



# Daily News Bulletin

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84th Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Sharon takes off for D.C. talks

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon left Israel for Washington, where he is slated to meet President Bush on Tuesday. Sharon said Sunday he is making the trip "with the purpose of strengthening the special relationship between Israel and the United States."

According to the Israeli daily Ha'aretz, Sharon plans to ask Bush to step up sanctions against Syria. The paper cited Israeli government sources as saying that Sharon will make the request because Syrian support for Hezbollah has expanded since Bashar Assad became Syrian president.

### Wiesel slams Jewish anti-Semites

Nobel Peace Prize winner Elie Wiesel criticized "anti-Semitism in Jewish leftist circles" in America and what he called their "desire to please the outside world."

Speaking at Sunday's opening session of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee's annual policy conference, Wiesel said Jews should not use their Jewishness as an excuse to condemn Israel. "We must rely more on enemies' threats than our friends' promises," he also said.

### Israeli, Palestinian officials meet

The head of Israel's Shin Bet domestic security service reportedly met a Palestinian counterpart on Saturday to try to end the almost six-month-old Palestinian uprising. Avi Dichter and Amin al-Hindi reportedly held the meeting as part of efforts to restore security cooperation since the violence began in late September. Palestinian officials denied that the meeting took place.

In another development, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon threatened to reimpose a blockade on the West Bank and Gaza Strip if violence flares anew. In a message to Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat, Sharon said the recent easing of sanctions would be canceled if the Palestinians renew violence.

### Bush pressed on Israeli captives

Thirty U.S. senators sent President Bush a letter asking him to press for the release of four Israelis kidnapped by Hezbollah last October, according to the Jerusalem Post.

They also asked Bush to secure information about three Israeli MIAs captured in Lebanon in 1982.

## British Jews charge that coverage of Mideast violence is unfair to Israel

By Richard Allen Greene

LONDON (JTA) — As clashes between Israel and the Palestinians continue for a sixth month, many Jews in the United Kingdom are concerned that Israel is not getting a fair hearing in the British press.

The Guardian newspaper has been the subject of the harshest criticism, but another daily newspaper, The Independent, and the BBC have also raised concern.

In an unusual move, Canadian publishing magnate Conrad Black publicly attacked one of his own columnists for expressing a hatred for Israel that Black described as "irrational and an offense to civilized taste."

Much of the British Jewish community shares Black's concerns.

"Israel is portrayed as a brutal regime interested only in hurting Palestinians," said Hagai Segal of the World Zionist Organization. Segal was a speaker at a recent panel on the topic, "Does Israel get a fair hearing in the media?"

The British press sees "Israel as a superpower and the Palestinians as poor people who want peace, and neither perspective is remotely accurate," Segal told JTA.

Part of the problem, he said, is that the British press in general tends to side with underdogs.

D.J. Schneeweis, the Israeli press attache in London, agreed.

"There is a tendency in many quarters of the media to go softly on the perceived weaker side in any conflict — in this case, the Palestinians," he said. "The presumption is that if more Palestinians than Israelis are being killed, it must be the Israelis using force."

Yet emphasizing the number of fatalities — without saying which side is initiating the attacks — leads to bias in articles, Schneeweis said.

Segal said the problem has gotten worse since the Palestinian uprising broke out at the end of September. After the Oslo peace process began in 1993 "there was more neutral, balanced, non-emotive reporting," he said.

"But now it's like the 1980s again," he said, when the press was strongly critical of Israeli tactics in the original Palestinian uprising.

The paper that has come in for the strongest condemnation is The Guardian, a London daily that is the choice of the left-leaning intelligentsia. Last month it was the target of an email campaign begun by a group called HonestReporting.com.

Started by a couple of young Londoners last October to monitor what they saw as anti-Israel bias in the press, Honest Reporting was soon taken over by Media Watch International, a new group based in New York.

