



# Daily News Bulletin

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## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Israel speeds up withdrawal

Israel accelerated its withdrawal from southern Lebanon after it became evident that its ally in the region, the South Lebanon Army, had collapsed.

Prime Minister Ehud Barak said the withdrawal would be completed in 10 days, but there are predictions it will happen much sooner.

Meanwhile, residents of northern Israel on Tuesday left bomb shelters, where they were ordered by the Israel Defense Force to spend the night to brace for possible shelling.

Officials in the coastal city of Acre and other towns said they were ready to take in families heading south for the time being. **[Page 4]**

### Bill to take aim at Wall ruling

Fervently Orthodox legislators in Israel's Knesset plan to present a bill next week aimed at bypassing a High Court of Justice ruling allowing the Women of the Wall group to pray at the Western Wall.

The Shas Party, which initiated the bill, hopes to exploit a six-month timetable the court gave the government to make arrangements for the prayer services.

### Gore addresses AIPAC

U.S. Vice President Al Gore defended the Clinton administration's involvement in Middle East peace negotiations.

The United States "facilitates but does not force peace," Gore said Tuesday, addressing participants at the annual policy conference of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee.

Gore also chided Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat and other Palestinian leaders for not quelling the recent violence in the West Bank. "This is a test for them," he said. **[Page 2]**

### Court fines Yahoo! for Nazi sales

Yahoo! broke French law when it allowed the sale of Nazi memorabilia on one of the Web sites it hosts, according to a Paris judge.

The judge ordered the Internet portal to pay some \$2,800 in fines and gave it two months to find a way to make the site inaccessible to Internet users in France.

Yahoo! officials said the ruling endangered the development of the Internet. **[Page 3]**

## Lobbyists wonder what it means to be an Israel supporter these days

By Sharon Samber

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Just what does it mean to support Israel's quest for peace when violence is flaring in the West Bank and Israeli troops are exchanging gunfire with Hezbollah fighters across the northern border with Lebanon?

The images emanating from Israel this week reflect a flare-up of tensions not seen in years, sparking some concern and confusion about the peace process among American Jews.

Some feel anxiety, others disillusionment.

Against this backdrop, the annual policy conference of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee this week brought together some 1,500 pro-Israel activists from around the country — including 650 students — to address some of the major political issues facing Israel.

The message from the pro-Israel lobby to its delegates was clear: The Jewish community as a whole must be unequivocal in its support for the peace process. The message came from several quarters, including Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak.

"When we are united, we are much stronger," Barak told delegates via satellite on Monday.

The premier canceled his planned trip to Washington at the last minute to handle the emerging crises with Lebanon and the Palestinians back home.

Less clear, however, was how to translate that support into action.

Jewish officials express a general concern about the difficulty in engaging American Jews as the peace process ebbs and flows.

Despite the current tensions with the Palestinians — talks in Sweden have been suspended in the wake of the latest Palestinian street violence — and a hiatus on Israeli-Syrian talks, there is a general sense that the process is moving forward.

"People have moved on to other issues," AIPAC's executive director, Howard Kohr, said in an interview. Asserting that many U.S. Jews erroneously think the peace process, especially between Israel and the Palestinians, is already a done deal, Kohr said, "Some people believe the peace process has ended. We say that's very dangerous."

Martin Raffel, associate executive vice chairman of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, agreed that more needs to be done to galvanize the grass roots.

Barak would like to see a "crystallization of support" from mainstream Jewish organizations, Raffel said.

"The American Jewish community is always able to respond to crisis," Raffel said. "But can we be a community that galvanizes in times of normalcy, not only when Israel is at war, but also when it is engaged in active peacemaking?"

For some grass-roots activists, support means letting the Israelis do what they see fit.

"Support means for the Israeli government and people to make the decisions," said David Schluskel, a participant from Teaneck, N.J. "We don't want to micromanage the peace process."

Others show their support through newspaper ads.

Thinking that Barak would be in the United States over the weekend, two groups that are staunch Barak supporters — the Israel Policy Forum and the Center for Middle East Peace and Economic Cooperation — advertised their support for the prime minister.

"We salute Ehud Barak," blared a full-page ad in Sunday's New York Times by the

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### U.N. OKs Lebanon plan

The U.N. Security Council endorsed a plan to verify Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon. The plan, based on recommendations by U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, also seeks to help establish the Lebanese government's authority over the region.

### Arabs hail withdrawal

Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon proves that "occupation never lasts," according to an aide to Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat. The withdrawal was also greeted by other Arab leaders.

### Talks to resume in Sweden

Israeli-Palestinian negotiations will resume soon in Sweden, according to the top Israeli official at the talks. Public Security Minister Shlomo Ben-Ami also said Tuesday that differences between the two sides remained "very, very substantial." Israel summoned home its negotiating team on Monday because of violence in the West Bank.

