



Daily News Bulletin

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TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Peres drafting peace plan

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres is preparing a new peace initiative.

According to the Israeli daily *Ma'ariv*, the plan calls for a total Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and the dismantling of Israeli settlements there.

The newspaper also said the plan called for the creation of a Palestinian state. The plan, which Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has opposed in the past, is expected to be presented soon. [Page 1]

Israel wants militants arrested

Israel rejected calls to withdraw from four West Bank cities.

During a meeting Monday, Israeli and Palestinian security officials failed to set a new timetable for an Israeli pullout.

Israel demanded that the Palestinian Authority arrest more militants before it withdraws.

IDF officer finds bomb near bed

Palestinian terrorists planted a bomb in the home of a high-ranking Israeli naval officer.

Col. Natan Barak awoke in his home in the Tel Aviv suburb of Ra'anana on Tuesday to find beside his bed a fire extinguisher wrapped with wires and attached to a cell phone.

He called the police, and bomb experts who later arrived at the scene used a robot to safely detonate the device. The Al Aksa Brigades, a group associated with Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat's Fatah Party, claimed responsibility for planting the bomb. Police believe the terrorists climbed in through a window while Barak was sleeping.

5 Israelis held as terrorists

U.S. officials are going to bat for five Israelis arrested after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. The five men were arrested after they allegedly went up on the roof of a building and posed grinning for photographs with the burning World Trade Center towers in the background.

The five men worked for a New Jersey moving company. Police found large amounts of cash in their car and suspected them of being terrorists. The deputy secretary of state, Richard Armitage, and two U.S. congressmen are trying to get the five released, according to Ha'aretz.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Under international pressure, Israel adds up balance sheet from invasion

By David Landau

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israel is weighing the interim results of the largest military operation it has mounted during the past 13 months of violence. The balance is complex, informed observers say, with both pros and cons on the ledger.

Israel Defense Force troops and tanks pulled back from Bethlehem and neighboring Beit Jalla, just south of Jerusalem, overnight Sunday, after a day in which Palestinians desisted from shooting at the nearby Jerusalem neighborhood of Gilo.

IDF generals reached a detailed agreement with the commander of the Palestinian Authority's preventive security service, Jibril Rajoub, that his men would take over the policing of the "front line" and ensure that it remained quiet. By midweek, that local accord appeared to be holding.

The three members of the inner security cabinet — Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and Defense Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer — presumably hoped that withdrawing from the Christian holy city of Bethlehem would alleviate some of the criticism that Israel's armored incursions into seven Palestinian cities was stirring abroad.

TV footage Monday in many Western countries of the damage and destruction the IDF had wrought in the two towns and adjacent refugee camps did little to relieve Israel's image problem.

And Israel's continued defiance of American demands that it pull out of all the Palestinian cities — the others are Ramallah, Kalkilya, Nablus, Jenin and Tulkarm, all in the West Bank north of Jerusalem — plainly grated on the Bush administration.

Indeed, there was speculation here that a possibility that Sharon would not attend the United Jewish Communities' General Assembly in Washington on Nov. 11 was occasioned by Israeli concerns that he might not be invited to the White House or might find himself in a confrontation with President Bush — especially if Israeli troops have not fully withdrawn by then.

Both the media coverage abroad — focusing on the 35-50 Palestinians, among them women and children, killed during the incursions — and the public spat with the Bush team are strikes on the balance sheet of the military operation. Certainly the Palestinians were doing their utmost to focus attention on the feuding between Washington and Jerusalem.

But some observers here suggested that the feud was not as bad as portrayed. For one thing, after the initial heated reaction, the language used in American statements was relatively restrained. For another, the spat was confined to words, with no hint of punitive action. And for a third, these observers say, Israel was demonstrating to the Palestinians and to the wider region that it has the strength and guts to stand up to Washington when its vital interests are at stake.

In addition, the unrest may have stirred the beginnings of real diplomatic activity. The longer the troops stay inside Palestinian-ruled areas, the more pressure grows inside the Labor Party to leave the government. Reflecting these pressures — or perhaps heading them off — Peres let it be known midweek that he is drafting a new peace plan to get the diplomatic process moving again.

