



# Daily News Bulletin

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## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Peres arrives in U.S.

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres arrived in the United States on Monday after holding talks the previous day in Egypt and Jordan about an Arab-sponsored plan to end the violence.

During the meetings, Peres said Israel and the Palestinians are involved in intensive, back-channel talks aimed at reaching a cease-fire agreement. Once a cease-fire is achieved, the two sides would resume diplomatic negotiations, Peres said.

Peres was slated to start his U.S. trip with a meeting Monday evening with U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

He is scheduled to hold talks with Secretary of State Colin Powell on Wednesday, and with President Bush at the White House on Thursday.

### Mubarak says Israel tricked him

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak angrily accused Israeli officials of tricking him into announcing that the Jewish state had reached a cease-fire with the Palestinians.

In a nationally televised speech Monday, Mubarak said that during talks with Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres a day earlier, the Israeli delegation gave him the misinformation.

Mubarak said he left the meeting to announce the news — only to have Peres later issue a denial.

In another development, Israel's ambassador to Cairo lashed out at the Egyptian media after a newspaper depicted Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres as a Nazi.

"The depiction of Peres in this way represents incitement and hatred, which has no place in Egypt and the Middle East," Zvi Mazel said Monday after he lodged an official protest.

### Court exempts religious groups

The U.S. Supreme Court on Monday upheld a California court decision that religious organizations are exempt from local landmark preservation laws.

California's 1994 law stops city and county officials from enforcing preservation laws against property owned by religious organizations if these groups request an exemption.

Opponents claimed the law gives unconstitutional preference to religion and puts secular groups at a competitive disadvantage in the real estate market.

## BEHIND THE HEADLINES

### As bombings continue, Kfar Saba contemplates life on the front line

By Jessica Steinberg

KFAR SABA, Israel (JTA) — Mario Goldin, a 52-year-old Israeli doctor, was waiting for a bus the morning of April 22 because his car wouldn't start.

He was planning to take the No. 29 bus to the nearby Meir Hospital, where he worked.

He never made it. A Palestinian suicide bomber standing near Goldin detonated explosives strapped to his body, killing the doctor and wounding at least 50 other Israelis.

The death toll could have been far worse, some said, considering the time and the place — a bus stop on a busy Sunday morning at a major traffic intersection.

The deadly attack followed two other incidents that rocked this upscale Tel Aviv suburb, located in central Israel where the West Bank bulges into Israel's coastal plain, toward the Mediterranean Sea.

On April 14, two pipe bombs exploded an hour apart, with the second blast moderately wounding an elderly man walking along a quiet side street.

On March 28, a Hamas suicide bomber killed two Israeli teen-agers when he detonated a nail bomb among a group of students waiting at a bus stop near Kfar Saba for their ride to school.

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

The spate of attacks has made Kfar Saba, an upscale address for Israeli yuppies enriched by the country's high-tech boom, into an unlikely front line in the war of attrition foisted on Israel since late September.

Established in 1937 by the British, Kfar Saba was surrounded for years by farming cooperatives growing oranges for export.

In recent years, the city's population reached 80,000 as a result of Israel's high-tech boom, and the orange groves fell to the sea of concrete expanding in all directions from the Tel Aviv metropolis.

The recent attacks have shattered the calm of this palm tree-lined enclave.

"People are more tense, and they're paying more attention to their surroundings," said Dov Rakovitch, a local resident. "They're more alert, but life has returned to normal."

There have been a dozen bombings or attempted attacks in central Israel during the past few weeks.

In addition to Kfar Saba, attackers also have hit in Petach Tikva, Netanya, Neveh Yamim and Hod Hasharon.

The central region is Israel's "soft underbelly," according to Israeli Police Chief Shlomo Aharonishky, primarily because of its proximity to Arab villages located just over the "Green Line" — Israel's pre-1967 border — in the West Bank.

"People are anxious about the entire country," said Jonathan Rimon, mayor of Kochav Yair, a nearby Jewish suburb that is home to former Prime Minister Ehud Barak and the army's chief of staff, Shaul Mofaz. "When things happen close to a person's house, that makes a strong impression."

