



# Daily News Bulletin

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82<sup>nd</sup> Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### **NATO to use Israeli-made planes**

Israeli-made pilotless planes are expected to help NATO forces in Yugoslavia. At least eight of the drones, manufactured by Israel Aircraft Industries, have been ordered from Fort Hood, Texas, to provide intelligence data for the NATO campaign.

The drones, which are capable of providing videos and pictures of Yugoslav targets, can stay aloft for up to 12 hours.

Meanwhile, Israeli planes carrying humanitarian aid, equipment for a field hospital and medical staff arrived in Macedonia and Albania on Tuesday to provide support for refugees streaming out of Kosovo. The field hospital was to be set up in Macedonia several miles from Kosovo, where British and Canadian aid delegations are already working. Officials from the Jewish Agency for Israel flew to Albania to oversee the distribution of aid there.

### **Yugoslav Jews to visit Israel**

Forty-five Yugoslav Jews who arrived in Budapest during the ongoing NATO air strikes against their country have registered for a pilot trip to Israel, according to the Jewish Agency for Israel. The group, aged 18-32, was expected to arrive this week in Israel, where they will be exposed to life in the Jewish state. Last week, seven Yugoslav Jews who decided to make aliyah were the guests of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at his family seder.

### **Yeltsin tells Arafat to negotiate**

Russia supports Palestinian statehood, but would like to see it emerge as a result of negotiations with Israel, Russian President Boris Yeltsin told visiting Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat on Tuesday. [Page 4]

### **Blast may be linked to shul bomb**

A powerful blast Sunday outside a downtown Moscow office of Russia's Federal Security Service may have been the work of the same perpetrators who bombed a Moscow synagogue last May. [Page 4]

REMINDER: The JTA DAILY NEWS BULLETIN will not be published Thursday, April 8 and Friday, April 9.

## BEHIND THE HEADLINES

### **History and politics influence Israeli debate over NATO action**

*By Gil Sedan*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israelis are divided over NATO's military campaign against Serbia — and opinions and policy are being informed as much by history and the Holocaust as by current political realities.

Israeli sympathy for the Serbs, who were fellow victims of the Nazis during World War II, is countered by the images of massacres and streams of refugees as ethnic Albanians flee their native Kosovo. Some 72 percent of Israelis support Israel's relief efforts for the Kosovars, according to a poll by the Israeli daily Yediot Achronot.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu spoke for many when he said last week: "Israel condemns the massacre being carried out by the Serbs and denounces any mass murder."

Others, recalling how some Albanians actively supported the Nazis, find themselves less sympathetic to the plight of the Kosovar Albanians.

And still others, believing that the "friend of my enemy is my enemy," are focused on the outside support for the Kosovo Liberation Army, which spearheaded the fight for independence from Serbia before Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic clamped down on the region with an iron fist.

Elyakim Haetzni, an outspoken supporter of Israeli nationalism, lashed out last week at the "leftists" who in their support for the Kosovo refugees are "ignoring the fact that the KLA was collaborating with the Iranians and other enemies of Israel."

But even left-wing Israelis are not unanimous in support of the NATO raids.

Among them is Raul Teitelbaum, a veteran journalist who at the end of 1943 was among the Jews of Prizren, Kosovo, who were put on a transport to Bergen-Belsen by members of an Albanian division working on behalf of the Nazi SS.

"Of course, there were among the Albanians those who fought against the Nazis," Teitelbaum told JTA. "But those who now say that the Albanians were known to have given shelter to the Jews are manipulating history."

"Clinton says the bombings in Yugoslavia are a lesson of the Holocaust," Teitelbaum added. "How can one compare this with the Holocaust? How can tiny Serbia be compared with a world power like Nazi Germany? How can Milosevic be compared with Hitler?"

Teitelbaum also questioned the effectiveness of the NATO raids.

"In a way, President Bill Clinton is the best ally of President Milosevic," Teitelbaum said.

