



# Daily News Bulletin

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83rd Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Barak defends helicopter strikes

Prime Minister Ehud Barak defended Israel's helicopter strikes on Palestinian positions in the West Bank towns of Ramallah and Nablus, and in Khan Yunis in the Gaza Strip.

Barak said Tuesday he would "continue to do whatever is necessary in order to protect the lives of the country's citizens and its soldiers." Army officials said Monday's strikes were part of their plan to attack those it considers responsible for the ongoing unrest.

### Unity government talks fail

Israeli opposition leader Ariel Sharon vowed to bring down the "failed government" of Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak. His comments to Israel's Army Radio came after he and Barak failed to agree on terms for creating a unity government. [Page 4]

### 'Iran 10' sentences to get review

Iran's prosecutor general will review the sentences of 10 Iranian Jews convicted on charges of spying for Israel, a judiciary official said.

The official also told The Associated Press that this "will be the last judicial consideration of the case."

### Marchers rally at Western Wall

Waving signs reading, "We Support Israel," world Jewish community leaders marched to the Western Wall in Jerusalem on Tuesday.

The marchers were participants in a solidarity mission to Israel. Prime Minister Ehud Barak later told the participants, "I am sorry to say that the period of emergency and challenges has not passed."

### Poll: Jews back intermarriages

Half of American Jews believe it is "racist" to oppose intermarriages, and 78 percent favor rabbinic ordination at such marriages, according to a recent survey of 1,010 Jews. The American Jewish Committee survey also finds 80 percent of the respondents agreeing with the statement, "Caring about Israel is a very important part of my being a Jew."

### Peres, Arafat to meet

Israeli Regional Development Minister Shimon Peres is expected to meet with Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat to try to find a way out of the ongoing conflict.

## Israel returns to G.A. spotlight as community rallies in support

By Julie Wiener

NEW YORK (JTA) — In the early 1990s, Israel, after decades as a rallying point, lost its star-player status at the annual gathering of American Jewish communal leaders.

With the Jewish state seemingly well on the path to peace and economic prosperity, and American Jews overwhelmed by high rates of intermarriage and assimilation, the General Assembly — reflecting communal and federation priorities in general — focused more on the domestic agenda.

Now, with violence plaguing the Jewish state, the peace process moribund and Israel feeling isolated, Israel has been shifted back to the center of the gathering, known as the G.A.

Sponsored by the United Jewish Communities, the umbrella system of local federations across North America, the G.A. is this year expected to draw some 4,000 communal leaders to the five-day event in Chicago.

The gathering begins Nov. 10.

The packed program, which had already included an address by Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, will now include a solidarity rally.

In addition, sessions are being recast to brief leaders on Middle East history and politics and strategize community action on behalf of Israel.

But does the renewed focus on Israel portend a larger, more lasting shift in American Jews' attitudes toward Israel?

And will the "renaissance" agenda — with its day schools, summer camps and synagogue renewal efforts all responding to the assimilation of American Jews — move to the back burner?

And, ultimately, will this mean a rethinking of allocations to Israel, which have decreased significantly in recent years as communities opted to spend more resources on Jewish identity-building and domestic social-service needs?

So far, everyone agrees that with the situation in Israel changing daily, it is too early to know how the American Jewish community will respond over the long term.

For now, most involved in the system say that the Jewish community must focus both on Israel and Jewish renaissance.

But there is no doubt, they say, that Israel solidarity rallies and missions are consuming the immediate attention.

Barry Shrage, president of Boston's Combined Jewish Philanthropies, said that at Israel solidarity rallies in his community, he told the crowds: "I would much rather be having this rally for Jewish education and raising money" for adult education courses and social justice programs, but "Jewish history doesn't work like that."

"Right now we've got to focus attention on increasing the community's support for Israel," said Shrage, one of the first communal officials to replace the term "Jewish continuity" with "Jewish renaissance."

But, Shrage added, "we've got enough resources and intelligence to do both things."

John Ruskay, executive vice president of UJA-Federation of Greater New York, said that despite the conflict in Israel, "the renaissance agenda is here to stay."

"If at this particular moment we need to have more attention on the extraordinary crisis that we face, so be it, but living as a Jew in the open society is an abiding challenge and opportunity for 21st century Jews," he said.

Even the most ardent champions of day schools and synagogue transformation

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Four killed in Gaza battle

Four Palestinians were killed during daylong dashes between Palestinian gunmen and Israeli troops in the Gaza Strip, according to local hospital officials.

A CNN correspondent, Ben Wedeman, was shot in the back during Tuesday's pitched battle at the Karni Crossing.

It was not immediately clear who shot him.

In another incident near the West Bank town of Bethlehem, Palestinian gunmen opened fire on an Israeli bus, but no one was hurt.

