement bloc and Jerusalem, where it would run east of the line.

- Only small sections of the strip would be protected by border fences, which would be built to cover a total length of 19 miles in the areas of Jerusalem and the West Bank towns of Kalkilya and Jenin.

- The rest of the strip would be patrolled by the IDF on its eastern side and the police and border police on its western side. Patrols would include helicopters, sophisticated electronic monitors designed to detect infiltrators, guard dogs trained to sniff out explosives, motorized patrols and foot patrols.

- Police would guard eight to 10 official crossing points, through which all traffic would be directed.

The Israeli newspaper Yediot Achronot reported that Shahal has assured the prime minister that the plan could be fully operational within one year.

Shahal reportedly estimated that the plan would have an initial cost of \$133 million and a subsequent operational cost of less than \$47 million per year.

People in IDF circles are said to contest these assessments, especially the relatively modest budgetary estimates.

In fact, the economic team, under the Finance Ministry's director-general, David Brodet, is said to have arrived at a far more daunting set of figures, predicting a total outlay approaching \$670 million.

'Peace costs money'

The economic team, in fact, is said to be cautioning against the entire venture, both because of its cost and its longer-term impact on Palestinian trade and economic growth.

At last week's meeting in Tel Aviv, Shahal brushed aside protests from military and treasury officials regarding the cost of the separation plan. The police, he said, were totally committed to providing the maximum possible security for Israel's citizens.

Although it might not be possible to seal off every possible access for determined suicide-killers, the government owed it to the people to make every effort, Shahal added.

Rabin seemed to echo this view when, in response to Finance Minister Avraham Shohat's assertion that the plan would "cost a lot of money," the prime minister retorted: "Peace costs money."

The separation scheme is predicated on an ongoing IDF presence inside the territories, designed to protect settlements and the roads between them.

Government sources reiterated this point Monday, after the attack in Hebron.

Rabin remains determined that no settlements be withdrawn during the interim period of Palestinian self-government. However, others in the Labor Party advocate the removal of at least the most isolated and exposed settlements as part of the separation scheme.

The prime minister warned somberly that once the IDF redeployed from the main West Bank Palestinian population centers in the next phase in the peace process, Israel's ability to monitor and control terrorist activity in the West Bank would be gravely impaired, regardless of the hoped-for efficacy of the separation plan.

Sunday's attack in Hebron notwithstanding, Rabin said there were more shooting and bombing attempts against Israeli targets in Gaza than in the West Bank.

He attributed this to the fact that because the area came under Palestinian self-rule last May, the IDF and the Shin Bet domestic security service were no longer deployed inside Gaza's towns and refugee camps.

"We will have a cardinal problem of security after the redeployment," Rabin said. □

As Israel buries attack victims, leaders pledge to pursue peace

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM, March 20 (JTA) — Israeli leaders vowed to continue peace negotiations with the Palestinians, as thousands of people took part in the funeral of the two Israelis killed in this week's terror attack near the West Bank town of Hebron.

Yehuda Fartush, 42, and Nahum Hoss, 31, were killed Sunday night when Palestinian gunmen ambushed an Egged bus traveling from Jerusalem to the Jewish settlement of Kiryat Arba, situated near Hebron.

Fartush, who lived in Kiryat Arba, is survived by a wife and infant. Hoss, who was married and lived in Hebron, was Rabbi Moshe Levinger's confidant. The rabbi is the founder of the Gush Emunim settler movement.

Five other people, including a 12-year-old boy, were wounded in the attack. Four remained hospitalized Monday. All were listed in moderate condition.

In Washington, President Clinton extended his sympathies Monday to the victims of the attack and to their families.

"The perpetrators of this crime, who use terror and violence to strike at the peace process itself, will not be allowed to succeed," White House spokesman Michael McCurry said.

Israeli security sources believe that three to four terrorists opened fire on the bus from the roof of a house at the northern entrance to Hebron, near the turnoff to Kiryat Arba.

Hamas' military wing blamed for attack

The Israel Defense Force plans to seal the house as punishment, Israeli Radio reported.

