



Daily News Bulletin

Vol. 79, No. 170

Wednesday, September 12, 2001

84th Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Sharon: Attack a 'turning point'

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon declared a state of mourning in Israel on Wednesday as a show of solidarity with the United States. Saying that Israel is ready to "extend any aid and assistance that is required" by the United States, Sharon called the terror attacks "a turning point in the war against terrorism."

In other developments:

- Israel evacuated all its diplomatic missions around the world following a series of terror attacks in New York and Washington.

Some Jewish groups in New York, including the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations and United Jewish Communities, also evacuated their offices. The Jewish Community Center in Washington was closed as a precaution.

- Israeli President Moshe Katsav conveyed to President Bush the "deep sorrow" of Israel after hijacked planes crashed into the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon outside Washington.

"All of us in Israel embrace you, would like to express our condolences, and add our best wishes for a speedy recovery to those who have been injured. Everything must be done to defeat this phenomenon in which insane people will stop at nothing to disrupt daily life," Katsav said.

- Israeli Defense Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer approved the dispatch of rescue units to the United States. He also canceled a visit to Washington planned for later this week.

- Thousands of Palestinians celebrated the terror attacks in the United States, chanting "God is Great." In the West Bank and in eastern Jerusalem, Arabs distributed candy, a traditional gesture of celebration. Palestinian gunmen at refugee camps in Lebanon fired into the air to celebrate news of the attacks.

- The terror attacks that hit New York and Washington may throw into question a major pro-Israel solidarity rally planned for Sept. 23 in New York, some Jewish observers said.

But a spokeswoman for rally organizer United Jewish Communities said, "We haven't even had a chance to think it through."

'Surreal' terrorist attacks in U.S. sparking Jewish anger and prayer

By Peter Ephross

NEW YORK (JTA) — Even for North American Jews used to thinking about security issues at home — and confronting terrorist acts in Israel — the series of horrific acts that struck Tuesday came as a devastating, unimaginable blow.

"This is surreal. This whole situation seems surreal," said Martin Raffel, the associate director of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, whose offices are located in midtown Manhattan, a safe distance from the destroyed World Trade Center.

Before the initial shock wore off from the hijacked plane attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon near Washington, Israel was offering help, U.S. Jewish groups were reacting with anger and Jewish communities across North America were holding prayer vigils.

Fire raged and smoke billowed around the towers after the two attacks, which occurred around 9 a.m. Tuesday.

The two towers collapsed by mid-morning, wreaking more havoc, claiming even more victims and hampering rescue efforts.

Reports said that more than 250 passengers were on board the four hijacked planes at the center of the day's horrific events — two hit the World Trade Center, one hit the Pentagon and one crashed in Western Pennsylvania — but there were no reliable reports of the number killed or injured.

However, New York officials estimated that there could be thousands of casualties from the World Trade Center explosions alone.

The attack was described as the worst on American soil since the Japanese assault on Pearl Harbor. By comparison, 2,400 people were killed on that day — Dec. 7, 1941 — which President Roosevelt described as a "day that will live in infamy."

Speaking Tuesday morning, President Bush described the crashes as an "apparent act of terrorism" and vowed to use the "full resources" of the U.S. government to "hunt down and find those folks who committed this act."

Two Jewish groups are housed near the site of the New York attacks, but efforts Tuesday to reach Agudath Israel of America and the Orthodox Union were unsuccessful.

The Educational Alliance, a Jewish-run community center in downtown New York, treated people suffering from minor injuries and shock.

"People were wandering in the streets coming from the World Trade Center, disoriented," said Ben Rodriguez, director of administration services for the Educational Alliance. "People were streaming in for a few hours," he said, but by late afternoon, things had quieted down.

Some Jewish groups in New York, including the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations and the United Jewish Communities, evacuated their offices as part of building-wide evacuations.

Jewish and non-Jewish businesses and facilities were closed in various cities across the United States, from Philadelphia to San Francisco, in fear of further attacks.

