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TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Cease-fire breaks down

A brief cease-fire Tuesday abruptly ended with Palestinian and Israeli gunfire in the West Bank and Gaza Strip on the sixth day of rioting that has claimed more than 55 lives.

Israel's deputy chief of staff, Maj. Gen. Moshe Ya'alon, said he believes the worst fighting is still ahead.

Israel admits to killing boy

Israel admitted that a 12-year-old Palestinian killed in a gun battle was struck by Israeli bullets.

"This was a grave event, an event we are all sorry about," said the Israeli army's chief of operations.

Saturday's shooting of the boy was captured by French television and shown throughout the world.

Clinton: Violence may spur peace

The violence between Israel and the Palestinians that has raged during the past week may spur both sides into reaching a peace deal, said President Clinton.

Meanwhile, the U.S. State Department advised Americans to avoid travel to the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Jerusalem.

CIA director to join talks

The director of the CIA will join U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright when she meets with Israeli and Palestinian leaders in Paris on Wednesday in an attempt to quell the ongoing violence in Middle East.

George Tenet will attend the meetings "to assist in the discussion on security matters," said State Department spokesman Philip Reeker.

Bomb damages German shul

A synagogue in Dusseldorf, Germany, was firebombed by vandals who threw as many as three Molotov cocktails against the shul's main door.

No one was injured and damage was minimal in Monday night's incident. Michel Friedman, vice president of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, said that on the 10th anniversary of the country's reunification, "The Nazis and their violence in both East and West are also united."

Also Monday night, vandals painted swastikas on the bell tower at the site of the former Buchenwald concentration camp.

NEWS ANALYSIS

As Israeli Arabs join the riots, many wonder if nation can heal

By David Landau

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Jews joined the world in anguish at the video broadcast around the globe this week of a 12-year-old Palestinian boy shot to death as he crouched with his father for safety.

It spoke to the horror that befell Israel and the Palestinians this past week as more than 55 died in days of rioting, touched off Sept. 28 when Likud Party leader Ariel Sharon visited the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, a site holy to both Jews and Muslims.

On the very cusp of a historic peace agreement, the two nations seem to have flung themselves backward into the blood and strife of the past.

For Israelis, the week's nightmare has been immeasurably exacerbated by other footage — less stark, perhaps, but no less shocking — of Israeli Arab citizens fighting with, and being shot down by, Israeli Jewish policemen in towns and on roads in the heart of the country.

For the wider world, the distinction between the nearly 3 million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the roughly 1 million Palestinians who are citizens of Israel blurred behind the palls of smoke.

The Palestinian propaganda machine was naturally eager to intensify this blurring process.

But for Israelis, this week's internal intifada, or uprising, came as a devastating surprise.

Never before in its 52-year history has Israel seen such widespread violence.

Jaffa, Haifa, Acre — mixed cities that have known harmony for decades — suddenly turned into battlefields. In the all-Arab areas of the Galilee, roads were blocked, civilians and police were attacked, and banks and Jewish businesses were brutalized.

At the height of the 1987-93 Palestinian intifada, Israeli Arabs, though plainly sympathetic toward the plight and the struggle of their cousins across the border, were always careful to stop short of joining the violence themselves.

Israeli Jews, for their part, grew to believe in the distinction demarcated by the "green line" separating the West Bank and Gaza from Israel proper.

This week, the Israeli Arab political leadership accused the police in northern Israel of provoking the extreme violence that engulfed their community by resorting far too readily to the use of rubber-coated bullets instead of the nonlethal riot equipment usually deployed by police forces in democratic countries.

The scenes in Prague last week, when thousands of police successfully contained anti-World Bank demonstrators from across Europe with such methods, were widely cited.

The social and political ramifications of the new Israeli Arab militancy are hard to predict.

In the heat of the rioting, many here feared that the delicate fabric of Jewish-Arab coexistence inside Israel has been irreparably torn apart.

As the week went on, some were saying that efforts need to be redoubled to allay deep-seated grievances simmering beneath the political and religious fury that triggered the week's events.

But the fact that at least eight Israeli Arabs are lying in fresh graves will not be quickly or easily forgotten by a community that numbers almost 20 percent of the

MIDEAST FOCUS

Sharon: Let's go down new path

Israel should still negotiate with the Palestinians despite the outbreak of violence, but talks should go along a different line, said Israel's opposition leader.

Likud Party head Ariel Sharon, appearing on a U.S. news show Tuesday morning, insisted his visit to the Temple Mount on Sept. 28 did not start the rioting and said the failed Camp David summit in July caused "most of the difficulties."

The hawkish politician said Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat believes that if he puts more pressure on Israel, "then he will get everything that he wants."

