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84th Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Arafat shows other face

Yasser Arafat sounded a belligerent note during a speech in Ramallah. In a sharp departure from his call Sunday for Palestinians to halt attacks on Israel, Arafat said Tuesday that all Palestinians are martyrs who will "sacrifice ourselves for our holy places."

Arafat also told the crowd that the Palestinian people "are prepared to give 70 of our martyrs for every martyr of theirs in this campaign, because this is our holy land." In response, the crowd chanted, "One million martyrs are already marching to Jerusalem."

Powell speaks with both sides

Secretary of State Colin Powell phoned the Israeli and Palestinian leaders.

In a conversation Tuesday with Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat, Powell stressed that the Palestinians needed to do more "to make an effective end to the violence," spokesman Richard Boucher said. In a separate conversation with Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, Powell called on Israel to "work to alleviate the pressures on the Palestinian people," Boucher said.

Sharon told Powell there had been 31 Palestinian attacks on Israelis since Arafat issued a call Sunday night for Palestinians to halt such attacks, according to Sharon's office.

Jewish groups support Turkey

American Jewish organizations called on President Bush to provide economic aid to Turkey. Nine Jewish organizations are seeking support for Turkey, citing it as a predominantly Muslim nation that has stood with the United States during international conflicts, including the current war on terrorism.

The organizations are seeking aid to alleviate Turkey's economic crisis, and have suggested debt forgiveness, trade concessions or aid from the International Monetary Fund.

Warning of new Hamas attacks

Hamas may begin targeting Israeli public figures. Israeli security officials also warned Tuesday that the terrorist group may also target large buildings in Israel.

The officials were pessimistic about Israel's ability to prevent attacks, likening the nation's anti-terror efforts to emptying the sea with a teaspoon.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Jewish groups ask if next phase of terror war is pressure on Arafat

By Matthew E. Berger

WASHINGTON (JTA) — In recent weeks, the United States has ratcheted up pressure on the Palestinian Authority and its president, Yasser Arafat, to crack down on terrorists.

But specific demands of the Palestinian Authority have been vague, and the consequences of noncompliance unclear.

The next step in the process, many believe, is for the Bush administration to detail its requirements of the Palestinian leadership, and to issue real threats against the Palestinian government if it fails to follow through.

"Demands without consequences have rarely had much effect on Arafat," Dennis Ross, former special Middle East coordinator under President Clinton, said in Sunday's Washington Post. "It is time for a consequence. It is time for an American ultimatum. The ultimatum must be very clear, with specific demands and an unmistakable consequence."

With the United States destroying the Al Qaida network of Osama bin Laden faster than anticipated, a window is opening for the Bush administration to use its clout to put real pressure on the Palestinian Authority to control terrorism.

No longer concerned about courting Arab states for its anti-terror coalition, the United States can act more unilaterally to aid Israel and pressure Arafat, Middle East analysts say. However, a State Department spokesman said the Bush administration was unlikely to act through ultimatums.

"It would be historically inconsistent for us to do that," the spokesman said. "We've been pretty specific about the actions that need to be taken by the Palestinians, and we'll stick along the lines of that."

The benchmark remains Arafat's crackdown on Hamas and Islamic Jihad after a string of suicide bombings in the spring of 1996, when action included rounding up weapons, dismantling bomb-making facilities and arresting terrorist suspects.

U.S. action is more likely to take the form of diplomatic pressure.

The United States has proved in the past — for example, after the Persian Gulf War 10 years ago, when it pressured Israel and the Arab states to sit down to peace talks in Madrid — that it can use a military success to effect diplomatic change.

It is considered doubtful that U.S. action would mean actual military operations by U.S. forces. More likely, it would mean escalating pressure on the Palestinians to crack down on terrorist groups and not criticizing Israel's anti-terror operations.

In the first weeks after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, Israeli and Jewish leaders who had expected empathy for Israel's plight were stunned to find America pressuring Israel to make concessions in order to defuse tensions with the Arab world. However, after the deadly attacks in Israel over the last few weeks, the Bush administration has done an about-face, pressuring Arafat and remaining silent while Israel retaliated.

