



# Daily News Bulletin

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81<sup>st</sup> Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Summit planned for next week

President Clinton will host Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat at a Washington summit beginning Oct. 15, U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright announced.

The summit will be held at the Wye Plantation, a conference site on the eastern shore of Maryland, according to White House press secretary Joe Lockhart. [Page 1]

### Baghdad slayings condemned

The leader of Baghdad's Jewish community joined President Saddam Hussein in condemning Sunday's killing of four people at a synagogue in the Iraqi capital.

Ibrahim Youssef Saleh wept as he described the incident to reporters. He called the shooting an isolated attack and the work of a "radical, ignorant or a mercenary."

Two Jews and two Muslims were killed when a Kuwaiti-born Palestinian opened fire on a small crowd of worshipers at the start of Sukkot.

### Israel reassures Syria

Israel scaled back routine military operations on its border with Syria in an attempt to reassure its neighbor that it had no role to play in Syria's conflict with Turkey. Last week, Syria blamed increased military cooperation between Israel and Turkey for the current crisis, which flared up over Syria's alleged support for Kurdish rebels seeking independence from Turkey. [Page 4]

### Report targets Israeli weapons

Israeli F-16 fighter jets are equipped to carry biological and chemical weapons manufactured at a secret plant near Tel Aviv, according to the Sunday Times of London. Israel denies that the plant at Nes Ziona manufactures such weapons. [Page 3]

Because of the Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah holidays, the JTA DAILY NEWS BULLETIN will not be published Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, Oct 12, 13 and 14.

## NEWS ANALYSIS

### Stridency of Oslo opponents rises as Israel, Palestinians near accord

By David Landau

JERUSALEM (JTA) — A series of intelligence warnings that Hamas terror attacks are imminent is providing the best proof that Israel and the Palestinians are near an agreement.

Further proof is also coming from right-wing members of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's coalition, who have renewed their threats to bring down the government if the premier agrees to transfer additional West Bank lands to the Palestinians.

But despite the flurry of diplomatic activity surrounding U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's visit this week to the Middle East — and visits by Netanyahu and Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat last week to New York and Washington — there are still plenty of skeptics who doubt that a deal will be concluded.

Some cite Netanyahu's coalition difficulties; others point to the premier's reluctance to abandon tracts of the biblical homeland.

And even among the more optimistic observers, there are warnings that even if Netanyahu and Arafat sign an agreement under the watchful eye of President Clinton, there is no guarantee it will be implemented.

Israel and the Palestinians, nudged on by American officials, are inching closer to a long-elusive accord under which Israel will redeploy from a further 13 percent of the West Bank in return for stepped-up security arrangements with the Palestinian Authority.

During a Sept. 28 meeting with Netanyahu and Arafat at the White House, Clinton proposed a summit in the middle of October in Washington to sign the accord and to agree on methods for pursuing the permanent-status negotiations, which are already long overdue.

Albright, who visited the region this week to lay the groundwork for that summit, told reporters Wednesday that Arafat and Netanyahu made "significant and substantial progress" on a host of issues, including security arrangements and the further Israeli redeployment. But Albright also cautioned that much work remains to be done after she met with Arafat and Netanyahu for more than three hours at the Erez Crossing between Israel and the Gaza Strip.

CIA Director George Tenet was reportedly instrumental in the security talks that are now focused on concluding a memorandum of understanding on Israeli-Palestinian security cooperation. For months, CIA officials have participated in meetings between senior Israeli and Palestinian security officials.

Clinton said Wednesday that he believes the Israelis and Palestinians are "close enough" in their stances to be able to reach an agreement at the Washington summit, which is slated to begin Oct. 15 at a conference site on the eastern shore of Maryland.

"It is imperative that we move on" to final-status talks, Clinton added.

Speaking with reporters after he met with Arafat on Wednesday, Netanyahu agreed with Albright's assessment of progress in the talks. But he added a cautionary note.

"Although we have climbed up on a steep hill, the hill is still ahead of us," Netanyahu said.

Looming ever closer is May 4, 1999, the end of the five-year interim period provided for under the Oslo accords. While Arafat was dissuaded by American officials from explicitly stating before the U.N. General Assembly last week that he would declare a Palestinian state on May 4 — a move Netanyahu insists would destroy the

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Fatah calls for strike, clashes

Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's mainstream Fatah faction called for a general strike Thursday in Hebron if Israeli troops do not lift a curfew there.

It called for dashes with Israeli troops on Friday in response to the curfew, which was imposed last week after a Palestinian threw a grenade at Israeli troops. There have been almost daily dashes between the troops and Palestinian stone-throwers since the curfew was imposed.

### Ariel to be designated as a city

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is planning to designate the West Bank settlement of Ariel as a city. A spokesman for the premier called the move a "technical thing" and denied that it was a provocative act.