### Meeting with Albright canceled

Wednesday's planned meeting between U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and Israel's acting foreign minister was canceled, according to officials at the Israeli Embassy in Washington.

The officials said Tuesday Shlomo Ben-Ami's departure from London had been delayed.

They added that they are now trying to reschedule Ben-Ami's Washington meetings, which also include an address at the National Press Club.

### Former minister's trial starts

Former Israeli Cabinet minister Yitzhak Mordechai went on trial Tuesday on charges of sexually harassing three women over the course of eight years.

Mordechai has denied the allegations.

At the opening of the session, the court rejected the defense's request to strike some of the charges on the grounds that the statute of limitations had expired.

### Jericho casino folds its cards

The Oasis Casino in Jericho closed down indefinitely because the ongoing violence caused a sharp drop in business.

Israelis, who constitute the majority of the casino's clientele, have been barred from entering the Palestinian autonomous areas because of the ongoing unrest.

efforts are troubled by what is happening in Israel and say they cannot conduct business as usual while Israel is in crisis.

Many point to Birthright Israel — a free 10-day trip to Israel aimed at strengthening young people's Jewish identities and one of the most popular new efforts — to show that building Jewish identity and supporting Israel are not mutually exclusive.

"An important part of the Jewish renaissance agenda is building and maintaining a sense of Jewish peoplehood," said Jonathan Woocher, head of the UJC's Renaissance and Renewal Pillar.

The pillar is one of four agenda-setting committees Jewish officials created a year ago.

Even programs that do not have a direct Israel connection help to build "the kind of deep personal Jewish identification that we know from every study correlates with closer identification with Israel," said Woocher, who also serves as executive director of the Jewish Education Service of North America.

In fact, while other programs have been cut or altered to make room for the Israel agenda at the G.A., the Renaissance and Renewal Pillar's programming remains largely intact, said UJC officials.

The pillar will host a forum on "fostering Jewish journeys" and will also sponsor 11 workshops on such topics as outreach to families, youth and "Generation J" — 20- and 30-something Jews — as well as the shortage of personnel in Jewish education.

It is unclear, however, whether programs on Israel, slated for the same time slots, will diminish turnout for these sessions.

Woocher said he does not expect low turnout, then added, "but if it's because people are at other important sessions, that's fine, too."

Cindy Chazan, a former federation executive who will attend the G.A., said the changes are necessary.

If the UJC had planned a G.A. "that was business as usual, we would have felt a void, it would have been confusing."

Chazan, now director of alumni and community development for the Wexner Foundation, which helps train young Jewish professionals, said she doesn't see this as a shift in priorities, but as a straightforward approach that says "here's a crisis, we need to come together."

Louise Stoll, the UJC's chief operating officer and one of the key people planning the G.A., said that despite the focus on Israel, other business will also continue.

"There are federations to be run, hungry people to be fed, Jewish schools to be staffed and a whole host of things that must continue," Stoll said.

Asked whether renaissance efforts might be relegated to the back burner as concern for Israel grows, Stoll said, "I don't think so. We know these are existential issues as well."

If the peace process resumes, she said, "you won't have noticed much departure from what's been going on in the past five to six years — assimilation and Jewish learning will definitely be the preoccupying elements."

But if the conflict is protracted, she added, it "will have implications on allocations" split between local and overseas needs.

For now, instead of sending additional dollars to Israel, American Jewish leaders are organizing solidarity rallies and missions and are training activists to defend Israel in the U.S. media, and to U.S. lawmakers.

But money could become an issue if Israel faces an all-out war.

Some believe the renaissance goal of strengthening American Jewish identity may not suffer even if more attention, and perhaps dollars, flow to Israel.

"When you mobilize a generation of Jewish students on campuses today to defend Israel, that's Jewish renaissance," Martin Raffel, associate executive vice chair of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, said, noting that "a lot of middle-aged people came to greater Jewish awareness" through the 1967 Six-Day War and the 1973 Yom Kippur War.

"We don't want to have war and intifada and violence," he added.

"But the reality is this is an opportunity for young Jews to get involved on issues related to Israel that can affect their self-definition and feelings of responsibility to Jews around the world." □



## Daily News Bulletin

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## JEWISH WORLD

### Mosque mistaken for synagogue

Vandals targeted a combined mosque-Islamic community center in Los Angeles twice during the past week, although in one instance the perpetrators apparently mistook the mosque for a synagogue.

The front of the Islamic Center of Southern California was defaced Oct. 26 with a swastika and the words, "Jew, Go Home." And on Sunday evening, a large rock shattered the front glass door of the center while worshipers were praying inside.

Jewish and Muslim leaders denounced the attacks at a news conference Monday.

### ADL: Cartoons favor Israel

While some Jews sense an anti-Israel bias in the American media, the Anti-Defamation League reports that in a recent sampling of editorial page cartoons, those cartoons depicting the Palestinians as the source of the violence outnumbered those blaming Israel by 3-1.

