



Daily News Bulletin

Vol. 78, No. 188

Thursday, October 5, 2000

83rd Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Draft accord would end violence

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Palestinian Authority Yasser Arafat agreed Wednesday in Paris to a draft accord to end the violence in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza Strip, according to Israel Radio reports.

Under the terms of the agreement, Israel would withdraw its forces to where they were before the violence began.

A more detailed agreement will reportedly be signed Thursday in Egypt. [Page 3]

Sharon visit said to be cleared

A Palestinian official had assured Israel that Likud Party leader Ariel Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount in Jerusalem last week would not lead to violence, a leading Israeli Cabinet member told the Knesset.

Acting Foreign Minister Shlomo Ben-Ami said the head of the Palestinian security forces in the West Bank, Jibril Rajoub, told him that as long as Sharon stayed out of mosques, the visit would pass peacefully.

The visit sparked riots that have claimed more than 55 lives. [Page 3]

Giuliani meets with Arabs, Jews

New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani met with local Arab and Jewish leaders to discuss anti-Jewish incidents perhaps connected with the violence in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Local police stepped up patrols near synagogues after reports of attacks on Jews, including the beating of an Orthodox Jew. [Page 1]

Court OKs Florida voucher plan

The nation's first statewide school voucher program is constitutional, a Florida state appeals court ruled.

The court said Tuesday that the program, which allows students in failing public schools to use taxpayer money toward private school tuition, does not violate the state constitution's restrictions on funding for education.

Because of Yom Kippur, the JTA DAILY NEWS BULLETIN will not be published Tuesday, Oct. 10.

Local Arab-Jewish tension spurs spirit of cooperation

By Michael J. Jordan

NEW YORK (JTA) — It is not unprecedented for violence in the Middle East to spill over to America in the form of clashes between Jews and Arabs.

But this week, in the wake of a series of attacks targeting Jews in the New York area, local Jewish and Arab leaders are taking unprecedented steps to ease the tension.

New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani met with Arab and Jewish leaders Wednesday, warning that the city would tolerate neither hate attacks nor "group blame," in which one community is collectively stereotyped or scapegoated by another.

At the same time, the two groups pledged to issue a joint "statement of unity" in which they pledge to work together to inform their communities and soothe tensions.

"Never before have we sat together to minimize the potential for illegal activity connected with the situation in the Middle East," said Michael Miller, executive vice president of the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York, an umbrella organizations of 60 Jewish groups.

Police are currently investigating 10 attacks on Jews or Jewish targets this week.

But while some of the incidents appear to be related to the Israeli-Palestinian violence gripping the Middle East, city and police officials emphasized that no incident has been confirmed as a hate crime.

"It's absolutely necessary to clarify information, dispel rumors and get more accurate information out to the people," said Lt. David Nagel, a liaison between the New York City Police Department and the Jewish community.

Jewish leaders agreed, and were cautious not to either exaggerate or downplay the current climate.

"Jews in New York are not under siege," Miller said.

Nevertheless, police patrols around synagogues will be stepped up in advance of Yom Kippur, which begins Sunday evening.

And on Wednesday, the New York JCRC and the Anti-Defamation League issued separate advisories urging vigilance and special security precautions as the Yom Kippur holiday approached.

The most serious incident reported by mid-week involved a 50-year-old Orthodox man who was insulted then stabbed on Sunday, the second day of Rosh Hashanah, reportedly by a Palestinian American, as he left synagogue with his son.

A second reported incident is more dubious, officials say. A Jewish man claims he was roughed up Monday in the subway by three men holding a Palestinian flag. However, there were apparently no witnesses.

Nationwide, there appeared to be no incidents of violence, though there have been a number of fiery anti-Israel demonstrations this week, coupled with the occasional anti-Semitic epithet.

Outside the Israeli Consulate in San Francisco, an Israeli flag was burned and trampled. In South Paterson, N.J., another flag was set alight.

In New York, meanwhile, cooperation between the Jewish and Arab communities will include Arab American leaders speaking to Jewish audiences, and vice-versa, according to Michael Nussbaum, co-president of the New York Metropolitan Region of the American Jewish Congress.

"Out of a negative came a positive," Nussbaum said of the dialogue.

"No crime of hate can be tolerated. Any attack due to race or religion or ethnicity is an attack on the fundamental beliefs that all Americans cherish." If attacks do occur,

MIDEAST FOCUS

Envoy returns to Israel

Martin Indyk, suspended from his post as U.S. ambassador to Israel late last month for alleged security breaches, is once again in Israel working on behalf of "compelling national interests," according to a U.S. official.

Indyk had been vacationing in Israel when the current bloodshed broke out.

But Secretary of State Madeleine Albright decided Indyk was needed for maintaining contact with Israeli officials during the crisis.