The UJC promised to resume business as soon as possible.

"This has been a tragic day for our country," the UJC said in a statement. "We express our condolences to the families of the individuals who lost their lives."

Israel, which closed Ben-Gurion Airport to foreign planes, evacuated all its diplomatic missions around the world. In an ironic turnabout, some Israelis held a solidarity rally with the American terror victims on Tuesday night.

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon declared a state of mourning in Israel on Wednesday,

MIDEAST FOCUS

Report: Editor had warning

Saudi terror mastermind Osama bin Laden warned three weeks ago that his followers would carry out an "unprecedented" attack on U.S. sites because of American support for Israel, according to an Arab journalist.

Abdel Atwan, editor of the London-based Al Quds newspaper, told Reuters he had received information of "very, very big attacks against American interests," but added, "We did not take it so seriously, preferring to see what would happen before reporting it."

DFLP denies involvement

A spokesman for the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine denied that it had carried out the plane attacks on the World Trade Center. Earlier, Abu Dhabi television reported that the radical Palestinian group had claimed responsibility for the attack.

Israel closes airspace

Israel closed its airspace to foreign airlines.

Israeli carriers, however, were still able to land at the nation's airports.

Israeli tanks encircle Jenin

Israeli tanks took positions around the West Bank city of Jenin on Tuesday in what the army said was an attempt to prevent suicide bombers reaching Israel.

Several suicide bombers recently launched their missions from Jenin, the latest on Sunday.

Cease-fire talks aborted

Talks between Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat that were slated for Tuesday fell through.

The two sides could not agree on a site for the talks, and Palestinian officials refused to hold the meeting after Israeli tanks advanced into positions around the West Bank city of Jenin.

and said the terror attacks would prove "a turning point in the war against terrorism."

President Moshe Katsav conveyed to Bush Israel's "deep sorrow," and the Health Ministry launched a blood drive.

"All of us in Israel embrace you, would like to express our condolences, and add our best wishes for a speedy recovery to those who have been injured," Katsav said. "Everything must be done to defeat this phenomenon in which insane people will stop at nothing to disrupt daily life."

Defense Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer approved the dispatch of rescue units to the United States. He also canceled a visit to Washington that was planned for later in the week.

Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat sent the "condolences of the Palestinian people to American President Bush," but many of his people did not seem to share Arafat's remorse.

Thousands of Palestinians celebrated the attack throughout the West Bank, chanting "God is great" and distributing candy. In Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, gunmen fired into the air in celebration.

In Argentina — where two Jewish institutions were hit by bombs in the 1990s — authorities pledged to increase security at Jewish sites. In Berlin, the Parliament was evacuated and the Jewish Museum was closed, just two days after it officially opened.

American Jewish groups strongly condemned the attack and "pledged to double check already tight security," in the words of one Jewish spokesman who asked not to be identified.

"We are outraged and unequivocally condemn today's terrorist acts against the United States," the American Israel Public Affairs Committee said in a statement that was echoed by other groups.

Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League, said Tuesday's events would force the United States to step into Israel's shoes.

"My feeling is that the American government has always understood Israel's dilemma" in fighting terrorism, but "now America, too, will have to struggle with, 'How do you respond, how do you prevent' " this kind of violence, Foxman said.

Though no direct links have been established between the attacks and U.S. support for Israel, some worried about that prospect.

"Will the blame be placed on Israel? Will the blame be placed on the fact of American support?" wondered Foxman, who along with thousands of others across the country was stranded at an airport when the attacks occurred.

"The United States has been brutally attacked today, and we must consider that our nation is at war," David Harris, the executive director of the American Jewish Committee, said in a statement.

But exactly who would be the target of that war remained unclear.

Spokesmen for several radical Palestinian groups denied reports that their organizations were behind the attacks. Speculation focused on Osama bin Laden, but there was no initial evidence linking the Saudi terrorist mastermind to the attacks.