According to a report in the Israeli daily *Ma'ariv*, the plan calls on Israel to withdraw completely from the Gaza Strip, dismantling settlements where about 7,000 Israelis live amid a hostile Palestinian population. Peres also envisions a Palestinian state that would be "political, not military," and the deferment of the status of Jerusalem

MIDEAST FOCUS

Peres, Arafat may meet in Spain

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres may meet with Yasser Arafat this weekend when he and the Palestinian leader attend an economics conference Friday and Saturday on the Spanish island of Majorca.

Peres sought to downplay expectations for the meeting.

Israeli Arabs, police clash

More than 30 Israeli Arabs — including three legislators from the community — were wounded in clashes with police near the town of Tira, according to the Jerusalem Post.

Legislators Ahmed Tibi, Mohammed Barakah and Issam Mahoul were among those brought to a local hospital.

The clashes erupted Tuesday after demonstrators began protesting plans to expropriate Arab land for building the Trans-Israel Highway in the area.

Arafat, pope meet in Vatican

Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat issued a condemnation of "every form of terrorism" during a meeting with the pope.

Referring to recent fighting between Israeli forces and Palestinian gunmen in Bethlehem, Arafat deplored "the recent tragic events that also involved the holy places of Christianity" when he met with Pope John Paul at the Vatican on Tuesday, according to a Vatican spokesman.

During the 15-minute meeting, the pope urged Israel and the Palestinians to put down their weapons and return to the negotiating table.

Mortars fired in Gaza

Palestinians fired mortar rounds at an Israeli settlement in the Gaza Strip. After Tuesday's attack, Israeli troops briefly entered Palestinian-controlled territory in search of the source of fire.

for a period of years. Even Sharon had spoken positively of a Palestinian state just days before Tourism Minister Rehavam Ze'evi was killed. The assassination effectively ended a string of minor but positive steps between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, plunging the region back into violence.

According to The Associated Press, Peres' spokesman, Yoram Dori, confirmed that the foreign minister was "preparing a peace plan" to be released in coming days. "Whether Sharon agrees or not, he will have to say," Dori said.

Indeed, some pundits speculated that, if it contains elements Sharon opposes, the Peres plan might hasten the downfall of the unity government.

Until Peres releases his plan, however, Israelis were left debating whether the IDF operation really had served vital national interests.

Official spokesmen explained last week that the incursions aimed to arrest or kill terrorists and to prevent or preempt planned attacks.

Military sources say at least 40 terrorists and suspected terrorists have been arrested, and some 20 killed in encounters with elite units.

IDF officials initially claimed that Members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine involved in the Oct. 17 assassination of Ze'evi were apprehended, though later claims contradicted that. The two men believed to have actually carried out the murder remain at large.

But two drive-by terror shootings on Sunday — one, in Hadera, killed four women and injured dozens of other people, and the other killed a soldier — undercut the assertion that IDF occupation of Palestinian cities is effective in blocking assaults. The killers in the two attacks came from Tulkarm and Jenin.

The first killing was claimed by Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat's Fatah faction, the second by Islamic Jihad.

The claims reflected widespread resistance to Arafat's public orders to the various Palestinian military and paramilitary groupings, and to the opposition factions, that it was in the Palestinians' national interest to observe a cease-fire. However, in another major address, to trade unionists in Gaza, Arafat gave precisely the opposite message, calling on the Palestinians "to continue fighting, fighting, determinedly and forcefully."

Arafat's cease-fire call could be seen as a success for the Israeli operation, especially if the cease-fire does take hold at least on some of the fronts. Israel says its troops will withdraw from the other cities one by one when each is quiet.

But Arafat has spurned Israel's demand to hand over Ze'evi's killers. Israel has received no real backing from the United States or the international community for the demand, which many see as an unrealistic stumbling block to the diplomatic process.

