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TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Sharon fires 4 ministers

Ariel Sharon fired Cabinet ministers from the fervently Orthodox Shas Party who voted against his emergency economic plan.

The move by the Israeli prime minister late Monday night, which takes effect Wednesday evening, came after four ministers from Shas helped defeat the government's emergency plan in the Knesset because it would cut spending for social services and welfare payments for large families.

Suicide bomber claims no victims

A suicide bomber killed himself but caused no other injuries Monday in northern Israel. The bomber blew himself up at a bus station near Afula when police approached him for questioning. Three people were treated for shock.

The terrorist had tried to board a bus carrying workers to a factory, but was told it was a private bus. Suspicious passengers then alerted the police.

Bush to visit synagogue

President Bush plans to visit a St. Petersburg synagogue during his trip to Russia. Bush is expected to make an appearance at the Choral Synagogue on Sunday.

The visit is not on the president's public schedule, but, according to sources, Bush told leaders of the United Jewish Communities who met with him at the White House last week that he was looking forward to the visit.

Groups unite on Israel campaign

The four major Jewish streams are folding their individual fund-raising efforts for Israel into a broad emergency campaign.

The joint campaign sponsored by the United Jewish Communities, the umbrella group of North American Jewish federations, is a "show of unity among the streams of Judaism that is not seen often enough," Harvey Blitz, president of the Orthodox Union, said at a news conference on Monday announcing the collaboration.

Leaders of the Reform, Conservative, Orthodox and Reconstructionist movements pledged their support for UJC's Israel Emergency Campaign, which aims to raise \$300 million for needs born out of the Mideast violence. [Page 3]

Students and faculty at Harvard, MIT reject call for Israel divestment

By Julie Wiener

NEW YORK (JTA) — Israel supporters in Cambridge, Mass., have hit back hard in response to a small faculty campaign urging Harvard and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to divest from companies doing business in Israel.

Responding to a pro-divestment faculty petition that garnered nearly 120 signatures, 4,000 Harvard and MIT faculty, students and staff have signed a counter-petition calling the divestment effort "a one-sided attempt to delegitimize Israel."

Among the more famous anti-divestment signatories are law professors Alan Dershowitz and Laurence Tribe, Near Eastern languages and civilizations professor Shaye Cohen and medical professor Dr. Jerome Groopman.

The debate at Harvard and MIT comes amid a flurry of divestment campaigns at universities across the United States, including Princeton, the University of Michigan and the University of California system.

Modeled on successful efforts in the 1980s to get universities to divest their holdings in apartheid South Africa, the new campaigns often make explicit comparisons between Israel and South Africa.

For example, the Web site promoting the Princeton divestment petition — which has the support of 41 faculty members — features a quote from Archbishop Desmond Tutu: "If I were to change the names, a description of what is happening in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank could describe events in South Africa."

A conference aimed at launching a national divestment effort was held in March in Berkeley.

That conference was organized by a group known as Students for Justice in Palestine.

The divestment activists have not yet persuaded any university to consider divesting from companies operating in Israel or from U.S. companies that sell arms to Israel.

However, pro-Israel groups say the campaign's real goal is to demonize the Jewish state.

"It's a tool to implant in the minds of the campus and the larger society that Israel today is like the South Africa of yore, that Israel is the contemporary apartheid state," said Jeffrey Ross, director of campus-higher education affairs for the Anti-Defamation League.

The efforts also are an attempt to attract left-wing students and nonwhite students to the Palestinian cause, Ross said.

The divestment effort at Harvard and MIT suffered setbacks with a May 8 editorial in the Harvard Crimson calling comparisons to South Africa "offensive, repugnant and detrimental to peace."

"This proposal for divestment once again makes Israel the victim of a double standard," the editorial says.

"Israel is not the only nation that takes strong and forceful action in times of war, yet it is consistently singled out for criticism."

Harvard's president, Lawrence Summers, told students at a public event that he opposes divestment from Israel, the Crimson reported.

The Harvard-MIT divestment effort sparked particular concern, Jewish activists say, because two of the faculty signatories were "house masters," or faculty who serve as counselors and advisers at residential halls.

The divestment petition calls on the universities to divest until Israel — among

MIDEAST FOCUS

Ben-Eliezer orders fence

Israel's defense minister ordered construction of a security fence along the border between Israel and the West Bank. The fence will be completed within six months, Benjamin Ben-Eliezer said Monday at a meeting of Israelis living along the border.

