



# Daily News Bulletin

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84th Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Sharon: 1 million Jews wanted

Israel should draw 1 million more Jewish immigrants over the next 10 years, with the goal that a majority of the world's Jews will live in the Jewish state by 2020, Prime Minister-elect Ariel Sharon told a delegation from the United Jewish Communities.

The bulk of these immigrants would come from "communities in distress," such as the former Soviet Union, Argentina and South Africa, said UJC President and CEO Stephen Solender, quoting Sharon.

Sharon later reiterated the comments before the Jewish Agency for Israel's Board of Governors, his first formal address to world Jewish leaders. [Page 4]

### Supreme Court divides Jews

U.S. Jewish groups are split over whether using public school buildings for after-school religious activities violates the constitutional separation between church and state.

Most groups feel the building's use in the case involving a New York school, which will be heard by the U.S. Supreme Court on Wednesday, would endorse religion.

Orthodox groups, however, say denying the group the right to meet in the school discriminates against religion.

### Group to honor 'Dr. Laura'

A controversial Jewish radio personality will be honored by a national Orthodox group with an award on March 4.

Her condemnations of homosexuality have earned Laura Schlessinger, popularly known as "Dr. Laura," the criticism of the Anti-Defamation League and other groups, and led her to being dropped from a recent conference on Jewish medical ethics.

Officials with the National Council for Young Israel say the group will give Schlessinger its "National Heritage Award" to "support her call for a return to traditional American moral values."

### Jews arrested in Judaica heist

Israeli police arrested three fervently Orthodox Jews with some \$2 million worth of Judaica believed to have been stolen in Israel and Europe.

Residents of Bnei Brak, Jerusalem and Haifa, the three were detained when they tried to sell stolen Torah ornaments to a Tel Aviv store.

## NEWS ANALYSIS

### Labor's public bloodletting shows peace camp in disarray

By David Landau

JERUSALEM (JTA) — The public bloodletting that the Labor Party presented to the Israeli public this week has exposed the current depth of disarray and confusion on the Israeli left following Prime Minister Ehud Barak's massive defeat at the polls.

Labor's Central Committee ultimately voted by a 2-1 margin Monday to join Prime Minister-elect Ariel Sharon's proposed national unity government.

But the margin masks the magnitude of division within Labor about the proper course of action for a party that, until the outbreak of the "Al-Aksa Intifada" five months ago, was convinced that its path as the standard-bearer of Israel's peace camp was the correct one.

Farther to the left, the Meretz Party also is in disarray.

Meretz head Yossi Sarid is facing criticism for his support of Barak during the election campaign, and some in the party even have recommended that Meretz join Sharon — if only Sharon can be convinced to jettison the far right from his proposed government.

Barak, the man who sought to lead Labor into a unity government until he realized the extent of his colleagues' loathing, didn't even bother to attend Monday's raucous Central Committee meeting.

Much as the septuagenarian Sharon stepped in to resuscitate the ailing Likud after Benjamin Netanyahu's defeat in 1999, it was left to party elder Shimon Peres, 78, to swing Laborites to his vision of the party's role.

In arguing passionately for a unity government, Peres faced down Foreign Minister Shlomo Ben-Ami, Knesset Speaker Avraham Burg, Justice Minister Yossi Beilin and Knesset faction chair Ophir Pines-Paz, all of whom argued that Labor was in effect selling its soul to join Sharon.

Peres castigated the doves for being "out of touch" with the people and assured the party that the great majority of the public wants a unity government.

"The time has come to listen to the nation," Peres said in a plea for unity, as supporters in the audience clapped and hecklers booed. "For once, listen to the will of the nation."

Labor would emerge strengthened from a stint in the unity government, Peres argued; in opposition, it would do little but make speeches during a period of national crisis.

Beilin, Peres' political protege and one of the main opponents of a unity government, said Labor's only purpose would be to extend the life of an ill-fated coalition under Sharon.

"Shimon, I love you, but listening to your remarks, I want to cry," Beilin said.

