



# Daily News Bulletin

Vol. 77, No. 135

Tuesday, July 20, 1999

82<sup>nd</sup> Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Barak raises Pollard's fate

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak raised the fate of Jonathan Pollard with President Clinton and proposed separating the Israeli spy's release from the peace process, according to a senior U.S. official.

Barak said the matter should be handled privately and refused to answer questions about Pollard during a news conference Monday with Clinton.

### Israel, U.S. form policy group

President Clinton and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak agreed to establish the Strategic Policy Planning Group to bolster Israel's defense and deterrence capabilities.

The group will meet at four-month intervals, and the two leaders agreed Monday to meet regularly to review its recommendations. Israel sought the move to send a message that the U.S.-Israeli relationship has recovered from the tensions that marked the tenure of former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, according to Israeli officials.

### U.S. heartened by Syrian reports

The United States welcomed reports that Syria has asked radical Palestinian groups based there to halt their armed struggle against Israel.

"It would be welcome" to have those "organizations that have been the enemies of peace become supporters of peace," State Department spokesman James Rubin said Monday.

It is not clear if the reports are true, given a series of conflicting statements from radical Palestinian leaders in Damascus on Monday.

### 3,000 remember Argentine blast

Argentina's Jews marked the fifth anniversary of the deadly bombing of the Jewish community center in Buenos Aires by reiterating their long-standing calls for the capture of those responsible for the crime.

An estimated 3,000 people attended the ceremony Sunday commemorating the AMIA bombing, which killed 86 people and wounded some 300 others. Commemorations were also held Monday in New York.

Because of Tisha B'Av, the JTA DAILY NEWS BULLETIN will not be published Friday, July 23.

## NEWS ANALYSIS

### Barak seeks U.S. Jewish support as he pursues his peace policies

By Matthew Dorf

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Now that Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak has formed his government, set his peace policies and developed a warm relationship with President Clinton, he is working to line up the support of the American Jewish community.

"Find a way to unite yourselves to send a clear and unequivocal message into the American political system" to support Israel's peace policies, Barak urged American Jews, according to participants who attended a closed-door briefing for the Israel Policy Forum, a group that actively supports the peace process.

Making Middle East peace is like "moving down a corridor with surprises coming at you from both sides," Barak said during his six-day U.S. visit.

While he expects surprises from Israel's negotiating partners, and at times even from the United States, they should not come from American Jews placing obstacles in his path as he tries to reach agreements with Israel's Arab neighbors, he said.

His remarks came after announcing an ambitious 15-month deadline for setting a comprehensive framework for peace with Syria, Lebanon and the Palestinians while pushing the United States back into the role of facilitator rather than mediator.

In seeking American Jewish support, Barak has his work cut out for him.

He is about to move into final-status talks with the Palestinians to tackle the hardest issues in the Palestinian-Israeli peace process — Jerusalem, borders, settlements, statehood and refugees.

He is also proposing to return some, if not all, of the Golan Heights to Syria, and he wants to withdraw Israeli troops from Lebanon within a year.

Although Clinton spared no expense in welcoming Barak during his visit — he hosted the largest dinner at the White House during his presidency, made Barak only the third foreign leader to visit Camp David during his presidency and spent an unprecedented amount of time with him — disagreements between the United States and Israel will inevitably arise once the complex peace issues are put on the table.

And it is at such times when the support of American Jewry has proven crucial.

The American Jewish community overwhelmingly supports the peace process, surveys show, but those opposed to concessions to the Palestinians and Syrians have actively lobbied in Washington against such initiatives. So as Barak enters what he calls the "moment of truth" in the search for peace, he wants American Jews to help.

At the same time, Barak said that he respected that the American Jewish community is "independent and autonomous," and that not everyone agrees on the issues.

Unlike his mentor, slain Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who wrote off the Jewish community seven years ago in a way that was interpreted as "We don't need you," Barak tried to start off on a good note during his first visit since his May election.

During his meetings with the Policy Forum, the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations and the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, the pro-Israel lobby, Barak made clear that he wants and expects the American Jewish community to work with — not against — him.

