



Daily News Bulletin

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TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Jewish groups go on alert

Jewish organizations throughout North America are being advised to review all security arrangements and be on heightened security in response to a threat from a virulent white supremacist group.

The United Jewish Communities' alert to its members came after the State of New Mexico Department of Public Safety told the Jewish Federation of Greater Albuquerque that the World Church of the Creator called for "days of rage" on Wednesday and Thursday against the Jewish community.

The World Church of the Creator made headlines last summer when one of its adherents killed two people and injured 10 in a shooting rampage against minorities in the Midwest.

Effect of cease-fire uncertain

The Palestinian Authority said it "issued strict orders to all Palestinians to follow through on the implementation" of the cease-fire agreed to at the emergency summit in Egypt.

Just the same, clashes were reported Wednesday between Israeli forces and Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

And in Nablus, a Palestinian militia leader told thousands of cheering supporters that the armed militias would not stop their fight against Israel.

Israel nabs Palestinian suspects

An Israeli undercover unit arrested eight Palestinians suspected of helping murder two Israeli reserve soldiers last week in the West Bank town of Ramallah.

The unit used video footage of the Oct. 12 mob lynching to help identify the suspects and bring them back from Ramallah to Israel to face trial.

U.S. leaders plan 'Jewish summit'

U.S. Jewish leaders announced that plans are under way for a "Jewish summit" in reaction to the expected Arab League summit in Cairo on Oct. 21.

Ronald Lauder, chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, said Wednesday the summit to discuss the crisis in the Middle East would likely be held within the next two weeks in Jerusalem.

Several hundred Jewish leaders from around the world have already expressed interest in attending, he said.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Ironically, Barak and peace process are in trouble even if cease-fire holds

By David Landau

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Will the cease-fire hold? That's the most immediate question in the aftermath of this week's agreement announced by President Clinton in Egypt.

But the post-summit answer will not only affect lives, it will also affect the political future of Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and the prospects for reviving the Middle East peace process.

Even the most sanguine observers did not realistically expect a total cease-fire on the ground, despite the verbal agreement reached at Sharm el-Sheik.

By midweek, this view was confirmed through sporadic shootings and other violent clashes around the West Bank and Gaza, although there was a decrease in the number of incidents.

The real test is expected to come early next week, after the Arab League heads of state meet in Cairo over the weekend at their first high-level conference in 10 years.

Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian Authority president insisted that Arab leaders come together for this rare gathering and does not want to appear there as a timid leader of a timid nation. From his perspective, the resentment and bitterness must continue to be tangibly present on Palestinian streets as the Arab leaders deliberate on the Palestinian future.

At the same time, the Palestinian Authority issued a formal statement on Wednesday, in accordance with the Sharm el-Sheik agreement, declaring it intends to abide by the cease-fire. Senior Israeli and Palestinian officers and security officials held a series of meetings Wednesday to implement the agreement on the ground at the various points of friction.

If the cease-fire holds, Clinton wants the two sides to send negotiators to Washington in two weeks as part of a first step toward resuming peace negotiations.

Ironically, however, the more successful the cease-fire, the more dangerous the domestic political position of Barak.

On Tuesday night, several hours after the summit ended, the opposition Likud Party announced the end of efforts to set up a national unity government.

Likud leader Ariel Sharon welcomed the cease-fire itself. But he poured withering criticism on the other terms of the agreement, accusing Barak of caving in to international pressures.

The agreement also called for a U.S.-led inquiry into the causes of the violence and an effort to find a way back to peace negotiations.

Sharon, who has been blamed by the international community for sparking the weeks of violence with his Sept. 28 visit to the Temple Mount, said there was no point discussing unity, since Barak had effectively agreed to resume the peace negotiations "as though nothing has happened."

The Likud opposes the concessions Barak offered at the Camp David summit in July. The party demanded that any unity government be predicated on a new peace policy agreed to by Likud and Labor.

Had the summit failed and the violence continued or worsened, the prospects of a unity government would have been much brighter.

Sharon might have been able to persuade his party colleagues to join Barak's government solely on the basis of the need to defend the country, without reference to

MIDEAST FOCUS

Barak may use separation plan

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak reiterated his fear that the Palestinians may no longer be partners "for the difficult and courageous decisions needed for peace." Earlier Wednesday, Deputy Defense Minister Ephraim Sneh said Barak would unilaterally implement a "separation" between Israel and the Palestinians if the peace process fails. This could include preventing Palestinians from working in Israel.

They spoke after Israel reopened international borders to Palestinians as part of an agreement reached a day earlier at the Sharm el-Sheik peace summit. Israel had closed the Gaza Strip airport and border crossings linking the West Bank to Jordan and Gaza to Egypt in response to the violence that erupted late last month.