It would be Sharon's wildest dream to have a "Nobel Peace Prize laureate as his foreign minister" to explain his government's allegedly hard-line policies abroad, Beilin said.

As the dust settled on Tuesday, Beilin warned that Sharon could not count on unified support from Labor members in important Knesset votes.

"Sharon has to know that there will be Knesset members who won't be able to support him," Beilin told Israel's Army Radio.

"If he thinks that those people who voted yesterday against" a unity "government and who won't be ministers in this government will come like obedient soldiers to vote confidence in a government they don't believe in, he's wrong," said Beilin. Sharon "is

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Israeli wounded in shooting

Palestinian gunmen seriously wounded an Israeli woman in a West Bank attack on a van near Jerusalem.

Two other people riding in the van also were injured in the attack.

### Sentence in Palestinian killing

An Israeli commanding officer sentenced a soldier in his unit to 49 days in jail for killing a Palestinian teen-ager earlier this month, according to Ha'aretz.

Israeli military police have yet to open an investigation into the Feb. 3 incident.

### Francophone envoy visits Africa

Israel's ambassador to the United Nations, Yehuda Lancry, is visiting several French-speaking countries in Africa to explain Israel's reaction to the current Palestinian intifada.

Lancry, a former ambassador to France, is traveling to Togo, Ivory Coast and Senegal. Lancry hopes to foster new Israeli ties in Africa.

### Palestinians release Israeli

Palestinian security officials released an Israeli arrested in the Nablus area on suspicion of helping Israeli forces kill a member of Hamas last week.

A physician with offices in two West Bank settlements, David Marsiye is the son of a Jewish woman who converted to Islam and now lives near Nablus.

### Olive grove murder investigated

Israeli police are investigating whether an Israeli whose body was found in the olive groves of a moshav near the border with the Palestinian-ruled areas was killed by terrorists.

Police initially thought the death was a work accident because a pesticide tank was found on top of the body, but an autopsy reportedly determined the man had been shot in the chest.

getting only a part of the Labor Party." Yet what the opponents of unity didn't say at Monday's meeting was as telling as what they did.

More important than the abuse and recrimination hurled around the hall was the fact that the losers in the struggle made no threat to split the party.

Immediately after Sharon's huge election victory on Feb. 6, Beilin began openly flirting with Meretz leader Sarid with his eyes on fashioning a new social democratic party from the bulk of Meretz's membership and Labor breakaways.

The assumption was that Labor's accession to a unity government — presumably, at that time, under the defeated Barak — would trigger a sizable secession movement.

On Monday, it was painfully clear to the doves that any split would be of discouragingly modest proportions.

Indeed, Meretz also seems in no shape for new political adventures. Sarid has been strongly criticized within the party for his decision a month before the election not to support Peres' bid to run for premier.

With polls at the time showing Peres giving Sharon a neck-and-neck race, Peres had sought the support of Meretz's 10 Knesset members — the minimum number required to back a candidacy — to present his own, alternative candidacy from the left.

Sarid's decision effectively enshrined Barak — who was trailing in the polls — as the peace camp's candidate.

Now some members of Meretz apparently believe Sarid, too, should resign as party leader.

There even are a few voices in Meretz that favor joining Sharon's unity coalition, if the prime minister-elect agrees to leave out the far-right party led by politicians Avigdor Lieberman and Rehavam Ze'evi.

To some on the left, these currents in Labor and Meretz reflect how dramatically the Israeli peace camp has lost its sense of confidence — and, some would say, its direction.

This is due not only to Barak's massive electoral defeat.

Rather, it is the bleak realization that Yasser Arafat and his Palestinian Authority rejected a peace package presented by Barak and President Clinton that represented Israel's ultimate red line.

Some peaceniks still cling to the notion that if only the package had been presented more sensitively and gracefully, the Palestinians might have accepted it. Yet most Israelis in the battered peace camp don't see what more of substance could have been offered.

