



# Daily News Bulletin

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85th Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Cheney offers Arafat carrot

Vice President Dick Cheney said Yasser Arafat must take steps this week to halt terror if he wants to meet with Cheney.

Cheney said Tuesday he expects the Palestinian Authority president "to speak to his own people personally about the importance of ending violence and terrorism and to issue clear instructions to his security services to enforce the cease-fire."

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said Tuesday that if a cease-fire is in place, Arafat will be able to travel to Beirut at the end of the month for an Arab League summit — though he may not be able to return if he uses the summit to incite hatred against Israel.

### Students' Israel trip canceled

The March of the Living canceled the Israel leg of its trip this year. The decision regarding the 1,500 teens on next month's trip, which annually brings U.S. teen-agers to concentration camp sites and the Jewish state, was made because of security considerations.

Contrary to earlier reports, at least one federation, the United Jewish Federation of MetroWest, N.J., did not cancel the Israel leg for its teen-agers separately, and will still send its teen-agers on to the Jewish state after they tour the concentration camp sites.

### American Jews show solidarity

The Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations has agreed on a solidarity statement with Israel. [Page 4]

### Report: Boy killed by Palestinians

A Palestinian boy whose death became a symbol of the intifada actually was killed by Palestinian gunfire, according to a German news report.

The report by German ARD Television said the footage of the death of Mohammed Al-Durrah was censored by the Palestinians to make it look as if he had been killed by Israeli gunfire.

Israeli army officials said it had been a "grave mistake" for Israel to apologize for Al-Durrah's death immediately after the incident. The dramatic footage was broadcast endlessly on Arab television stations and greatly contributed to anti-Israel fervor in the early stages of the intifada.

## NEWS ANALYSIS

### Internal Israeli, Palestinian constraints dim prospects for a meaningful cease-fire

By Leslie Susser

JERUSALEM (JTA) — In early March, as Israeli tanks rumbled into Palestinian refugee camps and cities, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon held a secret meeting with Mohammed Rashid, one of Yasser Arafat's closest confidants.

Sharon was doing what he said he never would: talking political solutions under fire. Rashid was doing what many Palestinians say he never should have: listening to the Israeli prime minister's proposals as the Israel Defense Force tightened its hold on the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

But the very fact that the two men got together under those circumstances suggests that after 18 brutal months of confrontation, the two sides may at last be ready to do business.

After pounding each other for a year and a half, both sides are tired and ready to move on.

But can they?

The reason Sharon called the meeting was to dispel Palestinian allegations that he has no peace plan. He wanted to convince the Palestinian leadership, through Rashid, that there is a political light at the end of the tunnel and it would be worth their while to call off their armed intifada.

But what he put on the table was not nearly enough for the Palestinians.

Sharon proposed a 7-year-long interim agreement, with Israel holding on to Jerusalem and the Jordan Valley. Although the Palestinians would get a mini-state, the plan would leave Israel in control of two buffer zones, one along the 1967 border with the West Bank and a second along the Jordan River to the East.

The Palestinians would have territorial contiguity in the rest of the West Bank, but their mini-state would be surrounded by Israeli-held territory on all sides.

Thank you, Rashid said, but no thank you.

The meeting, which took place two weeks before U.S. envoy General Anthony Zinni arrived on the scene trying to negotiate an Israeli-Palestinian cease-fire, gives a good idea of his chances of success.

The fact that the meeting took place suggests Zinni may well get a cease-fire; the political chasm it revealed suggests that it won't last.

And that is not the only reason why a cease-fire, if achieved, may not hold: The American mediators, the Palestinians and the Israelis all face virtually insurmountable problems.

For the Americans, it's a question of getting right an extremely delicate balancing act of carrot and stick. The margin for error is tiny.

For example, to get the Palestinians to join a political process, the Americans need to assure them that there are political gains to be had. So President Bush and Secretary of State Colin Powell speak openly and often about a vision of Palestine and Israel coexisting in peace and security. They need to show "even-handedness," so they publicly pressure Israel to withdraw from Palestinian territory.

The message to the Palestinians is supposed to be that moderation will be rewarded, and that they can get from the Americans what they cannot achieve through violence.

But when the balance is just slightly off, the message the Palestinians actually get is that violence pays, and that the more they use terror, the greater the price the Americans are prepared to pay to get them to stop.

For the Palestinians, just carrying out the first bits of the Tenet-Mitchell formula,

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Israel withdraws troops

Israel withdrew its troops from Bethlehem and the Gaza Strip on Monday night.

As agreed upon in a U.S.-Israel-Palestinian security meeting, Israel pulled out of the Bethlehem region and northern Gaza Strip.

The Israel Defense Force left troops surrounding several Palestinian towns and cities in the West Bank.

