



# Daily News Bulletin

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84th Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### One wounded in Gaza explosion

A tracker for the Israel Defense Force was wounded in a roadside explosion in the Gaza Strip. Hamas claimed responsibility for Monday's blast near the settlement of Netzarim.

In another development, Israeli security forces neutralized two bombs discovered near the tunnel road linking Jerusalem to the Etzion bloc of settlements in the West Bank.

### Barak: Little hope for Taba talks

Israeli and Palestinian negotiators resumed talks Monday at the Egyptian Red Sea resort of Taba.

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak said he did not expect much from the "peace marathon."

As the talks were held, Israel allowed in 16,000 Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza Strip who had been granted Israeli work permits last month.

### Sharon defends interview

Opposition leader Ariel Sharon defended remarks he made in a New Yorker magazine interview calling Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat a murderer and a liar. Sharon said Monday his personal views of Arafat were already known.

### Russian rights activists protest

More than 1,000 Russian human rights activists gathered in Moscow to declare a national emergency on human rights.

But many Jewish organizations stayed away from the weekend event because they considered the anti-government stance unproductive.

### Peres backers stop campaign

Leaders of a movement to replace Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak with Cabinet minister Shimon Peres as the Labor Party's candidate for prime minister announced they are stopping their campaign, Israel Radio reported. [Page 4]

### Israel tries to calm Syrian fears

Israel sent messages via the United States to Syria that it is not interested in escalating tensions. Monday's move came after the Israeli daily Ha'aretz reported that Syrian armed forces went on high alert for fear that Israeli forces might attack before Israel's Feb. 6 election.

## BEHIND THE HEADLINES

### Collaborator wears brave face, even though he knows he's hunted

By Avi Machlis

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Younis Aweba dips into his pocket and unfolds an Arabic leaflet circulating through the West Bank, listing 14 wanted collaborators with Israel.

He calmly points to his name — fifth from the top — on a piece of paper that is nothing less than his own death warrant.

Even after two Palestinians have been executed by the Palestinian Authority for collaborating with Israel, another two have been sentenced to death and several more gunned down in the streets of the West Bank, Aweba maintains his serenity during an interview in the Jewish quarter of Jerusalem's Old City.

He has nothing to fear, Aweba says.

Perhaps it is the pistol beneath his windbreaker, provided by Israel, that gives Aweba a sense of security in these dangerous times. Maybe his resilience is drawn from 33 years of standing by Israel's side.

More likely, Aweba, a Muslim who works as a maintenance man at the Western Wall, simply is trying to deter potential assassins by projecting a brave image.

Whatever the reason, as Israeli-Palestinian violence continues for a fourth month, stories like Aweba's are playing themselves out in a particularly ugly way.

Collaborators with Israel, whom Palestinians consider the worst of traitors, are under enormous pressure from both sides: Israel is hunting for information; the Palestinian Authority is hunting them down.

"My name has been on the Palestinian 'wanted' list since the first intifada," Aweba says, referring to the Palestinian uprising against Israel between 1987 and 1993. "I survived that period, and I will survive this, too. But if anything happens to me, my blood will be on the head of" Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak.

Aweba is 58, his grey hair combed back, several days' stubble dotting his chin. His voice is throaty; as he talks, light plays off a gold tooth.

Like a true intelligence operative, Aweba — who has renounced his Palestinian identity — is careful not to give details of how he has helped Israel over the past three decades. Palestinian sources say he is a prominent informer who has played key roles in cracking Palestinian terror cells and recruiting other moles for Israel.

That reputation has made Aweba infamous in Ras al-Amud, the mostly Arab neighborhood of eastern Jerusalem where he has lived since 1976.

For years, his wife and 12 children have been subject to nasty stares from neighbors and villagers, he says, and his house occasionally has been stoned.

Earlier this year, Aweba's 30-year-old son was kidnapped into areas under Palestinian control. His abductors forced him to sketch a map of the family home, and point out exactly where Younis Aweba sleeps at night.

