



Daily News Bulletin

Vol. 79, No. 61

Thursday, March 29, 2001

84th Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Israel retaliates for Arab terror

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon ordered military strikes Wednesday night on targets in the Gaza Strip and in the West Bank city of Ramallah.

In Ramallah, the Israeli military struck at the headquarters of Force 17, the personal bodyguards of Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat.

Israel has accused Arafat and Force 17 of coordinating terror attacks against Israel with Palestinian militant groups.

The Israeli strikes took place after a suicide bomber killed two Israeli teen-agers when he detonated a nail bomb among a group of students waiting in the Tel Aviv suburb of Kfar Saba for their ride to school.

Four other teen-agers were wounded, one of them critically.

U.S. vetoes U.N. resolution

The United States vetoed a U.N. Security Council resolution to send an observer force to protect Palestinians during the ongoing conflict with Israel.

A spokeswoman for the U.S. National Security Council said Wednesday that the resolution insufficiently addressed the fact that both Israelis and Palestinians need protection, and that the resolution was unclear about the necessity for Palestinian leaders to take steps to end the violence. [Page 1]

Report: Survivors suing U.S.

A group of Holocaust survivors filed a lawsuit seeking \$40 billion in damages from the United States for not bombing the Auschwitz concentration camp during World War II, according to the French news agency Agence France-Presse. The survivors contended that the failure to bomb the camp contributed to the genocide of millions of Jews.

Arabs pledge to Palestinians

Arab leaders pledged to send \$240 million in aid to the Palestinian Authority over the next six months and chided Israel for its "retreat" from the principles of the Middle East peace process launched in Madrid in 1991.

In a communique issued Wednesday at the end of an Arab League summit in Jordan, the leaders also demanded that Israeli "war criminals" be brought to trial.

FOCUS ON ISSUES

American veto at U.N. helps Israel prevent peacekeeping force

By Michael J. Jordan

NEW YORK (JTA) — With the help of a U.S. veto, Israel fended off Palestinian attempts this week to convince the United Nations to send a peacekeeping force to the West Bank and Gaza Strip and "internationalize" the Middle East conflict.

Together with their Arab and Third World partners, the Palestinians had hoped the U.N. Security Council would express support for such a force — at least in principle — and send a strong message during the Arab League summit in Jordan.

After five days of Security Council debate on the issue, the Palestinians had secured the necessary nine votes — including Russia, which had abstained from a similar Palestinian effort in December — to pass the measure on the 15-member council.

But the United States vetoed the resolution late Tuesday.

A spokeswoman for the U.S. National Security Council said Wednesday that the resolution insufficiently addressed the fact that both Israelis and Palestinians need protection, and that the resolution was unclear about the necessity for Palestinian leaders to take steps to end the violence.

The veto was the United States' first since 1997, when it vetoed a resolution that called on Israel to stop building in disputed areas of Jerusalem.

The five Security Council members with veto power — Russia, China, France and Britain, in addition to the United States — are reluctant to use it for fear of angering smaller nations.

The issue is unlikely to go away, however.

Some U.N. members are increasingly frustrated both with their perceived fecklessness in the face of continuing Mideast violence and the United States' ability to undermine U.N. efforts to get more involved in the conflict.

These countries hint of more drastic measures such as bypassing the Security Council in favor of the General Assembly, where the vast Arab and Muslim bloc holds sway among the 189 members. Unlike Security Council resolutions, however, those passed in the General Assembly are not legally binding.

Describing the situation as "worsening," Colombia's U.N. ambassador, Alfonso Valdivieso, told JTA before the vote that the Security Council "cannot remain silent."

"We cannot continue with the idea that involvement of the Security Council is harmful to the process; it's an error," Valdivieso said.

The United States maintains that an international force — ostensibly intended to protect Palestinian civilians — must have the consent of both Israel and the Palestinians. In practice, no country would agree to provide soldiers or other personnel for a mission likely to be greeted with hostility.

Israel opposes the force as unnecessary, and says it is likely to be ineffective.

