



Daily News Bulletin

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TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Sharon, Peres mull peace plan

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres presented Prime Minister Ariel Sharon with a new peace initiative.

According to the Israeli daily Ha'aretz, Peres proposed the staged creation of a Palestinian state, starting in the Gaza Strip. [Page 4]

Suicide bomber nabbed

Israeli officials said they prevented a suicide bombing in Jerusalem.

Border police arrested a terrorist traveling in a taxi on the outskirts of eastern Jerusalem when they found he was carrying a powerful bomb.

Peres replaces Sharon at G.A.

Shimon Peres plans to appear at the North American federation system's General Assembly in Washington.

Replacing Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, the Israeli foreign minister is slated to speak at a Sunday night plenary and may fill in for Sharon at other events as well, according to officials with the United Jewish Communities.

Traditionally, the Israeli prime minister speaks at the General Assembly, but Sharon recently announced he will be unable to make it to the United States because of the security situation in Israel.

Tom Ridge, the U.S. homeland security director, is also slated to address the General Assembly.

Clinton: Revive peace process

Israel and the Palestinians should resume the tattered peace process, President Clinton told JTA.

"I think we just need to get back to the process, and the U.S. should be heavily involved in it," Clinton told JTA after addressing a dinner in New York for the Hebrew University's Lautenberg cancer research center.

He declined to elaborate, saying that "the rest of us don't need to be giving public advice right now, we just need to be giving public support" to U.S. diplomacy in the region.

At the dinner, Clinton said the Sept. 11 terror attack and America's subsequent war in Afghanistan demonstrate the need for America to pay "special attention" to the Muslim world and to support secular, democratizing forces there.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Jews welcome a shift in tone as U.S. criticizes Palestinians

By Matthew E. Berger

WASHINGTON (JTA) — For the first time since the Sept. 11 terrorism attacks, the Bush administration is publicly criticizing the Palestinians and taking tangible steps toward fighting terrorism aimed at Israelis.

The change in tone, after weeks of pointed criticism directed at Israel, is being welcomed by many in the American Jewish community who were becoming increasingly frustrated by the administration's actions.

Some see the shift as the first sign of a more balanced perspective as the administration intensifies its war in Afghanistan — even as it tries to keep Arab nations on board.

A key test of the administration's positions will take place next week when world leaders gather for the opening of the U.N. General Assembly.

Speculation is rife about a possible meeting between President Bush and Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat even as Arafat has reportedly threatened to declare unilateral statehood.

The administration says no meeting between Bush and Arafat is currently being planned.

For the two months since the Sept. 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the administration had remained largely mute about Palestinian violence as it worked to assemble and maintain an international coalition against terrorism that included many Arab nations.

At the same time, the U.S. government publicly condemned Israel for its policy of targeted assassination of terrorists and its incursions into Palestinian-controlled areas, which were prompted by Israel's belief that the Palestinians were doing enough to crack down on terrorists.

The contrast angered many American Jews and Israelis, including Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, who at one point accused the administration of appeasing the Arabs at the expense of Israel.

But that changed over the past week, with a series of public comments aimed at the Palestinian Authority and Arafat.

David Satterfield, the U.S. deputy assistant secretary of state, told the Center for Policy Analysis on Palestine, that the last year of Palestinian violence has "become an ongoing process of calculated terror and escalation," which has led to Israeli actions that "proved inflammatory and provocative."

"There has been too little movement on critical issues involving basic questions of intent and will to bring the killing to stop," Satterfield said.

On Monday, Daniel Kurtzer, the U.S. ambassador to Israel, told the Foreign Press Association in Tel Aviv that "words are not enough" for Arafat to prove that he is against terrorism.

Kurtzer also said the Palestinian leader must do more to crack down on Palestinian militants and decide "where he stands on questions relating to terrorism."

At the same time, the Bush administration has taken steps to isolate Palestinian terrorist groups.