Under such pressure, it is difficult to imagine what drives Arab informers to help Israel. Aweba insists his motives are pure: Unlike other collaborators, who may provide information because of bribes or blackmail, Aweba says he supports Israel.

His work began just after Israel's 1967 victory in the Six-Day War.

"I had been living under Jordanian occupation and was subject to discrimination. Suddenly, I saw democracy in front of my eyes," he says. "I came to the Mahane Yehuda market," the main produce market in western Jerusalem, "and saw the Jews had no tails, that they live better than we did."

Israeli agents visited the newly won Arab areas, and they asked questions. Aweba

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Palestinians: Clinton was biased

Palestinian negotiators accused President Clinton of siding with Israel during his term in the White House and called on the Bush administration to take a new tack.

In a new memorandum summing up the Clinton administration's actions in brokering Israeli-Palestinian peace talks, the negotiators said Monday, "Over the last seven years in particular, the U.S. has become increasingly identified with Israeli ideological assumptions."

The Bush administration will be able to play a role in brokering a peace deal, "but only if it can learn from the mistakes and failures of the last seven years," they said.

### Shas rabbi blasts secular parties

The spiritual leader of the fervently Orthodox Shas Party said members of the secular Meretz and Shinui parties cannot be witnesses at Jewish weddings because they are evil, smoke on the Sabbath and eat nonkosher food.

In a weekly lesson on Jewish marriage, Rabbi Ovadia Yosef said such a union is valid only if witnessed by two observant Jews.

Shinui Knesset member Joseph Paritzky said in response that his party is trying to promote civil marriages in Israel.

### Temple Mount digging criticized

Israeli archaeologists called for greater supervision of work authorized by the Wakf Islamic Trust on Jerusalem's Temple Mount.

Monday's call followed reports that bulldozers had dug a deep ditch near the Dome of the Rock, causing damage to a floor dating from the Second Temple period.

However, Public Security Minister Shlomo Ben-Ami said only approved work was being done at the site.



## Daily News Bulletin

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answered. In the 1970s, he moved to Tel Aviv. In 1977, when he moved back to eastern Jerusalem and was given a gun and Israeli citizenship. He has no regrets about his past, even though — like many Arabs in Israel — he sometimes has suffered discrimination despite his allegiance to the country.

After returning to Ras al-Amud, he had to fight a demolition order on a home he was building; ultimately, his work for Israel helped get him off the hook. And during his interview with JTA, a group of yeshiva students from a neighboring terrace cheered Aweba, although just days earlier — before he appeared on Israeli television — they had spat at him.

"I only hate the other side that wants me dead," he says. "I have no regrets, and I am proud of myself. Nobody forced me to do this work."

This is not always the case. Human rights groups — who condemn the Palestinian execution policy — also have criticized Israel's tactics in recruiting informers.

According to B'Tselem, an Israeli human rights organization, Israel exploits its control over movement in the territories to woo Palestinians.

The Palestinian Authority controls most of its urban centers, but Israel still controls movement between cities in the West Bank, into Israel and abroad. Permits often are promised in exchange for information.

"Even if it is not illegal for Israel to try and recruit collaborators, these tactics make it illegal," said Yael Stein, head of research at B'Tselem. "Israel helps protect them in very rare cases, and it is clearly their obligation to do so."

Officials at Israel's Defense Ministry and at the Prime Minister's Office, which oversees the Shin Bet secret service, declined to comment for this article.

But Gideon Ezra, a Likud Knesset member and former Shin Bet chief, says Israel indeed looks after those who provide valuable information, resettling them inside Israel — though their absorptions are not without difficulties.

"There are a lot of people who have been fingered as having collaborated with Israel — even if they didn't — and they are between a rock and a hard place," Ezra told JTA. "Everyone who did help Israel is given basic assistance in things like housing until they get on their feet."