Police blamed Izz a-Din al-Kassam, the military wing of the Hamas fundamentalist group, for carrying out the attack.

A group of fugitives belonging to the organization have been operating in the Hebron area and have been responsible for previous fatal attacks on Israelis, police said. Police Minister Moshe Shahal said it was only a matter of time before the perpetrators were caught.

A curfew imposed Sunday on the 100,000 Palestinian residents of Hebron continued Monday — both to help in the search for the attackers and to prevent further clashes between settlers and Palestinians during the funeral procession. Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau and several Knesset members were among those in the funeral procession.

The funeral procession Monday passed through Kiryat Arba and Hebron before arriving at a local cemetery. The procession stopped at Hebron's Tomb of the Patriarchs, where mourners recited prayers.

Meanwhile, Israeli settler leaders demanded that Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin stop negotiations with the Palestinians.

Zvi Katzover, the mayor of Kiryat Arba, said, "The terrorists are shooting, and the government acts as if nothing happened."

After the funeral Monday, anti-government demonstrations took place in Jerusalem. Hundreds of settlers chanting "Death to Arabs" clashed with police outside Rabin's residence in Jerusalem.

Police reportedly charged the crowd and arrested several demonstrators.

Police also broke up a protest by a right-wing group, Women in Green, outside the Prime Minister's Office. Police threw several women to the ground and detained three others after the demonstrators refused to disperse. □

FOCUS ON ISSUES

Controversial Israeli play revisits the Pollard affair

By Uriel Masad

TEL AVIV, March 20 (JTA) — The date is Nov. 21, 1985. Jonathan Jay Pollard and Anne Pollard enter the Israeli Embassy in Washington to seek political asylum.

To the astonishment of the security personnel working there, Jonathan Pollard identifies himself by name, says he has been working for the Mossad — Israel's intelligence service — and adds that the FBI is on his tail.

The Pollards are invited in and offered something to drink while the security officer in charge makes a telephone call.

The officer speaks to Rafi Eitan, head of the Science Liaison Bureau, a Mossad branch, in Jerusalem, who then contacts an unidentified government minister.

The instructions from the top are clear: Kick the Pollards out!

The officer argues that they are Jews and that according to regulations, he must admit them.

Out! orders Eitan.

The stunned and desperate Pollards sit down and invoke the Law of Return, under which Israel must admit any Jew who requests it.

But Eitan does not budge: He instructs the security officer to throw the Pollards out, by force if need be.

Anne and Jonathan Pollard plead for their lives, but to no avail. They are forced off the embassy grounds into the waiting arms of the FBI.

This is the climactic scene in a controversial new play, "Pollard (The Patriots)," which has been enjoying a successful run at the Cameri Theater in Tel Aviv for more than a month.

Described in the playbill as "a fictional play inspired by the Pollard affair," the show uses for its plot the events that led to the arrests of Jonathan and Anne Pollard on charges of spying and treason, and their subsequent imprisonment.

The controversial nature of the play was evident in the enormous pressures brought to bear on the play's author, Motti Lerner, and its producers to cancel the show.

The unease of the audience during the powerful and chilling final scene is tangible.

At the play's end, there is a short public debate with a panel that includes the now-divorced Anne Pollard. When asked how much of the play is true and how much is fiction, she begins to list the gaps, then stops herself.

'Last time I saw Jonathan in freedom'

"One thing you can be sure of, this last scene at the embassy is 100 percent true," she says. "We were there for 20 minutes, by the end of which we were forced to leave and were arrested. This was the last time I saw Jonathan in freedom."

Jonathan Pollard, a Navy intelligence analyst and strongly identified Jew who believed that the United States was not passing important intelligence information to Israel, began passing secret information to Israeli officials in 1984.

As a result of a plea bargain, Jonathan Pollard received a life sentence. In solitary confinement for the past 10 years in a federal penitentiary in Marion, Ill., he is up for parole in November.

Anne Pollard was sentenced to five years in prison for her part in the case. She was released early because of illness and has since been divorced and immigrated to Israel.