Envoy unveils Czech memorial

Israel's ambassador to the Czech Republic unveiled a memorial plaque in a newly reconstructed synagogue in the Czech town of Breclav.

The plaque dedicated Sept. 28 by Erelly Hadar bears Czech and Hebrew inscriptions reminding visitors that many of the town's 600 Jews were murdered during World War II.

Delta, El Al team up

Delta Airlines will feed passengers from nine U.S. cities into flights on Israel's national airline, according to Reuters.

El Al officials said that Delta will sell tickets for El Al's daily nonstop flights from New York's JFK Airport to Tel Aviv and El Al will sell Delta tickets to nine Delta destinations in the United States.

Israeli firms may be double-listed

Israeli firms could soon be listed both on Wall Street and the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange after a Knesset panel approved new regulations Tuesday.

Officials hope that dual listing will increase trading volume in Israel.

Some of Israel's largest companies trade only in the United States.

total population. That fact must inevitably cast a pall of uncertainty over Prime Minister Ehud Barak's ability to retain crucial support from the 10 Arab Knesset members.

Without that support, he can have no hope of maintaining a narrow-based, center-left government into the Parliament's winter term, which opens at the end of this month.

Beyond political arithmetic, Israeli Jews and Arabs are wondering how much trust, if any, remains between the majority and minority communities in the Jewish state.

They wonder how seriously business and trade will be affected, and for how long. Will Israelis still flock to Arab restaurants, Arab garages, Arab shops, after the nights of mayhem they have all witnessed on their television screens?

If violence can sweep through the familiar streets so quickly, can contort familiar faces so totally, what are the chances of even a modest facade of neighborly relations being reconstituted?

Given the remarkable resiliency of individuals and society, the prospects of the week's illness being healed are probably better than they appear right now.

But the same disturbing questions are necessarily nagging at Israel's policymakers when they contemplate the collapse of trust between their state and the Palestinians' state-in-the-making.

Only last week, Barak and Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat were dining jovially together at the prime minister's home in Kochav Yair, at what both sides said was their warmest meeting ever.

Forty-eight hours later, they were enemies.

Urged on by the international community, the two leaders strove this week to rein in the violence — and even to turn the unrest into a catalyst for resumed peace negotiations.

On Wednesday, they were scheduled to meet with U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in Paris.

Later, they were to fly to Egypt for talks there organized by President Hosni Mubarak.

Plainly these goodwill endeavors by America and Egypt are predicated on the dual hope that the violence can be stopped and that a new determination to achieve peace can be nurtured.

Some observers in Israel maintained that the week's disturbances, though unforeseen in their ferocity, could have been expected once the peace process touched the raw nerve of Jerusalem and the Temple Mount.

These observers suggested that in hindsight, the dozens of fatalities and hundreds of injuries might yet be seen as the last blood that needed to be spilled so that the two combatants could finally lay down their arms and make the painful concessions that a peace settlement requires.

Another view, however, was just as cogent — and seemed more realistic — against the backdrop of the ongoing disturbances.

This view holds that the violence will have hardened the hard-liners on both sides and will make it all the more difficult for the two leaders to achieve a workable agreement and secure a solid majority behind it.

Many Israeli Jews have grave misgivings about sharing Jerusalem, which had become a major sticking point in negotiations.

And on the Palestinian side, concessions on Jerusalem are likely even more unpalatable, now that dozens of people have died — as Palestinian opinion sees it — defending Islamic claims in the holy city. □

U.N. speakers grumble about Israel

JERUSALEM (JTA) — The U.N. Security Council backed away Tuesday from a statement criticizing Israel for the recent outbreak of violence after it became apparent that the United States would not go along with the document, according to Israeli diplomatic sources.

But many of the delegates blasted Israel for what they deemed Israeli provocation and excessive use of violence. □



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JEWISH WORLD

Court rules against grad. speech

Students prevented from delivering a religious speech at a high school graduation did not have their freedom of speech violated, a U.S. appeals court ruled.

Meanwhile, the Supreme Court refused Monday to hear a case about student-led prayer at graduations, asking the lower court to reconsider the case in light of the high court's decision that found student-led prayer at public school sports events unconstitutional.

Arab Americans plan protests

Arab Americans are planning protests in major U.S. cities against the killing of Palestinians in Israel during the past week.

The American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee is organizing the protests in several U.S. cities.

Mayor removes Orthodox fence

A Jewish mayor of a northern New Jersey town with a growing Orthodox community is ordering the removal of an eruv, or fence permitting observant Jews to carry things on Shabbat, according to the Bergen Record newspaper.

Mayor Ann Moscovitz of Tenafly said local Orthodox Jews had constructed the eruv without first obtaining appropriate building permits.