### Abu Dis housing plan attacked

A plan by the Jerusalem municipality to build Jewish housing in an Arab village near Jerusalem may lead to violence, according to the top Palestinian official in Jerusalem.

"It is clear that the plan aims to put another obstacle in the way of" transferring Abu Dis to full Palestinian control, said Faisal Hussein.

### Medical team leaves for Ethiopia

An Israeli doctor and two Israeli nurses departed for their native Ethiopia on Tuesday as part of a volunteer medical team offering emergency assistance to the famine-stricken nation.

The team, which is on a three-week mission, will work with local authorities to assess health needs and establish a medical outreach program. Israel expects to send another team next month.

Center for Middle East Peace, which is chaired by S. Daniel Abraham.

As activists fanned out over Capitol Hill to lobby members of Congress on Tuesday, their messages of support were mostly general, though they did address the likelihood that more U.S. funds would be required to complete the peace process.

Talking points distributed to delegates included the message that the United States has "played a key role as facilitator of the peace process and must continue to play a critical role in providing Israel the security assistance it needs to take risks for peace.

"Peace does not come cheap, but it is a lot less expensive than war," delegates were instructed to tell their legislators. The message was similar to the words of Barak.

"The risks and price of peace are high, but the risk and price of war are unthinkable," Barak said in his remarks Monday as he urged participants to increase their support by lobbying Congress but also by working in their Jewish communities.

Lonny Kaplan, president of AIPAC, pledged that support to Barak, saying to widespread applause, "We stand ready to do anything."

While the overwhelming tenor of the conference suggested that American Jews are willing to stand by Barak, not everyone here embraces his policies.

At conference forums some participants challenged speakers about the displacement of residents of northern Israel and Jewish settlers should land be given to the Palestinians and Syrians. "Is Israel giving land away?" is the only question asked," said Morton Klein, national president of the Zionist Organization of America.

Klein said Barak should demand that Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat honor his obligations of the Oslo agreement, namely to arrest Palestinian terrorists and stop the spread of anti-Semitism in Palestinian textbooks and media.

Rabbi Herzl Kranz, an AIPAC participant from Silver Spring, Md., echoed Klein's disapproval and berated Barak for the current problems.

"We need Jewish leadership to stand up and do what has to be done," Kranz said. "Barak is giving everything away. It's madness." □

## Gore touts his longstanding ties to Israel, Jewish community

By Sharon Samber

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Vice President Al Gore defended the Clinton administration's involvement in Middle East peace negotiations this week, telling a Jewish crowd that the United States "facilitates but does not force" peace.

Speaking Tuesday morning to delegates at the annual policy conference of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, Gore seemed to be responding to remarks made a day earlier by his political rival, Texas Gov. George W. Bush.

Bush, addressing the same crowd, had reiterated the Republican stance that the United States must not interfere with Israel's democratic process, intimating that the Clinton administration pushes Israel too much on various issues.

"In recent times, Washington has tried to make Israel conform to its own plans and timetables," Bush had told the gathering, adding, "But that is not the path to peace."

Gore also chided Yasser Arafat and other Palestinian leaders for not quelling the recent violence in the West Bank. It is their responsibility to prevent violence, Gore said. "This is a test for them," he told the packed hotel ballroom.

Gore used the occasion to punctuate his long-standing relationship to Israel and his foreign policy expertise. "Commitment to Israel is not new to me," Gore said in an implicit swipe at Bush's lack of experience.

This year was the first time AIPAC hosted both presidential candidates at its policy gathering. Despite welcoming receptions for both candidates, judging by the applause and reaction of the audience, Bush is still No. 2 to Gore.

Perhaps this isn't surprising, given that despite recent inroads for Jewish Republicans, American Jews still overwhelmingly vote Democratic.

Gore, who has spoken to many Jewish audiences, did his best to show his connections to the American Jewish community by extending greetings to AIPAC board members and acknowledging personal friends in the audience. He received a minutes-long round of applause before he even spoke a single word. □



### Daily News Bulletin

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## JEWISH WORLD

### U.S.-German slave talks fail

U.S. and German negotiators were unable to reach agreement on details for creation of a \$5 billion fund for Nazi-era slave laborers.

As a result, it is unclear whether President Clinton will be able to sign the agreement when he visits Germany during the first week of June.

The two sides had been seeking a formula under which German firms will not face any future lawsuits in the United States after they contribute to the fund.

### Groups oppose anti-secrecy bill

U.S. Jewish groups oppose legislation that would ban the use of classified information to deport suspected terrorists.

An official with the Anti-Defamation League, Tom Homburger, criticized the Secret Evidence Repeal Act during testimony before the House Judiciary Committee and called for an approach that would balance the rights of suspected terrorists with national security interests. His testimony was supported by groups including the American Jewish Congress, Hadassah, and the Jewish Council for Public Affairs.