In any case, Arafat's response was a low-level war that exploded the world view the peace camp had carefully nurtured since the famous 1993 handshake on the White House lawn that set the peace process in motion.

The left in Israel is now so discomfited that it doesn't have the strength to split, regroup, and launch a new and more homogenous peace party.

While some aspirants for Labor's leadership are competing for the party's eight ministerial slots in the unity government, Labor doves are refusing to serve in Sharon's Cabinet.

They now will be able to devote all their energies to the looming battle for party leadership.

One of those doves, Burg, hopes to turn the widespread dismay in the party to his advantage in the leadership primaries.

Others, including Benjamin Ben-Eliezer, outgoing communications minister, hopes a ministerial position in Sharon's Cabinet will help his bid to become Labor's leader.

If Ephraim Sneh, the outgoing deputy minister of defense, receives a nomination for defense minister from Labor's Central Committee, it certainly will whet his appetite for the Labor leadership.

Other possible candidates for leader are Foreign Minister Ben-Ami — who still insists that a peace agreement with the Palestinians was just around the corner — and Haim Ramon, who favors a unity government but has taken himself out of the running for a seat in Sharon's Cabinet.

Both will be watching public reaction to the unwieldy and heterogeneous unity government before deciding whether to compete for the Labor leadership.

Peres, who on Monday ridiculed Ben-Ami's contention that a peace deal was at hand, is likely to become interim party leader, but has said he does not want the job on a permanent basis. □



## Daily News Bulletin

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## JEWISH WORLD

### Germany starts anti-far-right plan

Germany launched a \$30 million program aimed at combating youth participation in far-right groups.

The program will fund plans to help teens who want to leave far-right groups and counseling centers for victims of extremist violence, among other things.

### Congress urged on Gestapo chief

The Simon Wiesenthal Center is asking the U.S. Congress to launch an investigation into the disappearance of the chief of the Gestapo. Heinrich Mueller is believed to have been in the Berlin bunker with Hitler in April 1945, but vanished soon afterward.

### Activists want circumcision cut

A Canadian law that bans genital mutilation is being challenged as discriminatory by anti-circumcision activists because it does not apply to circumcision.

The Canadian Jewish Congress is opposing any changes to the law.

### Australia to look at Nazis, art

Australia will investigate whether nine paintings currently at a government-run museum were looted by the Nazis.

Among the paintings at the Art Gallery of New South Wales are works by Ernst Kirchner and Georges Braque.

### Rights groups laud Russian ruling

Human rights groups are praising last week's decision by a Russian court rejecting a case that sought to outlaw the Moscow branch of the Jehovah's Witnesses. The case stemmed from a 1997 law that recognized Judaism as one of Russia's four main faiths.

### Forum to focus on 'Gen X' Jews

Several young American Jewish leaders will gather in Washington next month for what is believed to be the first national conference focusing on outreach to Jews in their 20s and 30s.

The two-day event is sponsored by the United Jewish Communities' Renaissance and Renewal Pillar and the Schusterman Family Foundation.

### Hungary Jews learn fund raising

Some 20 representatives of Hungarian Jewish organizations this week began a four-month course in basic fund-raising techniques and strategies, the first such training program implemented for them.

The course, which is being organized by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, will teach participants to create draft projects, organize fund-raising campaigns and write grant applications.

## Director of faith-based office takes his case to Jewish community

By Sharon Samber

WASHINGTON (JTA) — The director of the new White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives took his case directly to the Jewish community this week — and was met with polite disapproval.

John DiIulio, Jr. came to the Jewish Council for Public Affairs conference here Monday well aware that many in the audience opposed the idea of giving government funds to religious organizations for social services. He acknowledged the difficulties he faces in trying to implement his program.

But DiIulio, trying to assuage Jewish concerns, highlighted some programs run by community and religious groups, such as housing rehabilitation and mentoring at-risk children, noting that most beneficiaries were not members of the congregation and were not required to express any religious faith before receiving the services.