When the Guardian reported that a man who killed eight Israelis by plowing his bus into a group of soldiers and civilians in mid-February was seen "in the Gaza Strip as a sort of Palestinian everyman who finally snapped," Honest Reporting encouraged its 12,000 email subscribers to write to the paper to complain.

"It places no blame whatsoever on the Palestinians. In article after article, and editorial after editorial, The Guardian places sole blame on Israel, on Israel's new prime minister, or on the Israel Defense Force," the monitoring group charged.

The campaign got an immediate response from the newspaper.

Four days after the Honest Reporting petition went out, The Guardian's comment editor, David Leigh, wrote an article saying that hundreds of e-mails had come in from around the world about the bus driver article.

Leigh traced the campaign back to Honest Reporting and Media Watch International. He linked both groups to the Orthodox group Aish HaTorah, which he described

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Israel gives P.A. cow vaccines

Israel transferred vaccines against hoof-and-mouth disease to the Palestinian Authority, after some 13 suspected cases were reported in areas under Palestinian control.

Israel transferred enough vaccines for 200,000 inoculations, according to reports. The Palestinian Authority has blamed Israeli closures for the outbreak of the disease in Palestinian areas — which Israel rejects as baseless — but the Palestinians have yet to present Israel with blood samples from the infected cattle, raising speculation that the claims may be false. No cases have been reported in Israel.

### Israeli reserve duty increased

The Israel Defense Force is increasing reserve duty to 42 days because of the ongoing violence.

Israel Radio said reservists would be called up in order to allow enlisted troops additional training and also a reprieve from their duties.

### Yad Vashem builds new museum

The Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial in Jerusalem is building a new museum as part of a major expansion project. The new museum will be three times bigger than the present one.

As part of the expansion, new archives and a library were opened last year to house more than 55 million pages of documents and 80,000 books.

### Students test tiny spy craft

Students at the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology in Haifa successfully tested a miniature spy aircraft fitted with a small video camera, according to the Israeli daily Ha'aretz.

The Unmanned Aerial Vehicle is designed to gather intelligence in urban areas or over hilly regions where radar cannot be used. The radio-controlled aircraft is very difficult to spot from the ground because its wingspan is a mere 24 inches.

as "widely regarded as right-wing extremists, not people entitled to harass the media into what they would call 'objectivity.'"

Sharon Tzur, the director of Media Watch International, told JTA that some people associated with her group are also associated with Aish, but there are no institutional links between the organizations.

She also said she was disappointed that Leigh responded with an attack on the messenger rather than to the substance of the group's complaint.

Leigh did not respond to JTA inquiries. Under Guardian policy, individual journalists are not permitted to speak to the media about the newspaper.

But The Guardian's editor, Alan Rusbridger, told JTA he found the complaints baseless.

He pointed out that The Guardian has published pieces by Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and writers Amos Oz and David Grossman — leading leftists who have been highly critical of Israeli policy — as well as local Jewish columnists including Linda Grant, Jonathan Freedlander and Ned Temko, the editor of the Jewish Chronicle.

"We are very careful to make sure Jewish and Israeli voices are heard," he said.

Many British Jews feel The Guardian is particularly problematic when it comes to Middle East reporting. "Most press bias is accidental, through naivete, not design," said Segal of the World Zionist Organization. "The exception is The Guardian, which sends biased reporters who make biased reports."

Israeli press officer Schneeweis does not go that far, but said "the Guardian finds it difficult to share its sympathy around."

He was particularly upset by the headline on an article describing Ariel Sharon's first visit to the Western Wall since being elected prime minister last month: "Sharon twists knife in Muslim wounds."

Pointing out that every new Israeli prime minister has made a symbolic visit to the Western Wall since the Old City was re-captured in 1967, Schneeweis said the headline was the result of either "ignorance or willful disregard for the facts."

One experienced British foreign correspondent familiar with The Guardian charged that part of the problem is the paper's Jerusalem correspondent.

The journalist, who asked not to be named, described Jerusalem correspondent Suzanne Goldenberg as "extremely inexperienced, young, leftist, Jewish and overcompensating because she's Jewish."