### French minister attacks Germany

France's interior minister created an uproar when he declared in a television interview that Germany "has not been cured of the derailment that Nazism represented in its history."

Jean-Pierre Chevenement, who also said Germany "still dreams of the Holy Roman Empire," was reacting to Germany's recent call for a strong collective government for the European Union.

Among those angered by his comments, French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin demanded a public explanation from Chevenement. Former French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, who worked in the past to foster French-German relations, said he was "scandalized" by Chevenement's comments.

### Report: Haider met with Gadhafi

Austrian politicians called for an explanation of why far-right leader Jorg Haider paid a visit to Libyan leader Muammar Gadhafi.

An American journalist spotted Haider and the director of an Austrian bank visiting Gadhafi last week, according to two Austrian magazines.

### Police nab 'Martin Bormann'

An Australian police squad formed to protect the Sydney Olympic Games arrested a man for possession of a large cache of explosives.

The man, who had changed his name to Martin Bormann to honor one of Hitler's closest officials, also kept neo-Nazi and other racist pamphlets in his home, according to court documents.

## French tell Yahoo! to block sale of Nazi memorabilia on Web site

By Joshua Schuster

PARIS (JTA) — A French court is holding Yahoo! accountable for its role in the burgeoning market of Nazi memorabilia available on the Internet and ordered it to stop allowing the goods to be sold in France.

The court told the Internet portal on Monday that it has until July 24 to "make it impossible" for Web surfers in France to purchase items put up for auction by international merchandise dealers on one of the company's Web sites.

Judge Jean-Jacques Gomez told the firm the auctions were "an offense to the collective memory of the country" and ordered Yahoo! to pay fines of some \$1,400 each to the two French-based groups that issued the complaint against the Internet firm—the International League Against Racism and Anti-Semitism, and the Union of French Jewish Students.

Marc Levy, a lawyer for the league, welcomed the judgment with "great satisfaction" and said that the Internet "risks becoming a zone of nonlaw."

Levy added that he "was surprised that such legal action had not been taken earlier."

The ruling is the first of its kind in France to condemn an Internet company for selling Nazi artifacts, and it may set a precedent for further legal actions.

Executives from the California-based company said they support the "emotional" cause of ridding the Internet of racism. They added that they would try to comply with the ruling.

But the director of Yahoo! France, Philippe Guillanton, questioned whether the company could comply with Monday's ruling.

"There is no filtration method that can be 100 percent effective" in blocking sales of Nazi items in France, he said.

The ruling followed a string of recent protests against Internet sites for profiting from the sale of Nazi paraphernalia.

On Yahoo!'s auction site, more than 1,000 Nazi items are currently for sale, including Third Reich medals, uniforms and used Zyklon B canisters similar to those that were used in the gas chambers.

Several other Internet auction sites, including eBay, make similar memorabilia available.

The availability of such items over the Internet is creating a difficult international legal situation.

In Germany, for example, it is illegal to sell Nazi artifacts, while they are legally sold in the United States.

Auction-based Web sites, whose content crosses international borders at the click of a mouse, contend that no technology exists to prevent surfers in one country from accessing materials deemed illegal by other nations.

A larger issue, said Cristophe Pecnard, a lawyer for Yahoo!, is whether a French court can rule on "the English-language content of a U.S. site, run by a U.S. firm subject to U.S. law, for the sole reason that French users have access via Internet."

"An identical stand by judges in foreign countries would oblige French operators of Internet sites to comply with the laws of more than 100 countries," said Pecnard.

"Such a functioning of the justice system at international level constitutes a risk to the development of the Internet in France and the rest of the world." □

## Russian prosecutor takes on newspaper

MOSCOW (JTA) — A Russian prosecutor recently charged a local newspaper that published an anti-Semitic pamphlet with inciting racial and ethnic strife.

The prosecutor opened the case after a request by the Moscow office of the Anti-Defamation League, which was alerted to the pamphlet by local Jewish groups.

"The Catechism of the Jew," based on the 19th-century forgery "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion," passes itself off as a document originating in Israel that teaches Jews how to seize control of the media and society in order to rule Russia. □

## Jubilation, confusion and fear as Israel calls its troops home

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israeli soldiers crossing the border from southern Lebanon this week took time out at at least one military outpost to hastily take down the Israeli flag and sing Hatikvah, Israel's national anthem.

The gesture was made, as one Israeli soldier put it, so "we would have the good feeling we are not leaving with our tail between our legs."

At the border crossing, soldiers dropped their gear and pulled out cellular phones to call their parents. "Just so my mom knows she can now sleep at night," said one soldier.