Manhattan Jews were horrified by what had happened — and impassioned about how America ought to react.

It's outrageous that America "has been brought to its knees by terrorists," said Larry Kowlowitz, vice president of PK Furriers in midtown Manhattan. "It's time for the dog to wag the tail, not for the tail to wag the dog. We should use our muscle and make these smaller nations understand that we have the power. Like the Bible says, 'An eye for an eye.' Even if innocent people are killed."

Anger was only part of the Jewish response, however; others began attempts at prayer and healing.

In New York — and elsewhere in North America, from St. Louis to Montreal — prayer vigils were scheduled to be held as early as Tuesday evening.

"Our community felt the need to get together for spiritual reasons," said Mark Finkelstein, director of the Jewish Community Relations Council of Des Moines, Iowa.

The United Synagogue for Conservative Judaism said it would send out a special packet of prayers for its congregations.

Congregation B'nai Jeshurun in Manhattan urged its members to donate blood and provide shelter for victims of the attacks. □

(JTA Staff Writer Michael J. Jordan in New York and correspondents Florencia Arbiser in Buenos Aires and Toby Axelrod in Berlin contributed to this report.)



Daily News Bulletin

Shoshana S. Cardin, *President*

Mark J. Joffe, *Executive Editor and Publisher*

Lisa Hostein, *Editor (on leave)*

Michael S. Arnold, *Managing Editor*

Lenore A. Silverstein, *Business Manager*

Paula Simmonds, *Marketing and Development Director*

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

Attack 'will change everything'

The European Union called Tuesday's terror attacks in New York and Washington the worst attack on the United States since Pearl Harbor 60 years ago, adding that it was "one of those few days in life that one can actually say will change everything."

E.U. foreign ministers were planning to hold an emergency meeting in Brussels on Wednesday to discuss a joint response.

Muslim Americans fear backlash

Muslim Americans are fearing a backlash following Tuesday's airborne terror assaults on New York and Washington.

The Islamic Association of Raleigh, N.C., and other groups in the city representing Muslim- and Arab-Americans, shut down a mosque and closed an Islamic school after receiving anonymous threats, an association member told The Associated Press.

Slovakia remembers Holocaust

The genocide of the Jewish people during World War II must never be forgotten, Slovak President Rudolf Schuster said Sunday, the nation's first Day of Remembrance of Holocaust Victims. He also called for a tightening of hate crimes legislation and stiffer punishments for those convicted of hate crimes.

Lithuania: Help find war criminals

Lithuanian prosecutors said they have asked authorities in Britain, North America and Latin America to help identify and find Lithuanians suspected of involvement in Nazi atrocities.

Last month, the Simon Wiesenthal Center gave Lithuanian officials the names of 97 Lithuanians suspected of collaborating with the Nazis in murdering Jews.

St. Petersburg plaque vandalized

A plaque commemorating Jewish life in 19th-century St. Petersburg was vandalized recently with the graffiti "Kikes, Get Out of Russia," according to the Union of Councils for Jews in the FSU. City authorities have yet to clean the memorial.

Meanwhile, the local branch of the political party Yabloko has announced its participation in a citywide effort to rid the city of racist and fascist graffiti, according to local media.

Georgia's chief rabbi threatened

The chief rabbi of Georgia, Ariel Levine, moved to Israel temporarily after police told him they had information about a plan to kidnap him. Kidnappings by Muslim separatists recently have become a serious problem in the former Soviet republic after thousands crossed into the country fleeing turmoil in Chechnya.

Solidarity mission participants worry about loved ones back home

By Jessica Steinberg

JERUSALEM (JTA) — U.S. Jews who had decided to brave the risk of terror by joining a United Jewish Communities' Solidarity mission to Israel during the current Palestinian uprising never expected that their trip would take them out of harm's way at home.

New Yorkers participating in the solidarity mission milled nervously around the King David Hotel on Tuesday afternoon as news of the attacks on New York and Washington played on the television in the bar.