The journalist also said Goldenberg was too new to the Middle East when the Palestinian uprising broke out at the end of September. Goldenberg, who speaks Hebrew, has been in Jerusalem about two years.

Guardian Editor Rusbridger said he stood by his reporter.

"She has proved herself in a number of forums around the world. In no other area has she been complained about," he said.

The journalist also said some people at The Guardian feel they have a duty to redress alleged pro-Israel bias in the American press: "If Israel has so much of the media on its side, especially in the US, then we'll be pro-Palestinian."

Black, the Canadian publishing magnate, meanwhile launched a wide-ranging attack against "large sections of the British media" for being "rabidly anti-Israel."

Black, owner of the Jerusalem Post and Britain's Daily Telegraph, wrote an article attacking a columnist at his own The Spectator magazine for anti-Israel bias, widening his criticism to include "most of the relevant sections of the BBC, Independent, Guardian, Evening Standard and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office," Britain's equivalent of the U.S. State Department.

Very few people will go so far as to claim that British media are downright anti-Semitic.

"I don't think there's a wild anti-Jewish or anti-Israel conspiracy in the British press," Segal said. The main problem with the BBC, he said, is "carelessness."

"What Palestinian sources say is taken as fact, whereas Israeli sources are treated with cynicism. They preface statements with 'Israelis allege that ...' "

Schneeweis said he thought some people, especially Jews, are learning to examine media reports critically. "Most people do buy what they're told, but many people are aware that they are being fed information through filters."

That said, media bias remains a significant problem, he said.

"I don't want to imply that everyone is skeptical of the media," he said. "It does get under the skin and make a huge impact." □



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## JEWISH WORLD

### L.A. police urge Jewish security

Los Angeles police officials are visiting Jewish institutions, schools and synagogues to urge an extra measure of alertness while a high-profile trial is under way.

The defendant in the case is Ahmed Ressam, a 33-year old Algerian accused of conspiring with other Islamic extremists to bomb Seattle and other U.S. cities during millennium celebrations. "I want to stress that we know of no plans or threats targeting specific institutions," said Deputy Police Chief David Kalish, adding that police nonetheless are urging caution in order to plan for all contingencies.

### Racist pleads guilty, says sorry

A man who published a white supremacist Internet newsletter pleaded guilty to civil rights violations for threatening a Jewish congressman and other officials and for vandalizing two synagogues near San Diego, Calif.

Under last Friday's plea bargain, Alex James Curtis, 25, will serve no more than three years in prison. Curtis also agreed to apologize to his victims and not to advocate white supremacist doctrine during an additional three years of probation.

### St. Petersburg called Nazi center

The Russian press is expressing concern about the "rabid flourishing of Nazi ideology" in St. Petersburg, according to the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews. Long considered a tolerant city with an ethnically diverse population, St. Petersburg has recently become a hub for neo-Nazi activities that include marches and the publication of anti-Semitic diatribes.

### Latvian SS vets hold gathering

Hundreds of Latvian veterans of Nazi Germany's Waffen SS units gathered for an annual reunion that has been criticized for honoring soldiers who fought for Hitler.

The local Latvian Jewish community called last Friday's gathering offensive. The veterans say they joined the fighting units only to help stop another invasion by the Soviets, who killed and deported thousands of Latvians during their 1940-41 occupation of Latvia.

### Europeans turning to hummus

Europeans are turning to hummus as they avoid meat for fear of foot-and-mouth disease, Israel's financial newspaper *Globes* reported.

The high-protein chickpea dish has been flying off the shelves in European supermarkets, the director general of Israel's Tzabar Salads company said. The company's hummus sales in Europe jumped 24 percent in the last two months.

## Israeli panel hears testimony about Argentina's 'disappeared'

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — An Israeli committee has begun hearing testimony about some 2,000 Jews abducted during Argentina's infamous military dictatorship of the 1970s.

