



Daily News Bulletin

Vol. 80, No. 64

Tuesday, April 9, 2002

85th Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Israel to withdraw from 2 cities

Israeli officials said the army would withdraw from two West Bank cities. The withdrawals from Kalkilya and Tulkarm were expected to take place Monday night. The officials said Israeli tanks would continue to surround the two cities following the withdrawal.

Earlier Monday, the U.S. Middle East envoy delivered to Ariel Sharon a message from President Bush that Israel must withdraw from the West Bank. Before Anthony Zinni delivered the message Monday, White House spokesman Ari Fleischer said "the president meant it — they need to begin to withdraw now."

In further U.S. pressure, Secretary of State Colin Powell said Monday after meeting with Morocco's King Mohammed VI that he was demanding "a clear statement from Israel that they are beginning to withdraw" from Palestinian territories and "to do it now." Powell met with Morocco's king during the first stop of his peacemaking tour.

While in Morocco, Powell also plans to meet with Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah, who put forward a peace proposal recently adopted at a meeting of the Arab League in Beirut.

2 soldiers killed in Jenin

Two Israeli soldiers were killed and four others wounded during fighting Monday in the Jenin refugee camp. The soldiers were identified as Staff Sgt. Matanya Ravinson, 21, from Tirat Tzvi, and Sgt. Shmuel Weiss, 19, of Kiryat Arba.

Before daybreak Monday, military helicopters hovering over Jenin fired rockets after Palestinian gunmen refused calls to surrender. Israeli officials estimated that more than 100 Palestinians have been killed in the refugee camp.

Mission leaves for Argentina

More than 160 North American Jewish community leaders are traveling to Argentina.

Representing nearly 50 Jewish communities as well as the United Jewish Communities, the umbrella group for North American Jewish federations, the group will look for ways to help Argentine Jews suffering from the country's economic collapse and will also meet with community leaders and Argentine officials.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Looking past Israel's operation to potential long-term solutions

By Leslie Susser

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Even before the first Israeli tanks swept into Ramallah at the start of Operation Protective Wall, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon was being asked what he intended to do the day after the tanks withdrew.

From day one, it was clear that the operation would not in itself put a stop to Palestinian terror. No matter how badly the terrorist infrastructure was hit, it would be only a matter of time until the suicide bombers were back on Israel's streets.

Unless, that is, there was some political solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

But how best to achieve it? During the past few weeks, as more suicide bombings claimed more Israeli lives, and the scale of Israeli retaliation intensified, there has been a flurry of new ideas.

Some, despairing of any hope of a negotiated deal between Israel and the Palestinians, advocate unilateral measures or externally imposed solutions. There are three basic approaches: incrementalism, unilateralism and international intervention.

All three hold out some hope — and all three are deeply flawed.

Both Sharon and the American administration have been inclined to continue along the slow incremental path from violence to cease-fire to graded political re-engagement, outlined in the "Tenet-Mitchell" framework, named for CIA Director George Tenet and former U.S. Sen. George Mitchell.

The idea was to rebuild mutual confidence and trust after the collapse of the attempts to resolve all the issues at Camp David in July 2000 and Taba in January 2001.

Badly burned by the failure of the permanent-status exercise, the parties lowered their sights and accepted the step-by-step approach. There was to be a cease-fire followed by confidence-building measures before talks on a political settlement were renewed. Each side would address the causes of the other side's mistrust.

The Palestinians would stop violence, collect illegal weapons and end incitement against Israel; Israel would freeze settlement building.

These steps would create a climate conducive for political negotiations.

But it didn't work. The trouble with Tenet-Mitchell was that it left the endgame open. Sharon was not prepared to spell out his vision of final status until the Palestinians stopped the terror. To do so, he argued, would be to reward violence and encourage more violence.

The Palestinians, however, were not prepared to stop the violence until they knew where the political process was leading. To break the vicious circle, the Americans offered their vision of final status — two states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side.

But the plan was too vague for the Palestinians. It said nothing about Jerusalem or refugees. Moreover, as Palestinian terror escalated, and world opinion restricted Israeli retaliation, Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat became convinced that violence was paying off and saw no reason to stop it.