Arab League: Reject Star of David

The Arab League is calling on the International Red Cross to reject Israel's request that it adopt the Star of David as one of its official emblems.

Israel's humanitarian relief movement, Magen David Adom, uses a red Star of David and has been barred from the Red Cross movement, which currently recognizes the cross and crescent symbols.

Several compromise proposals that would add the Star of David as a Red Cross symbol have fallen through.

Syrians rally against killings

Thousands of Syrian demonstrators threw stones and trash at the U.S. Embassy in Damascus to protest the killing of Palestinians by Israeli soldiers.

Police and security forces clashed with the demonstrators, who yelled anti-American and anti-Israeli slogans and urged the Palestinians to abandon peace talks.

Meanwhile, flag-waving Arab youths in Denmark threw stones and dashed with police at a demonstration in Copenhagen.

Demonstrators Wednesday burned and trampled Israeli flags, attacked bystanders and vandalized shops and banks.

Several people were injured, according to the Ritzau news agency.

Nussbaum said, "Arab leaders are very concerned that there should not be a blanket charge against the entire community."

The need for intercommunal cooperation is clear, several leaders said.

While Jews live and work side by side with the burgeoning Arab communities in many neighborhoods, and relations are mostly harmonious, "the proximity is so close and the interaction so regular, of course there are some on both sides who are untrusting," said one Jewish official who did not want to be identified.

"There is justifiable concern that there might be some spillover from the tension in the Middle East onto the streets of New York."

This is not unusual, the official said. Whenever there is a flare-up of violence between Israelis and Palestinians in the Middle East, New York experiences a surge in reportedly related attacks. However, said the source, "some are true, some are not."

One incident now cited as a cautionary tale occurred Monday, when a yeshiva student in a Brooklyn pizza parlor said he saw three Arab-looking youths laughing at him. He looked down, saw his hand bleeding and initially thought he'd been slashed. Later, he realized he'd cut it on an open soda can.

Nevertheless, a rumor swept through the tight-knit neighborhood that "a Jewish man had been stabbed by three Arabs" in the pizza parlor.

"Rumors take hold of the truth, and the truth suffers. The media ran ahead with the facts, though they are still under investigation," said Nussbaum. □

Differences on vouchers, abortion highlighted in presidential debate

By Sharon Samber

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Foreign policy took a back seat to domestic issues in the first U.S. presidential debate between Vice President Al Gore and Texas Gov. George W. Bush, with no mention of the violence enveloping Israel and the Palestinians.

The only foreign policy issue addressed at length during Tuesday's debate was the situation in Yugoslavia, where President Slobodan Milosevic has refused to step down despite his recent defeat at the polls.

Instead, the debate in Boston was dominated by back-and-forths about tax cuts, Social Security and Medicare. But on some issues being watched closely by the organized Jewish community, such as education and abortion, the exchange highlighted stark differences between the two candidates.

Bush showed his support of the public school system with promises of mandatory testing and accountability measures, but also voiced his support for vouchers, a divisive issue among Jewish groups. If a public school is failing, Bush said that rather than "continuing to subsidize failure," federal money should go to parents so they can choose to send their child to a different public, private or parochial school.

Gore, in contrast, made his position against vouchers clear.

Several states have started a variety of voucher programs, some of which are being contested in court. The Supreme Court has so far refused to hear cases on whether voucher programs violate the constitutional separation of church and state.

On the question of abortion, Bush made his pro-life stance clear, saying a "noble goal for this country is that every child, born and unborn, ought to be protected in law and welcomed into life." Both Bush and Gore said they would ban late-term abortions, though Gore added that he would make exceptions for the health of the mother.

The abortion issue led into a discussion about Supreme Court appointments.

Bush said he would not use a litmus test on any issue but would choose "strict constructionists" who would "interpret the Constitution and will not use the bench to write social policy."

Gore accused Bush of using code words, and said no one should mistake Bush's intent of appointing judges who would overturn the landmark case legalizing abortion, *Roe vs. Wade*.

The vice president said he also would not use a litmus test in his appointments, but would select people with a philosophy that would make it likely they would uphold a woman's right to choose. □



Daily News Bulletin

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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.
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JEWISH WORLD

Accord reached on looted art

Russia and the United States reached an accord that may lead to the recovery of Nazi-looted art.

The agreement, reached this week at an international conference in Lithuania on recovering looted art, would open Russian archives and allow for the cataloging of displaced property in Russian museums.

German Jews rethink future

The attack on a German synagogue earlier this week is raising questions about whether German Jews should rebuild Jewish life there.

"The message is clear — Jews don't belong to German society," Frankfurt Jewish leader Salomon Korn was quoted as saying.

Meanwhile, German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder visited the Dusseldorf synagogue that was firebombed earlier this week and vowed to use "all available means" to protect Germany's estimated 90,000 Jews.