Arabs pressure Geneva panel

Twenty-nine countries, most of them Arab states, are pressing the U.N. Commission on Human Rights in Geneva to adopt a resolution charging Israel with crimes against humanity for its role in Israeli-Palestinian violence.

France, which holds the rotating presidency of the European Union, urged the panel to "do nothing to undermine efforts already being taken to restore peace." The commission planned to hold a third session Thursday while the European Union tried to tone down the Arab-sponsored resolution.

Albright: Syria, rein in Hezbollah

U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright urged Syria's president to rein in Hezbollah.

Albright also sought Syrian support for the U.S.-brokered Israeli-Palestinian cease-fire and looked for indications Bashar Assad was ready to resume peace talks with Israel. But, according to a U.S. official, Albright emerged from the more than two-hour meeting in Saudi Arabia without a commitment from Assad.

a peace policy. But now with new hopes — albeit modest ones — of reviving the peace process, Likud members are asking, "Why should we step in to rescue Barak?"

In their view, if the emergency is over, the political dispute becomes legitimate again. And Barak, who has lost his majority in the Knesset over his peace policies, has a dim political future.

With the Knesset due to reconvene on Oct. 30, Barak's prospects of survival do indeed seem slim.

A bill calling for the dissolution of the Knesset and for early elections is on the agenda. By every indication, it seems poised to pass.

Barak can no longer rely on the votes of the Arab parties in the Knesset following the deaths of 13 Israeli Arabs during this month's disturbances.

If there are new elections, the current polls say former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who it is presumed would roundly defeat Sharon for the Likud leadership, would thrash Barak.

A Gallup poll appearing in the Israeli newspaper Ma'ariv last Friday gave Netanyahu a 16-point lead over Barak, while Sharon and Barak were neck and neck.

Some pundits believe that this ominous arithmetic will eventually drive Barak and Sharon into each other's arms, despite the strong reservations being voiced by rank-and-file members of both parties over the unity government option.

Other Barak-watchers assert that the premier has been toying with the opposition leader, using the specter of a unity government with Sharon in it to prod the international community into action to curb the violence with the hope of heading back to the peace process.

Now that such action has been taken, and has resulted in the cease-fire, Barak will back away from the unity option, these analysts say, since he never seriously intended to implement it anyway.

Barak himself said midweek he wanted as large an emergency government as possible.

He challenged his erstwhile partners, the fervently Orthodox Shas Party and the left-wing Meretz Party to set aside their differences and reconstitute their partnership in government with his own One Israel bloc

Bringing Shas back would mean Barak abandoning his secular legislative program, which among other things envisions the introduction of civil marriage and El Al flights on Shabbat.

Barak, who has widely touted the importance of this new program, would once again be sending the message that his government's initial priority — concluding a peace deal — ranks ahead of all else.

Only he can decide if his political credibility can withstand the impact of such a sharp U-turn. □

Czech town celebrates composer's life

PRAGUE (JTA) — The Czech town of Jihlava resounded with the music of Jewish composer Gustav Mahler during a three-day festival to celebrate the 140th anniversary of the birth of its most famous son.

The festival last weekend, which included special performances of Mahler's work and an international conference, was the biggest cultural event ever held in the south Bohemian industrial town.

Mahler converted to Catholicism in order to further his career, but he remained aware of his Jewish roots throughout his life.

Among the distinguished guests who attended the festival were the Austrian and French ambassadors to the Czech Republic, as well as the cultural attache to the Israeli Embassy.

Festival organizer Libor Ferda said interest in the event was higher among foreigners than Czechs.

"Most of the interest we have registered has come from abroad because Mahler is still undervalued in the Czech Republic," he said. "The Austrian ambassador was expected to come to the festival for only an hour, but he was so thrilled by it all that he turned up the next day to thank all of the organizers personally." □



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JEWISH WORLD

Gore, Bush back Israel again

Both Vice President Al Gore and Texas Gov. George W. Bush reiterated their support for Israel at the third and final presidential debate in St. Louis.

But most of the questions in Tuesday night's town hall forum focused on domestic issues.

Lieberman nixes Farrakhan forum

Vice-presidential candidate Joseph Lieberman will not meet with Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan, who is known for his anti-Semitic remarks.

Lieberman, who recently told a radio show that he would meet with Farrakhan, said Tuesday that such a meeting would not be constructive and would be "too loaded with political controversy."

Algerian held in London stabbing

An Algerian asylum seeker was charged with the attempted murder of an Orthodox Jewish student in London. Nabil Ould Eddine, 27, was held in custody and will next appear in court Oct. 25.