At best, Israel may make do with a proposed international monitoring mechanism — details of which are still vague — designed to ensure that terrorists arrested by the Palestinian Authority do not shortly walk out the other side of a "revolving door."

Israeli sources say arrests Arafat has made — and trumpeted to the media — are mostly of PFLP "pensioners" who long ago cease being active members of the guerrilla group. Of those on a Most Wanted list Israel submitted some weeks ago, almost all remain free — though at least two have met their deaths in violent circumstances believed to be of Israel's doing.

Politically, at least, the operation in the West Bank seems to have benefitted Sharon. Its scope seems to have assuaged Ze'evi's National Union-Yisrael Beiteinu faction, which has indefinitely deferred an earlier decision to quit the government. On Tuesday, Knesset member Benny Elon took over as Ze'evi's replacement in the tourism ministry. For Sharon, fighting to hold his coalition together and ward off incessant criticism from his Likud Party rival Benjamin Netanyahu, that's gratifying. □

'Wandering Jew' exhibit in Paris

PARIS (JTA) — An exhibit on the idea of the Wandering Jew has opened in Paris. "The Wandering Jew: A Witness of the Times" opened last Friday at the Museum of the Art and History of Judaism.

The exhibit presents pictorial and literary representations from antiquity to the present of the legend of the Wandering Jew, an idea that has played an important role in popular anti-Semitism and Christian theological anti-Judaism. Among the pieces displayed are paintings by Chagall and engravings by Gustave Dore. □



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JEWISH WORLD

'Protocols' on paper's Web site

An Italian newspaper is being pressed to remove an anti-Semitic tract from a Web site it hosts.

The Simon Wiesenthal Center demanded that the Italian daily *La Repubblica* remove the text of "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion," which was posted on one of the newspaper's online discussion forums.

The tract "appears in its entirety, without explanation and out of context, on your Web site forum entitled 'Missiles on Kabul,'" a Wiesenthal Center official wrote in a letter to *La Repubblica's* editor.

"We consider that *La Repubblica* bears responsibility for what is published under its name and logo."

Project helps women advance

Four Jewish groups were selected to join a project to advance the professional status of women.

The four groups — Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Life, UJA-Federation of Greater New York, the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, and the Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services in New York — will participate in Advancing Women Professionals, a national pilot project launched under the auspices of the Jewish federation system's Trust for Jewish Philanthropy.

The project intends to help recruit and groom women for top professional positions in Jewish organizations, where men now fill most high-ranking jobs.

It also aims to improve the work climate for all employees.

Casino bill prompts group's ire

A fervently Orthodox group is disappointed by a New York bill that will expand legal gambling.

Recently passed by the state legislature, the bill permits new casinos in the Catskill Mountains, where many Orthodox Jews spend their summers.

"As Orthodox Jews, we see casino gambling, and many of the social trappings that often accompany it, as entirely incompatible with the values we hold dear," said Chaim Zwiebel, Agudath Israel of America's executive vice president for government and public affairs.

'Exodus' released for new run

The film "Exodus" is being released on its 40th anniversary.

The film, about a ship of Jewish refugees turned away from Palestine in 1947, is slated to be screened in more than 200 cities worldwide. The film stars Paul Newman and Eva Marie Saint.

The premiere marking the 40th anniversary release was held Monday in Beverly Hills, Calif.

Among those attending was Yossi Harel, a Holocaust survivor who was the commander of the real ship.

Hoping to mend fences, Sharpton breaks some more with Arafat talk

By Peter Ephross

NEW YORK (JTA) — For a trip that was not supposed to involve foreign policy, the Rev. Al Sharpton's visit to Israel has turned out to be political — and controversial.

On his three-day visit to Israel this week, Sharpton visited the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial and an Ethiopian immigrant absorption center, and met with Israeli politicians, one of Israel's chief rabbis and relatives of terror victims.

Yet his most noteworthy meeting may turn out to be the one without any Israelis.

Sharpton, who is trying to improve his public image after years of controversy, also reportedly passed on some diplomatic messages from Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres to Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat.