Holocaust memoirs boosted

A major U.S. publishing house pledged \$1 million to publish the memoirs of Holocaust survivors.

Elie Wiesel will serve as honorary chairman of the Random House-funded project, which will be organized by the World Jewish Congress and plans to publish its first books by the end of 2001.

Survivors can send manuscripts to: Holocaust Survivors' Memoirs Project, 501 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y., 10022.

Shuls make hunger appeal

More than 700 synagogues throughout the United States are asking their congregants to donate food money they saved by fasting on Yom Kippur to Mazon: A Jewish Response to Hunger.

The congregations are also asking members to bring food for distribution to local food banks.

Last year, some 50,000 Jews participated in these Yom Kippur efforts, according to Mazon, which provides grants to food banks and other programs serving the hungry in the United States, Israel and poor countries worldwide.

Appeal made in war crimes case

Latvian prosecutors are appealing a state decision not to issue a warrant for the arrest of a Latvian-born man alleged to have committed World War II-era crimes.

The warrant is necessary for the Baltic nation to seek the extradition from Australia of Konrad Kalejs, who allegedly committed atrocities while a member of the Arais Kommando, the Latvian security police during the war.

Report: Barak, Arafat agree to draft in attempt to end deadly Israel riots

By Joshua Schuster

PARIS (JTA) — U.S. diplomacy this week apparently succeeded in spurring an agreement, reviving the possibility that the Israeli-Palestinian peace process may still be salvaged.

Under the terms of the agreement, reached Wednesday in Paris after a somewhat tumultuous three-way meeting involving U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat, Israel would withdraw its forces to where they were before the violence in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza Strip began last week.

In return, Palestinians would agree to stay away from two flashpoints on the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

In addition, both sides would apparently agree to have the CIA find ways to prevent the unrest from escalating.

A more detailed agreement was expected to be signed Thursday in Egypt, where talks will be hosted by Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

At least 55 people were killed, mostly Palestinians, in rioting touched off Sept. 28 when Likud Party leader Ariel Sharon visited the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

Bloody riots on the Temple Mount spread to the West Bank, Gaza Strip and parts of Israel, where Israeli Arabs launched their own actions against Israeli forces.

In Paris, Barak and Arafat also met with U. N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who warned that Israel was on the brink of "all-out war."

In the midst of the meetings, Barak signaled he was still determined to reach a peace accord but said he held Arafat and the Palestinian Authority "responsible for the uprisings and the wave of violence."

Barak was steadfast in defending Israeli troops, who "defend Israeli citizens who cannot defend themselves alone."

Toward the end of the week, the violence was limited to fewer sites. At least two Palestinians were killed Wednesday in a heavy exchange of fire at the Netzarim junction in the Gaza Strip.

Journalists were beaten up and cameras were damaged in a demonstration in downtown Jaffa.

In the meantime, Palestinians and Israelis exchanged heavy fire in several places in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

Israeli Apache gunships fired at Palestinian positions at the Netzarim area, reportedly in response to Palestinian attacks on an Israeli post.

Emotions cooled Wednesday among Israel's Arabs and most roads were reopened to traffic.

Arsonists caused more than 100 forest fires in the Galilee over an area of 2,000 acres.

Earlier they set alight three factories, and scores of Jewish-owned vehicles.

A Palestinian official had assured Israel that Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount would not lead to violence, an Israeli Cabinet member told the Knesset.

Acting Foreign Minister Shlomo Ben-Ami said the head of the Palestinian security forces in the West Bank, Jibril Rajoub, told him that as long as Sharon stayed of all mosques, the visit would pass peacefully.

Likud Knesset Member Gideon Ezra said that had Knesset members been warned that "there is danger in the actual visit," it would have been canceled.

Barak met Tuesday with a group of Arab Knesset members and community leaders who agreed to set up an independent commission to look into what caused the violence among Israeli Arabs.

Israeli President Moshe Katsav suggested Wednesday that the unrest could lead to a strengthening of the right wing in Israel's politics.

"Things will not be the same after last Friday," said Katsav. "As a result of the developments, Israelis will take a different stand on events in the Middle East." □

(JTA correspondent Gil Sedan in Jerusalem contributed to this report.)

BEHIND THE HEADLINES**A new sermon topic for rabbis: Lieberman as a Jewish symbol**

By Julie Wiener

NEW YORK (JTA) — Much has been made about Democratic vice-presidential candidate Joseph Lieberman taking time off the campaign trail to attend Rosh Hashanah services.

But in congregations around the United States, Lieberman became part of the Rosh Hashanah service, with many rabbis incorporating him into their sermons.

While generally avoiding Lieberman's politics, rabbis used the various aspects of Lieberman's public prominence to discuss what it means to be a Jew in America today.