Group pulls magazine support

The American Jewish Committee is withdrawing its financial support from a 5-year-old magazine aimed at exploring relations between blacks and Jews.

A spokesman for the AJCommittee told The New York Times that the group is investigating other ways outside of Common Quest magazine to address black/Jewish issues.

Lithuania to return Torah scrolls

Lithuania's Parliament voted to return hundreds of Torah scrolls to international Jewish communities.

The Sept. 24 move came after pressure from international groups, and just before the country hosts an international conference on Holocaust assets, which began Tuesday. Earlier, the Lithuanian government repealed a law that would have rehabilitated the country's short-lived pro-Nazi wartime government.

Soccer players shut out

Jewish soccer moms and dads in a Connecticut children's soccer league had to have their boys sit out a tournament match on Rosh Hashanah.

Now their girls may miss their final event as well because it's scheduled on Yom Kippur. The Anti-Defamation League's regional office in New Haven is criticizing the Connecticut Junior Soccer Association for the scheduling conflicts.

Lieberman's praise of Farrakhan called dangerous and misguided

By Sharon Samber

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Vice-presidential candidate Joseph Lieberman's receptiveness to meeting with Louis Farrakhan, the Nation of Islam leader condemned for his anti-Semitic remarks, has raised some eyebrows in the Jewish community.

Many Jews, alternately elated at the prospect of a Jewish vice president and embarrassed by any negative press Lieberman generates, are questioning the candidate's motives and political savvy.

Lieberman's outreach to Farrakhan is generally being seen as an effort to reach out to the wider black community, where Farrakhan stands on the fringe, but still has a following.

Ever since his nomination, Lieberman has taken pains to explain his positions to the black community and tout his record as an early supporter of civil rights.

At the Democratic convention in July, Lieberman was pressured into explaining his support for affirmative action to the Democratic National Committee's Black Caucus before the group gave him its full backing.

Lieberman's latest controversial remark came during an interview last week with a black-oriented radio station, American Urban Radio Networks, in which he said that he "respected" Farrakhan and his efforts to promote voter registration.

"I have respect for him and I have respect for the Muslim community generally," Lieberman said.

Lieberman, who characterized some of Farrakhan's past remarks as "not informed," said he was looking forward to meeting with Farrakhan and wanted to work with him to promote racial and religious reconciliation.

Sources close to the situation say no meeting is scheduled and the prospect for such a meeting is unlikely.

Farrakhan has often been criticized for his inflammatory rhetoric, which includes calling Judaism a "gutter religion" and Hitler a great man, and referring to Jewish, Arab and Asian businessmen in black communities as "bloodsuckers."

Farrakhan had questioned in August whether Lieberman, an Orthodox Jew, might be more loyal to Israel to the United States.

In the Jewish community, the reaction to Lieberman's comments was swift. Republican and some Jewish defense groups pounced on the statements as misguided and dangerous. The Anti-Defamation League told Lieberman that if he were to meet with Farrakhan he would be "legitimizing a bigot, an anti-Semite and a racist."

The American Jewish Congress said such a meeting would be a "disaster."

Such a meeting, the AJCongress said, "would send a message that you are prepared to accept repeated insults to the Jewish people and minimize the danger to all America from those who advocate overt and blatant racism."

The controversy also spilled into the political realm.

Calling Farrakhan a "virulent hater," Matthew Brooks, executive director of the Republican Jewish Coalition, said Lieberman's comments "give credibility and legitimacy" to Farrakhan's message of anti-Semitism.

Lieberman's Democratic supporters tried to downplay the issue.

Ira Forman, executive director of the National Jewish Democratic Council, said Lieberman has a proven track record of commitment to the Jewish community's interests, but admitted that he would not have suggested a meeting with Farrakhan.

When Farrakhan tried to ingratiate himself to Republicans in 1997, Forman seized the opportunity to say that "Democrats and Republicans, Jews and non-Jews, must reject Farrakhan," and that the NJDC condemned Farrakhan.

"We've worked within the Democratic Party to exclude Farrakhan from the political process and will continue to do so," he said at the time.

Forman said he stands by his previous statements.

The Gore-Lieberman campaign, not surprisingly, also played down the whole issue.

His spokesman, Dan Gerstein, said Lieberman's remarks were not new, since he had said the same thing after he was selected to be the vice presidential candidate. □

BEHIND THE HEADLINES**Israelis seek to stem damage as image of peacemaker fades***By Michael J. Jordan*

NEW YORK (JTA) — Less than a month ago, Israel's efforts to seek peace had boosted the Jewish state to unprecedented heights in the court of world opinion.

But this week the luster was fading fast, as bloody clashes between Jews and Arabs continued to rock the region.

In response, Israeli officials and some Jewish groups were working feverishly to minimize the harm to the country's international image.