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said earlier this month that if Palestinians stopped attacking Israeli troops — and launching terrorist attacks against civilians — they wouldn't need "protection" from any Israeli response.

Moreover, Israel believes U.N. intervention might lead to an imposed, not negotiated, solution to the conflict — one dictated by a world body Israel sees as inherently biased against the Jewish state by virtue of the large Arab and Muslim bloc and its allies.

Valdivieso, who served as ambassador to Israel in 1992, said he appreciates the Israeli perspective and the complexity of the situation. However, he said, "The

MIDEAST FOCUS

Two bombing attempts thwarted

Two bombs were discovered in the open-air markets of Netanya and Petach Tikva shortly before Wednesday's suicide bombing near Kfar Saba. The devices were exploded safely.

Hebron settlers unleash fury

Jewish settlers burned cars in the Palestinian-controlled section of Hebron on Tuesday night. Israeli soldiers drove back the settlers, who were furious after Palestinian snipers killed the 10-month-old daughter of one settler on Monday. When the army prevented them from entering Palestinian-ruled areas of the city on Wednesday, the settlers set fire to Palestinian buildings in parts of Hebron under Israeli rule.

In another development, Israel told its diplomats abroad to make extensive use of the photograph of the 10-month-old girl, according to the Jerusalem Post.

"The job of our information efforts is to unveil the real face of the Palestinian Authority," a Foreign Ministry official said.

Knesset approves budget

Israel's Knesset approved a \$58.4 billion state budget just ahead of a deadline that would have automatically brought down the government.

Lebanon ignores water warnings

Lebanon began pumping water Wednesday from the Hatzbani River, despite earlier warnings from Israel. Israeli officials have been concerned about how much water Lebanon takes from the river, which is a water source for the Jewish state.

Sharon expands coalition base

The United Torah Judaism bloc signed an agreement Wednesday to join the government of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, according to the Israeli daily Ha'aretz. With UTJ's five legislators, Sharon now has the support of 78 of the Knesset's 120 members.

international community is receiving the wrong message, that the Security Council is apart from the conflict. We must defend the role of the Security Council and comply with our responsibility to confront the violence."

Valdivieso said he hoped an international mission would act as a catalyzing force whose presence would bring a halt to the violence, paving the way for a resumption of peace talks.

But Israeli officials say the effect would be just the opposite.

"It would just be a prize for Palestinian cynicism," one Israeli diplomat said. "They started the violence, then they ask for protection from violence."

This week's Arab summit included surprisingly harsh criticism of Israel from U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who in the past has been praised by Israeli leaders for his moderation. "The international community and the Arab world have every right to criticize Israel for its continued occupation of Palestinian and Syrian territory, and for its excessively harsh response to the intifada," Annan said. "But these points could be made more effectively if many Israelis did not believe that their existence was under threat."

To some Jewish observers, calling Israeli reaction to attacks "excessive" is a way of blaming Israel for the ongoing violence.

Observers say that Israel's success in forestalling a U.N. force is only partial; the Arabs and their U.N. allies will try to paint Israeli resistance to such a force as a lack of sincerity to end the violence.

"We can ignore it as the same-old, same-old, but the U.N. has tremendous authority around the world and the Security Council has binding legal authority according to international law to enforce their decisions," said Shula Bahat, acting executive director of the American Jewish Committee. "So it does matter what happens there."

U.N. pressure on Israel is unlikely to let up.

If the issue does move to the General Assembly, Palestinian supporters might argue that a Palestinian state already exists de facto in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and thus an intervention force can be sent there.

Some dismiss that scenario as implausible because the United Nations would need Israeli clearance to physically enter the Palestinian territories.

"Do the Arabs use the U.N. for theater or for resolving problems? They use it for theater," Bahat said. "The Palestinians are not serious about reaching a peace settlement, so they use the political force of the global arena to try to accomplish their goals."

But Jewish observers say there's more to the request for peacekeepers than just "protecting" Palestinians.

Any sort of international presence coordinated by the United Nations would advance the Palestinian agenda, Jewish observers say.