"Thanks to the bombings, there is no longer any [internal] opposition to Milosevic. Thanks to the bombings, Milosevic is able to carry out ethnic cleansing on a scope he had never dreamed of before."

On the other side of the divide, people such as Labor Knesset member Shlomo Ben-Ami, a historian, had only praise for the NATO operation.

In his view, the operation has changed international norms of behavior in the face of atrocities that used to be considered "an internal matter."

"Kosovo is a belated response to the Nazis," said Ben-Ami. "From now on, intervention on a moral and humanitarian level is justified."

Just the same, he conceded — as the Pentagon has already done — that the NATO strikes were unable to stop Serbian roundups of the ethnic Albanians.

"Alas, even the greatest military power in the world, the NATO alliance, cannot

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Sharon warns of Islamic unrest

Israeli Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon warned Tuesday that the plight of ethnic Albanians fleeing Kosovo could spread Islamic unrest throughout Europe.

"The free world must look forward and see dangers in the future if a large bloc of Islamic states should develop what it's possible to call a Greater Albania," he told Israel Radio from the United States, where he was scheduled to meet with U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.

While stating that Israel wanted to help the refugees, he added that "Albania, Kosovo, Bosnia and who knows who else could join this game," creating a "focus of activity that could cause unrest in Europe for a very long time."

### Yad Vashem weighs in on Kosovo

The director of the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial called on the world to protest ethnic cleansing by Serbs in Kosovo, but added that comparisons should not be made to the Nazi genocide of Jews.

"Suffering is suffering whenever it occurs and must be denounced," Avner Shalev told the Associated Press on Monday.

Shalev said that the Holocaust resulted from Germany's desire to "liquidate all the Jews in the world," while Serb actions in the Yugoslav province of Kosovo are part of an "ethnic conflict over a piece of land."

### Christians close churches

Christians closed their churches Tuesday in Nazareth as some young men patrolled the streets with clubs in response to clashes earlier in the week with Muslim residents of the Galilee town.

At least seven people were injured in the clashes, which came amid demonstrations by Muslims seeking to build a mosque near the holiest Christian site in Israel's largest Arab town.



## Daily News Bulletin

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prevent a genocide," said Ben-Ami. As the public debate continued, the Israeli government, caught up in an election campaign, appeared uncertain how to respond to the NATO offensive.

Israel's relations with Serbia have been problematic ever since the disintegration of Yugoslavia earlier in the decade.

Despite memories of the Serbs as fellow victims of Nazi oppression and despite the fact that Bosnian Muslims were being aided by volunteers from Iran, Israel could not allow itself to support Milosevic, an international outcast.

Israel's diplomatic relations with Serbia were resumed only three years ago after the war in Bosnia had cooled. Since then, Israel's arms industry has sought to sell military equipment to Serbia.

Serbia has reportedly appealed to Israel for military supplies, according to the April 1 edition of the newsletter Foreign Report.

In addition to what the London-based newsletter described as a "shopping list of military equipment," it says the Serbs are also seeking medicines and credit.

The Israeli response is not known.

It was not until March 31, a week after the offensive began, that Netanyahu, denying allegations that he had failed to express his position on the Kosovo crisis, came out in support of the NATO operation.

But his foreign minister, Ariel Sharon, was less enthusiastic regarding the NATO strikes.

In remarks quoted last week by Yediot, Sharon told a closed-door audience that Israel had reason not to support the strikes out of fear that the Jewish state might one day be similarly targeted. The newspaper said he asked his audience to imagine what might happen if the Arab residents of the Galilee ever demanded that their region be recognized as autonomous — with links to the Palestinian Authority.

Would NATO strike at Israel under such a scenario, as it had done in the wake of the Kosovar Albanians' attempts at autonomy, Sharon asked.

"Israel must look to the future. It should not give legitimacy to an intervention like that exercised by NATO," Yediot quoted Sharon as saying.