### Structures planned for Hebron

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is pressing ahead with plans to build permanent structures at a Jewish enclave in the West Bank town of Hebron. Palestinian officials criticized the decision to replace the mobile homes in Tel Rumeida as a threat to the peace process.

### Two Israelis killed in Lebanon

Two roadside bombs in southern Lebanon killed two Israeli soldiers and wounded six others Monday.

The Islamic fundamentalist group Hezbollah claimed responsibility for the attack, which occurred in Israel's security zone.

### Sadat film banned

A film about the 1981 assassination of Anwar Sadat by Islamic fundamentalists was banned by Egyptian censors. No explanation was given for the rejection of the screenplay, based on the book "The Assassination of a President." Omar Sharif was to play the lawyer for the four killers, who were executed in 1982.



## Daily News Bulletin

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peace process — he reiterated in his U.N. speech that the Palestinian people expect to establish an independent state.

And he urged the international community to support this aspiration.

The extreme tenseness and fragility of the situation is exemplified by security incidents that have been occurring almost daily.

Among them were a grenade attack on soldiers in Hebron on Yom Kippur and a mysterious explosion last week of a car bomb near Ramallah.

Last Friday, Israel imposed a closure on the West Bank and Gaza Strip after security officials warned that Hamas is planning to carry out a major terror attack against the Jewish state.

The army chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Shaul Mofaz, and senior Shin Bet and Mossad officials have all warned the Cabinet that militant Palestinians are planning major terrorist attacks to derail the peace process. Indeed, the terrorists' efforts represent the gravest danger to the process. A terror attack inside Israel with heavy civilian casualties could instantly turn Clinton's best-laid plans to ashes.

It is perhaps the understanding that this is the case — coupled with a healthy dose of doubt based on almost two years of diplomatic stagnation — that has left the Israeli public skeptical about the latest diplomatic activity.

The Netanyahu-Arafat meeting in New York on Sept. 27, their first in nearly a year, left many Israelis unimpressed as they made their preparations for Yom Kippur. Indeed, the Israeli media were almost indifferent in reporting the meeting.

And the two leaders' White House meeting and photo-op the next day with Clinton were widely dismissed here as the president's attempt to demonstrate on camera that he was still functioning despite the Monica Lewinsky sex scandal.

Official spokesmen on both sides who carefully played down expectations contributed to a general sense of wait and see.

But one group that is not willing to wait is the Israeli right. After his return last week from Washington, Netanyahu faced angry hard-liners in his Cabinet.

Rabbi Yitzhak Levy, the minister of education and National Religious Party leader, reportedly warned him at a Cabinet meeting that if he returns from the proposed mini-summit with Clinton and Arafat having divested Israel of more West Bank land, he would find himself divested of his government.

Levy and his NRP colleague, Transportation Minister Shaul Yahalom, demanded that the premier submit any accord to the Cabinet before signing it on Israel's behalf. Netanyahu refused to give this commitment.

The NRP ministers and other Cabinet hawks are now focusing their efforts on the issues of security and reciprocity that remain outstanding in the negotiations.

They acknowledge, reluctantly, that Netanyahu has already acceded to the American proposal for the 13 percent redeployment.

Last Friday, a group of 10 right-wing Knesset members took out large ads in the major Israeli newspapers in which they warned the premier in an open letter against any territorial concession whatever.

"If the government decides to undertake any further withdrawal from the territories of Eretz Yisrael — we will no longer be party to your coalition," they said in the open letter. "We will make every effort to bring down the government."

In the letter, the 10 asserted that the Palestinian Authority has not honored "a single one of the commitments it undertook in the Oslo accords."

Netanyahu has said repeatedly that once his security concerns are satisfied, he will go ahead and conclude the deal, despite the political risk.

Some political observers discount that risk, pointing to the strong support that Netanyahu can effectively count on from the opposition Labor Party.

But that bipartisan backing would presumably only be a short-term prospect.

Once the 12 week implementation period that is proposed for the new accord ends, Labor would doubtless resume its opposition role.

If the hard-liners persist in their attempts to topple Netanyahu — in order to put up their own candidate for premier in a new election — the government would be doomed.

As a result, politicians and analysts are once again assessing the prospects of a Likud-Labor unity government being created after the redeployment deal is finally concluded — if it is. □

## JEWISH WORLD

### 1998 voucher effort scrapped

U.S. House Majority Leader Dick Armey (R-Texas) said he was abandoning efforts to create a school voucher program in the District of Columbia this year.

President Clinton earlier this year vetoed a bill that would have provided tuition vouchers for students in the nation's capital to use at private or religious schools, but Republicans had been attempting to include the voucher plan as part of a spending bill for Washington.