Life in Kfar Saba has undergone subtle changes since the Palestinians launched their intifada last September, Mayor Yitzhak Wald told JTA.

"We don't raise our hands" in despair and "won't let it control us," Wald said. "But there's tension in the air."

Last week, some 25,000 residents showed up for the Memorial Day and Independ-

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Mordechai sentence criticized

Former Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai was given a suspended 18-month prison sentence Monday for sexually assaulting and harassing two female subordinates.

"I am certain of my innocence, and I will appeal any judgment until I am acquitted," Mordechai told reporters as he left the courtroom.

Women's rights groups had sought a harsher sentence. Legislator Yael Dayan said Monday's sentence "bordered on being scandalous."

### Germany: Israel should pay, too

Germany proposed that Israel also contribute to any fund created for the families of 11 Israeli athletes killed by Palestinian terrorists at the 1972 Munich Olympics, according to the Israeli daily Ha'aretz.

The German proposal, which is based on the claim that Israel was responsible for exporting terrorism from the Middle East to Europe, angered Israeli officials and victims' families.

### Bomb in settlement kills Arab

A bomb exploded in a settlement in the Gaza Strip, killing a Palestinian and wounding another, the Israeli army said. The army added that the Palestinian who died in the blast had been working in a greenhouse in the Jewish settlement of Rafah Yam when the bomb exploded. Two Jewish settlers apparently targeted in the blast were not injured.

### Bank suspends Arab teller

Israel's Bank Hapoalim suspended an Arab teller who refused to stand at attention when sirens marked Memorial Day last week, according to Army Radio. Customers noticed that the teller continued working as the sirens wailed, and notified the bank manager, who told the employee to leave immediately. Bank officials said he was not obligated to stand at attention during the siren, but at least should have left his post.



## Daily News Bulletin

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ence Day celebrations in Kfar Saba's main square. That was the city's "answer to the terror," Wald said.

For all outward appearances, life in Kfar Saba continues as usual.

Two days after Goldin was killed, teen-agers could be seen strolling around the local mall, talking on their cell phones and trying on T-shirts and baggy cargo pants at Castro, the local version of the Gap.

At Erez Bread, a gourmet shop, customers tasted a new type of olive sourdough and purchased fresh rolls for Independence Day parties and picnics.

Next door, at Ilan's Coffee, patrons bought freshly ground coffee and drank "hafuch," the Israeli version of cappuccino.

"I haven't seen much of a difference in the number of customers," said Ilanit, a waitress who was clearing empty mugs from tables outside the shop. "People seem to be doing their regular thing."

Nearby, children played on scooters, skateboards and Rollerblades.

"Kids bounce back from these kinds of incidents," said Rakovitch, who works at a local school. "You don't get used to this kind of situation because you can't get used to it, but we're waiting for a solution, for a change.

"We voted for change, but we're certainly not feeling it yet," he added, referring to February's landslide election victory for Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, who promised to restore Israelis' security.

Because of Kfar Saba's proximity to Kalkilya, a West Bank city under Palestinian control, hundreds of Palestinians used to cross into Kfar Saba every day, according to Wald.

In the past, that was fine, Wald said; now it's a cause for concern.

"We were always close to Kalkilya, but that was OK," Rakovitch said. "Now we've crossed this red line, and there's this sense that terror can take place anywhere."

In the past, Kfar Saba residents sought closer ties with nearby Israeli Arab and Palestinian towns.

That was before the intifada began, after the Oslo accords had created a sense that peace was within reach.

During that period, some Kfar Saba schools hired Israeli Arabs to teach Arabic. Now, however, the teachers aren't coming — and the joint efforts have disappeared.

Wald said he received notes from the mayors of Tira and Taiba, the two nearby Israeli Arab towns, suggesting that they hold a joint rally against terror. Wald declined, but said he hopes to restore relations in the near future.