Sharon subsequently denied the report, stating that Israel expects "NATO forces do their utmost to end the misery of innocent people and renew the negotiations between the parties as soon as possible."

But the subject came up again during a meeting with European ambassadors, when Sharon was asked by the ambassador of Italy what Israel would do if the Palestinians asked for international intervention, like the ethnic Albanians had.

"I hope the question remains hypothetical," said Sharon. "Israel will never succumb to international pressure."

While most Israelis are spurning such historical analogies, one journalist saw a parallel between the Kosovar Albanians and the Palestinians.

Harking back to the 1948 War of Independence, Gideon Levy of Ha'aretz wrote: "Kosovo has already been here. At the time there was no NATO and no television from all over the world, but during 20 months, between December 1947 and September of 1949, between 600,000 to 760,000 Palestinian Arabs fled or were deported from their homes and turned overnight into refugees." □

(JTA correspondent Douglas Davis in London contributed to this report.)

## PLO official calls for exile government

JERUSALEM (JTA) — A leading PLO official this week called on Yasser Arafat to create a Palestinian government-in-exile in Cairo rather than delay the unilateral declaration of a state on May 4.

Farouk Kaddoumi, who serves as the PLO's de facto foreign minister, warned that failure to meet Palestinian expectations of a state on May 4, the end of the interim period in Israeli-Palestinian peacemaking spelled out in the Oslo accords, would produce a dangerous "political vacuum" that could lead to clashes between Palestinians and Israelis.

Kaddoumi, who opposes the Oslo accords, made the statement in an interview with the London-based Arabic daily al-Hayat. □

## JEWISH WORLD

### AJCongress backs land troops

The American Jewish Congress said it is "prepared to support use of land troops if NATO believes they are necessary to prevent the spread of the carnage in Yugoslavia."

NATO should not "foreclose any possibility that could deter or stop the slaughter of innocents in Kosovo," the AJCongress said in a statement. "Diffidence and tentativeness will not work against a determined aggressor."

### O.U. seeks action against Libya

Libya's handover this week of two suspects in the 1988 downing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, should not mean that the world absolves the Libyan government from ultimate responsibility for the "heinous crime," according to the Orthodox Union.

Describing the handover as only a "first step," the O.U. said, "States that foster and encourage terrorism must be severely punished so that global terrorism can finally be defeated."

### Thousands expected at ceremony

Some 3,000 people are expected to attend a ceremony Sunday in New York to commemorate the 6 million Jewish victims of the Holocaust.

The ceremony at Temple Emanu-El in Manhattan, believed to be the largest such commemoration in the United States, is one of many ceremonies held worldwide to mark Holocaust Remembrance Day, which falls this year on April 13.

### Group blasts anti-abortion leader

An official with the Canadian Jewish Congress criticized the founder of an anti-abortion group, Father Paul Marx, for writing an anti-abortion treatise in 1987 that identified Jews as the leaders of the abortion movement in North America and blamed them for causing "the greatest holocaust in all of history."

Bernie Farber, CJC's national director of community relations, called Tuesday for an apology for the "racist rhetoric" written by Marx, a Roman Catholic priest. Farber's comments came as the group, Human Life International, a Virginia-based pro-life and anti-gay coalition, prepared to open a five-day conference in Toronto.

### Isaac Stern visits Germany

Violinist Isaac Stern is visiting Germany, which he had once vowed never to visit out of respect for the victims of the Holocaust. Stern said he changed his mind because it was time to see the country of Bach, Beethoven and Mendelssohn. Stern, who was born in Russia but moved to the United States when he was 10 months old, lost many relatives in the Holocaust.

## Jewish groups mobilize to aid Kosovar refugees

By Peter Ephross

NEW YORK (JTA) — Jewish groups are taking an active role in aiding the hundreds of thousands of refugees fleeing the war-torn Yugoslav province of Kosovo.

The Albanian ambassador to the United Nations, Agim Nesho, met this week with officials from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee to thank them for the efforts of the Jewish community in helping the more than 200,000 Kosovar refugees who are currently in Albania.