Argentina will this year mark the 25th anniversary of a coup that led to a seven-year military junta. During the dictatorship's reign of terror, some 30,000 Argentines — "the disappeared" — were abducted, imprisoned or murdered between 1976 and 1983.

Last week, the Israeli panel began hearing testimony from people who were imprisoned by Argentina's military regime and who were released with the help of the Israeli government, as well as from relatives of those who disappeared.

Among those who testified at the Foreign Ministry was Pinhas Sela, who was a widower raising his three teen-aged sons in Argentina when the military regime came to power in 1976.

In a trembling voice, Sela recounted the phone call he received from his eldest son, Gabriel, then a high school student, on July 8, 1977.

Gabriel informed him that police had raided a place where he was meeting with friends. Gabriel managed to flee, but his coat — along with his identity card — was left behind.

"Since I knew how the police worked and I understood the scope of the risk, I asked my middle son, Jose, to leave the house and go to his grandmother's," Sela testified in a mix of Spanish and Hebrew.

"I remained with my youngest in the house. I knew I had not done anything and had nothing to fear from the police."

Still, police came to the house and arrested Sela and his youngest son. They later detained Jose at his grandmother's house.

"They covered my eyes and took me somewhere where they held me for several hours. They beat me and tortured me, also with electric shock," Sela said.

"My youngest son was held in a room next door. When they released us and we returned home, I got a phone call from Jose. He spoke anxiously and said he had been detained, and that they told him if Gabriel does not turn himself in, he will never see the light of day," Sela said. "Since then, and to this day, I have not heard anything from Jose."

Several months later, after Sela was arrested again, he decided to leave Argentina with his youngest son and return to Israel, where he had lived for a time after immigrating in 1950. His eldest son, Gabriel, now lives in Spain.

The Israeli committee — which includes officials from the foreign and justice ministries, representatives of the families and experts on the disappearances — was formed eight months ago by the Knesset Immigration and Absorption Committee to investigate the fate of Jews who disappeared under the junta.

The panel spent months gathering written testimony before beginning public hearings last week.

The head of the committee, the Foreign Ministry's deputy director general for Latin America and the Caribbean, Pinhas Avivi, told JTA the panel has three goals.

"To try to bring the remains of those Jews who disappeared and were killed for burial in Israel, to locate Jewish children who were born in captivity and adopted by Argentine families, and to publish all the material gathered as a piece of research, a remembrance to the disappeared," he said.

According to Avivi, officials know of some 20 cases of Jewish women who were arrested and gave birth in prison.

Avivi said the children, who were later adopted by Argentine families, "have a right to know" their background.

The hearings also are expected to touch on the feelings of some of the Argentine families that Israel at the time did not do enough to help the Jewish community there. In his testimony, Sela said he sought help from the Israeli Embassy, but was refused.

Avivi said the committee plans to travel to Argentina to gather information.

He estimated it will take another six to nine months before the committee issues its findings. □

## BEHIND THE HEADLINES

**For Sharon and Israeli envoy, it's a reunion of war buddies***By Matthew E. Berger*

WASHINGTON (JTA) — When Israel's ambassador to the United States briefed Ariel Sharon before the new prime minister's inaugural visit to Washington this week, it wasn't exactly a "getting-to-know-you" session.

Sharon and David Ivry have crossed paths repeatedly in the past half-century.

As the new Sharon government begins addressing its most pressing tasks — stopping the violent clashes with the Palestinians and making at least temporary steps toward peace — the two are quite familiar with the roles they will play: Sharon will be the fierce, charismatic leader and Ivry the behind-the-scenes team player.

If Israel's best and brightest military men were gathered in one room, both Sharon and Ivry would be included. But only one of them likely would stand out, says Ivry.

"Even out of the normal routine of leaders which you had, Sharon was always one that everybody knew for a long time and he was very famous for his work as a military leader," Ivry said.

That notoriety stands in sharp contrast to Ivry, 66, an unassuming, soft-spoken man who is well-regarded in the Israeli and American military communities from his dozen years as chief Israeli representative to the U.S.-Israel Strategic Dialogue.