When Sharpton announced his trip to Israel last week, he indicated that he would not be meeting with any Palestinian officials. But he told Peres that he wanted to meet with Arafat, Peres urged him to press Arafat to end violence against Israeli civilians.

"The Rev. Sharpton met with Yasser Arafat and conveyed a very clear message to him: Put an end to violence," said Ido Aharoni, the spokesman at the Israeli Consulate in New York. "We welcome any leader who wants to send such a message."

Despite the official approval, some U.S. Jewish leaders are upset about the meeting.

"If I were looking to reconcile with the Jewish community, my first overture would not be sitting down with Yasser Arafat," said Rabbi Marc Schneier, president and co-founder of the Foundation for Ethnic Understanding.

Schneier was supposed to be one of Sharpton's chaperones, but says he pulled out after he sensed Sharpton was wavering from his original intent to visit Israel in order to build ties to the Jewish community.

Sharpton was accompanied on his trip by Rabbi Shmuley Boteach, who is known primarily for his books about Judaism's teachings on romantic relationships, particularly the best seller "Kosher Sex." Boteach said that focusing on one meeting was unfair, and that Sharpton was moved after spending time at the Ethiopian center.

"For an African American leader to see that Israel will extend phenomenal resources and military sophistication to help those who are part of our ancient nation, irrespective of skin color, gives the lie to conferences like" the recent U.N. World Conference Against Racism "that says Israel is a racist country," Boteach said.

But for some, the meeting with Arafat undermined the stated goal of Sharpton's visit — to understand how Israelis live under the constant threat of terror. Sharpton said he wanted to Israel in the wake of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks in the United States.

Abraham Foxman, the national director of the Anti-Defamation League, called it "offensive" for Sharpton to "play diplomacy, to grandstand, rather than making the visit one of education and reconciliation."

Foxman added that Israel had little choice about the Arafat meeting once Sharpton raised the issue with Peres.

Jews have been angered by Sharpton's role in the 1991 Crown Heights riots, when some say he whipped up black antagonism against Jews. In addition, some people say that a 1995 speech Sharpton made incited rioters to burn down Freddie's, a Jewish-owned clothing store in Harlem.

Many also were outraged by Sharpton's support for Tawana Brawley, a black girl found to have fraudulently accused four white men of raping her and smearing excrement on her.

Making matters worse, critics say, is the fact that the meeting with Arafat came instead of a visit with survivors of the terror bombing at the Tel Aviv Dolphinarium.

Boteach noted that Sharpton did meet with several terror victims, including relatives of Nachshon Waxman, an Israeli soldier killed by Hamas kidnappers in 1994, and several others who are recuperating in Israeli hospitals.

Boteach also defended Sharpton's overall visit.

"We in the Jewish community have to be gracious when a man comes all the way at a very dangerous time, when Israel needs friends and international understanding, and meets with civilians and victims of terror," Boteach said. □

(JTA Staff Writer Julie Wiener contributed to this report.)

BEHIND THE HEADLINES**'Deep principle' of Israel issue pushed Red Cross leader to quit***By Sharon Samber*

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Israel's exclusion from the global Red Cross organization appears to have been the pivotal factor in the resignation of the head of the American Red Cross.

Dr. Bernadine Healy said last Friday that she had been forced out of her job over policy differences with her board. In particular, she noted her unpopular decision to withhold American Red Cross dues from the International Committee of the Red Cross to protest the group's refusal to give full membership to Magen David Adom, the Israeli relief group.

Contrary to reports, Healy's ouster had very little to do with the issue of how to use funds collected for the victims of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, according to an official at the American Red Cross. "It's just not the case," the official said.

Healy had taken the lead on what she termed a "controversial but principled stand" supporting Israel's demand for membership in the international organization. Healy advocated withholding American Red Cross dues to the international group until the Israeli branch was included. Magen David Adom currently has only observer status.

The American Red Cross has so far withheld two years of dues — approximately \$10-12 million — as well as voluntary contributions to the international group.

