



# Daily News Bulletin

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## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### **Prolonged conflict expected**

The Israeli army and Palestinian officials agree on one thing: They expect a long, drawn-out conflict. "We are not talking about a short-lived adventure," Brig. Gen. Ron Kitrey told Israel's Army Radio.

Also on Tuesday, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak accused the Palestinians of choosing the "path of conflict," but he said that "they will not gain a thing" from violence. His comments came as new clashes erupted in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

### **Nader blasts Gore's Israel stance**

Ralph Nader, the Green Party candidate for U.S. president, called Vice President Al Gore "cowardly" for backing Israel during the ongoing violence in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Speaking Sunday at the University of California at Davis, Nader said Israel should be held responsible for the violence in the Middle East, adding that there would be no "peace in that area without justice for the Palestinians."

### **Threats follow Jerusalem attacks**

Israel will "intensify" its response if Palestinian gunmen continue firing on a Jewish neighborhood of Jerusalem from a nearby Arab village, according to Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak's security aide. Danny Yatom issued the warning Tuesday, one day after army officials threatened to surround the Arab village of Beit Jalla, from where Palestinian gunmen have been firing on Gilo.

### **U.S., Jordan signing trade pact**

President Clinton was expected to sign a free trade agreement with Jordan. The pact, to be signed by King Abdullah at the White House on Tuesday evening, will phase out tariffs on textiles, farm goods and other goods within 10 years. Observers believe the U.S. is using the pact to acknowledge Jordan's support of the Middle East peace process.

### **U.S. to look into shul vandalism**

U.S. Jewish leaders met with officials from the Department of Justice to discuss synagogue vandalism stemming from the conflict in the Middle East.

The leaders said they were told Tuesday that government officials promised to intensify efforts to curtail future incidents and open communication lines between the Jewish community and the government.

## NEWS ANALYSIS

### **Barak and Sharon weigh costs and benefits of unity**

*By David Landau*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Prime Minister Ehud Barak and opposition leader Ariel Sharon are trying to get their respective parties to join a national unity government before the Knesset begins its winter session Monday.

They are calling it a "government of national emergency" and insisting that the ongoing violence engulfing the Palestinian territories makes its creation a historic necessity.

But their supporters in the Labor and Likud parties seem unconvinced, and certainly unenthusiastic.

Several Labor ministers and legislators are arguing that a partnership with the Likud would mean the end of even the most slender remaining hope of reviving the peace process.

And many Likud legislators are arguing that to join with Barak now would rescue him from almost certain defeat in a Knesset no-confidence vote, perhaps as early as next week, and also from his likely defeat in the early elections that would follow his government's collapse.

Likud lawmakers also argue that Barak, his policies in tatters, should be forced out in a no-confidence vote, and replaced by a candidate who can win the peoples' confidence.

They are not, however, necessarily referring to Sharon.

Beneath the surface of the Labor-Likud negotiations looms the presence of former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who is more popular than either Barak or Sharon, according to all the opinion polls.

Political observers believe that Netanyahu's would-be return to active politics is motivating Barak and Sharon to override the opposition within each of their parties and press ahead with forging a unity government.

Both party leaders, according to the observers, want to defer elections. This is because Barak and Sharon are certain that once elections are declared, Netanyahu will plunge back into politics — first for the Likud leadership in the party's primary, and then in the general elections for the premiership.

For now, Netanyahu is playing a cautious and statesmanlike hand. On Tuesday, speaking from Paris, Netanyahu said he favored a unity government — but only if it were set up for a limited period, defined in advance, and if all parties agreed that following this limited period general elections would be held.

Netanyahu noted that, though not a legislator, he is still a card-carrying member of the Likud Central Committee, the party's highest policy-making body, and that he would doubtless make his voice heard whenever the committee meets.

Later Tuesday, at a stormy meeting of Likud legislators, Michael Eitan demanded that if the party does join a unity government, Netanyahu should be appointed one of its ministers.

A majority of the legislators plainly opposed a unity government, but Sharon managed to prevent a vote.

The negotiations with Labor were expected to continue, with the Likud Central Committee having the final word.

Among Labor officials, dovish ministers like Yossi Beilin and Shlomo Ben-Ami have been speaking bitterly — although quietly so far — against a national unity

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Hezbollah: Prisoners for info

Hezbollah wants Israel to free 19 Lebanese prisoners in return for information on the three Israeli soldiers and reserve colonel the Shi'ite group recently kidnapped.

Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, the group's leader, told Saudi Arabia's *al-Watan* newspaper that there has been no serious effort to negotiate the Israelis' release.

### Palestinians get life sentences

Two Palestinians from Jerusalem's Old City were given life sentences for stabbing a Jewish settler who was on his way to morning prayers two years ago.

The Israeli court said Monday that the two "murdered a Jew whose only crime in their eyes was that he was a Jew."

Chaim Kerman was stabbed more than 30 times in May 1998.

### IDF postpones shortening service

The Israel Defense Force postponed plans to lessen the mandatory term of military service from three years to 32 months.

The shorter conscription period for males was slated to go into effect in 2001, but has been delayed because of the recent violence and may be rejected altogether.

### Museum honors Chinese envoy

The Jerusalem-based Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial posthumously honored a Chinese diplomat who issued visas to Jews in wartime Austria so they could escape the Nazis.

Ho Fengshan, China's consul general in Vienna from 1938 to 1940, issued the visas to thousands of Jews despite opposition from the Chinese ambassador in Berlin.

He died three years ago in San Francisco at the age of 96.



## Daily News Bulletin

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government. Beilin announced Monday that he would quit the government if Sharon obtains — as he has demanded — the right of veto over future peace moves as a member of a unity government.

If Barak and Sharon do manage to impose their will on their colleagues, and a unity government is set up, the initial reaction abroad is expected to be one of anger.

Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount on Sept. 28 is regarded among many of Israel's friends in Europe as responsible, at least in part, for the current wave of violence rocking the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

President Clinton himself has reportedly sought in recent weeks to dissuade Barak from forming a government with Sharon.

In the Arab world, Sharon is regarded as an inveterate warmonger, and Israeli diplomatic and public relations officials will have to work overtime to allay fears that his inclusion in a unity government is a prelude to some massive military initiative against the Palestinians.

Barak insists that these negative effects will be fleeting, and that they will be dwarfed by the sense of unity and national purpose that will engulf the nation once Labor and Likud are seen to be pooling their forces and setting aside their differences.

In this, the prime minister harks back to the examples of past unity governments, especially to the one created in May 1967, during the unnerving "waiting period" before the Six-Day War.

At that time, street demonstrations took place protesting against the government of Levi Eshkol's government perceived hesitancy to deal with the threat facing the Jewish state.

The upshot was that Eshkol had Moshe Dayan, then an opposition legislator, join the Cabinet as minister of defense. Also, the ostracized Gahal bloc — the largest of the constituents that later formed the Likud — of Menachem Begin joined the government.

Today, too, the polls consistently show that a majority of the nation would like to see a unity government formed, and that they would feel more secure and confident following such a move.

But opponents of the move from both sides of the political divide cite the Labor-Likud unity governments of the 1980s as more pertinent examples.

At that time, neither of the large parties was capable of forming a stable coalition. In election after election, they emerged virtually tied. As a result, a unity government was the only option.

For Labor, under Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Rabin, this spelled diplomatic paralysis.

Even when Foreign Minister Shimon Peres managed to reach a breakthrough agreement with King Hussein of Jordan in 1987, Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir was able to foil it, since it provided for concessions that Shamir was not prepared to contemplate.

Beilin and the other opponents of unity now say the same state of paralysis would descend on Israel today if Likud joins the government.

Barak's supporters say the peace process is going to be dormant for a long time to come anyway, and that what matters in the short term is Israel's strength and resilience in the face of the Palestinians' violence.

They warn, moreover, that this violence could quickly spread to involve other Arab states.

Indeed, Barak, in a formal letter to Sharon this week, cited Iraqi troop deployments along the Iraqi-Jordanian and Iraqi-Syrian borders as providing additional reasons for Israel to put its domestic differences into abeyance and form a unity government immediately. □

## Amnesty sends new team to Mideast

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Amnesty International is sending a second team to investigate the ongoing clashes in the Middle East.

The human rights group's report last week criticized Israel for what it called excessive use of force against Palestinians. Meanwhile, Britain is calling for Israel to conduct its own investigation of how it is handling the violence. □

## JEWISH WORLD

### Lieberman defends talk of God, says opposition firms his resolve

By Matthew E. Berger

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Democratic vice presidential candidate Joseph Lieberman, who has frequently included religious references in his campaign, is calling for a "conversation" to help America find its spiritual balance.

The Connecticut senator, speaking at Notre Dame University in South Bend, Ind., said the country was founded on values of faith and said he did not believe the Founding Fathers wanted the strong separation between church and state advocated by some in his own party.