Armey said he decided to walk away from the bill for now because he was confident it could pass next year with what he predicted would be "an even larger majority in both the House and Senate."

### House to discuss statehood

U.S. Rep. Matt Salmon (R-Ariz.) introduced a resolution in the House of Representatives calling on President Clinton to declare that a unilateral declaration of Palestinian statehood would not be recognized by the United States.

Clinton has hinted that his administration would adopt such a policy, saying that Palestinian statehood is among the issues to be discussed in the final-status talks between Israel and the Palestinians.

### U.S. legislators press Germany

Some 45 members of the U.S. Congress called on Germany to investigate what they say are abuses in that country's restitution program for Holocaust survivors.

The representatives called on recently elected German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder to look into cases where survivors "have received offers well below what they deserved or even were rejected outright."

### Germany to investigate Le Pen

Germany may soon start legal proceedings against the anti-Semitic leader of France's extreme-right National Front. German prosecutors announced plans to investigate Jean-Marie Le Pen after the European Parliament lifted his immunity.

Le Pen triggered the investigation by reiterating in Munich in December 1997 his often-repeated statement that the Holocaust was merely "a detail" in the history of World War II. Trivializing the Holocaust is illegal in Germany.

### Attack on embassy foiled

A hand grenade was found last Friday under a car parked in front of the Israeli Embassy in Brussels.

An embassy security guard found the grenade and notified the police, who removed the explosive and safely detonated it at another site. Local authorities are investigating the incident.

## Paper: Israeli jets able to carry biological and chemical weapons

By Douglas Davis

LONDON (JTA) — Israeli jets have been equipped to carry chemical and biological weapons, according to the Sunday Times of London.

The weapons are being manufactured at the Nes Ziona Institute for Biological Research, located southeast of Tel Aviv, the newspaper reported.

Sources quoted in the report said crews of F-16 fighter jets have been trained to load the weapons within minutes of receiving the order.

"There is hardly a single known or unknown form of chemical or biological weapons" that is "not manufactured at the institute," a biologist who is a former Israeli intelligence official told the paper.

The report alleged that the Nes Ziona facility not only made chemical and biological weapons for use in bombs, "but more unusual arms as well."

The newspaper further claimed that the facility had created the poison used in the bungled September 1997 assassination attempt on Hamas official Khaled Mashaal in Jordan.

In the past, Israel has described reports that the institute makes chemical and biological weapons as "inaccurate."

Last week, the mayor of Nes Ziona won a court order to freeze plans to expand the research institute.

Accidents at the plant have killed at least six workers, and alerts have almost led to the evacuation of the town. Details about the incidents have been suppressed by Israel's military censor.

Meanwhile, the Dutch government has ordered a public inquiry into the Oct. 4, 1992, crash of an El Al cargo plane.

The four-person Israeli crew and 39 Dutch citizens were killed when the plane crashed into an apartment complex in the Dutch capital.

The inquiry was announced after a Dutch newspaper reported last week that the plane had been carrying 42 gallons of the chemical DDMT — dimethyl methylphosphonate — which was destined for the Nes Ziona facility.

When combined with other chemicals, DDMT can be used to manufacture Sarin nerve gas.

The burning chemicals may have been responsible for health complaints registered by residents of the apartment complex in the wake of the crash.

Israeli officials acknowledged that DDMT was aboard the flight, which was traveling from Tel Aviv to New York.

But the officials added that the materials were non-toxic and that all the appropriate air transportation officials had been notified at the time about the nature of the shipment.

The officials also said the chemical was to be sent to Nes Ziona and that another shipment had been sent there after the crash. The chemical was used for "testing filters," they added.

Dutch officials have expressed doubts about the explanations emanating from the Jewish state.

Among the skeptics is Dr. Jan Medema, who heads a team of chemical weapons inspectors and directs the toxic substances division at the Dutch Defense Research Institute in The Hague.

Medema said he believed the quantity of DDMT aboard the airliner was too large for routine experiments.

"We have been trying to think what possible research purposes would need such large quantities of this compound," he said.

Medema added that it is likely the chemical was used to manufacture Sarin, which was used in a March 1995 attack in the Japanese subway that killed 11 and injured more than 5,000.

Either the Israelis "had some special plan for an experiment," he said, "or they needed a quantity of Sarin for some special purpose. This raises many questions." □

## Israel eager to avoid conflict growing between Turkey, Syria

By Douglas Davis

LONDON (JTA) — Israel has sent clear signals to Damascus indicating that it has no aggressive intentions against Syria.

The message was delivered over the weekend as Israel's close regional ally, Turkey, warned that it was considering military action against Syria.

Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai said Israel was underlining its message of non-belligerence by scaling down some routine military activities along its border with Syria.