The ADL based its findings on a survey of 73 editorial cartoons that ran in U.S. papers during the month of October.

In an earlier survey of editorials running in American newspapers, the ADL found "overwhelming support and sympathy for Israel's position."

### U.S. envoy visits school in Russia

The U.S. ambassador to Russia visited a Jewish school there that was recently vandalized by neo-Nazis, according to a Jewish group that works on behalf of Jews in the region.

During his visit to the Ryazan school last week, James Collins held a roundtable discussion about religious and ethnic tolerance, the NCSJ said.

### Hebrew program goes trilingual

For the first time, the National Jewish Outreach Program is providing study materials in Russian and Spanish when it offers Hebrew classes at some 1,100 locations across North America.

The campaign, running through the month of November, is expected to attract more than 15,000 unaffiliated and marginally affiliated Jews.

### Eternal flame gets extinguished

German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder accidentally extinguished Israel's eternal flame for the 6 million Jews killed in the Holocaust. During a visit to Jerusalem's Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial on Tuesday, Schroeder turned a handle that was supposed to make the flame rise.

When it went out instead, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak tried to help, but to no avail. Finally, a technician used a cigarette lighter to reignite the flame.

## ELECTIONS 2000

### Getting out the Jewish vote: Groups work down to the wire

By Sharon Samber

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Last-ditch efforts to get Jewish voters to the polls are taking different forms in different places but the message is essentially the same to all: The Jewish vote is important and your vote can make a difference.

Whether the mode is a voter guide or a "meet and greet the candidates" event, synagogues, Jewish organizations and community groups are trying to encourage everyone they can to vote on Nov. 7.

Because of their tax-exempt status, Jewish nonprofit organizations are prohibited from supporting or opposing candidates. But they are permitted to engage in voter registration and "get-out-the-vote" efforts.

Among the activities taking place across the country:

- In Rhode Island, a community relations council forum drew a crowd of more than 100 people to hear the local candidates for the U.S. House and Senate, according to Amy Gross, director of community relations for the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island. The council also helped organize a voter registration drive and is involved in an initiative to get people to pledge that they will vote in the upcoming election.

- In New York, the Jewish Community Relations Council is working with neighborhood-based Jewish organizations to reach out to the Russian-speaking communities.

- In Los Angeles, the Jewish Community Relations Committee of the Jewish Federation of Los Angeles joined with the local Board of Rabbis to encourage rabbis across southern California to include in their sermons this week a message encourage congregants to vote. The council also coordinated with senior centers to send absentee ballots to those elderly citizens who are unable to get to the polls.

- In New Albany, Ohio, Temple Beth Shalom sponsored a candidates' debate and there are "Vote" signs posted right inside the synagogue. Rabbi Howard Apothaker said voter registration forms were made available on the high holidays.

Getting out the vote has become a normal synagogue activity, according to Sarrae Crane, director of social action and public policy for United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism.

Some Jewish groups have also issued voter guides. All four streams of Judaism joined together to develop a voting guide and action manual that was sent out to every affiliated synagogue in the country. The guide, prepared by the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, details reasons why Jews should vote as well as practical points about voter registration and other forms of participation.

The guide discusses general guidelines to planning activities such as candidate forums and candidate questionnaires. Also included are sample letters for synagogue bulletins and suggested talking points to be included in sermons that deal with voter registration and the effect of the Jewish vote. "There is great interest in the community," said Mark Pelavin, associate director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism. "We have to funnel that interest and get people to the polls."

A group called the JAC Education Foundation, formed primarily by Jewish activists involved in the Joint Action Committee, a political advocacy group interested in Israel and abortion, put out non-partisan voter guides in consultation with Jewish organizations. The guide includes the voting records of House and Senate candidates on issues of interest to Jewish voters, such as reproductive choice and school vouchers.

The Orthodox, Conservative and Reform movements sent out a joint op-ed to Jewish newspapers this week discussing what's at stake in this election and urging the Jewish community to turn out and vote.

"As American Jews, many issues of particular concern to us — morally, politically and economically — will be decided by the next President, and the next Congress," the piece says.

"We must not squander this opportunity. We must not let others decide for us. The stakes are simply too high." □

## NEWS ANALYSIS

**Shas Party gives Barak a temporary 'safety net'***By David Landau*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — A lot remains unclear about Israel's political, military and diplomatic situation.

But when opposition leader Ariel Sharon emerged Monday night from a meeting that Prime Minister Ehud Barak held with party leaders in the Knesset, Sharon made at least one thing clear: His talks with Barak about forming a national unity government are over.

Signaling that he had given up on forging a political partnership with Barak, Sharon said the premier had "surrendered" to the doves within his party.