Locals largely refrain from driving into Taiba and Tira, once popular spots for shopping and lunch on Saturdays, when Jewish businesses close for the Sabbath.

"This kind of tension hurts them more than us, because now Israelis don't spend money in those towns," Wald said.

After Goldin was killed, Wald demanded that a barrier be built to separate his city from the West Bank.

Perhaps a cement blockade would make it more difficult for suicide bombers to slip through, he told JTA.

For now, Kfar Saba police stand in the middle of the two-lane road leading from Kfar Saba to the nearby Arab and Jewish towns, stopping cars that look suspicious.

The inspections make driving more difficult on an already traffic-laden route, but Wald is sticking to the plan for now.

"In the long term, I don't want a border between us," he said. "I want to see a peaceful relationship like Holland and Denmark. But that is not the reality right now. We're in an abnormal situation. We're at war." □

### Book: Israel denied Herzl request

JERUSALEM (JTA) — The State of Israel rejected Zionist pioneer Theodor Herzl's request to bury his children alongside him because it disapproved of two of the children's lifestyles, according to a new book cited in the Israeli daily Ha'aretz.

One of Herzl's children, Pauline, died a drug addict.

A second, Hans, converted to Christianity for a time, and ultimately committed suicide.

A third died in a Nazi concentration camp. □

## JEWISH WORLD

### Federation to honor German exec

North America's largest Jewish federation is honoring the chief executive of a media conglomerate that published propaganda for the Nazis. In a New York Times article, Elie Wiesel and officials with the UJA-Federation of Greater New York defended the decision to honor Thomas Middelhoff of Bertelsmann at an upcoming fund-raising dinner.

Bertelsmann has contributed to a German fund compensating wartime slave laborers, and its U.S. subsidiary, Random House, recently pledged \$1 million to a project encouraging Holocaust survivors to publish their memoirs.

### Oxford pressed on Shoah denier

Britain's Union of Jewish Students is pressing the Oxford Union to cancel a planned address by Holocaust denier David Irving at its debating society on May 10.

Plans call for Irving, who lost a high-profile libel lawsuit against Holocaust scholar Deborah Lipstadt last year, to be part of a panel debating freedom of speech at Oxford. A previous invitation to Irving was withdrawn last year after protests by Jews and anti-racist groups.

### Croatian camp victims honored

Catholic, Serbian Orthodox, and Muslim clerics from Croatia joined Jewish leaders to commemorate the tens of thousands killed by Croatian fascists during World War II at the Jasenovac death camp.

Jasenovac's victims included some 17,000 Jews. Government officials and World War II anti-fascist resistance fighters also participated Sunday in the annual ceremony.

Jewish participants included a delegation from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and a 30-member group of Jewish youths from across the former Yugoslavia.

### Groups to protest slave trade

Members of New York's Jewish community are planning to join an interfaith effort May 2 to protest the slave trade in Sudan.

Jewish groups are becoming increasingly active on the issue, which involves the enslavement of Christians and other non-Muslims.

### Dutch cemetery desecrated

Vandals spray-painted swastikas and anti-Semitic slogans on headstones at a Jewish cemetery in southern Holland.

Police said about 70 of the 120 headstones at the cemetery near the town of Dorst suffered damage and one was destroyed. The vandals also spray painted "Go to Hell" and "We are Back" in German on walls and headstones at the cemetery.

## Sharon says Peres in U.S. to prepare ground for future talks

By Matthew E. Berger

WASHINGTON (JTA) — As the pace of diplomatic activity increases again in the Middle East, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said he sent Foreign Minister Shimon Peres to the United States this week to "create the groundwork for future negotiations."

Speaking Monday via satellite to the Anti-Defamation League's annual leadership meeting, Sharon said a "full cessation of hostility" was necessary before Israel could resume negotiations with the Palestinians.

"It should be quiet," Sharon said, reiterating a favorite theme. "This government will not negotiate under pressure of terrorism and violence."

