



# Daily News Bulletin

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83rd Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Barak thanks U.S. Jews

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak thanked American Jews for standing behind the Jewish state amid Palestinian violence.

"We derive great strength from knowing that we in Israel are not alone," Barak told thousands attending a solidarity rally in Chicago organized by the United Jewish Communities. [Page 1]

### Sharon calls for strong steps

Israeli opposition leader Ariel Sharon called for the immediate redeployment of the Israeli army in the Jordan Valley and parts of the West Bank to "prevent any attempt by the Palestinian authority to take territory by force."

Speaking Tuesday in Chicago at the General Assembly of Jewish federations, Sharon also criticized Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak. [Pages 1, 4]

### UJC to create Web sites

The umbrella system for North American Jewish federations is launching a \$5 million initiative to create standardized Web sites for its members.

Called FedWeb, the effort will begin in the cities of San Francisco, Las Vegas, Atlanta and Tidewater, Va., and help federations provide Internet content more efficiently.

Approval for the funding came Tuesday at the United Jewish Communities' Board of Delegates, meeting in Chicago.

The UJC also decided to send weekly solidarity missions to Israel, beginning after Thanksgiving and lasting indefinitely.

The missions are intended to support Israel at a time of isolation and major loss of tourism dollars.

### Federations need 'major change'

The Jewish federation system is "in urgent need of major change," the system's top professional told delegates attending the General Assembly in Chicago.

While praising the federations' successes, Stephen Solender outlined several key upcoming challenges for the United Jewish Communities, including allowing donors more opportunities for "designated giving," becoming more relevant to younger Jews, upgrading technology and addressing the financial obligations that individual federations have to the national system. [Page 1]

## Solidarity for Israel dominates annual gathering of Jewish leaders

By Julie Wiener

CHICAGO (JTA) — In a speech that was the centerpiece of the North American Jewish federation system's gathering in Chicago this week, Israel's prime minister recalled being a small child when he heard of the United Nations' 1947 vote to partition Palestine.

That period — when the Jews' willingness to split the land was rebuffed by Arabs, precipitating Israel's difficult but triumphant War of Independence — parallels the situation of the Jewish state today, said Ehud Barak.

He told more than 4,000 flag-waving Jews on Monday at a rally intended to show solidarity for the embattled state that Israel feels its efforts at compromise have been rebuffed, and that it may face another war.

It was against this backdrop — and perhaps because of it — that this year's General Assembly drew 4,500 participants, the first sell-out in recent memory, said organizers.

With Monday's large solidarity rally, unprecedented security measures, about 100 Arabs demonstrating outside and a bevy of Israel-related programming, this week's gathering of Jewish leaders from around North America was not a typical G.A., as the gathering is commonly known.

Security was unusually strict at the sprawling downtown hotel where the assembly took place. Police stopped approaching vehicles, searching under them as well as inside the hoods and trunks. Inside, guests were frequently asked to show their name tags.

Amid intense fighting between Israel and the Palestinians — and concurrent attacks against Jews and Jewish institutions around the world, including in the United States — the heightened security was clearly intended as a precaution against any terrorist attack against Israel's top leaders and a major Jewish gathering.

But despite the threat of war facing Israel, Barak's message to North American Jewry was one of peace and solidarity. Israel must be "liberated from the crushing burden of never-ending war," said Barak, whose speech was preceded by a multiracial Israeli youth choir that sang folk songs about peace.

"We derive great strength from knowing that we in Israel are not alone," he said.

Despite his repeated message that there is no alternative to peace, Barak also squarely blamed the Palestinians for the violence and outlined several conditions — including a "Jerusalem broader than it has ever been in history" — for a peace agreement.

A speech early Tuesday morning by opposition leader Ariel Sharon had a somewhat different tone. He outlined his own plan for peace, but without mentioning Barak's name, criticized the prime minister for asking President Clinton during their meeting on Sunday to help bring about a reduction, rather than a cessation, in violence.

After years in which the G.A. had been dominated by debates about religious pluralism and hammering out details of the newly formed United Jewish Communities, issues of Jewish solidarity and Israel ruled the day.

The UJC, formed by a merger of the Council of Jewish Federations, the United Jewish Appeal and the United Israel Appeal, is the Jewish community's central fund-raising and social service system.

Except for comments from retiring U.S. Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-N.J.) — angry that neither his son-in-law who converted to Judaism nor the Jewish-raised children of his Catholic daughter-in-law would be recognized as Jewish in Israel — discussion of religious pluralism were notably absent from the assembly. In speech after speech,

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Israel imposes closure

Senior Israeli officers are calling for a stronger military response to the Palestinian violence, the Israel Defense Force's chief of staff said.

Lt. Gen. Shaul Mofaz spoke Tuesday after Israel imposed a closure on Palestinian communities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip following shooting attacks that killed two Israeli soldiers and two civilians.