"The irony is that my wife and everybody else were nervous about me coming to Israel, and now I can't find out if everyone's OK," said Peter May, a Manhattan resident who chairs UJA-Federation of Greater New York's 2002 campaign.

The 500 UJC mission participants — including a significant contingent from New York's federation — arrived in Israel on Monday night for a three-day mission to express solidarity with Israel.

"Our primary purpose is to be with our family," Morris Offit, chairman of the board of New York's federation, said on Monday night. "People are living here where every day is a crisis and we want to have a feeling for what they're going through."

On Tuesday, they endured a quintessentially Israeli experience, as they scrambled to make sure loved ones hadn't been affected by the attacks.

Most people couldn't get through to their homes and offices and didn't have access to e-mail at the hotel.

They stood on line at phone booths, hoping a regular phone line would work better than rented cell phones.

Holly Mauskopf gave up trying to reach her parents in Englewood, N.J. Her father has an office in the World Trade Center but usually goes in late, she said.

"Now I know what people go through here," she said. "This lack of communication is very surreal."

Such thoughts were echoed by American immigrants to Israel as well.

Missy Goldman, who now lives in a moshav outside Jerusalem, wasn't able to reach her sister or parents who live near Washington.

"Now I know how my parents feel when they hear the news in Israel," she said.

In Israel, cell phones and regular phone lines usually are tied up for several hours after a terrorist attack as people try to reach loved ones.

In response to Tuesday's attack, the Jewish Agency for Israel set up a "situation room" at its Jerusalem office, a 15-minute walk from the King David Hotel.

The room has a special satellite connection that doesn't rely on normal phone lines, a Jewish Agency spokesman said.

The agency also was in constant contact with its delegation in the United States and was bringing Americans on Israel programs to the office, so they could call home.

Many on the UJC mission commented on their sense of isolation. May called it helplessness.

"Our country, we thought we were above it all, that it just happens to everybody else," he said. "We thought we could deal with it diplomatically."

The ironies were all too obvious.

"I rented a cell phone to put my wife at ease so that she could find me," said Rabbi Alan Lucas, who lives on Long Island.

"The black humor is that when this hit, I said to the group, 'Thank God we're safe in Jerusalem.'"

Several people echoed that thought. Lucas commented that despite escalating violence with the Palestinians, he felt safe in Israel, though afraid of the unknown.

Others railed against the U.S. government and the fact that it hadn't anticipated or reacted to the attack.

"If this had happened to Israel, they would have shot the planes down," said Wendy Lipstadt, another New Yorker.

"They literally watched the planes fly in!"

Ben-Gurion Airport has been temporarily closed to non-Israeli airplanes. □

NEWS ANALYSIS

This could be just the beginning, stunned experts on terrorism warn

By Matthew E. Berger

WASHINGTON (JTA) — This week's coordinated terror attacks on commercial and governmental sites in New York and Washington have stunned terrorism experts in their scope and sophistication — and prompted dire warnings that more could be in store for American citizens.

Daniel Pipes, who has written frequently on terrorism, said he believes Tuesday's attacks are only "Phase 1" of a massive assault against the United States.

"There's an incredible amount of venom in the air against the United States," said Pipes, who is director of the Middle East Forum, a think tank.

Both towers of the World Trade Center collapsed Tuesday and portions of the Pentagon were destroyed when commercial planes were hijacked and crashed into them. Another plane crashed outside Pittsburgh, and a fourth crashed into the Pentagon outside Washington, causing part of the building to collapse.

Suspicion is focusing primarily on Osama bin Laden, the Saudi billionaire who is believed to have masterminded the 1998 attacks on U.S. embassies in Africa and other terrorist incidents around the world. An official of the ruling Taliban party in Afghanistan, where bin Laden is based, released a statement condemning Tuesday's attacks.

