



# Daily News Bulletin

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## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Clinton condemns lynchings

President Clinton condemned the murder of three Israeli soldiers by an angry mob of Palestinians in Ramallah. "There is no justification for mob violence," said Clinton, who made no mention of Israel's retaliatory strikes in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Initial reports said two Israelis were killed, but Israeli officials later said three had been slain.

Meanwhile, a Palestinian crowd set fire to an ancient synagogue in the Palestinian-controlled town of Jericho. [Page 1]

### Barak: Unity gov't 'necessary'

A national emergency government is "necessary for the State of Israel," Prime Minister Ehud Barak said in a televised address.

He called on all party leaders to put aside their differences and "stand shoulder to shoulder to face all the challenges" now confronting the Jewish state. [Page 1]

### Pro-Israel rallies held

Thousands of demonstrators turned out in New York to show solidarity with Israel.

The rallies were some of the dozens being held around the country that are sponsored by the American Jewish leadership.

Meanwhile, the Canadian Jewish community demonstrated its support for Israel through a series of rallies in major cities. [Page 3]

### Ship bombing likely terror attack

Five U.S. sailors were killed after a small boat rammed an American destroyer that was in port in Yemen.

In what was later described as a terrorist suicide attack, explosives in the small craft blew a hole in the side of the USS Cole.

### Bush, Gore agree on Middle East

The Democratic and Republican presidential candidates voiced similar stances regarding the Middle East during their second debate. [Page 4]

## Brutal violence appalls Israel, strengthens resolve to respond

By Avi Machlis

JERUSALEM (JTA) — The brutal murder of three Israeli soldiers by a Palestinian mob in the West Bank has sickened Israelis and strengthened their government's resolve to quell the ongoing unrest with whatever means are necessary.

Prime Minister Ehud Barak decried what he called the "shocking and heinous lynching" of the reservists, whose bloodied bodies were dumped onto the street outside a police station in the town of Ramallah after rioting Palestinians bludgeoned them to death.

Barak responded to the incident by ordering combat helicopters to fire on key Palestinian installations — actions that Palestinian leaders said amounted to a declaration of war.

The Israeli prime minister also intensified efforts to set up an emergency government of national unity and vowed that Israel would take whatever steps are necessary to defend its people.

Throughout the country, Israelis expressed revulsion at the Ramallah killings — and fear and uncertainty about where events were leading. Some wanted revenge, biblical style, an eye for an eye.

"Only animals behave this way," Avi Batish, a 20-year-old Jerusalemite, told the Israeli news Web site Ynet. "We don't know how to strike back. We should take revenge in kind."

"There is confusion and anger," said Shlomo Benizri, a legislator from the fervently Orthodox Shas Party.

At least Barak's decision to "shake the skies a bit" managed to "raise people's spirits somewhat," he added.

But an angry young settler from the Psagot settlement on the outskirts of Ramallah told Israel Television that he had "enough of this disgrace" and that the helicopter attacks were not sufficient.

"We should take down all of Ramallah," he said.

Settler leaders were trying to keep their people restrained, but they said patience was wearing thin.

By evening, an eerie quiet descended upon the streets of downtown Jerusalem — usually bustling with pre-weekend activity on a Thursday night — as the feeling of an impending war compelled most Israelis to stay home.

But not all was quiet in the West Bank.

Late Thursday night, according to Israel Radio, a Palestinian crowd set fire to an ancient Jewish synagogue in the self-rule town of Jericho.

There were reports that Israeli helicopters had struck West Bank sites after the synagogue attack.

The sharp escalation of violence has left little chance for the voices of peacemakers to be heard over the din of war cries.

Each passing day's new surge of violence — along with the charges and countercharges over who is responsible for the brutal incidents — is making it harder for even the most pronounced dove to imagine a return to the negotiating table anytime soon.

And even if Israel and the Palestinians do manage to resume negotiations, untangling the knotty web of angry charges and recriminations may take months — leaving plenty of room for additional incidents on the ground to further undermine the

REMINDER: Because of Sukkot, the JTA DAILY NEWS BULLETIN will not be published Monday, Oct. 16.

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Oman cancels ties with Israel

Oman said it would suspend low-level ties with Israel in a show of support with the Palestinians in the ongoing Middle East crisis.

Among its moves, Oman will close its trade office in Israel and the Israeli commercial mission in the Gulf state.

Oman and Qatar are the only two Gulf states to have such ties with the Jewish state.

### Stress hotlines launched

Counselors in Israel are launching new programs for members of Jewish communities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip who have been exhibiting heightened levels of stress during the recent violence, which has lasted for two weeks.