"I told them, 'I need your support,' " Barak said in a brief interview during Sunday night's formal White House dinner.

With President Clinton standing at his side, Barak said American Jews should stop creating partisan fights on Capitol Hill on issues such as those involving Palestinian compliance with the peace accords. American Jews should put "all of their retroactive

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### NASA to launch Israeli astronaut

An Israeli astronaut and cargo will be launched on a U.S. space shuttle next year, President Clinton announced Monday. Clinton and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak agreed Monday to establish a committee made up of NASA and the Israel Space Agency for the "development of practical applications in the peaceful use of space."

### Army prepares for withdrawal

The Israeli Army began preparations for transferring a regional headquarters in the West Bank.

The work, being carried out near Jenin, is limited to surveying and land clearing, but it marks the first time since the Israeli elections in May that the army has prepared for a withdrawal from the West Bank.

### Sharansky suspends deportation

Israel's interior minister suspended the deportation investigation of a Russian immigrant whose son is in the Israeli army.

Natan Sharansky said he wanted to review overall ministry policy in deportation cases.

### Israel to restrict detentions

Israel's new justice minister plans to restrict the practice of jailing Arab prisoners without bringing charges against them.

Administrative detentions, which have been denounced by human rights groups, should be used "only in cases of real danger" to the Jewish state, Yossi Beilin told Israel Army Radio on Monday.

### Hamas leader freed

The Palestinian Authority freed a Hamas leader to allow him to attend his mother's funeral, Palestinian police officials said Monday.

They added that it was unclear whether Abdel Aziz Rantissi would be jailed again at the end of the traditional three-day mourning period.

differences aside" and work to restore bipartisan congressional support for the peace process, Barak told the three Jewish groups with whom he met.

AIPAC, which was criticized by Barak's aides last year for unnecessarily antagonizing the administration on behalf of Benjamin Netanyahu, met with the premier Monday. In an indication of the sensitivity of Barak's relations with the group, AIPAC officials refused to comment on the substance of their meeting.

But later in the day, AIPAC President Lonnie Kaplan went out of his way to express the group's support for the peace process.

"AIPAC, for its part, will spare no effort to support" Barak's quest for peace, he said. "Support for the peace process is support for Israel," he said.

But good will between AIPAC and Barak will not change the dynamic on Capitol Hill overnight, where lawmakers have worked to stake out positions supportive of Israel that some say complicate the peace process.

The Netanyahu government, which had strained relations with the Clinton administration, often encouraged such initiatives. But with Barak in power, the equation has been altered and the definition of a pro-Israel initiative is once again changing.

A series of initiatives critical of the Palestinians are making their way through Congress, including a measure that would punish the Palestinian Authority if it does not extradite terrorists suspected of killing American citizens. The legislation could come up for a vote as early as this week.

And already, some groups opposed to Israeli territorial concessions on the Golan Heights have begun to drum up congressional opposition to American participation if a peacekeeping force is part of an agreement.

Such efforts to use Congress to delegitimize Israel's peace partners have been denounced by the leaders of groups such as the Policy Forum.

"Any one of these initiatives may in fact be good policy and useful in fostering [Palestinian Authority] compliance," Marshall Breger, a Policy Forum activist, wrote in a recent op-ed. "Taken as a whole, however, they reflect a conscious effort to throw spikes into the newly energized peace train," said Breger, a law professor who served in the Reagan White House.

But the tide among lawmakers may be turning.

U.S. Rep. Anthony Weiner (D-N.Y.), who has proposed an initiative to strengthen U.S. recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital, said Congress should act "responsibly" on measures that could impact the peace process.

For example, he said in a telephone interview, now is not the time to oppose aid to the Palestinians that was agreed to during the Wye accord negotiations last fall.

When asked what other initiatives should be laid aside, Weiner said: "We'll know it when we see it."

For his part, Kaplan of AIPAC said before deciding its course of action, his group would look at each legislative initiative and determine whether it is "promoting the peace process or impeding it in some way."