While Sharon was blaming doves like Justice Minister Yossi Beilin and Meretz Party leader Yossi Sarid for the failure of the effort to create a national unity government, everyone in the Knesset knew that the blame — or credit, depending on one's political sentiments — lay squarely with the fervently Orthodox Shas Party. Shas officials signed an agreement Monday to provide a parliamentary "safety net" for Barak's government for a period of one month, while the state of national emergency continues.

Shas members, who hold 17 seats in the 120-member Knesset, had said they would only back Barak if he abandons his "secular revolution" reform program — a set of legislative reforms the premier had proposed recently to weaken the hold of the Orthodox establishment over such matters as Sabbath observance.

Shas signed the agreement after Barak met this demand.

Under the terms of the agreement, Shas will not lend its hand to opposition motions of no confidence in the government.

Nor will it support legislation during the coming month designed to dissolve the Knesset and fix a date for early elections.

This provides nothing less than a life-support mechanism for Barak, whose government lost its parliamentary majority when three parties, including Shas, walked out during the summer to protest July's Camp David summit.

Those defections left Barak heading a minority government that had the backing of only 30 legislators.

Knowledgeable sources said Meretz leaders were involved in every stage of the Labor-Shas talks, which took place concurrently with the prime minister's series of sessions with Sharon about a unity government.

The speculation in Jerusalem now centers on whether the Labor-Shas agreement will be extended into a Labor-Shas-Meretz agreement.

In other words, will Barak's temporary reprieve evolve into a more lasting stabilization of his government? Political observers were quick to note that Shas' only condition for the pact, the freeze on the secular revolution, was something the secular Meretz Party had accepted in past coalitions with Shas under the late Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and last year under Barak.

Given the state of emergency, they say, Meretz could easily accept again. In one of his attacks on Barak on Monday, Sharon said, "He thinks symbolic shows of force are effective."

This was perhaps his most outspoken criticism of Barak since the crisis with the Palestinians erupted a month ago.

He was responding to Barak's decision Monday night to order

helicopter strikes on Palestinian positions in the West Bank towns of Ramallah and Nablus, and in Khan Yunis in the Gaza Strip.

In those strikes, the helicopters fired missiles at the empty offices of the Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat's Fatah movement and of its armed militia, the Tanzim.

Army sources made it clear that the attacks were intended specifically not to cause loss of life, but rather to serve as a warning in the wake of two killings of Jews in Jerusalem on Monday. "We put those missiles in through particular windows of empty building at night," said Deputy Defense Minister Ephraim Sneh. "The message is that we can do so with equal accuracy when the buildings are occupied during the day."

Sharon scoffed at this approach.

He indicated that he thought Barak wrong for not having sent in the helicopters during two incidents in October — when an Israeli border policeman bled to death inside the Joseph's Tomb compound near Nablus during a battle with Palestinian militias, and again during the lynching of two Israeli soldiers in Ramallah.

"I, too, oppose escalation," Sharon asserted. "But when lives are concerned, there should be no other consideration."

Until now, Sharon has deliberately confined his criticism to his private meetings with Barak. His outspokenness Monday signaled his clear intention to take a harder line against Barak now that the unity option had been abandoned.

This was evident when Sharon said at the opening of the Knesset's winter session that the premier's peace policies had led the nation into a "trap."

And it was evident again Tuesday, when Sharon vowed to bring down Barak's "failed government." Sharon was plainly at pains not to attack Shas, even though, as others in the Likud Party wryly conceded, Shas had outsmarted and betrayed the Likud.

But Sharon's attacks on Labor and Meretz doves for the collapse of the unity talks were not without justification.

Just as Sharon would have faced a tough battle within his own party to push through a Labor-Likud unity accord, so, too, Barak would have come up against determined opposition in the Labor ranks. For his part, Beilin had said publicly he would resign as justice minister if Sharon were given the veto powers he'd demanded as his price for joining the proposed unity government.

Other Cabinet doves may have followed suit, and their pressure on the prime minister certainly helped sway him away from the unity option.

Now, with the Shas-Meretz reprieve package in place, Barak can, if the situation on the ground allows, turn again to diplomacy.

During the unity government negotiations, Sharon had demanded that the premier publicly retract the concessions he offered the Palestinians at the Camp David summit.

Barak, bolstered by the doves, refused to do so. On Monday, in his speech opening the new Knesset winter session, Barak pointedly recalled his positions at Camp David, implying that if peace negotiations resumed they would still be on the table.

This implication will be important if, as was expected here this week, Barak journeys to Washington in mid-November for talks with President Clinton.

Interestingly, both Palestinians and Israelis are embracing a theory that the lame-duck Clinton, free of electoral considerations, will be a more effective facilitator and mediator — and perhaps a more determined wielder of American influence — than in the pre-election period. □