Now new ideas to resuscitate the failing incrementalist approach are being put forward.

Ya'acov Peri, a former head of the Shin Bet, suggests a carrot for the Palestinians — every month of quiet will be rewarded with the evacuation of an Israeli settlement.

More realistically, U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell is trying to build a wide international coalition with the Europeans and moderate Arab states to pressure the parties to at least start the incrementalist process. Operation Protective Wall, besides trying to smash the Palestinian terrorist infrastructure, was also ostensibly an attempt to

MIDEAST FOCUS

Israel marks Holocaust Day

Holocaust Martyrs and Heroes Day began in Israel with a state ceremony at the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial. During Monday evening's ceremony, six Holocaust survivors lit six beacons in memory of the 6 million who had perished in the Holocaust.

Appearing with President Moshe Katsav at the ceremony, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon connected the Holocaust to Israel's 18-month-long conflict with the Palestinians. "With the difficult struggle we are engaged in today, with the wave of anti-Semitism sweeping across Europe, we, who remember every day, are obligated, as Jews and human beings, to defend our home," he said.

On Tuesday at 10 a.m., a two-minute siren will be sounded throughout Israel to commemorate the victims of the Holocaust.

Netanyahu to speak for Israel

Former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has agreed to serve as a spokesman for the Israeli government. Netanyahu will "help clarify and present Israel's positions," an Israeli official told JTA.

Netanyahu's assistance was sought by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon in the wake of negative coverage of Israel by the American media, despite the fact that Netanyahu will likely challenge Sharon eventually for the Likud Party leadership.

Sharon to expand Cabinet

Ariel Sharon announced his intention to add three new Cabinet ministers to the government.

At the end of an address before a special Knesset session Monday, the Israeli prime minister said he plans to give Cabinet posts to the incoming leader of the National Religious Party, Effi Eitam, a former brigadier general and political hawk; to the party's outgoing leader, Yitzhak Levy; and to Geshet Party leader David Levy.



Daily News Bulletin

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JTA DAILY NEWS BULLETIN is published five days a week, except holidays, by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency Inc., 330 Seventh Ave., New York, N.Y. 10001-5010. For information about how to subscribe by e-mail, fax or regular mail, call (212) 643-1890, or visit our Web site at www.jta.org.

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pressure the Palestinians into declaring a cease-fire and starting Tenet-Mitchell.

But will a humiliated and discredited Arafat be in any mood to declare a cease-fire? And if he does, will his badly hit security services be able to maintain it? And why should he want to stop the terror, after the wave of world sympathy, especially European, the latest chapter of violence has gained him?

The assumption that Arafat will not call off the violence and that there is no partner for dialogue on the Palestinian side has led many Israelis on the left and the right to propose unilateralist solutions. The basic idea is that Israel withdraw unilaterally to a new line from which it can better defend itself and begin talks with the Palestinians, who would create their own state, on a political solution as soon as they are ready.

Sharon's growing emphasis on buffer zones to prevent suicide bombers from reaching Israeli population centers, reiterated in his early April policy speech to the Knesset, is a version of unilateralist thinking, and is indicative of the prime minister's conviction that there is no chance of any agreement with the Palestinians as long as Arafat is leader.

The key question for the unilateralists, of course, is where you draw the new line.

Meir Pa'il, a former far-left Knesset member, would pull back to the 1967 borders and put up a sophisticated electronic fence to stop the bombers getting through.

The advantage of Pa'il's line is that it would constitute full withdrawal in accordance with U.N. Resolution 242 and would be seen by the international community as bringing Israeli occupation to an end.

The concomitant disadvantage is that it would mean giving the Palestinians all the land for none of the peace and little incentive to make peace.

It would also entail dismantling all the settlements and moving over 200,000 settlers out of their homes without a peace agreement to show for it.

Labor Party leaders, like former Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Knesset member Haim Ramon, therefore, propose withdrawing from 75 percent to 80 percent of the West Bank, leaving most of the settlements intact, and negotiating the remaining 20 percent to 25 percent of the land and other outstanding issues on a state-to-state basis.