In a meeting with American Jewish leaders last week, Bush expressed the need for steps against anti-Israel terror groups such as Hamas, Hezbollah and Islamic Jihad.

Of course, such demands are not new. Arafat formally swore off terror in 1993, when he began the peace process with Israel, and has pledged time and again to quash Palestinian terror.

Eight years and much diplomatic energy later, it remains unclear how the United States can bring to bear the needed pressure to finally spur Arafat to act. The latest

MIDEAST FOCUS

Palestinian contacts persist

Israeli officials acknowledged they are maintaining high-level contacts with their Palestinian counterparts.

However, the contacts do not include Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat, who was declared "irrelevant" by the Israeli Cabinet last week. The contacts involve Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and Defense Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer, sources at the Israeli Foreign Ministry told Reuters.

Palestinians warned of expulsion

The Palestinians could wind up being expelled from their homes, Israel's tourism minister warned.

If the Palestinians start a war against Israel and then lose, "it will cost them — and the price will be expulsion," Binyamin Elon, a member of the hawkish National Unity Party, told Israel's Army Radio on Wednesday.

Terror groups defy Arafat

Another Palestinian terror group rejected Yasser Arafat's call for a halt to attacks against Israel.

In a statement released Tuesday, the Syria-based Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine said Arafat's call would harm the intifada. Hamas, Islamic Jihad and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine have already rejected Arafat's call.

Two U.N. heritage sites in Israel

UNESCO designated two sites in Israel as World Heritage sites. The two sites are Masada and the Old City of Acre, according to the Jerusalem Post.

Israeli officials are considering other sites for future inclusion in the UNESCO list: ancient Beit Shean, the Bauhaus buildings of Tel Aviv and the walls of Tel Dan. In order for a site to be accepted, a government must show that it has plans, laws and sufficient investment to preserve the site.



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American initiative, outlined by Secretary of State Colin Powell in November shortly before the latest attacks, has been scrapped for the time being.

U.S. envoy Anthony Zinni returned to the United States this week, unable to prod Israel and the Palestinian Authority toward a cease-fire. Zinni was scheduled to meet with Bush mid-week to brief him on the situation in the Middle East.

Powell said Monday that despite Zinni's departure, his vision for the Middle East — of separate states for Israelis and Palestinians and an Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza Strip — "still stands."

But the possibility of returning to negotiations has taken a back seat to pressure on the Palestinian Authority to control terrorism. U.S. rhetoric right now is aimed at Arafat's legitimacy, while not making direct threats on the Palestinian Authority.

Still, no explicit consequences have been laid out if Arafat continues to shirk his responsibilities.

"What was being held out to the Palestinians is more a denial of benefits rather than an imposition of penalties," said Jason Isaacson, director of government and international affairs for the American Jewish Committee.

The United States' main tool has been rhetoric, harshly criticizing Arafat while remaining quiet about Israeli retaliation. The Bush administration also has sought diplomatic backing from the European Union and has used America's veto power on the U.N. Security Council to stifle pro-Palestinian resolutions.

These actions have the effect of delegitimizing Arafat, making him more of an outcast in the international community.

To many observers, the shift in rhetoric has had its desired effect. Arafat has taken some steps to curb violence, allegedly arresting over 100 militants and closing some Hamas and Islamic Jihad offices, and he is under international pressure to do more.

His speech Sunday, calling for an end to terrorist attacks against Israel, fulfilled a long-standing American demand that he call for an end to violence in Arabic. However, two days later, in a speech in Ramallah, Arafat again was calling on his people to struggle against Israel, telling a crowd of Palestinians that "I am willing to sacrifice 70 martyrs to kill one Israeli," according to Israel Television.

What will be needed, Ross suggested, is an ultimatum with firm deadlines and real consequences for non-compliance. These could include cutting off humanitarian aid to the Palestinians, closing their Washington offices and placing some factions of the Palestinian Authority — such as Arafat's Fatah Party, which has claimed responsibility for a string of recent attacks — on the State Department's terror lists.