Israeli officials are now calling those attacks part of a new "death on the roads" terror campaign by Palestinian gunmen.

### Hundreds attend mother's funeral

The funeral of a Jewish mother of five who was killed by Palestinian gunmen was held in Jerusalem.

Hundreds of mourners accompanied the body of Sara Lisha, a 42-year-old schoolteacher, in Tuesday's procession. A leaflet distributed at the funeral said, "The Oslo accords are dead. The Arabs want war."

### Israel: Arafat can't attend funeral

Israel decided not to let Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat attend Wednesday's funeral of Leah Rabin, widow of Yitzhak Rabin, in the wake of shooting attacks in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

A source close to the prime minister was quoted by the Israeli daily Ha'aretz as saying it would not be appropriate for Arafat to attend.

### Anti-Rabin teacher back in class

Israel's Education Ministry is allowing a Jewish educator to resume teaching after he was barred from Haifa schools for calling on teachers not to teach Yitzhak Rabin's legacy or hold memorial services marking the former prime minister's assassination.

Prior to his reinstatement, Yisrael Shiran distributed a letter of clarification, condemning the assassination and saying the educators must differentiate between the moral aspects of the murder and the political elements of Rabin's legacy.

Israeli leaders spoke gratefully of American Jews as partners and family members, thanked them for the solidarity missions they have been organizing since the violence broke out in late September, urged them to defend Israel in the media and asked them to visit Israel.

Most participants said they were not only pleased to have the opportunity to learn about Israel, but also relieved to see Jews unified — at least temporarily.

The focus on solidarity came "at a time when maybe we'd have been discussing the different factions of the community," said Jennifer Levine, president of the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago's Young Leadership Division. But despite Israel's starring role, it did not — as some had initially feared — crowd out all other issues.

For the first time, the Jewish Outreach Institute sponsored several sessions — many well-attended — on outreach to interfaith families. There were sessions on Jewish education. And the top professional of the UJC delivered a speech that focused more on the institutional changes federations need to make than it did on Israel.

"Our infrastructure needs to be majorly overhauled if we're going to continue to be relevant," Stephen Solender, UJC's president and chief executive officer, said, citing the need for more designated-giving opportunities for donors, upgraded technology and collective responsibility for maintaining and enhancing a central fund-raising and funding system for local, national and overseas needs.

Amid the talk about solidarity, there was some confusion over just what American Jews should be doing to express that solidarity.

Although some federations have begun focusing more heavily on Israel in their fund-raising campaigns, Israel is not asking for new money at this time.

Many G.A. participants said Israel is treated unfairly in the media. But beyond writing letters to the editor and op-ed pieces, many were uncertain what they could do.

"There's injustice in the media, but Israelis are not being killed left and right," Chicago's Levine said, noting that she has had difficulty recruiting her peers for solidarity missions, many of whom don't understand the purpose of such trips.

"People are confused by what they should be doing. It's not like it's a war and we should be packing up supplies," said Levine.

Some of those questions were answered at Monday night's rally, as Israeli officials repeatedly urged American Jews to travel to Israel and lobby on their behalf in Washington.

"Come to Israel not only because our hotel rooms are empty, but because we don't want our hearts to be empty," said Yuli Tamir, Israel's minister of absorption.

With so much uncertainty as to how things will shake out in Israel, few participants could say whether the renewed intensity of the relationship between North American Jewry and Israel portends a lasting shift or simply a temporary response to a crisis. A surge of interest in Israeli Arabs — who shocked many Jews when they held their own protests against the Jewish state early in the crisis — was evident in two well-attended sessions on Jewish-Arab coexistence.

How lasting the concern will be is unclear.

"When you have a family member stricken with tragedy, you don't say we have six children and have to divide our time equally," said Rabbi Solomon Schiff, executive vice president of the Rabbinical Association of Greater Miami. "When there's a crisis, you mobilize the family to help that one."

Many participants said that just as it did not pre-empt all the other sessions on the G.A. program, Israel will not crowd out work on Jewish identity building and education. Some noted that, without focusing on Jewish continuity and renaissance, there will be fewer American Jews left in future years to rally in support of Israel.

David Winer, a 38-year-old Chicago attorney who was volunteering at the G.A., noted the contrast between the involved G.A. participants and most of his Jewish peers.

Many of his Jewish friends, he said, have no idea even who the key political players are in Israel, or which countries border the Jewish state.

A few weeks ago, he said, he decided to make a small show of solidarity by putting a sticker with the Hebrew acronym for the Israel Defense Force, Tzahal, on his notebook and showing it to his Jewish colleagues.