"We want to tell the American children that Afghanistan feels your pain," said Mullah Abdul Salam Zaeef, the Taliban ambassador to Pakistan. "We hope the courts find justice."

While his people celebrated and distributed candy in the streets, Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat condemned the attacks and sent condolences to President Bush.

Bush canceled an appearance in Florida and asked for a moment of silence soon after the attacks in New York.

Terrorism expert Steve Emerson said he did not believe some of the Islamic groups being mentioned as potential masterminds behind the attacks had the ability to mount such a widespread effort. "No one ever thought a coordinated attack was possible," he said. "They have never demonstrated the capability before."

Emerson called the series of attacks "unfathomable."

Pipes of the Middle East Forum said the United States was "deeply unprepared" for this type of terrorist assault.

"There has been a fundamental mistake looking at this as a criminal problem, when in fact it is a military problem," he said. "You don't deploy policemen and lawyers. You deploy soldiers."

Pipes said it will be easy to determine what group is responsible for the attacks, because few have the capability. He said he hoped this would be an educational lesson for the United States, but was more cautious than some who believed it would be a turning point for U.S. counterterrorism efforts.

"If today doesn't have a chemical or biological component, that's what we have to look for in the future," Pipes said.

In a 1997 article, Emerson said he believed Muslim fundamentalist groups were preparing for a wide-scale attack against the United States.

"In fact, I would say that the infrastructure now exists to carry off 20 simultaneous World Trade Center-type bombings across the United States," Emerson warned in the interview with Middle East Quarterly. "And as chemical, biological and even nuclear weapons

become available to them, the threat becomes ever more ominous.

"Just because someone holding a gun to your head doesn't pull the trigger should not be understood as the threat not existing," he said. "It would be suicidal to permit our national security to depend on the good will or rationality of radical fundamentalists."

David Makovsky, senior fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, said the United States should be humble about making predictions regarding who is responsible.

"If indeed this is some sort of Islamic terrorism, the short-term impact may be giving the Israeli government more space in its fight against the threats that it faces daily," said Makovsky, former editor of the Jerusalem Post.

"There is no doubt that, at least in the short term, Americans will have a greater appreciation for what Israel has been going through on a daily basis for the last year." □

(JTA correspondent Sharon Samber in Washington contributed to this report.)

NEWS ANALYSIS

New understanding for Israel could emerge from U.S. rubble

By David Landau

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israel's civilian and military authorities have swung into full alert after the magnitude of the terror attacks against the United States has become apparent.

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon summoned an emergency session of the Security Cabinet on Tuesday, together with key defense and security personnel.

The country's air space was closed to foreign aircraft, and other measures apparently were taken that were not publicized. Abroad, Israeli embassies and other trade and diplomatic missions were ordered to close completely, or, in certain cases, reduce to skeleton staffs.

Beyond the emergency measures and the wave of shock and sympathy that swept the nation, analysts predicted several potential implications for the Jewish state:

- The attacks on New York and Washington would bring home to an apathetic world the real meaning of terrorism — which Israelis have understood for years — and perhaps create greater sympathy for Israeli counterterrorism efforts

Terror "is the No. 1 enemy of mankind," Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said. "It is a threat to humanity."

Peres voiced his confidence that the United States would "know how" to counter the threat. "The account must be rendered to state after state, without mercy, until this is eradicated," he said.

- Anxiety that any American response, when it comes, could somehow involve Israel. Just as the U.S.-led coalition against Iraq during the 1991 Persian Gulf War led to Iraqi Scud missile attacks against Israel, Israelis worried this week that countries targeted by Washington, or countries sympathetic to those targeted, would hit back at the Jewish state.

- A political assessment that, in the wake of this cataclysmic event, American sympathies and perhaps other Western opinion on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict could tilt in Israel's favor.

Bolstering this assessment were the demonstrations of glee and gratification among Palestinians, both in the West Bank and in refugee camps in Lebanon. These manifestations were quickly picked up by international media and could discredit the Palestinians in American opinion. □