"The line of church and state is an important one and has always been hard for us to draw, but in recent years we have gone far beyond what the framers ever imagined in separating the two," Lieberman said. "So much so that we have practically banished religious values and religious institutions from the public square."

When he joined Vice President Al Gore's campaign in August, Lieberman made headlines as the first Jew on a major national ticket. But even after the novelty of his candidacy wore off, Lieberman pursued religious issues in his speeches, evoking God and biblical verses in his remarks. Those comments sparked criticism from some Jewish leaders, who felt he was crossing the line between church and state.

"Appealing along religious lines, or belief in God, is contrary to the American ideal," said the Anti-Defamation League in a letter to Lieberman in late August, signed by the group's national chairman, Howard Berkowitz and its national director, Abraham Foxman.

In his remarks Tuesday, Lieberman defended his use of religious speech and made specific mention of those who have opposed it.

"Some friends and foes alike discouraged me from speaking about religion anymore," he said. "But my resolve has only been strengthened."

He went on to say that leaders need to find the line between discussing faith in public life and not excluding those with differing viewpoints.

Foxman said Tuesday that while he agrees there is a need to find the role of faith in American politics, now is not the time to look for it.

"It's an important debate and an important conversation," he said. "But this is a debate that belongs in American society, not on the campaign trail."

Although he expressed concerns with Lieberman's continued evocation of God, he said the Notre Dame speech was softer and somewhat more inclusive, and more appropriate because it was in a university setting.

"But the issue remains that if you're a person who's an atheist or a Muslim or a Buddhist, you felt excluded," Foxman said.

Matt Brooks, executive director of the Republican Jewish Coalition, said he found the speech "hypocritical" because Democrats have long chastised Republicans for speaking of God in expressing views on abortion and other issues.

"This is an unprecedented call for greater religious involvement," Brooks said. "This is part of a pattern among Democrats to use religion in speeches and their public profession."

He cited Lieberman's speech last week, when the candidate invoked the commandment "honor thy mother and father" as an argument for Medicare reform.

"It's turning religion into just another political football," said Robert Boston, assistant director of communications for Americans United for Separation of Church and State. "The more they go out of their way to show themselves as religious, the more hypocritical they seem."

"Religious people don't have to wear it on their sleeve," Boston said.

Lieberman's remarks Tuesday combined religious doctrine with American history, as he repeatedly noted the role faith played in the establishment of the American government.

The senator cited George Washington, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, among others, and noted their use of God in writing the Bill of Rights and Declaration of Independence. □

### Soldiers to go on Birthright trips

Thirty-six U.S. Jewish soldiers and military personnel under the age of 27 will go on a free 10-day trip to Israel this December on a project called "Operation Birthright Israel." While Birthright Israel has sent more than 10,000 Jewish young adults to Israel in the past year, this will be the first trip organized specifically for Jews in the U.S. military.

### Australia balks at extradition

Australia said it still could not legally deport a suspected Latvian war criminal to the Baltic nation.

Justice Minister Amanda Vanstone made the comment Tuesday after Latvia announced that it had issued an arrest warrant for Konrad Kalejs to face charges that he took part in the massacre of Latvian Jews during World War II.

### Vatican Shoah study expected

A panel of Jewish and Catholic scholars plans to release a preliminary report on the Vatican's actions and policies during the Holocaust. The panel's findings, to be released Thursday, are based on a yearlong study of Vatican archives from the period.

### New charge sought in AMIA blast

Argentine prosecutors asked a judge to upgrade the charges on an extradition request of a key witness in the 1994 bombing of a Jewish community center in Buenos Aires.

The prosecutors want Wilson Dos Santos to be charged with having participated in the AMIA bombing, which killed 86 people, and not just with giving false testimony.

Dos Santos, a Brazilian citizen living in Switzerland, is also believed to have participated in the 1992 bombing of the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires.

### German vandals confess

Two teen-agers confessed to scrawling Nazi slogans at a memorial to concentration camp victims in eastern Germany.

The 14- and 17-year-olds also spray-painted "Dirty Jews" and swastikas on the walls of Ravensbruck last week, police said. The teens, who were released because they were minors, said they were just bored, but also admitted to police that they are part of Germany's far-right.

### Czech publisher faces charges

Czech prosecutors said they would soon press criminal charges against a man who published a Czech translation of Hitler's "Mein Kampf" last March. Officials said Michal Zitko of the Otakar II publishing house will be charged with supporting and promoting movements suppressing people's rights and freedoms.