"Not every response is going to be a military response," said Martin Raffel, associate executive vice director of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs. "The United States has a tool kit with diplomatic, economic and military means available."

Many possible actions already have been approved by Congress. They have been suspended in the past by the president because of the view that sanctions stifle chances for peace. To impose sanctions, Bush would need only to not extend these suspensions.

But Bush does not seem to have reached that point. On Monday, he chose to suspend for another six months the transfer of the U.S. Embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, something he had promised to expedite.

While Palestinians would consider the embassy move a provocative gesture, keeping the embassy in Tel Aviv is a sign that the United States is not willing to agree to all of Israel's requests. In addition, the State Department on Monday offered its first criticism of Israeli actions in recent weeks, calling the detention of Palestinian official Sari Nusseibeh for trying to hold a diplomatic reception in eastern Jerusalem "provocative" and "counterproductive."

The next turning point is expected to come once the United States ceases its pursuit of Osama bin Laden and Al Qaida in Afghanistan. Once the first phase of the war on terror is completed, the second phase — if there is one — will be a test of America's resolve to fight terrorism in general, even if it is unrelated to the Sept. 11 attacks.

Many believe that if bin Laden is captured and the Taliban eradicated, the United States will be able to move freely against other terror organizations — and, as Bush has promised, states that sponsor terrorism. Many Jewish leaders place the Palestinian Authority in the category of governments that sponsor terror.

"Success generates respect and fear," Isaacson said. "It's a combination of respect and fear that the United States must wield in its dealings with countries that don't necessarily share our values." □

JEWISH WORLD

Refuseniks return to Moscow

Former Soviet refuseniks met in Moscow to mark the 25th anniversary of a landmark dissident forum.

One of the aims of this week's two-day conference, sponsored by the Federation of Jewish Communities of Russia, is to work toward creating a worldwide organization of Jews born in Russia and the former Soviet Union.

The conference also features discussions on the future of Russian Jewry and reports by leading personalities who fought against Soviet repression.

Many of the refuseniks who attended the conference now live in Israel or the United States.

Brazilian Jewish center opens

A Jewish center in Brazil opened recently after delays because of fears of terrorism.

The center, located in the city of Recife where the 17th-century Zur Israel Synagogue once stood, is slated to host public lectures and exhibits on Brazilian Jewish history.

The opening was postponed in October after Brazil's president refused to attend a dedication ceremony because he feared a terrorist attack.

Survivor to carry Olympic torch

A concentration camp survivor will run with the Olympic torch. Martin Weiss plans to run with the torch in front of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum on Friday.

The torch is making its way from Atlanta through 46 states to Salt Lake City, site of the 2002 Winter Olympics.

Israelis value Diaspora ties

Israelis believe ties with Diaspora Jews are more important to them than they are to world Jewry, according to a new poll.

Some 20 percent of 443 Israelis polled in a recent survey thought the ties are more important to them, while 14 percent said Jews around the world place a higher value on these relations than Israelis.

The survey also showed that 80 percent of Israelis believe Jewish immigration to Israel should be encouraged, despite the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian violence.

The poll was conducted by the Dahaf Institute.

Jewish war hero dies at 86

The only Jewish soldier to receive Britain's highest military honor during World War II died at 86. Tommy Gould earned the Victoria Cross for helping to dislodge two unexploded German bombs from his submarine, the Thrasher, in 1942.

A Jewish veterans association raised \$66,000 to buy the medal from him when he fell on hard times in 1987.

NEWS ANALYSIS

French fight against anti-Semitism has already become a political football

By Andrew Diamond

PARIS (JTA) — For more than a year, French Jewish leaders have called on the government to confront the dramatic rise in anti-Semitic violence that began with the outbreak of the Palestinian intifada.

Now it appears that Prime Minister Lionel Jospin may be ready to address the issue.

Attending last month's annual dinner of CRIF, the umbrella organization for secular French Jews, along with 11 other top-level officials, Jospin assured the audience of "the determination of the government to fight against all forms of anti-Semitism.