The advantage of the plan is that it could trigger a negotiating dynamic. The disadvantage is that the international community would regard Israel as still in occupation of Palestinian territory.

A team under Cabinet minister Dan Naveh, who was former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's chief negotiator with the Palestinians, has also been working on a unilateral separation plan.

It has Israel moving back to wide buffer zones along the old 1967 borders and in the Jordan Valley, and may prove to be the blueprint for Sharon himself.

The trouble with this scheme is that it would gain no international support and be vigorously resisted by the Palestinians and the Arab world.

The lack of international enthusiasm for unilateral solutions and the fact that by definition they do not include an end to the conflict has spawned solutions based on the international community imposing its will on both parties.

Left-wing Meretz leader Yossi Sarid wants to see an American mandate in the Palestinian territories, nursing the Palestinians to statehood and peace with Israel along the lines of the Saudi peace initiative. The new mandate, which is also being backed by former Foreign Minister Shlomo Ben-Ami, would have U.N. sanction and would automatically replace the Israeli occupation.

American or NATO soldiers would be stationed between Israel and the Palestinian territories to protect both sides.

The advantage of the imposed solution is that it is final and underwritten in the most emphatic way by the international community. The question is whether outside countries would be prepared to make the commitment, and even if they did, whether they would be able to impose their will on both sides.

What would they do if the terror persisted and if some of it were aimed at their own forces? When Powell arrives in Israel later this week, he and Sharon may find themselves out of sync.

Powell will be trying to revive the incremental approach, while Sharon seems to have moved on to a unilateralist mind-set. The result could be an American leap of faith to greater international involvement — first to cool the situation and then, some time down the road, to impose a solution. □

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

JEWISH WORLD

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

French rallies expose fissures as Jews battle anti-Semitic acts

By Andrew Diamond

PARIS (JTA) — Rallies across France this week have shown the strength of French Jews as they battle a recent surge in anti-Semitism.

But Sunday's rallies have also exposed fissures among Jewish groups.

The largest rally occurred in Paris, with an estimated 50,000 people, while smaller rallies were held in Marseille, Lyon and Toulouse.

The rallies came as a wave of anti-Semitic attacks not seen here since World War II continued unabated.

In a stormy meeting on April 2, some Jewish communal officials sharply criticized Jewish leader Roger Cukierman for promoting the Paris rally more as a "defense of Israel and its government" than a denunciation of French anti-Semitism.

Cukierman, the president of CRIF, an umbrella organization for secular French Jews, managed to placate some of these critics by redefining the demonstration as a show of support for the "Israeli people," rather than for the government. But several Jewish organizations still felt the need to put their own spin on the protest.

The Union of French Jewish Students and the League Against Racism and Anti-Semitism issued their own call for "a republican mobilization against anti-Semitism," and a French Jewish pacifist group, Friends of Shalom Achshav, organized a "parallel demonstration" in support of the formula of "two nations, two states for peace.

These differences erupted during the Paris demonstration when young members of the radical groups Betar and the Jewish Defense League assaulted peace protesters as they attempted to join the larger demonstration.

Indicative of the mounting anger among the younger generation of French Jews, who are the most exposed to the everyday realities of anti-Jewish aggression, the ranks of these organizations have risen dramatically in the past few weeks.

In Paris, several hundred members of Betar and the JDL, clad in white armbands and yellow T-shirts, circulated around Bastille Square, roughly preventing photographers from taking pictures and once fighting with a group of Arab youths attempting to display a Palestinian flag. In one incident, a youth from one of the Jewish groups stabbed a police officer in the abdomen with a knife.

Members of these organizations also clashed with a large group of Arab youths in Marseille who attempted to menace protesters.

While the violent actions and the pro-Sharon sentiments of these groups received a great deal of attention in the French media, the majority of demonstration signs articulated cries for peace in Israel and France.

Cukierman was quick to denounce the violence as "extremist" following the rally, but nobody in the community is dismissing their significance.

To some observers, they demonstrate that despite joining together in perhaps the largest mobilization of Jews in French history, the French Jewish community seems to be growing more and more divided over the policies of the Sharon government.