Last week, Attorney General John Ashcroft named several groups believed linked to Arafat's Fatah faction as possible terrorist organizations in need of American monitoring.

And the State Department last Friday took steps to freeze the assets of Hamas,

MIDEAST FOCUS

Two militants killed in Jenin

Two Palestinian militants died when their car exploded near Jenin. Palestinian officials blamed Israel for the deaths of the two members of Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat's Fatah movement.

Israel said the two had died in a "work accident" as they were preparing a car bomb.

Powell calls for intifada's end

Colin Powell called on the Palestinians to halt the violence against Israel.

In an interview on Egyptian television, the U.S. secretary of state said he understands that the intifada reflects the frustrations of the Palestinian people. But, he added, if the Palestinians halt the violence, "I am sure you will see a response from the Israeli side."

Lebanon won't act on U.S. call

Lebanon likely will reject a U.S. call to freeze Hezbollah's assets. Claiming that Hezbollah is a legitimate resistance group, Finance Minister Fuad Saniora told the Voice of Lebanon radio station Tuesday that the Cabinet would discuss freezing Hezbollah assets during a meeting Thursday, but that ministers were expected to reject it.

As part of its anti-terror campaign, Washington last week included Hezbollah on a list of 28 terror groups whose assets should be blocked.

Gaza security chief resigns

Yasser Arafat refused to accept the resignation of his Palestinian security chief in Gaza.

Palestinian sources said Mohammed Dahlan resigned to express dissatisfaction with Arafat's handling of the political situation with Israel and the recent arrest of some Arab militants.

Dahlan likely will remain in his position despite the resignation, which Palestinian analysts described as a symbolic act of protest.

Hezbollah and other groups already on the department's Foreign Terrorist Organization list.

The new designation subjects these groups to the executive order President Bush declared on the Al Qaida network shortly after the September attacks.

The new focus on the Palestinian Authority has satisfied the American Jewish community, whose leaders had become increasingly frustrated with U.S. pronouncements on Israel.

"It's an indication that the administration is getting tougher on Arafat," said an official with a leading American Jewish organization. "Arafat only performs when he is pressured."

Jewish leaders met last week with Ashcroft and more than 20 Republican senators. They said they felt an unprecedented alliance between the lawmakers and the Jewish community, and believe their message helped shape the change in pronouncements by the Bush administration.

"I don't think what we brought so much was pressure as much as information," said Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

"Plus, it was a question of timing."

Jewish leaders had been optimistic for weeks that the courting of Arab states was temporary, and that the coalition against terrorism would eventually target Palestinian groups.

While they spent the first weeks after the Sept. 11 attacks concerned about offending the Bush administration as it began its war efforts, the Jewish lobbying intensified after the administration's sharp criticism of Israeli moves into the Palestinian areas.

Lawmakers peppered U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell with questions about what they termed the hypocrisy between America's mission in Afghanistan and the Israeli policy of targeted killing.

Jewish activists also sought stricter controls on Palestinian terrorist groups, warning administration officials that the terrorist network was interconnected and should not exclude those that target Israel.

"I don't think that this is a sea change, as much as a coming to terms with reality," Hoenlein said of the administration's seeming shift.

"You can't conduct this war without combating Hamas and Hezbollah."

Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League, said he believes the administration is reacting to a feeling of being "stung" by criticism of its views on targeted killing, and are working to balance out their views.

For its part, the administration says it has not shifted course.

A State Department official said the Bush administration would continue to press Israel to leave portions of the West Bank it has occupied in recent weeks.

"It doesn't reflect a fundamental change," the official said. "Both sides need to be doing things to move the process forward."

For his part, Sharon canceled meetings in Washington with Bush and other government leaders next week, citing security concerns at home.

Administration officials have reportedly hinted to Sharon that if he came to Washington, the administration would be forced to rebuke the policies of incursions.

As for a meeting with Arafat, State Department officials said this week that no meeting is being planned; privately, sources said such a meeting is unlikely.