"Faced with the risks," he said, "we will not relax our efforts."

By highlighting "all forms" of anti-Jewish aggression, the prime minister was clearly responding to Jewish complaints about his interior minister's reluctance to take a harder line against the predominantly teen-aged Muslim perpetrators of such hate crimes.

At the dinner, Jospin announced that the government would institute a program in French schools for devoting one day each year to the memory of the Holocaust and to the prevention of crimes against humanity.

He also stated that France would work with the European Council and the Foundation for the Memory of the Shoah to organize an international conference on the Holocaust next October. Yet, for some in the Jewish community, these initial moves are more symbolic than real.

Taking the podium before his featured guest, CRIF President Roger Cukierman adopted a more urgent tone when he called for government support in tackling a problem that many observers feel has reached a crisis level.

"We fear for the security of Jews in France," he told the delegation of French officials seated before him.

After recounting the list of aggressions and insults that have struck the community over the past year, Cukierman warned of what was at stake if the situation worsens.

"We have never wanted to develop some parallel militias to defend our rights, and we especially do not want that our youth, who encounter the phenomena of Jewish hate, be tempted to respond to the aggressions," he said.

Jewish leaders must now wait to see if Jospin's rhetoric signals a substantive shift in law enforcement policy.

Without a pressing reason, it is unlikely that the government will take the initiative. This is an election year, and Muslims in France outnumber Jews by about 10-1.

And, just a few days after the CRIF dinner, two stories in the French media cast some doubt on the willingness of Jospin's Socialist-led government to confront anti-Semitism in the run-up to the April election.

One was an expose on this very subject in the popular French magazine L'Express.

Of particular interest in the piece was a report that a leading member of the Socialist Party, Pascal Boniface, had recently suggested in a closed meeting that his party modify its policy toward Israel in order to obtain the Muslim and Arab vote.

"I am struck by the number of young Arabs, of French Muslims of all ages," Boniface allegedly stated, "who call themselves left but who, because of the situation in the Near East, say they are not voting for Jospin in the presidential election."

Cukierman articulated the feelings of many in the community when he responded, "Beyond the figures, it is the climate that worries us."

Despite these lingering doubts about the support of the French authorities, Jews in France have to be encouraged by the rising public awareness about the problem of anti-Semitism.

In addition to the coverage in L'Express and Le Monde, two of the other most widely circulated French dailies — the right-leaning Le Figaro and the left-leaning Liberation — have published a number of editorials and articles in the past month affirming the increase in anti-Semitic violence. Le Figaro, in fact, ran a front-page, two-part series titled "The New Anxiety of French Jews."

French Jews are hoping this new exposure will put more pressure on the French government and catapult their grievances into the upcoming presidential debates. □

New survey finds U.S. Jews support Bush, reject Arafat

By Rachel Pomerance

NEW YORK (JTA) — A majority of American Jews supports the creation of a Palestinian state, though they are increasingly distrustful of the Palestinian leadership, an annual survey of American Jewish opinion finds.

In addition, while they strongly support President Bush's handling of the war against terrorism, they fear he will soon resume pressure on Israel to make concessions to the Palestinians in pursuit of peace.

David Singer, director of research for the American Jewish Committee, said the organization's findings show that Jews have overcome the psychological obstacles necessary to reach a peace agreement — after all, even Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon says he supports a Palestinian state — but months of violence have reinforced the idea that the Palestinian Authority and Yasser Arafat are not the correct partners for peace.

According to the poll, 73 percent of those surveyed agreed with the statement that “The goal of the Arabs is not the return of the occupied territories but rather the destruction of Israel.” Perhaps because of that, 80 percent said they are concerned the U.S. government will continue to pressure Israel for concessions.

Ninety-three percent said the Palestinian Authority is not doing enough to control terrorist activity, and 65 percent support the Israeli government's handling of relations with the Palestinians.