Rather than force Palestinians to return to the negotiating table — and American mediation that the Arab world views as pro-Israeli — a force from the Palestinian-friendly U.N. would create "facts on the ground" that could be expanded over the years.

This time, "they would settle for observers who write reports," Bahat said. "The next time it could be beefed up to include humanitarian or logistical analysts, then civilian police, then military observers, until you have armed peacekeepers."

Observers say it's not unusual for U.N. peacekeepers to be used as shields. For example, if Hamas were to shoot at Israeli troops from among a crowd of U.N. peacekeepers, Israel presumably would be reluctant to shoot back.

And Israeli officials note that last October, Hezbollah gunmen kidnapped three Israeli soldiers on patrol along the Israel-Lebanon border, while U.N. peacekeepers reportedly looked on from a nearby outpost.

A peacekeeping mission also raises another question: Which countries would commit troops? Would they be friends or foes of Israel?

Peacekeepers are human, and have their own preferences and prejudices. The U.N. mission in Bosnia in the mid-1990s was tainted when it emerged that French peacekeepers had tipped off the Bosnian Serbs to U.N. plans.

Valdivieso was asked if Israeli concerns of unfair treatment at the United Nations are irrational. "I understand that's a feeling that comes from reality; it's not invented by Israel," he said. "The paradox is, Israel was established and allowed to exist through the U.N." □



Daily News Bulletin

Shoshana S. Cardin, *President*

Mark J. Joffe, *Executive Editor and Publisher*

Lisa Hostein, *Editor*

Michael S. Arnold, *Managing Editor*

Lenore A. Silverstein, *Business Manager*

JTA DAILY NEWS BULLETIN is published five days a week, except holidays, by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency Inc., 330 Seventh Ave., New York, N.Y. 10001-5010. For information about how to subscribe by e-mail, fax or regular mail, call (212) 643-1890, or visit our Web site at www.jta.org.
© JTA Reproduction only by previous arrangement.

JEWISH WORLD

23 swastikas at N.Y. campus

Twenty-three swastikas were discovered on the Binghamton University campus in New York on Wednesday.

The state university's president denounced the "anti-Semitic graffiti vandalism." Campus police believe the vandalism is the work of one individual.

Last fall, the university — which has 4,500 Jewish students — experienced several incidents of bias-related vandalism, including the theft and destruction of mezuzahs and the appearance of swastikas in dormitories.

Slovak Jews' lawsuit rejected

A Berlin court on Wednesday rejected a multimillion-dollar lawsuit filed against Germany by Slovakia's Central Union of Jewish Religious Communities.

The Jewish group was seeking to reclaim money the wartime Slovak government paid Nazi Germany to deport more than 57,000 Jews to concentration camps.

ADL seeks Danish retraction

The Anti-Defamation League is calling for a retraction after Denmark's foreign minister said the European Union should institute economic sanctions against Israel because of its settlement policy.

The ADL called the statement by Mogens Lykkesoft "sad and offensive." A source in Jerusalem said Lykkesoft has a history of making hostile statements against the Jewish state, according to the Jerusalem Post.

U.S. deports WWII criminal

The United States deported a Lithuanian-born man for his role in helping to execute more than 11,000 people in Lithuania and Belarus during World War II. Juozas Naujalis, who served in a battalion that aided the Nazis, returned to Lithuania on March 15 after a U.S. appeals court upheld his deportation.

Mass Polish Jewish grave found

Investigators located the mass grave of Jews killed by their neighbors in the Polish village of Jedwabne during World War II, The Associated Press reported. A Polish official said the government will set up a cemetery and monument in time for the 60th anniversary of the pogrom in July.

Wyoming police arrest Israeli

An Israeli citizen was arrested after a Wyoming highway patrolman found 135,000 ecstasy tablets, estimated to be worth from \$1.3 million to \$6 million, in his rental car, according to The Associated Press.

State law enforcement officials said it was the largest single seizure of the drug on U.S. highways.

U.S. anti-Semitism rises due to Mideast violence

By Michael J. Jordan

NEW YORK (JTA) — The outbreak of Israeli-Palestinian violence last fall sparked a surge in attacks on Jews in the United States, particularly in New York, according to the Anti-Defamation League's annual Audit of Anti-Semitic Incidents.