In addition, hotlines to help parents deal with children's fears have been set up in the West Bank and Gaza, as well as in Jerusalem.

### Muslim leaders, Albright meet

Representatives of several American Muslim and Arab American groups discussed the crisis in the Middle East with Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in a conference call.

During Tuesday's call, the Muslim and Arab leaders accused the U.S. government of acting in favor of Israel.

The secretary of state responded that the Clinton administration remains an "honest broker" in the Middle East.

### Gene scientists to meet in Texas

U.S. and Israeli scientists will meet to discuss research priorities for genetic cancers, such as those affecting Ashkenazi Jews, in Houston in November.

The workshop, sponsored by the Baylor College of Medicine and Hadassah: the Women's Zionist Organization of America, may generate collaborative projects between the scientists.

## JTA Daily News Bulletin

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cause of peace. But talk of war, not peace, took prominence Thursday.

Palestinian officials — including Yasser Arafat — used the word "war" to describe the Israeli helicopter attack Thursday on targets near the Palestinian Authority's headquarters in the Gaza Strip.

One of the targets reportedly hit was a post manned by Arafat's elite bodyguard unit.

Less than an hour earlier, Israeli combat helicopters fired on targets in Ramallah, including a television station and the Palestinian police station where the three Israeli reservists were killed.

According to Palestinian hospital officials, 17 people were wounded in the Israeli attacks.

The Israeli army said the three reservists had made a wrong turn and accidentally ended up in a flashpoint for the recent violence.

For his part, Arafat remained defiant after the Israeli retaliation for the Ramallah killings, telling CNN, "We will not hesitate to continue the march to Jerusalem."

American officials, meanwhile, attempted to bring the two sides back from the brink.

At a news conference in Washington, President Clinton condemned the murder of the Israeli soldiers.

"There is no justification for mob violence," said Clinton, who made no mention of Israel's retaliatory strikes in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"The alternative to the peace process is now no longer merely hypothetical," he said. "It is unfolding today before our very eyes."

Hours earlier, U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright called on Israel to put "an immediate end to the current operations of the IDF."

"We have to get the violence to stop," she told a news conference Thursday.

"There needs to be a cease-fire by both sides. Neither Israelis nor Palestinians can gain from further killing," she said.

Albright also called upon "the entire international community to join the United States in urging Chairman Arafat to take the steps necessary to bring this senseless and destructive cycle of fighting to an end."

But they made it clear that there would be more such actions if the Palestinian leadership did not rein in the mobs.

Barak sounded a similar warning during a news conference Thursday, when he said that Arafat — who "does not appear to us to be a partner for peace during this time" — should maintain control over his population, making it clear that otherwise Israel would do it for him.

Barak also said during the televised address that a national emergency government is "necessary for the State of Israel."

He called on all party leaders to put aside their differences and "stand shoulder to shoulder to face all the challenges" now confronting the Jewish state.

During an interview soon after on CNN, a visibly angry Barak said the helicopter attacks were a "signal" to the Palestinians that Israel knows where all the Palestinian installations and institutions are — and can target them again should events warrant.

The prime minister added that he expects Clinton and other foreign leaders to tell the world "loud and clear" that the Palestinians "failed to move forward to put an end to the bloodshed."

He also defended the helicopter strikes in Ramallah and Gaza, saying they came in response to Palestinian provocations and, in an effort to keep casualties to a minimum, were preceded by warnings to the Palestinians.

Indeed, earlier Thursday, the Israeli army said it gave Palestinian security officials three hours' advance warning to get their men out of installations in the West Bank and Gaza Strip before Israeli helicopter gun ships rocketed them.

"A maximum effort was made to keep the number of casualties as low as possible," the head of the IDF Operations Branch, Maj. Gen. Giora Eiland, told a news conference.

Israel informed Palestinian security officials "on every possible channel that their headquarters are in danger," Eiland said. □

(JTA Foreign Editor Mitchell Danow contributed to this report.)

## JEWISH WORLD

### Charges filed in N.Y. shul attack

New York police filed hate crimes charges against three Arab Americans in connection with vandalism against a synagogue in the Bronx. The three men are accused of throwing a bottle of vodka and breaking a window at Synagogue Adath Israel on Sunday.

Meanwhile, Israeli minister Michael Melchior met in Jerusalem with representatives of several Jewish organizations and leaders of European Jewish communities to discuss the increase in anti-Semitic incidents throughout the world in the past two weeks.

### Canada, France see bias attacks

Vandals attacked several synagogues in Canada during the past two weeks in incidents apparently linked to the violence in the Middle East, according to the Canadian Jewish Congress.