"Until now, when French Jews would take the streets, they would do it for themselves, but also to defend democratic and ethical values since they were inseparable from their own values," said Olivier Guland, the editor in chief of the influential French bimonthly, the Jewish Tribune. "The immense majority of French Jews do not agree with extremist groups," he added, "but they do not dare talk for fear of appearing to be giving arguments to Israel's adversaries."

With the opening round of the presidential elections set for April 21, French Jews find themselves increasingly isolated on the issue of Israel.

Indeed, only a few non-Jewish organizations were willing to officially back Sunday's protests. Even the anti-racist group, SOS-Racism, which is headed by a Jew and which recently collaborated with the Union of French Jewish Students on a study of anti-Semitism, abstained from participation in the main demonstration.

Meanwhile, despite the deployment last week of 1,100 extra police officers to guard Jewish religious and civic buildings throughout the country, groups of young, male Maghrebins — Arabs of North African descent — persisted in a campaign of anti-Jewish aggression in solidarity with the Palestinian cause. □

Far-rightists fail in Hungary

A far-right political party in Hungary failed to qualify for Parliament.

The Hungarian Justice and Life Party received slightly more than 4 percent of the vote in Sunday's elections, falling short of the 5 percent threshold needed to become part of the legislature.

The Free Democrats, a party supported by many Hungarian Jews, crossed that threshold.

A second round of voting is scheduled for April 21 to decide which of Hungary's two main parties will be asked to form a new government.

Russian Jews remember Shoah

The ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict was a major theme as Russian Jews marked Holocaust Remembrance Day.

Leaders of major Jewish groups, two Russian chief rabbis and officials including the Israeli ambassador to Moscow mentioned the ongoing violence in their address to 200 Jews on Monday at Moscow's Poklona-ya Gora Synagogue.

The Russian Jewish Congress, organizer of the event, issued a statement saying that "thanks to the horrible experience of the Holocaust, Jews are stronger than those who seek to destroy them."

Envoy: Arafat siege a 'mistake'

Israel's consul general in New York said he believes Israel's decision to surround Yasser Arafat's Ramallah compound was a "mistake."

The standoff at the compound has only given Arafat more attention than he deserves and it would have been better to ignore him and let him travel wherever he wants, Alon Pinkas said Monday at the United Jewish Communities' board of trustees meeting in New York.

Pinkas defended Israel's ongoing military operation in the West Bank, saying it would "restore a certain amount of our deterrence power that has been eroded in the last 18 months."

France urged to help Papon pay

A government commissioner recommended that France should pay part of the damages that Nazi collaborator Maurice Papon was ordered to pay Holocaust victims. The crimes for which Papon, 91, was convicted cannot be detached from his wartime duties with the pro-Nazi Vichy regime, Commissioner Sophie Boisard said last Friday.

Papon began serving a 10-year jail sentence in October 1999 after he was found guilty of helping deport some 1,500 Jews to Nazi death camps during World War II.

He was also ordered to pay about \$630,000 in damages and court costs to victims and their families.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES**Israel summer teen programs push ahead despite the hard sell***By Julie Wiener*

NEW YORK (JTA) — As teens finalize their summer plans, Israel programs — hit hard last year by the intifada — are suffering heavily from concerns about terrorism.

Most major providers of Israel programs — from the Reform movement to the Jewish Community Centers Association to the Orthodox National Conference for Synagogue Youth — are continuing to run programs this summer, but amid uncertainty and very heavy security measures. Among the security measures:

- All programs organizers interviewed said teens will have virtually no free time in urban areas and will not be allowed to travel on their own.

- Programs will consult daily with government officials and the Jewish Agency for Israel to ensure that itineraries are safe.

- Programs will be in frequent contact with parents during the trips, most of them manning 24-hour phone lines parents can call if they concerned about anything.

- Many are housing participants outside Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. The Reform movement, which canceled its teen trips last summer due to security concerns, will house teens only in kibbutz guest houses, which it feels are safer than other accommodations.

Despite the precautions, registration numbers are down dramatically from pre-intifada levels, and in some cases from last year. Most programs have been forced to cut staff significantly and to rely on financial subsidies from parent organizations.