The problem, however, is that many of the several hundred Palestinian collaborators who have been accepted into Israel prefer to live in Israeli Arab communities, whose residents often consider them traitors to the Palestinian cause.

Aweba's only criticism of Israel is directed at Barak, whose concessions to the Palestinians, he believes, have allowed the current unrest in which the Palestinian Authority is killing off collaborators like Aweba. Aweba supports Ariel Sharon, the Likud Party's candidate for prime minister.

Back in the West Bank, hardly anyone in the Palestinian Authority is paying attention to those parts of the Oslo accords that implied collaborators would be safe. International criticism has not stopped Palestinian officials from defending their execution policy. These officials say the collaborators play a key role in helping Israel liquidate Palestinian officials and militants suspected in anti-Israel attacks.

According to the Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group, seven suspected collaborators have recently been found dead in the streets. It's unclear whether these are cases of vigilante justice or officially sanctioned hits.

Part of the problem, the monitoring group says, is that Palestinians define collaboration very loosely to include not only those suspected of helping Israeli intelligence, but sometimes those who sell land to Jews — and even critics of Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat's regime.

During the first intifada, for example, Palestinians killed an estimated 850 of their own who were suspected of collaborating with Israel in one way or another — almost as high as the number of Palestinians who died at Israel's hands in the six-year revolt.

Mireille Widmer, a researcher at the Palestinian human rights group who has studied Palestinian treatment of collaborators, believes most of the recent victims were suspected of involvement with the Israelis.

"There have already been seven cases of alleged collaborators killed in the streets," she said. "The problem is that the public is so supportive of the death penalty that there is a danger that if the P.A. doesn't crack down hard enough, the population is likely to take over." □

## JEWISH WORLD

### Yeshiva schemers get pardon

President Clinton pardoned a group of New York men who were convicted of fraud and embezzlement in a scheme to use federal money to finance a fictitious yeshiva. Clinton also pardoned Marc Rich, who fled the United States to evade alleged racketeering and tax evasion charges. Rich holds Israeli citizenship and has been a major benefactor to Israeli museums.

### Groups slam abortion decision

Some pro-choice Jewish groups denounced President George W. Bush's decision to bar federal funds to international family planning groups that offer abortion services and counseling.

The National Council of Jewish Women and American Jewish Congress said the move would harm women's health programs.

### Haider: Pay German deportees

The former head of Austria's Freedom Party said Austria's latest agreement to compensate Jewish Holocaust victims meant the country must now seek compensation for Germans deported from Czechoslovakia to Austria after the war, Czech newspapers reported. Jorg Haider said Monday that some 2.5 million Germans who were expelled had "suffered the same fate" as Jews.

### Doctors identify gene mutation

A group of doctors in the United States identified the genetic mutation that causes familial dysautonomia, a neurological disease that affects Ashkenazi Jews in disproportionate numbers.

One in 3,600 Ashkenazi Jews is affected by the disease, which leads to problems with heart rate and blood pressure. In a related development, the Dysautonomia Foundation announced screening tests for people at risk for the disease at NYU Medical Center and Mt. Sinai Hospital in New York, and at the Hadassah Medical Organization in Israel.

### Michael Pelavin dies at 64

Michael Pelavin, former chairman of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council, died last Friday at 64. From 1986 to 1989, he served as chairman of the organization, which is now known as the Jewish Council for Public Affairs.

### Rabbi Mordechai Gifter dies at 85

Rabbi Mordechai Gifter, head of the Telshe Yeshiva in Cleveland, died after a long illness on Jan. 18 at 85. Gifter was a member of Agudath Israel's Council of Torah Sages.

Thousands attended his funeral in Jerusalem on Monday, which followed memorial services in Cleveland and New York.

## Hopes for a pardon dashed, Pollard backers look to courts

By Michael J. Jordan

NEW YORK (JTA) — With a presidential pardon denied, Jonathan Pollard's best chance for freedom after 15 years behind bars is once again through the court system, according to advocates for the convicted spy.