### Soldier's mother blames Israel

The mother of an Israeli soldier killed Tuesday blames the murder on Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"The occupation killed my son," said Malka Tzemach, an activist in the Women in Black group, which calls for an immediate Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Lt. Tal Tzemach, 20, was killed and three soldiers wounded in the West Bank incident.

### Israeli minister slams U.N. group

A top Israeli official accused the U.N.'s human rights body of "institutionalized discrimination."

Deputy Foreign Minister Michael Melchior said Israel is the only country to which the U.N. Commission on Human Rights devotes an entire session during its annual meeting.

Melchior made his comments in Geneva, where the commission currently is meeting.

### P.A. official claims role in plot

A Palestinian Authority official claimed he was part of a plot to kill Ariel Sharon in 1992. Jibril Rajoub, the Palestinian security chief in the West Bank, told *Esquire* magazine that he had arranged for an Israeli spy to kill Sharon, who was housing minister at the time.

The Mossad heard about the plan and arrested the man.

which is supposed to lead to a renewal of peace talks, is anathema.

According to Tenet-Mitchell — named for CIA Director George Tenet and former U.S. Sen. George Mitchell — immediately after a cease-fire en route to political dialogue, the Palestinians must arrest wanted men, decommission weapons and stop incitement.

Palestinian leaders already are saying that in the present climate they may not be able to come up with the goods.

Even Jibril Rajoub, the powerful head of preventive security on the West Bank, and one of the Palestinian leaders most outspokenly in favor of accommodation with Israel, declared that after the recent Israeli incursion into Palestinian territory, no Palestinian leader could order arrests or collect weapons.

Even if Arafat wanted to make a cease-fire stick — a debatable proposition, to say the least — it is not clear whether he still has the clout on the ground to restrain the armed men.

Never mind the rejectionist organizations such as the fundamentalist Hamas and Islamic Jihad, who will continue to try to wage terror no matter what, especially if there seems to be progress toward a peaceful solution. Arafat's own Fatah group, the Tanzim, has an agenda of its own.

These young men, who grew up under occupation, are involved in a power struggle with the older generation Arafat brought with him from Tunis when he returned to the Palestinian areas as part of the Oslo agreement in 1994.

The men from Tunis are associated with Oslo, and Tanzim leaders like Marwan Barghouti challenge them by discrediting Oslo.

The violence they wage against Israel is a means of building their power base on the Palestinian street and is part of an unstated struggle for succession. What they do if Arafat signs onto a cease-fire will be crucial.

For Sharon, the problems are equally complex.

The more that forces under Arafat, like the Tanzim, are involved in terror, the more Sharon strikes at Arafat's Palestinian Authority. But that renders it less able to control those forces, especially the Tanzim.

Ostensibly, the defection of the far-right National Unity — Israel, Our Home alliance from his government should give Sharon more freedom of maneuver vis a vis the Palestinians and should open new diplomatic avenues.

But in practice, he will still have them and the right wing of his own Likud Party breathing down his neck and calling any political concessions he makes to the Palestinians a sellout.

Moreover, the most substantial diplomatic move made by the Sharon government is one that, ironically, Sharon does not approve of.

In a written but still unsigned deal, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and Abu Alaa, the speaker of the Palestinian Parliament, see early Palestinian statehood as the "engine" that will drive the whole process forward.

Peres believes that once the Palestinians get statehood they will feel that the peace process is moving in a meaningful direction that violence could subvert. Abu Alaa, whose real name is Ahmed Karia, believes that the mini-state will set off a dynamic leading inevitably to full statehood and the achievement of other Palestinian national aspirations.

But others on both sides are less convinced.

Sharon argues that early statehood could be seen as a reward for violence and encourage more. And some Palestinian leaders fear that accepting a mini-state on part of the West Bank and Gaza could take the Palestinian issue off the international agenda and leave them with nothing more.

So how to square the circles?

How to convince Palestinians they have everything to gain by talking and nothing by shooting? How to convince Israelis that once Palestinian national aspirations are achieved, the shooting will stop?

The situation is too complex and charged for the parties to resolve alone and it is extremely difficult for third parties to push the right buttons.

But without an active, concerned and determined third party, like the Americans, to win confidence, bridge gaps and underwrite agreements, nothing positive will be achieved. □

*(Leslie Susser is the diplomatic correspondent for the Jerusalem Report.)*



## Daily News Bulletin

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## JEWISH WORLD

### AROUND THE JEWISH WORLD

## Zimbabwe's Jews tense, watchful after disputed presidential election

By Moira Schneider

CAPE TOWN (JTA) — Zimbabwe's Jews are facing an uncertain future in the wake of the recent presidential elections.

With food shortages, the threat of strikes and selected sanctions added to the country's myriad problems, the mood among the country's 700-strong Jewish community is one of bewilderment.