The images of cheering and singing Israeli army soldiers crossing the northern border dominated the news media here this week amid an accelerated withdrawal that Prime Minister Ehud Barak said could be completed within days.

But the images mixed with fear and confusion among Israel's northern residents as gunfire erupted across the border and fundamentalist Hezbollah fighters occupied many of the border villages abandoned by fleeing members of Israel's ally, the South Lebanon Army.

Some soldiers expressed mixed feelings about the pullback because of these concerns.

"My feeling is half-happy and half-sad," one soldier was quoted as saying. "For me, the personal danger is reduced, but I feel as if I'm abandoning the security of Israel right now."

The escalating tension dashed hopes for a quiet, orderly withdrawal from Lebanon.

The Israeli government had pledged to withdraw the troops by July 7. But the emerging collapse of the SLA as the Israeli army began the initial transfer of outposts to its South Lebanon Army ally raised the likelihood that the withdrawal would be completed sooner, possibly within 10 days, to avoid further fighting.

In recent days, Hezbollah has established a foothold in dozens of Lebanese villages as SLA troops abandoned posts in the area, turned themselves in to Lebanese authorities, or sought asylum in Israel.

The proximity of some of the towns to Israeli settlements on the border has raised concern that the Iranian- and Syrian-backed Hezbollah will use them to launch attacks on Israel.

Barak sought to play down concerns over the latest developments. "We considered far more difficult scenarios," Barak said, adding, "We are not facing the worst-case scenario right now."

Barak reiterated a stern warning to Hezbollah and all other parties in Lebanon that Israel would respond severely to any attacks on its soldiers or citizens.

The Israeli army chief-of-staff, Lt. Gen. Shaul Mofaz, echoed these remarks in an appearance before the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee on Tuesday.

Mofaz was quoted as saying that Israel would retaliate harshly against any attacks on soldiers or civilians during the withdrawal. Such retaliation would target Lebanese infrastructure, Syrian interests and all other "sources of power" in Lebanon, he said.

Israel established the nine-mile-wide security zone 22 years ago to protect northern settlements from cross-border attacks. However, amid rising public pressure in the face of continuing

Israeli casualties, Barak promised to pull out of the security zone, saying it no longer served its purpose.

"The Katyusha rockets continue to come, fired from outside the security zone," Barak said, arguing that Israel's military might is its primary defense and deterrent to future attacks.

In towns and villages along Israel's northern border, residents emerged from bomb shelters where they had spent Monday night at the order of the Israel Defense Force.

The IDF said residents could resume their daily lives, but reminded them to be on alert for future directives, given the likelihood the security situation could change at any moment.

Many families, however, chose not to wait out the withdrawal. The Acre municipality, further south on the coast, said it was making arrangements to take in northern residents opting to seek calmer surroundings during the turbulent period.

And local officials in the northern settlements, including the largest town of Kiryat Shmona, fear the new situation will prompt a permanent exodus from the area.

Meanwhile, along the shores of the Sea of Galilee, more than 1,000 SLA members and their families arrived at a holiday village set up for those seeking asylum.

Interior Minister Natan Sharansky said Israel would do what it could to help the SLA members, including those interested in settling in other countries.

In Jerusalem, Foreign Minister David Levy insisted that Israel had not abandoned its South Lebanon Army ally.

Levy stressed that Israel also holds the Lebanese government directly responsible for maintaining quiet and order along the border following the Israeli withdrawal.

He also said Israel does not expect United Nations peacekeepers stationed in Lebanon to have any role in Israel's defense.

At the United Nations, meanwhile, the Security Council adopted Secretary-General Kofi Annan's recommendations for the U.N.'s role in the Israeli withdrawal, calling for an increased peacekeeping force from 4,500 to 5,600, and ultimately, to 7,900.

The Security Council also said that Israel must pull back completely to within its internationally recognized border for its withdrawal to be officially "confirmed" by the international body.

Annan also concluded that Israel may remain in Shabaa Farms, a small hamlet Lebanon had laid claim to. In fact, the land belongs to Syria, but its return must be a subject of Israeli-Syrian negotiations, the report concluded.

Israeli diplomats said they were satisfied with the report. "It gives clear demands of the Lebanese government to reassert its sovereignty over south Lebanon," said one Israeli diplomat. "It tells the Lebanese, 'It's your country, your responsibility.'"

However, with the situation on the ground increasingly chaotic, Israeli officials are concerned that some countries may be reluctant to send their troops into an unstable, potentially dangerous environment.

"If they get cold feet, the situation will still not disappear," said a senior Israeli diplomat.

"The thing to do is to consolidate and reinforce its position in an area that's troubled," the diplomat said, on condition of anonymity.

"Because the situation is volatile, it is the responsibility of the international community to restore peace and stability. Having said that, the ultimate guarantee for the citizens of Israel is the Israeli defense forces." □