The victim, 20-year-old David Myers, is in serious but stable condition following Monday's attack, when he was stabbed as many as 20 times.

Reform group on mission to Israel

A Reform Jewish delegation is flying to Israel this week for a one-week solidarity mission.

As part of its mission, to be held in conjunction with a gathering of the international Reform movement, the group is slated to meet with top Israeli officials, including Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak.

Fund reaffirms coexistence effort

A fund that focuses on Jewish-Arab coexistence reaffirmed its commitment to its goals despite the violence in the Middle East.

In response to the crisis, the New York-based Abraham Fund plans to establish a special \$1 million emergency fund to expand the projects it promotes in Israel.

El Al office gets bomb threat

The Frankfurt offices of El Al Airlines were evacuated after a bomb threat.

But German police, already on alert because of the Middle East crisis, said later Wednesday that they found no bomb.

Graffiti defaces German church

Vandals sprayed anti-Semitic and satanic graffiti on a church in eastern Germany. Police said slogans, including "Heil Satan" and several anti-Semitic epithets, were found Tuesday on the Protestant church in the town of Chemnitz.

Little information is released about Israeli in Hezbollah hands

NEW YORK (JTA) — Israeli sources are releasing few details on Elhanan Tannenbaum, an Israeli colonel reportedly kidnapped abroad and held by Hezbollah.

The explanation is simple: the fewer the words said, the greater the prospects for Tannenbaum's release.

Tannenbaum, 54, served as a reserve colonel in the Israel Defense Force and had various business contacts overseas. After several years as a businessman, Tannenbaum reportedly suffered financial difficulties and an unknown family crisis.

Friends told the Israeli media that Tannenbaum used to travel overseas frequently, often for short periods of several days. He last left Israel two weeks ago. However, although family members had not heard from him for several days, only after Hezbollah announced Monday that it detained an Israeli colonel did the family realize that it was him.

"The kidnapping of my father by Hezbollah is an inhumane and immoral act," Tannenbaum's daughter, Keren, 26, said in a brief statement to the media. She said her father was sick and needed medication.

Reacting to Hezbollah reports that Tannenbaum was tricked to come to Lebanon by a business associate, a close friend told reporters:

"This is a sick, elderly family man, who does not speak a word of Arabic. The last things he needs is adventures in Lebanon."

Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah claimed this week that Tannenbaum was an officer in the Mossad, a charge that Israeli sources denied.

Israeli Cabinet minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer called Nasrallah's claim a "fantastical story."

"This is a private businessman whose trip was made in part for personal reasons, and there is no reason to go into those details," Ben-Eliezer told Israeli media.

Israeli security officials have said the kidnapping took place in Switzerland, but the Swiss federal police could not confirm the report.

Tannenbaum was discharged from service in the 1970s as a junior officer, but throughout the years climbed to the rank of a reserve colonel, a rare phenomenon in the IDF. Although the army reportedly offered him several times to join as career officer, he preferred to continue in the business world.

As soon as Hezbollah announced that it was holding Tannenbaum, Israel declared that he had nothing to do with the Mossad and that he was not sent overseas on a state mission. □

Barbs traded at U.N. session

NEW YORK (JTA) -- Israeli and Palestinian officials traded accusations this week during an emergency session in New York of the U.N. General Assembly.

Israel's ambassador to the United Nations, Yehuda Lancry, spoke Wednesday of "an alarming pattern of behavior by the Palestinian leadership" during the nearly three weeks of violence that have shaken Israel, the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The Palestinian observer to the United Nations, Nasser Al-Kidwa, accused Israel of "willfully" causing "a large number of casualties and losses among our people."

The world body is expected to vote in the coming days on an Arab-sponsored resolution harshly critical of the Jewish state. □

Sukkah rebuilt after arson attack

MINNEAPOLIS (JTA) — An Orthodox congregation in Minneapolis has rebuilt a sukkah destroyed over the weekend by arson.

The U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, which has jurisdiction in the case as a result of federal legislation created after a series of church burnings several years ago, is investigating the fire at Adath Israel Synagogue. □

FOCUS ON ISSUES

Jews at college receive first lesson in Mideast rhetoric*By Julie Wiener*

NEW YORK (JTA) — When Ronit Ridberg first learned of a rally to protest the loss of human life this month in the Middle East, she was eager to participate.

A senior at Duke University in Durham, N.C., Ridberg expected the rally — a march from one end of the campus to another scheduled the day after Yom Kippur — to decry violence and commemorate the losses on both sides.