"I'm not suggesting to you that our worst fears may not be justified," he said. But the "most systematic research, if anything, moderates these kinds of concerns."

DiIulio had his work cut out for him in facing the Jewish community because most Jewish groups have come out against expanding financial partnerships between government and religious organizations. They say it chips away at the constitutional separation between church and state, allows for employment discrimination based on religion and infringes on religious liberties.

DiIulio, who promised to be "on the emes," to tell the truth, said he did not yet have any details about how much government money would go into the program or how the organizations would be monitored.

As a result, many of the questions raised by participants were left unanswered.

Rabbi David Saperstein, director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, praised DiIulio but lambasted his plan, saying it would corrupt religion and force religious groups to compete against each other.

Richard Foltin, legislative director for the American Jewish Committee, called the new federal office's plan a "fundamentally misguided mission" and noted there has yet to be a congressional hearing on the issue of charitable choice.

In contrast, Nathan Diament, director of the Orthodox Union's Institute for Public Affairs, lauded the concept of an expanded role for religious groups and said the "employment discrimination claim" is just a political tactic.

The late-night session's topic resonated with conference attendees — more than a dozen stood at microphones to ask questions and others waited until nearly midnight to speak directly to DiIulio after the program.

Meanwhile, a group of religious and civic organizations released a report Tuesday emphasizing areas of agreement on the government's partnership with religious organizations but disagreeing on many other aspects of charitable choice.

The report, "In Good Faith: A Dialogue on Funding Faith-Based Social Services," does not reflect changes in policy for any of the groups that signed on to it.

Some of the groups that participated in the report back the administration's proposals, while others — such as the American Jewish Committee, the only Jewish group to sign on — do not.

The Anti-Defamation League said the report does not adequately address concerns about discriminatory employment practices by would-be recipients of funding or endorse safeguards against money going to hate groups. □

## Gov't help sought on Jewish divorce

SYDNEY, Australia (JTA) — Australian Jewish groups are asking for government help in solving the problem of husbands and wives who refuse to give their spouses Jewish divorces.

Australian Jewry's umbrella body and the country's central group of Orthodox rabbis requested that Australian courts be given the power to postpone the granting of civil divorces until a religious divorce has been finalized or the parties agree to take their case to a Jewish religious court. □

**BEHIND THE HEADLINES****To angry Palestinians, Saddam presents himself as Arab savior***By Gil Sedan*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — While U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell was journeying across the Middle East trying to shore up support for sanctions against Iraq, a look at the West Bank and Gaza Strip could have shown him how popular Saddam Hussein has become to ordinary Arabs.

Powell acknowledged in Jerusalem this week that the U.S. was taken by surprise at the intensity of Arab protest at bombings of Iraqi radar sites earlier this month. And, just as they did 10 years ago, the Palestinians set the tone for Arab grass-roots displeasure.

As Powell shuttled between Middle Eastern capitals, Palestinian demonstrators took to the streets waving Iraqi and Palestinian flags. Through megaphones, they urged Powell to go home “and tell the killer” — President Bush — “that our people will not kneel and will continue to fight.”

Similar demonstrations were held in Amman and Beirut. Since the 1950s heyday of Egyptian President Gamal Nasser, it appears, no leader has managed to focus the Arab masses' anti-American frenzy as has Saddam Hussein.

Struggling for a decade to throw off United Nations sanctions and defy Western attempts to destroy his military machine, Hussein has found a vehicle in the Palestinians' “Al-Aksa Intifada.”

More moderate Arab leaders like Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Jordanian King Abdullah dampen talk of war. But Hussein — unfettered by the politesse of an international community that largely shuns him — has been trying to whip up Arab support for a broad attack to eradicate the “Zionist entity.”

In a show of force meant to intimidate Israel, Hussein moved troops several times this winter to the border with Syria. Ranks of volunteers were formed to join a jihad against Israel.

Lionized on the Arab street for his missile attacks on Tel Aviv during the 1991 Gulf War, Hussein threatened to fire a Scud a day on Israel. He urged Arab leaders, whom he called too cowardly to take up arms, to make room for his army to pass on the way to liberate Palestine.