Yet American Jews apparently are even more distrustful of Syria than of the Palestinians. Asked their opinion of 15 countries, 77 percent of respondents had unfavorable views of Syria, a figure topped only by Iran (86 percent).

While 62 percent of respondents said Israel should dismantle some or all West Bank settlements to reach a peace deal with the Palestinians, almost an equal number — 63 percent — said Israel should give up only a small part or even none of the Golan Heights for peace with Syria.

The survey also recorded the views of American Jews on a host of other issues. Among the findings:

- A large majority — 85 percent — approves of the way President Bush is handling the U.S. campaign against terror. Even more, 91 percent, favor U.S. military action in Afghanistan.
- More than 50 percent have a favorable perception of the U.N., despite its repeated and harsh criticism of Israel.
- Seventy-eight percent oppose government aid to religious schools — such as tuition vouchers — a moderate increase from recent years.

• Anti-Semitism is considered a very serious problem in the United States by 27 percent of American Jews, and 67 percent call it somewhat of a problem. In fact, 69 percent of those interviewed said anti-Semitism outranks intermarriage as the greatest threat to Jewish life in America today. Additionally, 47 percent of respondents believe anti-Semitism will increase around the world in coming years.

Despite the image of American Jews as political liberals, Singer said one of the survey's most important revelations is the willingness to accept increased law enforcement measures against terrorism, even if they risk infringing upon civil liberties.

However, the level of support depends on the action in question.

While 92 percent support expanding undercover activities to monitor suspicious groups, 66 percent oppose ethnic profiling.

Also noteworthy, Singer said, is the high approval rating given to President Bush, who did not receive a majority of the Jewish vote in the November 2000 election.

According to Gary Tobin, President of the Institute for Jewish and Community Research in San Francisco, the results of this poll echo the voice of the general American population.

Polls show that “all Americans believe that the Palestinian Authority and the Arab world in general do not want to make peace with Israel,” Tobin said. What Tobin found “shocking” about the survey was the fact that only 20 percent of American Jews have an unfavorable reaction to the U.N., “given how consistently anti-Israel the U.N. is.”

He also found it “very odd” that only 15 percent of American Jews characterize the U.S.-Israel relationship as very positive, when the U.S. provides Israel with massive military and economic aid, and has been its greatest diplomatic ally for the past 50 years.

The AJCommittee's findings corroborate survey results released last month by the Forward and the New York Jewish Week.

The Jewish Week reported that Jews considered anti-Semitism the most important issue the community faces in the United States. It also reported high approval ratings for President Bush.

Like the AJCommittee, the Forward also found apparent contradictions with regard to Israel, as American Jews said they increasingly identified with Israeli hawks — yet still supported conciliatory positions toward the Palestinians.

In the Jewish Week, 60 percent of American Jews had a favorable view of Sharon, and 57 percent also favored creating a Palestinian state.

Martin Raffel, associate executive director of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, said the mixed messages are a “reflection of Israeli attitudes as well.”

Simply put, it means Israelis are prepared to make significant compromises for genuine peace, but Arafat has not won their trust, Raffel said.

“When an Arab leader comes forward and is prepared to reach a reasonable accommodation with Israel on outstanding claims, as Anwar Sadat was in the late 1970s, the Israeli people will be there and their government will be there, and I have no doubt that will be widely supported by the American Jewish community,” Raffel said.

In the meantime, opinion polls among both American Jews and Israelis reflect what Singer terms a “countertrend,” with people's minds working on two different psychological tracks.

Both groups are suspicious of Arab intentions, Singer said.

Still, if “a miracle happened tomorrow and the peace process were back on track,” Israelis would still be ready to make compromises for peace. □

Duel proposed in Ukraine

MOSCOW (JTA) — A Ukrainian Jewish leader reportedly challenged a Russian lawmaker to a duel.

Vadim Rabinovich made the challenge after Viktor Ilyukhin, who is known for making anti-Semitic comments, accused Rabinovich of selling arms to the Taliban and to Islamic separatists in Chechnya. Rabinovich, who holds both Ukrainian and Israeli citizenship, is alleged to have ties to organized crime. □