None of his colleagues could read the Hebrew. "Most didn't know what it said and when I explained it, they still didn't know what it is," Winer said. □



## Daily News Bulletin

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## JEWISH WORLD

### Additional U.S. aid to Israel requested, but outcome uncertain

By Sharon Samber

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Amid politically volatile situations in Israel and the United States, the White House is asking Congress to support an additional aid package to Israel worth \$450 million.

Under different circumstances, the request, mainly intended to assist Israel with the financial burden associated with its withdrawal from Lebanon over the summer, might have been routine.

But depending on who becomes the next U.S. president and the status of the crisis in the Middle East, the aid package might get more scrutiny when Congress reconvenes for a lame-duck session in December.

Although Congress has decided to delay finishing up its legislative work until after the Thanksgiving holiday, the Clinton administration made the request this week to lawmakers.

The package also includes an additional \$225 million in military funds for Egypt, and \$25 million in military funds and \$50 million in economic funds for Jordan.

The request for supplemental aid to the Jewish state has been in the works for many months.

The request is separate from the \$3 billion in aid to Israel, including \$1.98 billion in military and \$840 million in economic funds, that Congress approved last month as part of the \$14.9 billion foreign operations bill.

But beyond the annual aid package, President Clinton is, according to administration officials, intent on making good on a promise to Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, who wants to have something to show for his peacemaking efforts, especially given his unstable government.

The supplemental package includes \$200 million in military funds for Israel as well as \$250 million to help defray the costs of the withdrawal from Lebanon.

With the peace process in tatters and violence continuing in Israel and the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the package seems like something of a consolation prize for Israel.

The aid to Egypt and Jordan, countries that have formal peace treaties with Israel, is intended as a nod to two countries that have been supportive of the U.S.-backed peace process.

The aid is also perhaps meant to shore up the United States' image as an "honest broker" in the Middle East, according to sources close to the process.

There is no money in the additional package for the Palestinians. The foreign aid bill passed by Congress last month includes approximately \$100 million in primarily humanitarian aid for the Palestinians, administered through nongovernmental organizations.

Just how much the American election affects this and any other request from the administration remains to be seen.

The request also includes suggested additional aid for 2002.

Under that proposal, Israel would receive \$350 million in military funding targeted at improving anti-ballistic missile efforts, including further development of the Arrow missile program.

The proposal also suggests about \$150 million in additional funds to be distributed among Egypt, Jordan and the Palestinians. □

### Bishops may issue peace call

NEW YORK (JTA) — U.S. Catholic bishops are expected to approve a resolution later this week calling on the United States to work "tirelessly" to revive the Middle East peace process.

The resolution, which is being circulated at the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in Washington, also calls for the creation of a Palestinian state and Palestinian acceptance of Israel's right to exist within secure borders. □

### Tycoons to stay out of Russia

A Russian Jewish tycoon ceded control of his media holdings to the country's natural gas monopoly, which is controlled by the Russian government.

Vladimir Goussinsky, who left the country in July after being jailed briefly on fraud charges, has no plans to return to Russia to face questioning, his lawyers said Monday.

Goussinsky, the leader of the Russian Jewish Congress, frequently used his independent media outlets to criticize the government, thereby drawing the ire of President Vladimir Putin.

It is unclear how the move by Goussinsky, the financial backer of the RJC, will affect Russian Jewry.

Another Jewish media mogul, Boris Berezovsky, also decided to remain abroad rather than face possible arrest.

### Slave labor cases dismissed

A federal judge in New Jersey dismissed 45 cases against German companies that used slave labor during World War II.

Under an agreement with the United States, payments from a \$5 billion German fund to pay Nazi-era laborers will not be made until all court claims against the companies are dismissed.

There are now fewer than 20 such cases in the U.S. courts, and they could be dismissed by January, according to lawyers involved in the cases.

### B'nai B'rith joins internat'l group

B'nai B'rith International was accepted as a part of the Organization of American States, a grouping of 35 nations that work for democracy and economic progress in the Americas.

One of 15 nongovernmental agencies affiliated with the OAS, B'nai B'rith will participate in discussions of freedom of speech and other human rights issues.

### Shtetl film opens film festival

Britain's largest Jewish film festival opened with a sell-out screening of a Czech film about shtetl life in the early 20th century.

"Hanele," which some are criticizing for reinforcing stereotypes, centers around the disruptions on family life when a Jewish father forbids his daughter from marrying a non-Jew.

Although many of the films are unlikely to see wide release in Britain, the festival includes items such as the new Cate Blanchett-Johnny Depp-Christina Ricci picture, "The Man Who Cried," and the Oscar-winning documentary about the 1972 Munich Olympics massacre, "One Day in September."

The Brighton Jewish Film Festival, which is in its fourth year, runs through Nov. 25.

## NEWS ANALYSIS

**Barak is under great pressure to intensify response to violence***By David Landau*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak is resisting pressure to step up Israel's military response to the violence and terror in the Palestinian territories.