Tens of thousands more have crossed into Macedonia, and the numbers are growing each day.

As in past crises, several Jewish organizations are collecting donations, and hundreds of contributions have already poured into the JDC's offices in New York to help with the shelter, medical, food and clothing needs of the refugees, according to Steven Schwager, the group's associate executive vice president. As of Monday, some 650 donations totaling more than \$78,000 had been received by the JDC, an "unprecedented" response in such a short time, according to JDC officials.

Israelis, too, are contributing humanitarian aid.

A first wave of Israeli planes carrying food, tents, equipment for a field hospital and medical staff arrived in Macedonia and Albania on Tuesday to provide support for the refugees. The field hospital, organized by the Israeli government, was to be established in Macedonia, several miles from Kosovo, where British and Canadian aid delegations are already working.

The Jewish Agency for Israel, which is spearheading the humanitarian effort among Israelis, expected to collect and airlift 43 tons of equipment and food by the end of the week. Officials from the Jewish Agency flew to Albania to oversee the distribution of aid there.

Meanwhile, the American Jewish Committee has contributed \$25,000 to the relief effort for the refugees as an initial donation.

"We cannot stand silently while a human tragedy unfolds in Kosovo," said AJCommittee President Bruce Kramer.

Jewish leaders are showing their support for the Kosovo refugees in non-monetary ways as well. The World ORT Union recently met with some 20 non-governmental organizations in Albania. At the meeting, a group of human rights representatives and lawyers was established to interview Kosovar refugees now in Albania in order to document human rights violations that occurred before they fled their home province.

And when the national director of the Anti-Defamation League was asked to speak at an Albanian-sponsored rally last week opposing the Serbian policy of ethnic cleansing in Kosovo, Abraham Foxman was more than happy to accept.

"As Jews, we certainly understand ethnic cleansing and hate crimes," said Foxman. "And as complicated as the history is, one of the lessons of our history is not to be silent in the face of hatred."

About 300 people took part in the Albanian American Civic League-sponsored rally March 31 in front of the United Nations in New York. It is unclear how many Jews attended.

Martin Bresler, president of the American Jewish Committee's Belfer Center on American Pluralism, also spoke at the rally.

Jewish organizations collecting money for the refugees include:

- The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, JDC Kosovo Mailbox, 711 Third Ave., 10th Floor, New York, N.Y., 10017;
- The American Jewish World Service, Kosovar Relief Effort, 989 Avenue of the Americas, 10th Floor, New York, N.Y., 10018;
- B'nai B'rith International, Humanitarian Relief Fund, 1640 Rhode Island Ave. NW, Washington, D.C., 20036; and
- UJA Federations of North America, c/o Kosovo Refugee Fund, 111 Eighth Ave., Suite 11E, New York, N.Y., 10011. In addition, some local federations are collecting money. □

## Yeltsin backs Palestinian state, but urges more talks with Israel

By Lev Krichevsky

MOSCOW (JTA) — Russia supports Palestinian statehood, but would like to see it emerge as a result of negotiations with Israel, President Boris Yeltsin told visiting Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat this week.

Yeltsin said the negotiations should “meet the interests of all nations” in the Middle East, Sergei Prikhodko, a presidential aide, told reporters after Yeltsin hosted Arafat in the Kremlin on Tuesday, a day after the Palestinian leader arrived here.

Russian television showed Yeltsin vigorously embracing and kissing Arafat at the start of their meeting.

In recent weeks, Arafat has visited the United States and several European capitals to drum up support for Palestinian statehood. He has threatened to unilaterally declare a Palestinian state on May 4, when the interim period of Israeli-Palestinian peacemaking expires under the terms of the Oslo accords.

During his meeting with Arafat late last month, President Clinton reiterated U.S. policy that a Palestinian state can only emerge through negotiations with Israel.

Earlier this week, Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov said the Palestinian Authority should hold off on the unilateral declaration and give more time to the negotiating process.