Judging from a random sampling of rabbis across the country, the most common themes were Lieberman as a symbol of how far American Jews have moved into the mainstream of society — and as an example of how one does not have to fully assimilate or sacrifice Judaism in order to be a successful American.

"We've had many Jews who reached high office, in particular in this administration, but not Jews for whom Judaism is a central part of their lives," said Rabbi Dovid Eliezrie, who heads a Chabad congregation in Yorba Linda, Calif., near Los Angeles.

Eliezrie, who plans to speak more extensively on Lieberman during his Yom Kippur sermon, said he told his congregants on Rosh Hashanah that "the importance is not the fact he's running for office, but the fact that he's walking to shuls on Shabbos."

The public acceptance of Lieberman — with kosher restrictions and Shabbat observance part of the package — shows that "Jews can be public about their religion, and that certainly was not always the case," said Rabbi David Cohen of Congregation Sinai, a Reform temple in Milwaukee.

Rabbi Rebecca Lillian of Temple Menorah, a Reform synagogue in Chicago, said she pointed to Lieberman "as an example that it is no longer necessary to divorce Judaism from being American."

"You can be a 100 percent devoted American and a 100 percent devoted Jew," added Lillian. "He revels in it and excels in it."

Rabbi Jonathan Hausman of Ahavath Torah Congregation, a Conservative synagogue in the Boston suburb of Stoughton, Mass., said he used Lieberman as a call to his congregants to become more Jewishly knowledgeable and observant.

"With Lieberman on the ticket, people are going to start asking questions that could make us Jews quite uncomfortable," he said, adding that if "non-Jews are learning about our faith, dietary laws, observance of Shabbat and fast days," they will be asking Jews to explain their practices and beliefs.

"And here's the rub: How many of us are capable of answering these questions in any meaningful way?" he asked his congregants.

"With an observant Jew on the ticket, you can no longer get away with running to the rabbi or educator to answer these questions," Hausman concluded. "You'll be responsible for learning and living a Jewish life."

Several rabbis also used Lieberman as a way to discuss Jewish values.

Cohen suggested that Lieberman rose to national prominence

"not because he was Jewish but because he did something particularly Jewish — stand up to power and question authority," he said, referring to how the senator broke from party ranks and spoke out against President Clinton's behavior in the Monica Lewinsky scandal.

Rabbi Margot Stein, a Reconstructionist rabbi who has a High Holiday pulpit at the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Jewish Community Group in suburban Washington, also talked about Lieberman's outspokenness during the Lewinsky scandal, using it to illustrate distinctions in Jewish ethics between shaming, which is forbidden, and rebuking someone, which is encouraged.

Although some Jewish critics have attacked Lieberman's flexibility in observing certain aspects of halachah, or Jewish law, Chicago's Lillian cited him as an example of one who takes Jewish teachings seriously but looks for ways to balance them with other demands.

"He takes every decision he makes about mitzvot and halachah seriously and interprets them in such a way so he can fulfill his role as public servant and still fulfill his role as observant Jew," she said.

She noted that this spurred a larger discussion in her synagogue of "the role of halachah and mitzvah for liberal Jews, how one looks at commandedness when one doesn't feel literally commanded by God."

Rabbi Morris Allen of Beth Jacob Congregation, a Conservative synagogue in suburban St. Paul, said he would have spoken more about Lieberman were it not for a tragedy concerning a congregant that occurred shortly before the holidays and dominated his Rosh Hashanah sermons.

However, he did say in his sermon that what may be most notable about the Lieberman nomination is how sharply it has altered American Jewish morale from just one year ago, when the High Holidays closely followed the anti-Semitic-motivated shooting at a Los Angeles-area Jewish community center.

"A year ago, every congregation in America was unfortunately and unnecessarily terrified that there were going to be terrorists running into the building," he said. "Last year we felt like victims of hatred. This year we feel like we're mainstream." □

Israeli team finally wins a medal

SYDNEY, Australia (JTA) — A lot of people missed it, but Israel did win a medal — a bronze — at the 2000 Olympic Games.

It happened on the final day of competition, in the final event in which Israel competed — the 500-meter kayaking race, which took place Sunday, the second day of Rosh Hashanah.

The medal won by Michael Kolganov, an immigrant from the former Soviet Union and a member of Kibbutz Degania Bet, partially erased a disappointing Olympics by Israeli athletes.

Kolganov's medal lifts Israel's overall Olympic medal tally to four — a silver for Yael Arad and a bronze for Oren Smadja for judo in Barcelona, Spain, in 1992, and a bronze for windsurfing to Gal Friedman in Atlanta in 1996.

Kolganov's victory boosted the number of Olympic medals won by Jewish athletes in Sydney. These medals included a gold medal by Masha Mazina, a fencer representing Russia who is a member of a Maccabee club — and of course, the three gold medals captured by U.S. swimmer Lenny Krayzelburg. □