Not only did Israel have no interest in a conflict with Syria, he said, "we are looking to restore talks with the Syrians." Israel's strategic ties with Turkey "are not aimed against any other party," he added.

The Turkish defense minister, Ismet Sezgin, denied media reports that some 10,000 additional troops and convoys of armored vehicles had been sent to the Syrian border.

Turkish military leaders said last Friday that any military movements in the border area were part of NATO exercises. The Turkish media said the NATO forces would be simulating conflict with an "enemy," marked as "Yellowland" on NATO maps. The area represents Syria.

In London, Western sources said they do not believe the escalating rhetoric from Ankara indicates that military action is imminent, but they do believe that Turkey might be preparing public opinion for such an eventuality.

On Sunday, both Syria and Turkey called for a peaceful solution to the crisis as Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak sought to mediate the dispute.

The level of rhetoric from Ankara increased late last week after Turkey's National Security Council discussed Syrian support for the Kurdish Workers Party, or PKK, which is based in Syria.

The conflict between the PKK and Turkey is estimated to have cost the lives of some 34,000 people since 1984.

Sources noted that the PKK's heavy dependence on logistical support from Syria has reduced the movement to a "wholly controlled Syrian subsidiary."

"The Syrians," said one senior source, "use the PKK as a proxy force against Turkey just as they use Hezbollah as a proxy force against Israel," referring to the Islamic militant group in southern Lebanon.

The long-running dispute between Syria and Turkey has been exacerbated by the increasingly close military ties that have developed between Turkey and Israel over the past two years.

Under the terms of their relationship, Israel and Turkey conduct joint military exercises and have a reciprocal agreement to use the other country's air bases and air space for military training.

Israel has been accused of using Turkish facilities to spy on military activities in northern Syria, which are "invisible" to Israel's early warning systems on the Golan Heights. Israel captured the Golan from Syria during the 1967 Six-Day War.

In addition, both Syria and Iran have accused Turkey and Israel of conspiring to launch joint military attacks, charges that have been vigorously denied by both Jerusalem and Ankara.

Syrian-Turkish tensions reached new heights late last week after a stream of statements by Turkey's political and military

leaders served notice that their patience is running out over Syrian support for the PKK. The Turks said that while they hoped to resolve their differences through diplomacy, military action against Damascus is now being considered.

"There is a state of undeclared war between us and Syria," the Turkish daily Sabah quoted the army's chief of staff as declaring last Friday.

"We are trying to be patient," said Gen. Hussein Kivrikoglu. "But that has a limit."

His remark followed a threat by Gen. Atilla Ates, commander of Turkey's ground forces, that Syria could face military action "if it does not end its support for the terrorists."

The warning was echoed by President Suleyman Demirel in a recent speech to the Turkish Parliament.

"I declare once more to the world that we reserve the right to retaliate against Syria, which has not abandoned its hostile policies despite all our warnings and peaceful initiatives, and that our patience is nearing an end," Demirel said. □

## Nobel winners slam government for not ending crisis over crosses

By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME (JTA) — A group of prominent Polish intellectuals and an association of Polish war veterans have criticized the Polish government for failing to take action to end the crisis over the crosses recently erected by Catholic fundamentalists at Auschwitz.

Six eminent Polish intellectuals, including Nobel Prize-winning poets Czeslaw Milosz and Wislawa Szymborska, published an open letter to Polish Prime Minister Jerzy Buzek last week calling for government intervention to halt the crisis.

The letter, published in the newspaper Gazeta Wyborcza, said the controversy over the hundreds of crosses erected by Catholic extremists since July "disturbs Poles, insults Jews and causes concern in world opinion."

The militants who claim to be "defending" the crosses, actually want to provoke unrest and conflict in Poland, the letter said. It urged Buzek to step in and "stop the provocation" at Auschwitz.

A Krakow-based association of "veterans and freedom fighters," meanwhile, issued a statement supporting the intellectuals' letter, according to the Polish news agency PAP.

PAP said the association represents some 20 organizations. It said the veterans are protesting "the incomprehensible passivity of Polish state authorities in the face" of the conflict at Auschwitz.

At the same time, however, extreme right-wing activists, including Leszek Bubel, one of the leaders of the campaign to erect the crosses, have published the first issue of what they said will be a monthly magazine called "Now, Poland."

Stanislaw Krajewski, a member of the board of the Union of Jewish Religious Communities in Poland and a consultant to the American Jewish Committee, called the magazine "frightening" because of its apparently wide distribution, anti-Semitic content and aggressive tone.

"The magazine contains several anti-Semitic texts," Krajewski said from Warsaw, including a front-page article claiming that a "Polish-Jewish war" was under way and that "Jews must understand that those who fight with a sword die by a sword." □