Most practically, at a time when the Palestinian Authority is unable to pay salaries and its checks to families of intifada “martyrs” are bouncing, Hussein is diverting funds from his own beleaguered nation to pay \$10,000 to the family of each Palestinian killed fighting Israel.

With public support for Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat falling, Hussein is emerging as the Palestinians' new hero.

Other Arab states have failed to deliver financial support for the Palestinian uprising, primarily because of concerns about rampant corruption in the Palestinian Authority. Iraq, however, is funneling large sums of money to the Palestinians.

Hussein also is believed to have supplied the PLO with rocket-propelled grenades, anti-tank missile launchers and Russian-made anti-aircraft guns. Such grenades struck a Jewish settlement in the Gaza Strip last week.

In addition, Hussein hosted Arafat advisers in January, ostensibly to discuss Iraqi support for the Palestinian uprising. In fact, according to *Jane's Foreign Report*, the real purpose was to explore the possibility of evacuating the senior Palestinian leadership to Baghdad if the conflict with Israel heats up.

Just as the Palestinians need Hussein, so, too, he needs them.

Heating up the region serves his purposes, because Arab anger at Israel gives cover to his re-armament efforts.

Just as he did after the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait — when he said he would withdraw his occupation forces only if Israel evacuated the West Bank and Gaza Strip — Hussein is trying to establish a link between his growing standoff with the Bush administration and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This week, for example, Iraqi officials said they would allow U.N. arms inspectors to return to Iraq only if they inspected Israeli facilities as well.

Despite Hussein's rumblings, most Israeli experts tend to play down the military danger he poses to Israel, at least until he succeeds in developing weapons of mass destruction. Ironically, the main danger Hussein poses for Israel is diplomatic.

The new American administration warns that Hussein is the “main reason for problems in the Middle East,” and Powell has made containment of Iraq the focus of Bush's early diplomacy in the region. Other problematic parts of the Mideast, such as Israel, will enjoy less attention than they did in the Clinton administration — and, perhaps, less tolerance if Israeli-Palestinian violence threatens American efforts to build Arab support for sanctions against Iraq. □

**Sharon promotes Zionism with visiting Jewish leaders***By Michael J. Jordan*

NEW YORK (JTA) — In his first address to world Jewish leaders since being elected prime minister, Ariel Sharon reiterated what have become some of his trademark themes: aliyah to Israel, Zionist education worldwide and the settlement of Jews in sparsely populated regions of the country.

Sharon told Jewish leaders visiting Jerusalem on Tuesday that he hopes to bring 1 million Jewish immigrants to Israel over the next 10 years. His goal, he said, is that a majority of the world's Jewish population — estimated today at 13 million — will live in the Jewish state by 2020.

Sharon made the comments to the Jewish Agency for Israel's Board of Governors, who came from nearly 20 countries. Earlier in the day, Sharon made similar comments to a five-member delegation of the United Jewish Communities, the umbrella group of local federations across North America.

Aside from the former Soviet Union, which in recent years has been Israel's main source of immigrants, Sharon singled out Jewish communities in economically unstable countries such as Argentina, Brazil and Mexico and in crime-wracked South Africa.

Sharon said that Jews from these countries must be “persuaded” that Israel is a viable alternative as a new homeland, according to a Jewish Agency spokesman who attended the event.

Meanwhile, Sharon said he would promote further Jewish settlement of the Negev desert, the Galilee and “Greater Jerusalem.” In some regions of Israel, Sharon said, Jews are significantly outnumbered by Arabs.

Finally, Sharon outlined three conditions before peace talks can resume with the Palestinians: Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat must make an “unequivocal public declaration” to stop anti-Israel violence, the Palestinian Authority must take concrete steps against incitement; and coordination must be renewed between Israeli and Palestinian security forces, which would allow Israel to re-open its borders to Palestinian goods and workers. □