Sharon said Jerusalem is "under siege" and that his main goal is to restore safety and security to Israel. Remembered in the international community for his wartime experiences, Sharon said he understands the importance of peace.

"For me, peace is something serious," he said. "Peace should last generations."

As part of that effort, Peres, a former prime minister and the elder statesman of Sharon's government, arrived in Washington this week for a series of meetings with U.S. officials, including President Bush and Secretary of State Colin Powell. He also will meet with congressional leaders and give speeches to Middle East think tanks and the American Israel Public Affairs Committee. Peres is expected to gauge U.S. reaction to an Egyptian-Jordanian plan for an Israeli-Palestinian cease-fire. Peres spent the weekend in Cairo and Amman, presenting Israel's thoughts on the proposal.

"I see the beginning of a possibility of getting out of the present deadlock," Peres said in an interview with Israeli Television.

The Egyptian-Jordanian plan, drafted with the aid of the Palestinians, calls on Israel to ease restrictions it has imposed on Palestinians since their violent uprising against Israel began in late September, including pulling back Israeli troops from positions in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and releasing tax money that has been withheld.

Most controversially, however, the plan demands that Israel completely cease settlement construction in the West Bank and Gaza. Sharon has agreed not to build any new settlements, but has reserved the right to expand existing communities to accommodate "natural growth."

If Israel agrees to the plan, negotiations would resume after the cease-fire holds for a still-to-be determined amount of time.

That the plan was produced by Middle East leaders represents a contrast from recent years, when the United States served as the main mediator. In his address Monday, Sharon endorsed an approach in which Israel and Arab countries speak face to face.

"Most of the negotiations and talks should be bilateral," Sharon said. "Let the sides solve bilaterally the complicated problems that exist."

When asked what Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat needs to do to receive an invitation to the White House, Sharon said Arafat "should stop terror, because Arafat is playing with terror."

"Most of the terror which is carried against Israel at the present time is done by military or intelligence organizations which are under the direct control of Arafat," Sharon said.

Arafat should not be invited to the White House now because it would "postpone the peace," Sharon said. Rather, he said, heavy pressure should be placed on Arafat to stop terror — but Israel will not "interfere" in any decision the United States makes in the matter, Sharon said. □

## Palestinian unemployment way up

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Unemployment in the West Bank and Gaza Strip has nearly quadrupled since the start of the Palestinian uprising seven months ago, a Palestinian survey said.

The survey conducted by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics showed unemployment hit 37.7 percent in the first four months of 2001, up from 10 percent when the violence began last September. □

## French Jewish community enraged by minister's embrace of Hezbollah

By Joshua Schuster

PARIS (JTA) — A series of sharp verbal exchanges between French and Israeli diplomats has prompted Jewish leaders here to criticize the French government.

The most recent cause for alarm that bilateral relations seem to be deteriorating quickly came during French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine's weekend visit to Lebanon and Syria, where he made pointed remarks criticizing the Israeli government.

On several occasions, Vedrine took the opportunity to denounce the "aggressive politics" of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. At the same time, Vedrine appeared to support Hezbollah as a legitimate resistance movement.

Hezbollah has continued attacking Israel even after the Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon last May, citing the continued occupation of Shabaa Farms, a part of the Golan Heights that Israel conquered from Syria in 1967.

Vedrine supported Hezbollah's demand that Israel withdraw from Shabaa Farms — despite repeated statements by U.N. officials that the land is not Lebanese and that Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon is complete.

French Jewish leaders condemned Vedrine's statements.

"We cannot accept that France would recognize Hezbollah as a resistance movement," said Chaim Musicant, executive director of CRIF, the umbrella group of secular French Jewish organizations. "Hezbollah is a movement against the Israeli people. It is not a resistance movement." Although its official policy is to remain nonpartisan in Middle East affairs, France has a generally pro-Arab tilt due to its large Islamic population and its long-standing friendship with several Arab countries.