Across the country, anti-Semitic acts against individuals and institutions were 4 percent higher in 2000 than in 1999, the report said.

In New York, however, the number of incidents soared by 50 percent, and college campuses saw a 15 percent rise, reversing a five-year decline in campus anti-Semitism.

The audit recorded 1,606 incidents — such as vandalism, intimidation and assault — in 44 states and the District of Columbia, versus 1,547 in 1999.

Of the incidents last year, 877 were verbal intimidation, threats or physical assault, while 729 were acts of property damage, arson or cemetery desecration.

There typically is an increase in anti-Semitic incidents around the High Holidays. In 2000, however, there were 259 incidents in October alone, just after violence broke out in Israel and the Palestinian territories.

America was not unique in that regard, as a number of countries with large Jewish populations, including Australia, Canada, France and England, experienced a rash of anti-Semitic incidents because of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, ADL National Director Abraham Foxman noted in the report.

"When the crisis in the Middle East reached a fever pitch, Jews around the world and in the United States became targets for random acts of aggression and violence," Foxman said.

"Many random acts of violence or harassment were acted out by sympathizers of the Palestinian cause. Fortunately, this phenomenon was apparently a unique, one-time occurrence."

Most troubling was the jump in attacks in New York City, home to America's largest Jewish community — and a place where Jews and Arabs live side by side.

Across the city's five boroughs, incidents rose from 184 in 1999 to 275 in 2000. In Brooklyn, the number more than doubled, from 58 to 121.

Overall, New York state experienced a 32 percent increase and "continued to lead the nation in expressions of anti-Jewish hate," according to the report.

"While the rest of the country saw little if any change in the statistics for anti-Semitic incidents, New York City's levels rose dramatically over the last year," Howie Katz, ADL's New York regional director, said in the report. "This increase is clearly unacceptable for a city that prides itself on its racial and ethnic diversity."

Yet the rise may not have been due solely to Mideast violence, Katz said.

"We believe that the cooperative efforts between law enforcement agencies throughout the state, working with the Jewish and other communities to aggressively investigate and prosecute hate crimes, have encouraged more people to come forward and report incidents," he said.

"Likewise, the expansion of the New York City Police Department's Bias Crimes Unit has led to more attention and scrutiny of hate crimes and other acts that, while not necessarily criminal, are expressions of anti-Semitism."

Despite the slight increase nationwide, Foxman remains optimistic.

"In the 22 years that ADL has been conducting the audit, we have seen ups and downs," he said in the report. "We still believe that through education and diligent work of law enforcement, these kinds of incidents can decrease in the future."

The annual report can be found at www.adl.org. □

Lawmaker: Take back Bethlehem

MOSCOW (JTA) — It was a "mistake" for Israel to give the Palestinians control over important tourist destinations such as Bethlehem, Israel's tourism minister said at the International Tourist Exposition this week in Moscow.

Rehavam Ze'evi, a member of the right-wing National Union Party, said he thinks the Israeli government should "correct this mistake." □

Orthodox Jew's likely nomination as U.S. envoy divides U.S. Jews

By Matthew E. Berger

WASHINGTON (JTA) — American Jews might be expected to applaud the appointment of an Orthodox Jew as U.S. ambassador to Israel, but the possible nomination of Daniel Kurtzer has some Jewish groups worried.

Currently the ambassador to Egypt, Kurtzer is widely believed to be the front-runner to replace Martin Indyk after Indyk steps down this summer.

Indyk was the first Jew ever to be named U.S. ambassador to Israel.

Kurtzer is a longtime U.S. diplomat who served as a member of the peace team during the Clinton and elder Bush administrations.

Although his nomination has not been finalized, some right-of-center Jewish leaders already are raising red flags over Kurtzer's support for the Oslo peace process and the foreign policy objectives of the Clinton administration.

"He has a track record of complete 'even-handedness' and pushing for Palestinian rights," said Morris Amitay, a pro-Israel activist and former executive director of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee.