Echoing virtually all major providers, Yuval Koren, director of JCC Maccabi Experience Israel Programs said, “We’re struggling financially how to keep this program going, but the decision was made at the board” of the Jewish Community Centers Association of North America and Maccabi that “we’re going ahead.”

Jules Gutin, director of the Conservative movement’s United Synagogue Youth, said the group’s Israel programs “operated at a substantial loss last summer,” subsidized by the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism. However, the movement is reluctant to “dismantle our infrastructure, because if you do, it could take years to build it back up.”

Among the losses in registration:

- Young Judaea, a Zionist youth movement under the auspices of Hadassah: The Women’s Zionist Organization of America, expects to send 100 teens this summer, compared with 200 last year, and an average of 1,000 each summer before the intifada.

- The Reform movement’s North American Federation of Temple Youth hopes to send “a couple hundred” teens this summer, according to officials, compared to almost 1,500 in the summer of 2000. Only 80 are signed up so far.

Before the intifada, Young Judaea and NFTY were the largest providers of teen travel to Israel, together accounting for 40 percent of North American teens on summer trips there.

- The JCC Maccabi Experience Israel Programs expects to send 70 teens, the same as last year, but down from pre-intifada levels of 600.

- The Orthodox Union’s Israel touring program for public school students is hoping for 45 participants, compared to over 100 in previous years. Its study programs for day school students expects 140 to 180 participants, down considerably from pre-

intifada levels but about the same as last year.

- The Conservative movement’s United Synagogue Youth, expects 175, compared with 285 last year, and between 450 and 650 in recent pre-intifada years.

With so many parents reluctant to send their teens to Israel, many groups are expanding teen programming outside of the Jewish state. For example, the Orthodox Union, Reform movement and Conservative movements are offering European travel programs, which are full or almost full.

Enrollment at the Reform movement’s teen leadership camp in the United States is up considerably. For the first time, the Orthodox Union is offering a travel program in the United States.

The Conservative movement is actually facing lower enrollment for its USY on Wheels, a cross-United States travel program, which it attributes to the Sept. 11 attacks.

However, the movement is also offering, for the first time — a pre-college summer school program, which is filled to capacity, at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York.

Young Judaea is making a point of not offering Israel alternatives. “It’s inconsistent with our ideology to set up programs that overtly compete with sending kids to Israel,” said Doron Krakow, national director of Young Judaea.

“As long as we can run Israel trips responsibly with attention to safety, that’s where we’re going to urge our members to go.”

With recruitment so challenging, groups are trying different strategies. The Conservative movement’s USY recently sent 16 parents on a trip to Israel, hoping they could convince other parents of the safety.

The JCCA’s Koren said recruitment is “very personal now.”

“We’re talking with parents and kids — they’re not just picking up a brochure. There’s a lot of questions and dialogues with parents and kids.”

Young Judaea’s Krakow said his group is “pulling out all the stops from a marketing standpoint, but the long and short of the situation is that people simply aren’t calling.”

Instead of reaching out broadly, the group is focusing its recruitment efforts on kids who are already heavily involved in Jewish activities and thus deemed the most likely to see an Israel trip as important.

The groups say the security measures will not significantly affect the educational agenda or fun of the programs.

“We hope kids will be accomplishing 90 percent or more of what we’ve done in the past,” said Paul Reichenbach, director of Israel programs for the Reform movement’s Union of American Hebrew Congregations.

But with the situation in Israel changing daily, the program providers are clearly uncertain about what is in store this summer, with most acknowledging the possibility that programs may need to be canceled if the situation in Israel escalates further.

One professional, who did not want his name or organization’s name mentioned, said, “I’m troubled by some of the ‘it’s business as usual’ talk about sending kids to Israel. It’s not business as usual. It’s an extraordinarily difficult time and parents are right to be concerned.”

Daniel Schonbuch, national educational director of NCSY, said that it is important to continue programs and “not to let Arafat win.”

However, when asked if the trips might be canceled under any circumstances, he said, “If the Jewish Agency decides the program is too dangerous, then we’ll decide not to continue with it.” □