Many people were "fairly stunned" that President Robert Mugabe was re-elected in the disputed vote "because they expected an outcome that would lead to better days," said Peter Sternberg, acting head of the Zimbabwe Jewish Board of Deputies.

U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell said the March 9-11 election, in which Mugabe won 56 percent of the vote to challenger Morgan Tsvangirai's 42 percent, was marked by "numerous, profound irregularities" that thwarted the will of the people.

After being sworn in for another six-year term Sunday, Mugabe called on his countrymen — as well as his African neighbors — to join his fight against Western imperialism.

Mugabe has supported an effort to turn over white-owned farms to black squatters, a redistribution of wealth that has been accompanied by widescale violence.

On Monday, a white farmer whose farm was besieged by black militants was dragged from his car and executed.

He was the 10th white farmer killed since the Mugabe-backed offensive against white landowners began two years ago.

Sternberg described the violence that has followed the elections as "revenge taking."

"The winners now feel that they've got the government behind them and can do what they want — this is not a good trend for any country," he said.

The Jewish community, which at its height in the mid-1960s numbered some 7,500, is a small minority within the country's white minority and has never felt threatened as such.

Most community members are older than 70. While a fair number of families are making plans to leave the country, Sternberg said the majority that would remain have lived in Zimbabwe for most of their lives and can't imagine settling elsewhere.

"They feel they would be a burden on their children. In addition, we have the problem in this country that when one leaves one cannot take one's money, plus the fact that it has been devalued to such an extent that it's pretty laughable," Sternberg said.

"Those that have lived here so long might feel, 'Let's carry on as long as we've got something to eat and the sun is shining,' but if the crunch comes they'll have no choice but to leave," he said. "We hope it won't happen."

Mervyn Smith, chairman of the African Jewish Congress, said that there had been some incidents against Jews in the past, though the Jewish community had never felt targeted as Jews per se.

"It was good to observe that there were no anti-Semitic statements made in the election campaign," Smith said. "We continue to be in constant touch with our brethren in Zimbabwe and very vigilant and ready to help in case things should get out of hand. This has been the position for some while."

David Joffe, a regional director of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, was one of the board's representatives on South Africa's observer mission to the elections.

"It was an opportunity to touch base with the Jewish community there," he said. "They feel very comfortable there — they may not always like the politics but most of them are committed to the country. Otherwise they would have left a long time ago."

The Jewish community still maintains three synagogues — two in the capital city of Harare and one in Bulawayo.

Ivor Davis, president of the Harare Hebrew Congregation, said Jewish life is continuing, though there is general concern for the country's future.

"We keep the Jewish flag flying. Our shul has daily services and we are getting ready for Pesach," he said. "The matzah has arrived and is being distributed tomorrow. Life goes on." □

### U.S. seeks end to incitement

The United States is asking Arab states to end their anti-Semitic rhetoric.

In a Voice of America government editorial, the United States says Saudi Arabia and other Arab nations could aid the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by influencing the media to stop "inciting hatred and violence against Jews."

Saudi Arabia has become an influential player in the peace process since Crown Prince Abdullah suggested that the Arab world normalize relations with Israel if it withdrew from the entire West Bank, Gaza Strip, Golan Heights and eastern Jerusalem.

### Poland pressed on restitution

Jewish groups and some E.U. members pressed Poland on Tuesday to start returning property confiscated from Jews during the Nazi era.

Beside Belarus, Poland is the only country trying to join the European Union that has not enacted a property restitution law since Communism collapsed in 1989. Poland hopes to join the union in 2004.

### Group wants Sabbath boundary

The Orthodox Union called on an appeals court to allow a Sabbath boundary to be rebuilt.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit will hear oral arguments Thursday in a Tenafly, N.J., case that pits town leaders against Orthodox Jews who want the religious boundary, or eruv, so they can carry items on the Sabbath.

The O.U. joined a legal brief contending that the town's refusal to permit the eruv is a denial of free exercise of religion.

### Auschwitz development blasted

The Simon Wiesenthal Center called on the Polish prime minister to stop a commercial development near Auschwitz.

Regional authorities have already granted permission for construction of a shopping mall on a site used by the Nazis for slave labor near the concentration camp.

Rabbi Abraham Cooper, the center's dean, called the actions "insensitive and inappropriate" and wants a definitive map of the Auschwitz-Birkenau area drawn up so local authorities will not continue to try to develop there. Polish officials say the planned mall is far enough away from the camp and is necessary to meet the needs of local residents.

### Yeshiva student killed in N.Y.

A fervently Orthodox man was killed Monday night on a major Brooklyn thoroughfare. Police are investigating the stabbing of the man, who was a yeshiva student.

## Jewish groups come together to issue statement of solidarity

By Rachel Pomerance

NEW YORK (JTA) — Unity trumps all.