Indicative of the challenges Barak will have in securing support for his vision of peace, activists say, was an exchange at a congressional hearing last week on Israel's treatment at the United Nations. Rep. Robert Wexler (D-N.Y.) said Israel should stop the peace process if a Palestinian-supported U.N. conference to criticize Israeli settlement activity convenes, which it later did, in Geneva.

Martin Indyk, the U.S. assistant secretary of state, politely cautioned Wexler that the Barak government, while opposed to the Geneva conference, had not taken such a hard line and asked him not to be "holier than the pope." Barak planned to make a similar argument, in lighter terms, when he met with lawmakers on Capitol Hill this week to encourage support for his peace initiatives, his aides said.

"The views of this new Israeli government are relatively well known so the bottom line is all of the organizations should really think about how not to be counterproductive to Israel and the American governments efforts to move the peace process forward," said Michael Sonnenfeldt, chairman of the Policy Forum.

But Barak's ideological opponents in the Jewish community say they must continue their work.

"If Arafat shows himself to be a demon by refusing to arrest and prosecute" terrorists who killed Americans, "it is not us demonizing him," said Morton Klein, president of the Zionist Organization of America. "He is a demon." □



## Daily News Bulletin

Caryn Rosen Adelman, President  
Mark J. Joffe, Executive Editor and Publisher  
Lisa Hostein, Editor  
Howard Levy, Managing Editor  
Lenore A. Silverstein, Business Manager

JTA DAILY NEWS BULLETIN is published five days a week, except holidays, by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency Inc., 330 Seventh Ave., New York, N.Y. 10001-5010. For information about how to subscribe by e-mail, fax or regular mail, call (212) 643-1890, or visit our Web site at [www.jta.org](http://www.jta.org).  
© JTA Reproduction only by previous arrangement.

## JEWISH WORLD

### Gore meets with peace group

Vice President Al Gore met Monday with some 160 Israeli and Arab campers from the Seeds of Peace group.

Following their meeting with Gore, the children serenaded Nava Barak, the wife of the Israeli premier, with songs of peace.

Gore is slated to host a lunch Tuesday at the State Department for Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak before Barak leaves Washington for London, where he is scheduled to meet Wednesday with British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

### Charges dropped against Israeli

Norwegian prosecutors dropped charges against a retired Israeli intelligence agent suspected of masterminding an assassination that killed the wrong man.

The case was dismissed Sunday, when prosecutors said it would probably be impossible to convict former Mossad agent Mike Harari due to lack of evidence and the amount of time that has passed since the 1973 killing.

Norwegian officials have long suspected that Harari planned the assassination of Moroccan waiter Ahmed Bouchikhi, who was apparently mistaken for Hassan Salameh, a PLO official suspected in the deaths of 11 Israeli athletes at the 1972 Munich Olympics.

### Lithuania questions collaborator

An 81-year-old man who was stripped of his U.S. citizenship in 1997 because of his World War II-era activities admitted he was part of a Nazi-allied police battalion, but denied he participated in a 1941 mass killing.

Kazys Ciriunskas made the comments when he was interrogated last month by Lithuanian prosecutors, according to the Reuters news agency.

The prosecutors added that they may have collected enough evidence to charge him with committing war crimes.

Ciriunskas left the United States in May to avoid deportation.

### Vatican official criticizes Israel

Israel angered the Vatican by refusing to acknowledge Catholic overtures of friendship, a Vatican representative said at a conference on anti-Semitism in Tel Aviv.

The Rev. David Yager blasted as a "blood libel" Jewish charges that Pope Pius XII refused to speak out against the Holocaust.

The national director of the Anti-Defamation League, Abraham Foxman, rejected the criticism, saying Monday that both sides "have responsibilities that we haven't fulfilled."

## Russian Jews hear loud message from political silence after stabbing

By Lev Krichevsky

MOSCOW (JTA) — In contrast to Israeli and American leaders, who swiftly and unambiguously condemned last week's stabbing of a Jewish leader in Moscow's Choral Synagogue, Russian politicians have been quiet about the attack.