**NEWS ANALYSIS****Arab moderates get their way, but they cannot ignore militants***By Gil Sedan*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — As far as Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat is concerned, Arab leaders failed to deliver the goods.

At the end of their two-day meeting last weekend in Cairo, the leaders issued a resolution blaming Israel for the ongoing violence in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

But they did not call on Arab states to sever their ties with the Jewish state.

Neither did the prolonged violence prompt them to call for a renewal of the Arab boycott on Israel.

Nor were there any threats of a unified military stance against Israel.

Even Yemen's hard-line president, Ali Abdullah Saleh, who described the Jewish state as "a cancerous growth in the Arab nation," failed to offer any military commitments to his Palestinian brethren.

Professor Yosef Ginat of Haifa University said the summit embodied a paradox.

"The Palestinians were the issue" that brought the Arab leaders together, "but Arafat played only a secondary role at the summit."

The "Al-Aksa intifada" that began late last month provided the reason for convening the summit.

But it soon developed into an all-too-familiar contest between who holds sway over the Arab world: the moderates or the extremists, those who have everything to lose or those who have nothing to lose.

Predominant among the moderates are Egypt and Jordan, the only two Arab states that have already signed peace treaties with Israel.

The leaders of both nations have been concerned about what might happen if the intifada spills over into their territory.

As millions have taken to the streets in anti-Israel demonstrations throughout the Arab world, Egyptian officials have worried that the rage orchestrated by Muslim fundamentalists could be diverted against them.

And in Jordan, King Abdullah is well aware of the threat posed to his regime by his Palestinian subjects.

Palestinians make up more than two-thirds of the population of the Hashemite Kingdom.

"The scope of unrest in the Arab world is so terrible that no Arab leader can actually ignore it," said Arye Gus, Arab affairs correspondent for Israel Radio.

The relatively moderate resolution issued at the summit was passed thanks mostly to the efforts of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

But his efforts were not the result of any particular love for Israel.

It was heavy American pressure, with thick hints of possible difficulties in passing U.S. aid to Egypt, that motivated the Egyptian leader.

Egypt receives an \$2 billion in aid each year from the United States — aid that some members of Congress have questioned,

depending on how constructive Egypt has been in the peace process.

Since its peace agreement with Israel, Jordan receives millions of dollars in aid.

On Tuesday the United States and Jordan were signing a new trade agreement that Jordan has long sought.

But in contrast to the leaders' relative moderation, there have been angry demonstrations in Egypt and other Arab states over the summit resolution.

While officials in Egypt and Jordan appear able to weather such demonstrations, other states — including Oman, Tunisia and Morocco — have bowed to anti-Israel pressure and severed relations with Israel.

In the case of Morocco, the recently enthroned King Mohammad is "too weak to stand the pressure of extremists and continue business as usual," said Gus.

Another inexperienced leader, President Bashar Assad of Syria, did not take any chances by siding with the moderates. Instead, he adopted a hard line against Israel.

"Internally, Assad played it safe," said Eyal Sisser of Tel Aviv University.

"No one can charge him with neglecting the Palestinian cause."

The recently concluded summit proved "that the people on the streets have a lot more influence than the leaders would like to admit," Sisser said.

Meanwhile, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak's announcement this week that he is taking a "timeout" from the peace process as long as the violence continues has intensified anger across the Arab world.

Arab moderates interpreted the statement as a slap in their faces.

Just after they had passed a moderate resolution at the summit, Barak was acting as if he was no longer a partner to the peace process.

The Jordanian paper A-Rai wrote Monday that such statements lead the Arabs "to think of other options."

Syria's official Tishrin daily reported Tuesday that Barak's statement had "taken the mask" off Israel, which "is preparing the ground for a military adventure."

As the prospects for peace dim amid the continued fighting in the West Bank and Gaza, observers are somberly assessing what may come next.

According to Sisser, any of the three main pieces in the regional puzzle — the Palestinian Authority, Israel and Lebanon — could explode and drag the entire region into conflict.

Israeli officials have expressed concern over calls for an Arab war, and they have reportedly increased surveillance of Lebanon and Syria.

They are also concerned that Hezbollah, which according to reports has amassed hundreds of Katyusha rockets in southern Lebanon, could spark a confrontation.

So far, while there have been no troop movements in either Egypt or Syria, Iran and Iraq have been urging war.

According to local reports, the Iraqis have deployed one to five divisions in western Iraq, some 60 miles from the border with Syria.

This has reportedly prompted warnings from U.S. officials that they will bomb any threatening Iraqi troops. □