Pollard's new attorneys are expected to push to set aside the guilty verdict and hold a new trial.

Pollard supporters had hoped that President Clinton, who came close to releasing Pollard as part of an American-brokered Mideast peace deal in October 1998, would include him among his final presidential pardons to release the former U.S. Navy intelligence officer.

Many even hoped that Clinton, who rebuffed heavy pressure from former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Pollard's behalf, would issue the pardon as a "gift" to boost beleaguered Prime Minister Ehud Barak's chances for re-election in Israel's Feb. 6 election.

It is widely believed that Clinton was swayed by the intelligence community's opposition to freeing Pollard, and the new administration of George W. Bush is expected to be even more beholden to the defense establishment.

Nevertheless, on his first workday as president, Bush was immediately beseeched by Congressman Anthony Weiner (D-N.Y.) to "show compassion" and grant Pollard clemency.

Other supporters, meanwhile, vented their anger that Clinton refused to include Pollard in a flurry of last-minute pardons before he left office Saturday.

"To be harsh, I think it reflects a lack of guts," said Seymour Reich, former chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations. In the early 1990s, Reich was among the first Jewish leaders to speak out publicly on Pollard's behalf.

Clinton "seems to have pardoned, or exercised clemency, for those people for whom there was no prior publicity," Reich said. "He would have been criticized for pardoning Pollard, but people would have forgotten it. It would have been a gesture toward the people and the state of Israel."

Clinton also did not pardon Michael Milken, the convicted junk-bond king who is a major contributor to Jewish day schools in California.

Pollard was sentenced in 1987 to life in prison for spying for Israel.

He pleaded guilty to one count of passing along classified information, albeit to an American ally.

In a plea bargain with prosecutors, Pollard reportedly agreed to talk on condition that he would not receive life imprisonment.

Supporters cite his harsh sentence as proof that he was "double-crossed" by the government.

Pollard reportedly has been incarcerated longer than any other American ever convicted of spying for a U.S. ally.

Clinton's own vulnerability on military issues — he was accused of dodging the draft for the Vietnam War, a major issue in his 1992 presidential campaign — made him especially sensitive to pressure from the defense establishment, some observers suggested.

"The president has always had difficulty with the military. He never served, and it even took him a while to learn to salute when getting off Air Force One," Reich said. "I guess he didn't want that criticism from the intelligence community as a legacy."

Despite mounting pressure from a number of Jewish politicians and community leaders, clemency from Clinton always was a long shot, Pollard supporters say.

"We tried to be realistic about it," said Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice chairman of the Presidents Conference, which lobbied the Clinton administration.

"I thought this was the opportunity for the president, and I'm disappointed he didn't take it," Hoenlein said. "It's regrettable that we couldn't close this chapter, at least on humanitarian grounds." □

## Some Jews serious at inaugural; most of them just want to have fun

By Matthew E. Berger

WASHINGTON (JTA) — They may be small in numbers, but Jewish Republicans were out in full force during Inauguration weekend, partying as George W. Bush was sworn in as the 43rd president of the United States.

The Republican Jewish Coalition and the American Israel Public Affairs Committee co-sponsored a reception Friday at L'Etoile, a kosher French restaurant in downtown Washington. RJC Executive Director Matt Brooks called the event an "insiders' briefing."

New White House spokesman Ari Fleischer and the editor of the Weekly Standard, William Kristol, addressed the audience, mostly donors to the RJC and similar organizations, as well as influential Jews in the Republican Party.

Brooks said it was an opportunity for the audience to ask questions about issues of concern to them: how active a role Bush would play in the Middle East peace process and how much interaction he would have with the Jewish community.

The atmosphere was light and jovial, as the speakers — including former Republican National Committee chair Haley Barbour and Sen. Gordon Smith (R-Ore.) — joked with the audience.