Although an official co-sponsor of the Middle East peace process, Russia has long said it seeks a greater role in peacemaking efforts. To further that role, Ivanov is planning a four-day visit to the region next week. His itinerary includes a stopover in Israel.

Also next week, another Mideast leader — Syrian President Hafez Assad — is slated to visit Moscow.

Assad's visit comes as Russian officials reacted angrily to a decision last week by the United States to impose sanctions on three Russian firms for supplying anti-tank weapons to Syria, which Washington accuses of sponsoring terrorism.

U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright determined last Friday that the Russian government was involved in the deal, but did not slap sanctions on it, a move that preserved \$90 million in U.S. aid to Moscow.

Responding to the announced sanctions, the Russian Foreign Ministry released a statement saying that Moscow reserved the right to take “adequate retaliatory acts.”

The statement also called the sanctions another anti-Russian move that would only further sour U.S.-Russian relations, already strained by the ongoing NATO bombing of Yugoslavia.

The Russian Foreign Ministry said its cooperation with Syria does not violate any international agreements to which Russia is a signatory, nor does it disturb the balance of power in the Middle East.

A number of leading Moscow newspapers also criticized the U.S. sanctions. According to press reports, Russia is involved in a \$138 million deal to supply Syria with its Cornet-E and Metis-M anti-tank missile systems, which Russia insists are defensive weapons.

A leading Moscow newspaper that has a strong following among liberals wrote that the “discriminatory” move against the three Russian firms had been taken under pressure from the Jewish lobby in Washington.

Nezavisimaya Gazeta, one of the best-informed Moscow papers on military issues, also reported that 99 Russian experts and advisers are currently working with the Syrian armed forces, while Russia is training 77 Syrian army officers and generals in Russian military colleges.

According to the newspaper, plans are under way to supply Syria with Russian anti-aircraft missile systems.

Another Russian daily wrote in a front-page article that by announcing the sanctions Washington is “driving Russia into a corner.”

Izvestiya added that this is happening at a time when Moscow is desperately seeking ways to protect its interests in the Mediterranean while also staying out of the crisis in Kosovo.

The NATO campaign, aimed at ending Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic's campaign of ethnic cleansing in Kosovo, has created a wave of anti-American and anti-Western sentiment in Moscow.

Some Jews and members of other minority groups have grown increasingly worried by what they describe as “pro-Serbian hysteria,” a massive campaign in the mass media supportive of Russia's fellow Slavs in Yugoslavia.

But the situation changed somewhat this week, when Russian television stations began showing footage of the tens of thousands of refugees forced from their homes by Serbian forces. □

## Blast in downtown Moscow linked to synagogue attack?

By Lev Krichevsky

MOSCOW (JTA) — A powerful blast outside a downtown Moscow office of Russia's Federal Security Service on Sunday may have been the work of the same people who bombed a Moscow synagogue last May.

Sources in the Federal Security Service, the successor to the Soviet-era KGB, said the bomb that injured three people and shattered dozens of windows was identical to the device used in the bombing of the Marina Roscha Synagogue.

Security service officials also said that both bombs had been planted in a similar manner. The officials gave no explanation why those responsible for the synagogue attack would want to bomb the Federal Security Service office.

Security officials have made little progress in their investigation of the synagogue bombing, which caused no injuries but seriously damaged the building.

Other officials with the Federal Security Service believe that Sunday's bombing may have been the work of the same obscure group that claimed responsibility for a failed grenade launcher attack on the U.S. Embassy in Moscow late last month.

That attack was reportedly carried out to protest the U.S.-led NATO military operation in Yugoslavia.

The group that claimed responsibility for the failed embassy attack recently urged those U.S. citizens who were not in favor of the NATO air strikes to leave Moscow by last Saturday.

The group, called Skif — which stands for Scythian, an ancient warlike people — said it would continue “acts of retribution” against those Americans remaining in Moscow after its deadline. □