Arab leaders are pushing for such a meeting, while many pro-Israel activists and lawmakers staunchly oppose it, saying that granting the meeting would reward Arafat at a time when he is not doing enough to crack down on terrorism.

Bush has told Jewish leaders in the past that he understands that meeting with Arafat is the "trump card" he holds over the Palestinian leader.

At the same time, administration officials say Powell will not expand on the U.S. position regarding a Palestinian state when he addresses the United Nations next week.

The administration also is making clear that it opposes any action by the Palestinians to unilaterally declare a state, as some media reports have suggested Arafat might do next week.

"Our policy on unilateral declarations have been clearly stated," a State Department spokesman said Tuesday. "It would constitute a unilateral move, and we are against unilateral actions." □



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JEWISH WORLD

ADL in joint anti-terror effort

The Anti-Defamation League is launching a counter-terrorism effort.

The ADL is teaming up with the Israel-based International Policy Institute for Counter-Terrorism on a new initiative to bring information about terrorism to policymakers, law enforcement officials and the public.

Chicago man faces deportation

The U.S. government wants to revoke the citizenship of a Chicago man for alleged wartime persecution of Jews. The Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations claims that Juozas Guzulaitis, 77, served as an armed guard at two Nazi concentration camps.

In the complaint, the government claims Guzulaitis was an armed guard at the Majdanek concentration camp in Poland and at the Hersbruck forced labor camp in Germany. The complaint also alleges that Guzulaitis was a guard during the death march from Hersbruck to Dachau in April 1945.

Rabbis meet in Jerusalem

The Conference of European Rabbis met in Jerusalem to show solidarity with the Jewish state.

Kashrut issues and the rise in anti-Semitism in Europe since the Sept. 11 terror attacks were among topics discussed at the conference's recent meeting, which was originally slated to be held in Gibraltar.

Conservative yeshiva to open

The U.S. Conservative movement is creating a yearlong study in Israel program for recent high school graduates.

Beginning next September, the Conservative Yeshiva of the United Synagogue in Jerusalem will open a pre-college yeshiva year. Rabbi Joel Roth, head of the yeshiva, said it will "offer North American high school graduates the opportunity to study rabbinic texts in an open-minded egalitarian atmosphere, while retaining the intensity associated with traditional yeshiva learning."

Reform rabbi, author dies

Rabbi Chaim Stern, editor of Reform prayer books including Gates of Prayer and Gates of Repentance, died Monday at 71.

In addition to his work for the Central Conference of American Rabbis, Stern served for 33 years as senior rabbi of Temple Beth El of Northern Westchester, in Chappaqua, N.Y., and recently had taken an interim position with Temple Israel in Miami.

At a 1998 prayer breakfast for religious leaders, President Clinton used words that Stern wrote about redemption to apologize for Clinton's relationship with White House intern Monica Lewinsky.

Mayoral race is too close to call, but one sure thing: he'll be a Jew

By Rachel Pomerance

NEW YORK (JTA) — When Abraham Beame was elected the first Jewish mayor of New York in 1973, the American Examiner-Jewish Week proclaimed, "Gracie Mansion to get mezuzah now that city has new mayor."

With Mark Green and Michael Bloomberg in a dead heat before Tuesday's mayoral election, the only sure thing is that Gracie Mansion will once again have a symbolic mezuzah on its doorpost.

Thirty years ago, Beame's ethnicity was considered so exceptional that the Jewish community of New York saw the win as an ethnic triumph. Katz's Deli, a local landmark, put a sign over its counter urging patrons to "Send a Salami to Your Boy in City Hall," a play on its wartime slogan, "Send a Salami to Your Boy in the Army."

This year, in contrast, there's been little mention of religion in the media and among voters — and only muted recognition of the subject by the candidates themselves.

In fact, the Jewish issue seems to be a nonissue as the city chooses its 108th mayor. Like the rest of New York, the Jewish community is having a hard time deciding between two Upper East Side candidates who are both left of center, Jewish and schooled at Harvard.