Outside the reception hall, Bruce Bialosky sat on a couch and spoke to old friends. A contributor to Republican causes, he said Republican Jews may be relatively few, but they still wield power.

"There's enough people in there with enough money to assert their influence over George W. Bush, if that's what they wanted," Bialosky said, motioning to the ballroom. "Jews have a big influence on Republicans. Bush knows all of them."

An accountant and real estate broker from Los Angeles, Bialosky said he hopes the younger generations of Jews realize they don't have to be Democrats.

"The values of the Democratic party have moved away from traditional Jewish values," he said. "Individual responsibility is a basic precept of Judaism."

Noah Doyle walked over to Bialosky with a plate full of food, and the two ate together.

Doyle, a 20-year-old Cornell University student from Long Island, said that too many people simply assume Jews will vote Democratic.

"Most Jews are bipartisan," Doyle said. "But they're afraid of the Christian Coalition."

That sentiment was repeated throughout the event. Republican Jews indeed seem weary of the Christian Coalition and its perceived grip on the GOP, but they also want to bring the Republican Party to the Jewish community and emphasize the party's inclusiveness.

Steven Some, a lobbyist and chairman of the New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education, said many things about the Republican Party should appeal to Jews, such as the party's economic views, stance on national defense and support for Israel. But the Jewish community is turned off by Republican positions on domestic issues like abortion, he acknowledged.

"The perception that the religious right has some hold on the Republican Party concerns me," Some said.

Dale Robinowitz, a Dallas dentist who had come up from Texas for the weekend, called Bush "an old friend" and said she had high hopes for the next administration. "I think he's going to listen and he's going to care," she said. □

## Barak backers say U.S. interview demonstrates Sharon's true colors

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Ariel Sharon's foes are trying to make political hay out of an interview with the opposition leader that appeared in this week's issue of The New Yorker magazine.

In the interview — most of which was conducted last fall, before Sharon launched his campaign for prime minister — Sharon refers to Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat as a "murderer and a liar" and describes him as a "bitter enemy."

The article appears in the middle of a campaign for Israel's Feb. 6 election, in which Sharon is portraying himself as a moderate who will bring Israel peace and security.

Indeed, author Jeffrey Goldberg wrote that when he spoke to Sharon last week, the Likud leader was "more cautious in his public pronouncements" than when the bulk of the interview was first conducted.

Sharon's political opponents seized on the interview as revealing the Likud Party candidate's true ideological bent.

The interview "speaks for itself, for anyone who thought Sharon had changed," Prime Minister Ehud Barak's campaign said in a statement.

Barak also was interviewed for the article, but it was Sharon's comments that drew the most attention in Israel.

At the time most of the interview was conducted, Sharon may not have anticipated his candidacy.

Many Likudniks were pinning their hopes on a political comeback by former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

But Netanyahu dropped his bid, and Sharon subsequently was chosen as the Likud candidate.

In his first public reaction to the interview, Sharon said Monday that if elected he would conduct negotiations with Arafat — as he has in the past — but based on different proposals than those favored by Barak.

Sharon, the front-runner in opinion polls, has accused Barak of a willingness to make far-reaching concessions, including granting the Palestinians control over parts of Jerusalem and the Temple Mount, foregoing an Israeli presence in the Jordan Valley and allowing Palestinian refugees to return to Israel.

Barak has repeatedly denied that he is willing to make such concessions.

It was not immediately clear whether the New Yorker article would provide Barak with sufficient ammunition to make up the deficit in the polls.

In what could provide another boost for Barak's campaign, leaders of a movement to replace Barak with Cabinet minister Shimon Peres as the Labor Party's candidate for prime minister announced Monday that they are stopping their campaign.

The movement's leaders said the effort has only helped Sharon by splitting the "peace camp."

At the same time, they said they remain convinced that Peres is the stronger candidate to oppose Sharon. □