And officials of the Jewish community are shocked by the hateful levels of rhetoric voiced at a recent pro-Palestinian rally outside the Israeli Consulate in Toronto.

At one point, some of the 150 protesters on hand shouted "Death to the Jews" in Arabic, said a B'nai Brith Canada official who was one of seven representatives of the Jewish community monitoring the event.

### Arson hits another French shul

Meanwhile, the door of a synagogue in southern France was doused with gasoline and set afire. The flames were quickly contained and damage was minimal.

Wednesday evening's attack was the latest in a series of similar incidents, most of which have taken place around Paris and are apparently linked to the violence in the Middle East.

### Senate passes terror victims act

The U.S. Senate passed a measure Wednesday that would make it easier for the families of terror victims to claim damages from the frozen assets of countries suspected of supporting terrorism.

Federal courts have awarded terror victims multimillion-dollar judgments, but the Clinton administration has blocked the freeing of assets to pay the damages, citing national security interests.

The president is expected to sign the measure into law.

### Domestic violence act passes

The U.S. Senate voted Wednesday to reauthorize and expand legislation to provide more shelters for victims of domestic violence as well as help victims of stalking and sexual assault.

Jewish groups hailed the passage of the Violence Against Women Act and expect that President Clinton will sign it into law soon.

## Activists mobilize for Israel with massive New York rally

By Michael J. Jordan

NEW YORK (JTA) — Thousands of street demonstrators showed solidarity for Israel in New York on Thursday, in a counteroffensive to what organizers say is a global perception — promulgated by much of the news media and the United Nations — that the Jewish state is to blame for the escalating violence in the Middle East.

And in a sign that Jewish leaders sense the Palestinians have gained the upper hand in international opinion in their quest to recover the Temple Mount, many speakers took the opportunity to emphasize the centrality of Jerusalem to the Jewish people and Israel's sovereignty over Judaism's most holy site.

The Temple Mount is sacred to both Jews and Muslims, and the issue of its guardianship is said to have caused peace talks to collapse.

"We will not be silent," vowed Ronald Lauder, chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, a co-sponsor of the event with the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York.

"We will not forsake thee, Jerusalem."

The "Rally for Solidarity" in New York — and others planned for dozens of cities continent-wide — indicate that the American Jewish leadership is finally on the offensive, after its self-admitted paralysis during the first week the current conflict broke out. The paralysis, they say, was induced by the shock of renewed violence and wrangling over how the crisis was triggered.

After some Israelis criticized the sluggish response, the U.S. Jewish leadership took action. In addition to the demonstrations and various full-page newspaper advertisements, there is feverish work behind the scenes, say activists.

Diplomatically, they are lobbying various European missions in New York and embassies in Washington, said Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents. At the same time, Hoenlein said, the American Jewish Committee is lobbying in Geneva to prevent passage of a one-sided resolution against Israel by the U.N. Commission on Human Rights.

On the home front, leaders say perhaps the greatest challenge is to shake American Jewry from its complacency, alert it to the threat facing Israel, and remind it why it is that Jews vow each Passover, "Next year in Jerusalem!"

Said Bonnie Lipton, national president of Hadassah and co-chair of the Conference of Presidents "Jerusalem Committee": "We have to go out and aggressively re-educate the Jewish community as to the real history of Jerusalem."

"It's going to be difficult," she said, "but if we can't even re-educate Jews, then what can we expect from the rest of the world?"

At the massive New York demonstration — which covered six city blocks — the tone of speakers ranged from hints of a triumphal "I told you so" expressed by more hard-line Jewish leaders to disillusionment among more dovish activists that hopes for peace had evaporated so quickly.

Absorption Minister Yuli Tamir, a member of Prime Minister Ehud Barak's Cabinet, tried to reassure the massive crowd that Israel is prepared in case the situation worsens.

"Anyone who knows anything about Israel knows that we will not yield to threats, we will not yield to violence," said Tamir, who noted that her teen-age daughter will be drafted into the Israeli army next week.

"We will pray for peace, but we also know how to fight."

The demonstration was not without its share of high-profile American politicians — and candidates one month away from elections, like first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton. Both Clinton and her Republican opponent for the U.S. Senate seat in New York, Rep. Rick Lazio, expressed their unwavering support for Israel.

Yet Clinton, who has drawn heavy criticism for some past steps vis-a-vis Israel, was loudly booed throughout her entire speech. She was the only speaker to get such treatment. Nevertheless, she maintained her composure.

"I know this is a season of politics," Clinton said, "but it is also a season of for Israel."

## Bush, Gore voice no differences on strong relationship with Israel

By Matthew E. Berger

WASHINGTON (JTA) — During their second debate, the two major party candidates for president agreed on how to handle the violence in the Middle East.