Israel's humanitarian relief movement has been barred from the Red Cross movement, which allows only the red cross and, in Muslim countries, the red crescent. Israel insists on keeping its red Star of David.

Israel's exclusion has been a long-standing point of contention between the American Red Cross and the international bodies.

The exclusion generally is attributed to intense lobbying against Israel from Arab and Muslim members of the International Red Cross. Officially, the reason given is that allowing the Star of David might encourage other groups to press for inclusion of their emblems as well.

Alluding to her difficulties on this issue with the board of governors, Healy said "reasonable people have differed with me on this and certain other matters, but this is an area of deep principle for me not easily compromised."

Earlier this month the board tried to reverse course and pay its back dues to the international body, even passing a resolution to do so, the American Red Cross official told JTA. Healy refused to back down, however.

In her resignation speech, she said, "the policy is now up for grabs." The following day, however, the American Red Cross voted to keep its current policy, passing a resolution affirming its commitment to Magen David Adom's struggle.

"It is one of our top international policy priorities," said Leslie VanSant, a spokesperson with the American Red Cross.

It remains to be seen how aggressively the American Red Cross will pursue the issue.

Healy's resignation may help solidify American Red Cross support for Magen David Adom, the official said, but she remains doubtful about the Israeli group's ultimate prospects of joining the world body.

"I'm not terribly optimistic," the official said.

When she began her tenure, Healy said the Star of David

emblem should be recognized by the International Red Cross. The exclusion of the Israelis is "a betrayal of the sacred principles of this movement" and "cannot be tolerated any longer," she said.

Lawrence Eagleburger, a former U.S. secretary of state, said Healy had asked his advice in forcing the International Federation of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent to change policy toward Israel.

In an op-ed for The Washington Post on Tuesday, Eagleburger wrote that Healy was forced out of office not because of anything related to the events of Sept. 11, but because "she dared to try to right a wrong — the wrong of denying a sovereign nation equality because of its ethnicity."

The Israeli relief agency's general director, Avi Zohar, credited Healy with "opening the door" on the issue and generating much support in the last two years. American Red Cross chapters have been strengthening their connections with Magen David Adom, Zohar said, and the American Red Cross will continue its support.

"Because it is just, I think they will put pressure in the same way," he said. Zohar believes his group will be granted full membership in the next year or two.

Magen David Adom's inclusion has support from all major Jewish organizations, and U.S. congressional support reached a high point this year. Fifty-three U.S. senators signed letters in August to Secretary of State Colin Powell and Red Cross officials, urging the International Red Cross to grant full and immediate acceptance to Magen David Adom.

Gary Kenzer, the executive director of the U.S. branch of Magen David Adom, said that Healy's resignation is of concern but does not signal the end of American Red Cross support.

"The issue is not dead in the water," he said.

Last year, representatives from Israel and the American Red Cross held talks in Geneva and discussed proposals to incorporate Magen David Adom's red Star of David into a neutral emblem. Discussions on alternatives are still under way.

The issue of the emblem has blocked Magen David Adom's admission to the International Red Cross since 1949. According to Magen David Adom, it has met all of the other criteria required to join the international organization. □

Rome embraces chief rabbi

ROME (JTA) — Rome's chief rabbi, who is retiring after 50 years in the position, has received the city's highest honor.

At an emotional ceremony last Friday at the city's historic city hall, Elio Toaff was named an honorary citizen — the equivalent of receiving the keys to the city. Attending the ceremony were Jewish community leaders, cultural figures and Holocaust survivors, as well as a broad spectrum of Italy's elite — including President Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, who hugged his old friend.

"The entire city of Rome embraces you, and with you it embraces the Jewish community and all those in the world who are unjustly persecuted and offended," Rome Mayor Walter Veltroni said.

He called Toaff "a man of faith who has always been distinguished not just for his dedication to tolerance, dialogue and discussion, but also by a tenacious commitment to defend democracy and freedom."

Toaff, 86, shocked the Rome community with a surprise announcement at the city's main synagogue earlier this month that he was stepping down because of his age. □