Their silence is a "bad sign," according to Pavel Feldblum, the executive vice president of the Moscow Jewish community.

Feldblum attributed the silence to the fact that politicians "fear to lose votes by raising their voices against anti-Semitism."

"This silence is reflective of the mood of the Russian electorate," he said.

Indeed, outside of news reports carrying the condemnation by a minister who has not been part of the Russian Cabinet since the spring, Russian authorities have said little about the incident, which left Leopold Kaimovsky in the intensive care unit in a Moscow hospital with wounds to the face, stomach and leg.

While leading politicians have steered clear of commenting, the Russian media have given considerable air time and print to the anti-Semitic views of Nikita Krivchun, the 20-year-old assailant. Interviews with him taken in a detention center have appeared in all major newspapers and television news broadcasts.

Krivchun has been charged with attempted murder motivated by ethnic, racial or religious hatred. If found guilty, he could face up to 20 years in prison.

Meanwhile, Jewish sites in Moscow were given unprecedented protection last week after an unidentified individual called the Choral Synagogue to say that a neo-Nazi leader had ordered his organization to set up "actions" near several synagogues.

Last week, police also issued an official warning to Alexander Barkashov, the leader of Russian National Unity, Russia's largest and best-organized neo-Nazi group.

Nonetheless, the Russian Jewish Congress has sent a letter to the national election committee urging it to ban any party or candidate from December's parliamentary election who has made anti-Semitic remarks. □

## Stalin's grandson blames Jews for Russia's economic problems

By Lev Krichevsky

MOSCOW (JTA) — A grandson of Stalin has found a familiar target for Russia's current woes — the Jews.

Yevgeny Dzhugashvili charged that "Zionists" are ravaging Russia and that there are "practically no [ethnic] Russians" in the current Russian Cabinet, the Interfax news agency reported.

The statement was similar to a series of anti-Semitic remarks made in recent months by prominent members of the Communist Party, who charged that there have been too many Jews in the government of Russian President Boris Yeltsin and that they are responsible for Russia's ongoing economic and social problems.

Russia's 30-member government includes two officials with Jewish roots.

Stalin was responsible for several cruel waves of persecution in the Soviet Union, including some that involved anti-Semitism.

Dzhugashvili, a retired air force colonel, was speaking to a crowd of 100 supporters of several groups that rallied near Moscow's Red Square to protest Russian President Boris Yeltsin's reported intention to bury Lenin's embalmed body.

Earlier this year, Dzhugashvili launched a new group called the Stalinist Bloc, which supports the reconstitution of the Soviet Union.

Dzhugashvili, who like other descendants of Stalin kept a low profile during the later years of the Soviet Union, lives in the former Soviet republic of Georgia, where he heads the 50,000-member Stalin Society.

Earlier this year, he was quoted as saying at a public rally that "in contrast to the war against Nazi Germany, the enemy today is among us and hiding." □

## FOCUS ON ISSUES

**900 years later, Arab memories of Crusades shape view of Zionism***By Gil Sedan*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — It was just another day in Jerusalem's Old City, with tourists wending their way among Arab shops as they sought out one historic site after another.

But whether at the Tower of David or on the Via Dolorosa, few people realized that July 15 marked a historic anniversary: On that date, 900 years ago, the first Crusaders conquered the city, plunging Jerusalem into a bloodbath.

"Men rode in blood up to their knees and bridle reins," wrote a Crusader eyewitness.

"Indeed, it was a just and splendid judgment of God that this place should be filled with the blood of the unbelievers, since it had suffered so long from their blasphemies."

Arabs and Jews were slaughtered together by the Crusaders, yet some modern-day Arab historians, politicians and clergymen are using this legacy as a further wedge between the peoples, equating Zionists with the conquerors of nearly a millennium ago.

The Crusades lasted from the 11th to the 13th centuries, when nobles led armies from across Europe in holy wars aimed at taking the Holy Land from the Muslims or at repelling their various counterattacks.