After several days of fine tuning, North American Jewish organizations, representing nearly every take on Judaism and Israel, have unanimously agreed on a solidarity statement with Israel.

But to get there, the final version of the statement expressed support for the state of Israel rather than its government, as was originally proposed.

The statement by the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations comes at a time, the umbrella group says, when it matters most.

"American Jews need an opportunity to come together and be heard in an expression of unity," said Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents.

The statement, titled "We Stand With Israel," is slated to appear in full-page advertisements Thursday in major newspapers across the country, including The New York Times, The Washington Post, and The Los Angeles Times.

The ad is part of a broad solidarity initiative launched by the Conference of Presidents in partnership with the United Jewish Communities and its member organizations. A cornerstone of the initiative is set for March 24, when pro-Israel gatherings are being planned for dozens of communities around the country.

In New York, the gathering, for some 1,000 people, will take place at the 92nd Street Y. Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, other top Israeli officials, Israeli terror victims and American political leaders are slated to address the groups by live telecast. After several days of debate and discussion over the language, all but one of the umbrella group's 52 organizations signed on to the ad.

The only group that didn't sign was the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, which, as a humanitarian organization, has a policy that precludes participation in public political action.

Hoenlein said the statement steered clear of potentially divisive political points, but instead strove "to express our solidarity with the people of Israel and for the people of Israel to see that we stand with them at this very difficult time" when they "feel very isolated and alone."

Beyond finding a nexus for American Jewry and Israel, the ads target the audience of the mass media, Hoenlein said, to "show our own government and American people that we stand united with Israel and hope that they will do so as well."

The statement begins: "We stand with the people and the state of Israel at this critical time. We share their pain and outrage at the terrible loss of life and limb as a result of the Palestinian campaign of terror and violence launched against Israel eighteen months ago."

It continues: "We stand with Israel as it fulfills its most basic responsibility as a democracy; defending the nation and protecting its citizens."

The changes from the draft to the final version reflect the statement's sticking points. Most glaring is the deletion of a proposed statement that followed the demand for Palestinians to end the terror campaign and live up to their previous commitments.

The deleted statement read: "This will make a cease fire possible and enable a return to negotiations."

Another major change altered the initial version from supporting the "government" of Israel to the "state" of Israel. Also, a statement calling for peace that assures Israelis' safety is newly expanded to encompass "all the citizens of the region."

Explaining the edits, Arthur Naparstek, director of the Israel and Overseas Pillar for the United Jewish Communities, said, "You had a variety of different points of view that had to be taken into account."

"People had some different thoughts about wording, that's all," said Naparstek, who participated in the discussion on behalf of 189 local federations.

The ad campaign, along with the events, are estimated to cost between \$200,000 and \$230,000, according to Naparstek. The funds will come from money allocated for a solidarity rally in New York that had been planned for Sept. 23, 2001.

That rally was canceled to avoid diverting security officials after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, Naparstek said. Funds will also be drawn from Israel's Foreign Ministry's office, Israel Bonds and the Conference of Presidents, organizers said.

That has some members asking if the tactic is the best use of organized Jewry's stretched resources — amidst crises in Israel and Argentina — and what impact the initiative will have.

But organizers say it is important to make a statement at this time, and to do it in a more subdued way.

"The focus of this event is the engagement of as many cities as possible, Naparstek said. "That's where the energy is going.

"We clearly could do a Madison Square Garden event," he said, referring to the ceremony held in New York after former Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's assassination, but that would be "very costly" and "very labor intensive."

The rationale for this approach is "to respond to the need among Jews throughout the Diaspora to express themselves in support of Israel," and to "give the Israelis a message that we're standing with them."

As the number of signatories indicate, the statement brings the organized American Jewish community together across the political divide.

On the right, Morton Klein, president of the Zionist Organization of America, said: "This is a very strong statement of support for Israel and its policies. What is especially gratifying is that this statement explicitly condemns Arafat for his eight years of pro-terror, anti-peace" policies.

ZOA had objected to any statement about a return to negotiations — none was included in the final version.

Arafat and the Palestinian Authority have "shown themselves to be a group of terrorists devoted to the murder of Jews and the destruction of Israel," said Klein, whose group has mounted a worldwide ad campaign demanding that the Bush administration end relations with the P.A.

The statement also pleased the left-wing Americans for Peace Now, which had reservations about the initial version. Changing support for the Israeli "government" to "state" removed many of the concerns of the group, said spokesman Lewis Roth, whose group has been critical of some of Sharon's recent actions.

Americans for Peace Now also had objected to the original reference to negotiations, not because it doesn't support negotiations, but because the way it had been phrased suggested that violence must end before negotiations begin.

Roth also said the "call for peace for all peoples of the region makes it softer." □