A former deputy assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs, Kurtzer was one of the architects of American contacts with the Palestine Liberation Organization in the late 1980s, and has developed strong relationships with the Arab world from his stint in Egypt.

Kurtzer also is believed to be one of the authors of Secretary of State James Baker's famous 1989 speech to AIPAC, the pro-Israel lobby, in which Baker called on Israel to move past the "unrealistic vision of a Greater Israel" that includes Gaza and the West Bank.

A senior American Jewish official described Kurtzer as the most left wing of the four pillars of the Clinton peace team — the others being Indyk; Dennis Ross, the former special Middle East coordinator; and Aaron Miller, Ross' former deputy.

Several Jewish officials feel Kurtzer's close ties to this group will put him at odds with the Bush administration, which is taking a more distant approach to the peace negotiations and has cooler relations with the Palestinian leadership.

"I don't think he has a history of staying out," one conservative Jewish official said.

Kurtzer has said the protagonists in the Mideast conflict should try to see the world through the other's eyes.

"The one lesson that I think I can bring to this debate and to this discussion is that many of the dreams and many of the desires and many of the wants of the Arab neighbors of Israel are exactly the same as those of the people of Israel," Kurtzer said in a May 2000 speech at Hebrew University.

Kurtzer's supporters describe him as a career diplomat who will be able to adjust to the guidelines of the new administration, as several other key peace process figures have done since Bush took office.

"He's someone who's got great knowledge of the situation," said Martin Raffel, associate director of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs.

"I think he's a terrific U.S. official and would bring an enormous amount to the position."

It is unclear why the Bush administration is leaning toward Kurtzer, given his role under Clinton.

Some argue that Kurtzer's name was put forward by the State Department, which is seen as more receptive to Arab concerns than are other parts of the Bush foreign policy team.

In addition, Bush's secretary of state, former Chief of Staff Colin Powell, favors filling ambassadorial openings with career foreign service officers.

But Frank Gaffney, president of the Center for Security Policy, said Bush ought to find someone who reflects his views and can help define a new approach to the Middle East.

"If the administration wants to put its own mark on U.S.-Israeli policy, it wouldn't surprise me if they found someone who would be more effective in representing the administration's view than Kurtzer is," Gaffney said.

While some would welcome the nomination of an Orthodox Jew, right wingers fear Kurtzer might use his Orthodox lifestyle as a shield against criticism of his dovish views.

"Obviously, he will use his Jewishness as a protective cover for his anti-Israel views," Amitay said.

Amitay, a former foreign service officer, said he believes it is wrong to send a Jew to Israel because the ambassador might be accused of promoting Israeli interests, rather than those of the United States.

In fact, the Arab world frequently accused Indyk, Ross, former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and other Jewish diplomats in the Clinton administration of being closet Zionists doing Israel's bidding.

To avoid such suspicion, a Jewish ambassador might "lean over backwards" to favor the Arabs, Amitay said.

"It's psychological, not political," he said.

However, Nathan Diament, director of the Orthodox Union's Institute of Public Affairs, said the characterizations of Kurtzer were a "classic form of stereotyping."

"People should be judged on their own merits and own characteristics," Diament said.

A former dean of Yeshiva University, Kurtzer wrote in 1997 that he saw "no conflict whatsoever" between his being an observant Jew and a diplomat.

"Not only is there no conflict between my religious observance and my profession, I believe the two are complementary," he wrote in *Commentator*, a Yeshiva University magazine. "I hope the success I have enjoyed in my career is convincing to those who are thinking about public service that one can be observant and do one's duty to country."

Kurtzer was sent to Cairo in 1997 after serving as acting assistant secretary of state for intelligence and research.

He also served as first secretary of political affairs at the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv in the early 1980s and as a member of the State Department's policy planning team. □

Chicken firm delays Israel plans

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Tyson Chickens is delaying a planned partnership with the Israeli firm Tnuva to market kosher poultry in Europe, according to Israel's *Globes* newspaper.

Tyson announced the delay because of the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The U.S.-based company is the world's largest poultry concern. □