Rebecca Michelman, a television producer who is actively Jewish, said it was only on her way to the polling station Tuesday that it really hit her that two Jews were going head to head for the mayoralty.

"If one had not been Jewish, and if I knew he had issues with Israel in the past," Michelman said, "that would have affected my decision. Definitely."

A choice between two Jewish candidates shows how established Jews have become in New York, said Eric Solomon, rabbi of Congregation Tehillah in the Riverdale section of the Bronx and assistant rabbi of Congregation B'nai Jeshurun on Manhattan's Upper West Side.

"It's raised my level of gratitude that two Jewish candidates who disagree with each other can become the mayor of the greatest city in the world — maybe outside of Jerusalem," Solomon joked.

With both candidates part of the mishpocha, Jewish voters said they didn't find a uniquely Jewish perspective to the elections.

"My gut reaction is that I see myself first as a New Yorker," Michelman said. "I'm worried about the economy, and other urban issues like homelessness and education and teacher's salaries."

Marc Landis and Beth Berns, Democratic leaders on the Upper West Side, said the biggest issue for voters now is rebuilding downtown, followed by public safety and education.

"The 'Jewish' issues are the civic issues," Landis said.

The candidates themselves hardly made reference to their Jewishness. Green's Web site skims the surface of his Jewish identity, noting only that "Mark, while proud of his Jewish heritage, has visited over 100 churches throughout the City."

Bloomberg's Web site makes no mention of his Jewish heritage and lists no Jewish charities among his affiliations, which include Lincoln Center and The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Still, both candidates are in touch with the city's Jewish life in various ways, Landis said. Green has been active in issues affecting the Jewish community and Israel, he said, and when Green was consumer affairs commissioner he administered a survey to protect against price gouging over Passover products.

On the other hand, one Jewish observer, explaining her preference for Bloomberg, said he simply seemed like more of a mensch than Green.

Michelman, for example, said she considered voting for Bloomberg, but ultimately decided not to because of his political inexperience.

Personalities also were important, with many voters — including many Jews — commenting on Green's perceived arrogance.

Though she voted for Green, television producer Pam Wolfe said she did so grudgingly, as "the lesser of two evils." □

(JTA staff writer Michael J. Jordan contributed to this report.)

NEWS ANALYSIS

Israel studies peace moves before U.N. assembly meets

By Mitchell Danow

NEW YORK (JTA) — Despite a daily drumbeat of terror and death in the Middle East, efforts continue to work toward a diplomatic breakthrough.

In the past week, for example, Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat met twice, and Peres reportedly presented a peace plan to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.

The timing of the diplomatic push may not be coincidental, coming days before the U.N. General Assembly convenes here on Nov. 10. On Tuesday, the London-based Al-Hayat newspaper reported that Arafat may unilaterally declare a Palestinian state at the General Assembly, believing he will receive wide backing.

Peres said he does not know about such plans, but that Arafat would "be taking a huge risk, because it will be a Palestinian state without borders."

Just the same, the possibility that Arafat may spring a surprise on Israel could help explain Peres' urgency in coming up with a peace plan.

"We cannot remain without a plan," Peres said, according to the Israeli daily Ha'aretz. "If we don't take the initiative, they will take the initiative from us."

There have been reports for more than a week that Peres was drafting a peace initiative. On Sunday, according to Ha'aretz, he presented it to Sharon.

Two days later, Peres told Israel Radio that he wanted to reach an agreement with Sharon on a common plan to present to the Palestinian Authority.