Both Vice President Al Gore and Texas Gov. George W. Bush on Wednesday praised the United States' relationship with Israel and stressed the need for the next president to continue work as an "honest broker" toward peace in the Middle East.

"Our bonds with Israel are larger than agreements or disagreements on some details of diplomatic initiatives," Gore said. "And our ability to serve as an honest broker is something that we need to shepherd."

Bush said it is important for the United States to speak with one voice on international issues — and to reach out to Middle East countries to foster mutually beneficial friendships. He also advocated developing an anti-ballistic missile system that can be shared with Middle East countries.

When pressed by moderator Jim Lehrer, both candidates said the United States should side with Israel in the current fighting against the Palestinians and urge Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat to end the violence. Gore suggested the United States must again be wary of Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein, who has made threats against Israel during the current clashes.

Bush said he believed the United States must do more to control the leader whom his father, as president in the early 1990s, fought in the Persian Gulf War.

"The coalition that was in place isn't as strong as it used to be," Bush said of the countries opposing Hussein's leadership. "He is a danger; we don't want him fishing in troubled waters in the Middle East."

The candidates argued over who was at fault for Hussein's current power — the Clinton administration or the administration of Bush's father. But Gore said he wants to aid the groups that are trying to overthrow Hussein and said last week's overthrow of Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic could be the model for change in Iraq. While the candidates were cordial and agreeable on foreign policy issues in the Winston-Salem, N.C., debate, the differences between the two were clear when the subject changed to domestic issues.

With a relaxed format that contrasted with their first meeting in Boston a week earlier, Bush and Gore squared off on the need for hate crimes legislation, gun control and health care. Bush stayed away from supporting expanded federal hate crimes legislation.

He defended his record in Texas, where a hate crimes bill exists, but another version of the bill, advocated by the family of James Byrd, a black man dragged to death in Jasper, Texas, had died in the state legislature.

"If you have a state that fully supports the law, like we do in Texas, we're going to go after all crime," Bush said. "And in this case, we can't enhance the penalty any more than putting those three thugs to death, and that's what's going to happen in the state of Texas."

Two of the three men convicted of killing Byrd received the death penalty and a third was given a life sentence.

Gore said hate crimes were different from other violent offenses because they single out people because of their

backgrounds or beliefs, and said hate crimes legislation would "embody our values."

The vice president said he supports civil unions for gay and lesbian couples, and sided closely with both vice presidential candidates, who last week said that people need to be tolerant and allow gays and lesbians to live as they choose.

Bush said he was opposed to gay marriage, but would also try to be tolerant of those he disagreed with. Bush's running mate, former Defense Secretary Dick Cheney, has a lesbian daughter, and said last week in a debate that states should be allowed to decide the issue of civil unions.

The candidates will meet again Tuesday in St. Louis for a town-hall style debate during which undecided voters will ask them questions. □

## Jewish groups hope to pass hate crimes law — somehow

By Sharon Samber

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Despite a major setback, Jewish groups say they're optimistic they can find another way to get hate crimes legislation passed before Congress adjourns for this term.

A hate crimes measure was removed from congressional legislation last week, greatly hurting the chances of a national hate crimes law passing this year.

The latest turn of events is "an unwelcome but not unexpected development," said Michael Lieberman, Washington counsel for the Anti-Defamation League.

The ADL hopes to get the hate crimes legislation attached to one of the 11 still-unfinished appropriations bills that will have to be worked out before Congress adjourns sometime this month.

The bills will ultimately be negotiated between the White House and Congress. Jewish groups hope the president will continue to insist that a hate crimes provision be included in this year's legislation.

Even though time is running out on the legislative calendar, Mark Pelavin, associate director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, said "experience teaches us that where there is a political will, there is a procedural way."

After strong bipartisan support from both houses of Congress during the past few months, the hate crimes provision was nevertheless dropped from a defense bill last Thursday, even though the House of Representatives voted just a few weeks ago to instruct the bill negotiators to keep the provision.

The Senate had voted 57-42 to add the hate crimes language to the defense bill last spring. The House voted 232-192 on Sept. 13 to instruct its conferees on the bill to support the Senate proposal, but the resolution was not binding.

The controversial legislation would authorize federal prosecution of crimes motivated by sexual orientation, gender, or disability, expanding the current laws that protect victims of crimes motivated by race, color, religion or ethnicity. State and local law enforcement would still have primary responsibility for investigating and prosecuting hate crimes.

Republicans argue that such a federal law would designate some groups of crimes and its victims as more important than others. The Republican leadership also is under pressure from conservative groups to stop the bill because it would afford protections to gay and lesbian victims. □