But she began to feel uncomfortable when an Arab classmate looked at her with surprise and asked, “What brings you out today?”

The discomfort grew as Ridberg looked at the placards around her, some of which were “very anti-Israel” and “one-sided.”

“I was really distraught that day,” she recalled, adding, “I wanted to be active and wanted to make a statement but wasn’t sure what kind.”

The recent violence in Israel has spawned a proliferation of anti-Israel rallies on college campuses, which in turn are sparking confusion and distress among some American Jewish students.

While Jews and Arabs at some campuses have been able to maintain better relations throughout the escalation of violence, the situation at others has been more confrontational.

In the past two weeks, these incidents have occurred at U.S. universities:

- Yelling slogans like “You’re killing us!” and “Israel is a fascist state!” 200 Arab students protested at a University of Michigan Hillel teach-in on the peace process.
- At Concordia University in Montreal, Arab demonstrators burned Israeli flags and held up placards signifying that a Jewish star is equivalent to a swastika. Students walking into the main building there confront video images of Palestinian children being killed.
- Anti-Zionist Chasidic Jews joined Arab protesters at a demonstration at Rutgers University in New Jersey, where some of the placards called for the “liquidation” of the Jewish state, according to the local Hillel director.
- Exhibits displayed in the student union of Detroit’s Wayne State University say Israelis are “the murderers of innocents,” “U.S. taxes to massacre Palestinians must stop,” “It is our Aksha not their Temple” and “Zionism is Racism.”
- Plans for a joint Jewish-Muslim community service day were postponed indefinitely after some Jewish and Arab students at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign yelled epithets at each other during what had initially been planned as a peaceful demonstration. Others on both sides have tried unsuccessfully to draft a statement of shared principles.

The surge of anti-Israel activism on campus has been a rude awakening for many Jewish students.

“These students have never been through this before,” said Rabbi Bruce Bromberg Seltzer, assistant director of Duke’s Freeman Center for Jewish Life.

“They were in junior high and elementary school when the intifada and Gulf War were going on, and they’re not used to Israel being perceived so negatively.”

In addition, the Jewish students tend to be more ambivalent about the situation — and often less emotionally connected to it — than their Muslim and Arab counterparts, many of whom still have relatives in the Middle East.

“There are a lot of first-generation, very angry Palestinians here and a lot of fourth-generation American Jews who are not as well-versed,” said Rabbi Richard Kirschen, assistant director of the University of Michigan Hillel.

While most American Jews have little contact with Palestinians, for Jewish students, “your roommate might be Palestinian,” said Richard Joel, president and international director of Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life.

Avi Finegold, co-president of the Concordia Hillel, says he and the 30 or so other Jewish students on campus are now feeling somewhat besieged by the anti-Israel climate there.

What is most difficult for them, he said, is that they had been friendly with many of their Palestinian classmates before.

“I speak to people on campus who say that person is in my class, I’m friends with them and now I see them marching,” said Finegold. “How am I supposed to relate to these people in class?”

Jewish students are uniting to draft letters to the editor of their school newspapers and participating in larger communitywide Israel solidarity rallies.

But for the most part there appears to be a reluctance to stage counterdemonstrations criticizing the Palestinian side or schedule dialogues with their Arab counterparts.

Many Jewish students say they and the Arab students are simply experiencing different realities.

As Concordia’s Finegold puts it, “I’m dealing with a certain set of facts, and they’re dealing with a certain set of facts.”

The biggest problem, said Ridberg, is “the facts are confusing and depending on who I got information from I could’ve been swayed either way.”

For Kirschen, the possibility of Jewish-Arab discussion on his campus is hindered by the fact that the Arab students there tend to be hard-line.

“The sad thing is I don’t hear from their side that they want peace or dialogue,” he said.

On some campuses, relations are smoother.

At Georgetown University in Washington, Arab and Jewish students co-sponsored a vigil criticizing the violence that took place on both sides.

At the University of Colorado, the Hillel president received an “eloquent e-mail from the Muslim Student Association” requesting they put together a joint program, said Pat Blumenthal, executive director of the Hillel Council of Colorado.

The students there have brought in an expert in conflict resolution to facilitate a dialogue that will avoid discussing the current situation but instead focus on “why is this land so important for people of different faiths,” Blumenthal said.

And while the rally at Duke left many Jews there disappointed, Seltzer and the campus imam, or Muslim cleric, are in close contact.

When the imam and Muslim leaders on campus learned of the Jews’ concerns about the rally — initially scheduled to last all week — they decided to cancel the remaining days.

“The fact that they canceled the rally is a good sign that they’re responsive,” Ridberg said. “It is still a working-together environment.” □