From the play's inception, those involved with the production were under intense pressure to suppress it. The

pressure was unprecedented in Israeli theater history, according to some involved in the production.

At a recent news conference, the Cameri Theater's directors, Noam Semel and Omri Nitzan, along with director Ilan Ronen and playwright Lerner, said the pressure began even before the play saw the light of day.

They spoke of blatant warnings to "watch out," unveiled threats of libel suits from those mentioned in the play — including Anne Pollard — and warnings that funding would be cut off. They said the pressure went as far as a cash offer of up to \$330,000 to shelve the project entirely.

When all this failed, they said, a campaign was launched to postpone the opening, amid claims that it would harm Pollard's parole hearing in November.

According to Cameri's spokespeople, every effort was made to ensure that Jonathan Pollard's case was not harmed in any way.

Both Anne Pollard and Amnon Dror, who heads the Release Jonathan Pollard Committee in Israel, which receives major funding from the Israeli government, were initially adamantly opposed to the play. But now they say they are convinced that the production can only help Pollard.

This is partially due to the 10,000 people who have so far signed a petition asking President Clinton to consider Pollard's immediate release. The Cameri puts the petition in the theater's lobby during the play, and people are urged by the actors and panelists to sign it at the end of the evening.

Playwright expresses some regret

Lerner, 46, one of Israel's prominent playwrights, expresses regret over the scandal that has surrounded his play. "I used Pollard as a fable, as a symbol of Diaspora Jews," he said in a recent interview at his Tel Aviv studio.

He said his goal in writing the play was to examine the relationship between Israel and the American Jewish community.

Lerner said the Pollard affair provided him with a "dramatic plot" with which to approach "the complicated components that make up this relationship: questions such as dual loyalty, our mutual obligations and commitment to each other, coinciding and conflicting interest, and our Jewish identity."

"Unfortunately, this is not perceived as the play's central theme," said Lerner, who noted that he visited the United States and spoke with leaders of major American Jewish organizations as part of his research for the play.

"If there is a lesson for me here, it is that anchoring a play in a contemporary affair can shift the focus from the play's essence as I saw it."

Despite the hardships that accompanied the mounting of the play, Lerner is on the whole pleased with the Israeli public's response to the production.

Of the 15,000 Israelis who have seen the show so far, most remain for the discussion and two-thirds have signed the petition, he said, adding that some 100,000 Israelis probably will see the production before it closes.

The play has already been translated into English and there have been negotiations for staging the production in the United States. However, Lerner, concerned about the effect the play could have on Pollard's parole board hearing, said it should be performed in America only after that occurs.

"Maybe this will help open a dialogue between" the Israeli and Diaspora communities, the playwright said of his production. "If a true, symmetrical and open dialogue had existed, one that recognized the legitimacy of the other side, it is possible that the whole Pollard affair could have been avoided." □

Jewish protesters disrupt Buchanan presidential rally

By Matthew Dorf

WASHINGTON, March 20 (JTA) — Three Jewish protesters, bearing placards reading "Buchanan Is a Racist," disrupted a Manchester, N.H., rally Tuesday, where Patrick Buchanan launched his bid for the presidency.

The three rushed the stage as Buchanan declared himself a candidate for the Republican nomination. One of them yelled to Buchanan, "You're a fascist!" as he and the others were dragged from the stage by guards.

According to news reports, Buchanan dismissed the interruption as an example of "what we're fighting against."

The three protesters, who wore skullcaps identifying themselves as observant Jews, were members of the Coalition for Jewish Concerns-Amcha.

The group, which is led by New York activist Rabbi Avi Weiss, has vowed to pick up on its 1992 effort, when members heckled Buchanan on his campaign trail during his failed bid for the presidency.

According to Judy Balint, Amcha's national director, the three protesters were dragged down three flights of steps after being removed from the stage. Once outside, Balint said, they were beaten, punched and kicked by Buchanan's guards.

Manchester police launched an investigation into the incident, said spokesman Lt. Phil Alexakos.