Ivry is nonpolitical, a man who has built a career on civil service rather than politics.

Although he was appointed in 1999 by former Prime Minister Ehud Barak of the Labor Party, Ivry is apolitical enough that he can make a smooth transition to a Likud administration.

In fact, Ivry was the only member of the Barak government to sit in on meetings between Sharon and U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell when Powell was in Israel late last month.

Ivry's "credentials cross both parties," said Tom Neumann, executive director of the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs.

"He is not partisan as much as he is committed to the process and programs he is involved in."

Before beginning his diplomatic career, Ivry played a role in many of Israel's battles — from the 1956 Sinai campaign to the 1982 Lebanon War.

He is a former commander of the Israel Air Force and served an unprecedented decade-long stint as director general of the Defense Ministry.

In many of the tensest moments of Israeli history, Ivry and Sharon have served together.

In the 1950s, Ivry and Sharon met at military social gatherings that brought together members of the Israel Defense Force's two elite units: the "Unit 101" anti-terror force Sharon led and the fighter pilots, in which Ivry was a lieutenant.

"Those were the small units, which actually were taking the major responsibility for the security of the country at that time," Ivry said.

During the Sinai War, Ivry and his unit provided protective cover for Sharon's paratroopers as they dropped to forward positions at the war's start. "I can recall flying before dawn," Ivry said. He watched as the sky began filling with paratroopers.

"It wasn't like a war, it was like a very nice show. But this was the start of the war."

In the 1967 Six-Day War, Ivry always knew where the paratroopers were, a group known simply as Sharon's Unit.

By the time the Egyptian-Israeli War of Attrition began along the Suez Canal in the late 1960s, both men had risen in rank. Ivry was head of air force operations, Sharon head of the IDF's Southern Command.

"We used to coordinate the air attacks or the air support for the Southern Command on almost a daily basis," Ivry said. "So I used to meet with him quite a lot."

Sharon became defense minister in 1981 and led the invasion of Lebanon.

It was the air force, under Ivry's command, that destroyed Syrian missile batteries in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley.

Sharon was forced to resign as defense minister because of the Lebanon War and faded from the political spotlight for a while.

Ivry, on the other hand, rose quietly through the military ranks, and became director general of the Defense Ministry in 1986.

When Ivry was tapped to create Israel's National Security Council in 1998 by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, he found an unlikely ally in Sharon, who was beginning a political revival as foreign minister.

The NSC acts as part of the Prime Minister's Office, similar to the National Security Council in Washington.

Many foreign ministry staffers didn't like the idea of a new bureaucracy that might challenge their power, but Sharon understood the need for the NSC, Ivry said.

"He saw that the prime minister needed a staff to advise him," Ivry said.

Under Barak, much of the U.S.-Israel communication went directly from Barak to President Clinton, because of their excellent personal ties.

In the Sharon government, Ivry expects his responsibilities as ambassador to increase.

"It's going to be all the easier to contact him if I want," he said of Sharon.

Ivry has only praise for his former and current boss. Sharon is "very practical and pragmatic," Ivry said. "He's looking to the issues themselves to see what really should be done."

In Jerusalem last week, Ivry gave Sharon his assessment of the atmosphere in Washington and the young Bush administration's emerging policy toward the Middle East.

His long-standing relationship with Sharon will make his mission that much easier, Ivry said.

"But we are not playing social games here," he said. "This is political work which we have to do." □

**U.N. may take more active role**

JERUSALEM (JTA) — The U.N. Security Council reportedly is considering taking a more active role in the Middle East peace process.

This follows a call last week by the Palestinian representative to the United Nations for a U.N. force to "protect" Palestinians from Israel, and a speech by Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres arguing against such a force. As a first step, the council — which to date has passed resolutions condemning only Israel for the ongoing violence — may soon approve a resolution "acceptable to all parties," according to a leading council delegate. □