According to Ha'aretz, the Peres plan includes the following:

- A demilitarized Palestinian state will be created, with its borders determined through negotiations;
- Buffer zones will be created between Israel and the West Bank;
- The plan would be implemented first in the Gaza Strip, later in the West Bank;
- The status quo will remain in Jerusalem, including Palestinian control over the Temple Mount. If it becomes impossible to reach agreement on Jerusalem, the issue will be postponed;
- Palestinian refugees will not return to homes they abandoned in Israel during the 1948 war. An international panel will be created to arrange compensation for Palestinian refugees, as well as for Jewish refugees from Arab countries;
- There will be no Israeli-Palestinian negotiations until there is a complete cessation of violence, a frequent demand of Sharon.

The Peres plan also calls for the United States to guarantee Israel's final borders, Ha'aretz reported, adding that Israel will seek a defense treaty with the United States to accompany any final peace treaty with the Palestinians.

As Sharon studies Peres' proposals, he knows that his unity government could hang in the balance. Avigdor Lieberman, head of the hawkish National Unity bloc, threatened Tuesday to leave the government if Sharon accepts the Peres plan.

On the other hand, Peres is under increasing pressure from his Labor Party to pull out of the government unless Sharon shows he is serious about entering negotiations with the Palestinians.

In the meantime, the violence continues.

In the bloodiest such incident this week, a Palestinian gunman opened fire Sunday on a bus in the French Hill neighborhood of northern Jerusalem.

Two people were killed and some 50 injured when the gunman sprayed the No. 25 Egged bus with fire from an M-16 automatic rifle at the afternoon rush hour.

Police identified one of the dead as Shoshana Ben Yishai, a 16-year-old who immigrated to Israel with her parents from Long Island when she was 5 years old.

Three Israelis — a border policeman, a soldier and a civilian — shot and killed the gunman. The gunman was a member of Islamic Jihad from the West Bank city of Hebron, Jerusalem Police Chief Mickey Levy said.

The attack took place hours after Defense Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer said at Israel's weekly Cabinet meeting that Israeli troops would withdraw from the West Bank city of Kalkilya.

Early Monday, Israeli forces indeed withdrew from Kalkilya. The army said it would remain in Israeli-controlled territory nearby "to prevent terror activities launched from" areas under Palestinian control.

In its biggest operation in areas under Palestinian control since the two sides signed their first interim peace accords in 1993, Israel took up positions last month in and around the largest Palestinian-controlled cities in the West Bank.

Criticized by the United States and other Western nations, the operation was launched to crack down on terrorism after the Oct. 17 assassination of Tourism Minister Rehavam Ze'evi by a Palestinian squad.

Israel troops already had withdrawn from Bethlehem and Beit Jalla. On Tuesday, Ben-Eliezer ordered the Israel Defense Force to prepare to withdraw from Ramallah, while maintaining a tight closure around the city. IDF troops remain in Tulkarm and Jenin.

On Tuesday, in a signal that Israel would change its anti-terror strategy, Sharon spokesman Ra'anana Gissin said Israel plans to rely less on large-scale military operations and more on "guerrilla warfare" tactics against suspected terrorists.

"We'll rely more on intelligence" and "pinpointed operations," he said.

On Monday, three Israelis were wounded when a bomb exploded in an Israeli settlement near the West Bank city of Jenin. One suffered moderate wounds and the other two light injuries in the blast at a factory. Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility.

Following the bombing, Israeli officials said the attack would delay plans to withdraw troops from Jenin.

In other violence, Palestinian gunmen shot and killed an Israeli soldier, Staff Sgt. Raz Mintz, 19, of Haifa last Friday night.

The gunmen also lightly wounded another soldier in the drive-by shooting, which occurred at a roadblock north of Beit El.

The Al Aksa Brigade, which is affiliated with Arafat's Fatah movement, claimed responsibility for the attack. □

Arab legislator loses immunity

JERUSALEM (JTA) — A Knesset committee has voted to lift the parliamentary immunity of an Israeli Arab legislator.

Monday's step against Azmi Beshara was taken on the recommendation of Attorney General Elyakim Rubinstein.

Rubinstein requested the step after Beshara made a speech in Syria earlier this year in which he called upon the Arab world to unite against the "warmongering" government of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. □