The offensive appeared to be three-pronged: defuse criticism on the diplomatic front, inform American rabbis about the on-the-ground situation so they could fill in their congregants at Yom Kippur services next week and contact the media that is so influential in making first and lasting impressions on the public.

At the United Nations Security Council on Tuesday, an effort to push through a statement critical of Israel failed when it became apparent that the United States, a permanent member of the council, would not go along with the document, according to Israeli diplomatic sources.

The text, which was debated at a special session, would have condemned the violence against Palestinian civilians without mentioning Israel explicitly.

Israel's ambassador to the United States acknowledged that the broadcast of dramatic footage of the rioting has not helped Israel's position in the international arena.

"TV pictures are not assisting us in public opinion," David Ivry told JTA, adding that the Jewish state is acting in self-defense. "Violence is against our interest."

Not surprisingly, there is disagreement in the Jewish community about what spin should be put on the events in the Holy Land.

In a conference call Monday between Israeli officials and American Jewish organizational leaders, one topic focused on shifting blame from Likud Party leader Ariel Sharon — for sparking the conflagration with his visit to the Temple Mount in Jerusalem last week — to Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat for not acting to extinguish it.

"There's a polemical war going on here," one dovish participant on the call told JTA, "and in the rules of a polemical war, if you acknowledge your warts, you weaken your case."

By the end of the call, said the source, who asked not to be identified, "it was clear that not everybody agreed with the proposal that all blame should be laid at Arafat's feet."

Still, many Jewish organizations were rallying to Israel's defense. In a barrage of faxes sent out early this week, several Jewish groups blamed Arafat for the violence and called on him to restore stability to the region.

To some, the media coverage echoes coverage of the Palestinian uprising that dominated news coverage from the area in the late 1980s and early 1990s: simplistic portrayals of armed Israeli soldiers versus stone-throwing Palestinian youth.

"Everybody loves the blood and guts shown on the 6 o'clock news," said Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

"But the media has not given an even-handed account. The fact that this violence is clearly orchestrated and Arafat has done

nothing to stop it is lost in the message. They present the defenseless Palestinian, but you rarely hear about the Palestinian police using live ammunition and shooting at Israelis."

Responding to international criticism that Israelis have used excessive force, Hoenlein said, "Could there be cases of excessive force? Certainly, but it's very easy to judge from over here what soldiers should do when they are under fire."

An Israel diplomat disagreed that a media bias is inherent. But the diplomat, who asked that he not be identified, conceded that "there is a tendency to show Israelis without a human face."

In an effort to correct the perceived imbalance, Israeli officials are suggesting a number of human-interest features for the Western media to report.

Not only do they focus on Israeli casualties, both military and civilian, but on examples of Israeli and Palestinian cooperation that are occurring in medical and rescue units.

Still, the media's graphic images not only shape world opinion, but have left many ordinary Jews confused and uncertain how to react, said Thomas Smerling, director of the Israel Policy Forum's Washington Policy Center, a group that strongly advocates for the peace process.

Those Jews opposed to concessions are relieved to see the peace process derailed, at least temporarily, said Smerling. "People are not sure what to do. On one hand, they don't want to see Israel's image dragged through the mud. On the other hand, they themselves are very pained by what they see on TV.

"There's a general sense of dismay. Since hopes have run so high for an end to the conflict, to see it slip back to street violence is dismaying. But those Jews professionally involved with the peace process understand that this is part of a longer-term cycle. The peace process has proven resilient."

To soothe anxiety and keep the Jewish community better informed, organizations like the Jewish Council for Public Affairs and the Conference of Presidents are preparing "talking points" for rabbis and community leaders.

"There's a battle for public opinion as to who's responsible for the violence," said Martin Raffel, associate executive vice chairman of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs.

"Our job is to provide them with a source of information other than the media and what is being promulgated by Arab-American organizations. We're encouraging them to proactively reach out to the media and non-Jewish influentials to help them understand Israel's perspective and our perspective of what is taking place."

Smerling admitted it will be a challenge.

"Unfortunately, what people remember are images more than the analysis. And the image that is unfortunately burned into everybody's retina is that of the 12-year-old boy being shot and dying in his father's arms," he said, referring to the widely televised incident in which a Palestinian boy was killed by Israeli gunfire.

Jewish activists say it is unclear whether the bloodshed will do deep or lasting damage to Israel's image.

But at least one Israeli official was optimistic that the reservoir of good will and political capital built up by Prime Minister Ehud Barak is large enough not to drain overnight.

"It's clear this sort of event erodes some of the good will we've gained," said Yehuda Ya'akov, spokesman for the Israeli Consulate in New York.

"But I think we have turned the corner, and that international and public support is a fixture because of Israel's sincerity about seeking peace." □