"The protesters made allegations that they were assaulted, and Buchanan supporters say they were assaulted," Alexakos said. "We are investigating the incident."

Police answered a call that there was a fight in progress outside the Manchester Institute of Arts and Sciences, where the rally was held. According to police, there was no one fighting when they arrived.

The protesters, David Kalb, Moshe Maoz and Ronn Torossian, say guards hit and kicked them and ripped their clothes.

All three say they have cuts and bruises.

Torossian has filed a complaint against Buchanan, charging the candidate with pushing him on the stage.

"There must be a place for peaceful protest against anti-Semitism and bigotry without the fear of being beaten by paid goons," Balint said.

Buchanan has come under fire from Jewish leaders for calling Adolf Hitler "a great man" and for referring to Capitol Hill as "Israel's occupied territory."

Jewish Republicans here denounced Buchanan while criticizing the protesters' methods.

"Buchanan's campaign is particularly troubling," said Matthew Brooks, executive director of the National Jewish Coalition. "Unfortunately, they voiced their opposition to Pat Buchanan in such a provocative manner that only gives [Buchanan's supporters] ammunition." □

Relief for Jordan clears hurdle in Senate measure

By Matthew Dorf

WASHINGTON, March 20 (JTA) — The Senate has voted to forgive all of Jordan's remaining debt to the United States by the end of the 1996 fiscal year.

The move could defuse what has become an especially volatile question in the Middle East peace process: Can the United States deliver on its promise that it pays to make peace with Israel?

After a full-court press by the Clinton administration that included calls to key senators from Secretary of

State Warren Christopher during his trip to the Middle East last week, the Senate agreed to include \$50 million in debt relief now and an additional \$225 million in fiscal year 1996.

The Senate move represents a victory for pro-Israel activists, many of whom had actively lobbied for full debt relief.

President Clinton had promised King Hussein debt relief when Jordan made peace with Israel in October.

Activists had expressed disappointment when the House of Representatives, in a budget-cutting measure last week, had approved only \$50 million in relief for Jordan.

In the Senate bill, all of the money would come from the foreign aid budget.

According to the debt relief formula, the total \$275 million would forgive Jordan's remaining \$410 million debt to the United States.

Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), chairman of the Foreign Operations Appropriations subcommittee, sponsored the measure.

The move was an amendment to the Department of Defense Supplemental Appropriations bill.

Activists here said they believe that the Senate's version will gain support when the two chambers work out their differences in a conference committee.

The American Israel Public Affairs Committee praised the Senate's move.

"It's a long process but we're encouraged in the difficult environment that there's support for recognizing the efforts that the Jordanian government has made in the peace process," an AIPAC spokeswoman said. □

Moroccan king brings vision of Mideast peace to Clinton

By Jennifer Batog

WASHINGTON, March 20 (JTA) — As the Middle East peace process continues to move in fits and starts, a key supporter, King Hassan II of Morocco, brought his vision of Middle East peace to President Clinton last week.

The peace process is stalling because it is not a full-fledged peace yet, Hassan said in his welcoming remarks at the White House on March 15.

"Peace hasn't taken place in all areas of interest," Hassan said through an interpreter.

"For peace to be achieved, the pace of the negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israelis needs to be accelerated away from any equivocations liable to cause the peace process to falter."

Hassan's visit also focused on strengthening Moroccan-U.S. economic ties, the Arab boycott of Israel, negotiations between Israel and Syria and the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The boycott is an important issue for the peace process, said Hassan, whose country has taken significant steps to ease its own boycott of Israel.

"We are not looking into the peace process without looking into the economic peace process, also," he said.

The boycott is an Arab League issue, he added. "I would say that there has to be a compromise among the members of the Arab League if the boycott is to be lifted," he said.

Hassan was optimistic about Syria and Israel restarting peace talks and said progress there could have a positive effect on the boycott.

"In today's world, the reality of political relations should reflect that of economic relations, and that is why we aspire to having our economic ties up to the level of our distinctive historic ties," Hassan said. □