Last October, for example, at the end of a Paris summit meeting designed to put an end to the then-young intifada, Israel charged that French President Jacques Chirac convinced Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat to walk away from a cease-fire agreement reached after arduous negotiations and to hold out instead for a better deal. Half a year later, the violence continues.

Some observers contend that France's pro-Arab position has less to do with ideological commitment to the Arab cause than a desire to win friends — and, more importantly, business — in the Arab world.

Vedrine's comments over the weekend dovetailed with a growing stream of anti-Israel stances from the French government.

In recent weeks, a coalition of E.U. countries led by France has been pushing the European Union to suspend Israel's privileged trade status with Europe, which is worth millions of dollars to the Jewish state.

Such a proposition is unlikely to pass, but the European Union may suspend the favored trade status offered to Israeli goods produced in Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

French Jewish leaders bridle at their government's anti-Israel statements, but they are even angrier that France does not speak out against Palestinian terror attacks against Israeli targets.

"Europe has never understood that it needs to remain neutral in its policy toward the Middle East," said Musicant. "If France does not play an active role in condemning Palestinian acts of terrorism, it cannot have a positive role" in the peace process.

Musicant added that France should balance its criticisms of Israel by closely monitoring the aid the European Union gives to

the Palestinian Authority. Critics long have charged that much of the E.U. aid is siphoned off by Arafat's cronies.

Symptomatic of the French Jewish community's frustration with the current administration, a recent scuffle arose when Israel's ambassador to France, Eli Barnavi, was quoted in the bimonthly Jewish newspaper *La Tribune Juive* as saying that France had disappointed him and was showing bias and a "terrible lack of judgment." French wire services quickly picked up the remark, which prompted the ambassador's office to issue a statement denying the comments.

A review of the interviewer's tapes revealed that Barnavi indeed had been misquoted. The damage already had been done, however, as French officials already had been pressed to respond to the incident. But the editor of *La Tribune Juive* later insisted the overall sense of the interview was correct.

"We maintain that we did our work properly," editor Olivier Guland said. "Basically, Ambassador Barnavi said in plain words what every Israeli is thinking about the openly pro-Arab position of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs." □

## Russian fascist's troubling cry: 'Eurasia Above All' is his platform

By Lev Gorodetsky

MOSCOW (JTA) — A new fascist group in Russia is arousing the concerns of some Jews — and, apparently, the support of other Jews.

"Eurasia Above All," Alexander Dugin cried out at a conference earlier this month of the All-Russian Political Movement Eurasia in Moscow. The cry was the Russian equivalent of "Deutschland uber alles," a slogan often used by the Nazis at their rallies. The conference attracted 300 participants from across Russia, including two of Russia's top Muslim leaders.

The group preaches an anti-liberal and anti-Western ideology, drawing on a long tradition in Russia that has championed the idea of Russia's "uniqueness."

What is particularly alarming, some observers say, is the movement's leader: Until recently, Dugin was a leading figure in the ultranationalist, anti-Semitic newspaper *Zavtra*.

Dugin, 40, says he possesses "intelligence information that agents of the CIA are now working in the Chechen opposition."

Dugin repeatedly stresses his admiration for Russian President Vladimir Putin — and what he calls Putin's ideological affinity for the values of Dugin's movement.

For a number of years, Dugin was seen as a marginal figure, but his position as a legislative aide to the speaker of the Russian Parliament means he has established a mainstream foothold, said Micah Naftalin, the national director of the Washington-based Union of Councils for Soviet Jews.

"Although Dugin's writings are not explicitly anti-Semitic, his past affiliations with anti-Semitic extremist groups like *Pamyat*" — a Russian neo-fascist group that peaked in popularity in the late 1980s and early 1990s — are alarming, Naftalin said.

But other Jewish organizations and individuals apparently think otherwise. One of these is a new Israeli group known as *For Our Land*. The group, headed by Russian-born, West Bank-based Rabbi Avrom Shmulevich, preaches the same anti-Western ideology as *All-Russia*.

Shmulevich says Dugin is not anti-Semitic because he protested the paper's anti-Semitism after leaving *Zavtra*. □