The Christian faithful who heeded Pope Urban II's call in 1095 to conquer the "infidels" attached to their outer garments crosses — "croises" or "crociati" in local tongues — from which came the name "Crusaders."

In the Holy Land, the Crusades resulted in repeated slaughters of Jews and Muslims. In Europe, they led to repeated acts of anti-Semitic savagery.

No one knows for sure how many people were killed in Jerusalem on July 15, 1099.

Estimates range from between 3,000 to 70,000, including Muslims and Jews.

The Jews tried to find shelter in a local synagogue; the Muslims gathered at the Al-Aksa Mosque. The invaders set fire to both holy sites.

As they look back over the centuries, many Arabs recall with pride how in 1187 the great Muslim warrior Saladin struck a devastating blow to the Crusaders, who had believed they were in the Holy Land to stay. They hope a similar fate will befall those now governing Israel.

"The Arabs have leaned on the past with the hope that the fate of the Crusaders will also be that of the Zionists," said Professor Ben-Zion Kedar of the Hebrew University, an expert on the Crusades.

"This is an attempt to use the past in order to mold the present, but it is hardly a historic study."

The significance of Saladin's victory over the Crusaders cannot be overestimated. The Crusaders remained in Palestine nearly 200 years, but they lasted only 88 years in Jerusalem. It was only after Saladin's historic victory that Jerusalem captured a central role in Islam, along with the holy places in Mecca and Medina.

It is therefore not surprising that Arab historical and political writings, frustrated with the development and prosperity of the

Jewish state, have tried to draw parallels between Zionism and the Crusades.

"The similarity is there, all right," said Mohsen Yussuf, a member of the history department at Bir Zeit University, near Ramallah.

He pointed out that both movements originated in the West, adding his belief that both were religiously and militarily motivated.

But Yussuf himself is aware of a weak link in the comparison — that history may not repeat itself.

"I don't know that the fate of the Zionist movement will be identical to that of the Crusaders," he said.

The Van Leer Institute in Jerusalem last week devoted a daylong symposium to the place of the Crusades in the history of the region.

Professor Yehoshua Porat, one of the foremost scholars of the Palestinian national movement, said the Palestinian educational system is preoccupied with the Crusades.

The equation of the Crusades with Zionism "is not new," Porat said, "but the Palestinians, and not only them, bring new life into it."

Ya'acov Ahimeir, a well-known television moderator, recently wrote in the Israeli daily Ma'ariv that the office of Syrian President Hafez Assad is decorated with a carpet depicting the battle of Karnei Hittin, located near present-day Tiberias, where Saladin defeated the Crusaders, paving the way for the Muslim reconquest of Jerusalem.

"Let the first Israeli guest in Assad's bureau ask him to replace that carpet," wrote Ahimeir. "Let this be the first sign of normalization."

Kedar of Hebrew University criticizes those Arabs — and Israelis — whom he describes as being obsessed with the Crusades-Zionism comparison.

Unlike the Jews who forged the State of Israel, he pointed out, the Crusaders were not returning to their ancient homeland. Nor did they come after suffering a terrible tragedy in Europe.

"This was not their last shelter, and this is a major difference," he said.

Yussuf of Bir Zeit University noted another important difference.

"At least when you conquered Jerusalem, you did it without destroying the city."

Recently, a group of evangelical Christians known as Reconciliation Walk visited the Gaza Strip and begged the forgiveness of Muslims for the Crusades.

In response, a local religious leader reportedly told them: "It's all very nice, but the new Crusaders still occupy our lands."

Last week, on the 900th anniversary of the conquest of Jerusalem, the Christian mission of apology finally reached the Holy City.

Their arrival in Jerusalem marked the culmination of a journey that began three years ago in Cologne, Germany — where the First Crusade was launched in 1096 — to trace the path of the Crusaders to the Holy Land.

In Jerusalem, the Christians held hands as they sang and prayed outside the walls of the Old City.

They eventually met with Israel's chief rabbis and top clerics of the Muslim and Greek Orthodox faiths to beg forgiveness for the crimes committed by their forefathers. □