Back from the United States, Barak plunged into consultations with top ministers and army generals following the deaths Monday of four Israelis — two soldiers and two civilians — in a series of attacks on road traffic in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Informed sources claim the pressure on Barak is coming not only from the Jewish settlers and from the right of the political spectrum, but from within the Israel Defense Force's senior officer corps too.

But the sources said the premier was determined to stick with his policy of relative restraint.

They said he would not order the IDF to change its basic strategy, despite the mounting Israeli casualties.

Some observers link Barak's position to reports out of Washington that President Clinton still hopes to host another three-way summit before he relinquishes the presidency on Jan. 20. According to these reports, Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat voiced his readiness to attend such a summit, together with Barak and Clinton, when he met with the U.S. president in Washington on Nov. 9.

Barak, it appears, has signaled his consent, too, even though his public position is that no diplomacy can go ahead so long as the level of violence is not significantly reduced.

Clinton's meetings with the two Middle East protagonists drew scant attention because of the ongoing saga of the presidential election, which continues to rivet the media and minds of America and the world.

The participants, for their part, preferred to divulge little of substance, either in their public comments or in off-the-record briefings by their aides.

For domestic political reasons, neither Barak nor Arafat was prepared to declare any deviation from the tough positions each took with him into the Oval Office.

Arafat demands an international force to "protect" the Palestinians from the IDF.

Barak insists on a serious and sustained reduction of the violence in accordance with understandings reached at the Sharm el-Sheik summit last month and subsequently confirmed — but not implemented — at a meeting between Arafat and Israeli Cabinet member Shimon Peres.

Barak's determination to eschew military escalation against the Palestinians, at least for the moment, was evident in his carefully crafted address to the General Assembly of the United Jewish Communities in Chicago on Monday.

"In the current round of unrest, we have until now taken a path of great restraint despite constant provocations," he said. "We are trying to minimize bloodshed and prevent a widening of the confrontation, but we will know how to respond."

But Ariel Sharon rejected the prime minister's approach.

Sharon told the U.S. Jewish leaders, as he has repeatedly told Israeli audiences, that he believes the IDF can defeat the "Al-Aksa

intifada" without triggering a major escalation in the territories and without sparking a general conflagration in the region.

"Jews are under siege and under fire," Sharon said in his address. "I fought 52 years ago in the war for independence to defend Jerusalem. I did not think the day would come after 50 years, that it would happen again that Jerusalem is under siege."

His sentiments were echoed Tuesday night in downtown Jerusalem, where West Bank Jewish settlers demonstrated under the slogan, "Allow the IDF to Win."

By the same token, Sharon made it clear in Chicago that he is no longer interested in serving under Barak in a national unity government, but rather is focusing all his energies and those of his Likud Party on bringing down the Barak government.

Those energies are being thwarted, for the moment, by a tenuous "safety net" extended to the prime minister by the fervently Orthodox Shas Party.

Some political pundits are warning, though, that holes in the net are growing bigger every day.

Helping Barak stay afloat politically is the plain and sobering fact that no specific alternative policy has been articulated by the opposition, other than Sharon's vague assertion that he could do things better if he were in power.

The bleak mood discernible around the nation seems to stem from a sense that neither Barak nor anyone else has a foolproof solution to offer.

After the attacks Monday, the army announced closures around all the major Palestinian cities. But the next day, Palestinian cars and pedestrians were still seen moving between the cities.

"There is just no way of effecting a hermetic sealing-off," admitted IDF's chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Shaul Mofaz.

The IDF pledged to strike back at the individuals who perpetrated the attacks. Cabinet member Benjamin Ben-Eliezer said they appeared to be Islamic Jihad activists. But Ben-Eliezer — seeming to implicate Arafat and his ministers — added that the attacks were unlikely to have been carried out without the assent of the Palestinian leadership.

In that, Ben-Eliezer spoke for a hard-line ministerial minority that tends to the view that any thought of returning to the peace process is fanciful at best, reckless at worst.

Ben-Eliezer, a longtime personal friend of Sharon, has himself been at the vanguard of efforts to forge a unity coalition between Labor and Likud. He still believes this is both possible and desirable.

Most ministers — Peres, Yossi Beilin and Haim Ramon among them — still hold out hope that a negotiated settlement can be salvaged out of the present crisis.

Increasingly of late, this group's subdued criticism of the prime minister for his handling of Arafat and of the peace talks has made itself heard outside their intimate circle. Some has seeped into the media.

Barak's insistence that restraint remain the order of the day, and his reported readiness to give Clinton a final chance to pull the parties together, will improve his standing with these Cabinet doves.

Whether, however, it will improve the chances of his government's survival is another question.

The days ahead will doubtless see redoubled efforts in the Knesset and in the court of public opinion to defeat the premier and bring about new elections. □