The 225-mile-long fence will be equipped with cameras and electronic detection devices, he said. A total of \$46 million has been allocated for the project, which also will include protective walls for nearby Israeli communities.

Victim survived Passover attack

One of the victims of Sunday's suicide attack in Netanya had survived the "Passover Massacre" in the same city.

Arkady Wiselman, 40, worked as a chef at the Park Hotel, where 29 Israelis were killed in late March in the suicide bombing at a Passover seder. Also killed in Sunday's bombing was Yosef Haviv, 70.

Alleged bomber nabbed

Israeli soldiers on Monday arrested a Palestinian woman allegedly planning to carry out a suicide bombing inside Israel. Ta'ura Hamur, 26, was arrested in Tulkarm after the Israeli military received a tip from the Shin Bet domestic security service, according to the Israeli daily Ha'aretz.

Palestinian militant's son killed

The son of radical Palestinian leader Ahmed Jibril was killed Monday in a Beirut car bombing. Jihad Jibril, 40, was killed by a bomb placed under the driver's seat of his car, Lebanese police said.

An aide to Ahmed Jibril blamed Israel, but Israeli Defense Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer denied that Israel had any connection to the bombing. A group opposed to the Syrian presence in Lebanon later claimed responsibility for the killing.



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other things — complies with U.N. Security Council Resolution 242 and accepts that Palestinian refugees either should be allowed to return to their former lands or be compensated for their losses.

Israel accepts Resolution 242 and other resolutions on refugees — but not the Arab interpretation of those documents.

Harvard has an estimated \$614 million in investments in companies that do business in Israel.

Beside the 54 MIT faculty and 64 Harvard ones, five Israeli academics signed the petition calling for divestment.

The anti-divestment petition, written by Harvard and MIT faculty and signed by faculty, staff, students and alumni, has been circulated in part by a new student group called Harvard Students for Justice in the Middle East.

The petition notes that the signatories have "diverse opinions on how peace in the Middle East can be achieved," but notes that "to place blame solely on Israel for the recent state of affairs and to demand unilateral concessions without showing any concern for its self-defense is unjust."

Jeffrey Bander, a medical student who in the past few weeks helped spearhead Harvard Students for Justice in the Middle East, said the anti-divestment petition's success is "a good example for other Jews."

Bander, who has been to Israel several times but had not previously been involved in campus Jewish organizations, said the group was born out of frustration over "the propaganda and misinformation prevalent on campus."

"I feel that in general there's a war going on our campuses, and that war is being won and fought very well by the pro-Palestinian side," Bander said. "Very little is done by Jewish groups or agencies to help explain what Israel's position is."

Harvard's Hillel also has circulated the anti-divestment petition. In addition, it is sending a student-faculty solidarity mission to Israel next month, and is raising money to purchase new ambulances for Israel.

The campus also started a Jewish-Palestinian dialogue group this spring.

While Harvard has not been a hub of anti-Israel activity, it has been "uncomfortable to state really pro-Israel views in public" there, said Benjamin Solomon-Schwartz, Hillel's student president.

"In general, especially within the Jewish community, this is a difficult question because we want to say something powerful in support of Israel, but there is a large diversity of opinions," Solomon-Schwartz said. "We don't want to alienate people who don't have a certain opinion, but we want to be a voice for support of Israel on campus."

Princeton's divestment campaign sparked a smaller counter-effort that was spearheaded in part by Adina Yoffie, daughter of the Reform movement's president, Rabbi Eric Yoffie.

A senior at Princeton, Adina Yoffie mobilized several campus Jewish groups and collected 110 undergraduate signatures for a petition against divestment.

Pro-divestment activists collected 300 signatures, many belonging to faculty and graduate students.

Because there were petitions on both sides, the Princeton administration announced that it would not consider the possibility of divesting at this point. □

Plot to destroy Tel Aviv towers

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israel's army recently thwarted a Palestinian bombing of the nation's tallest building, an Israeli military official said.

Palestinian terrorists had planned to use a ton of explosives to destroy the two Azrieli Towers in Tel Aviv, the officials said Monday at a closed-door session of the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee.

The plan, thwarted after Israeli troops recently raided a West Bank town, involved blowing up a truck loaded with the explosives in the underground garage of the 50-story towers, a second military official told The Associated Press.

The plot was similar to the 1993 attack by Islamic extremists on New York's World Trade Center. □

JEWISH WORLD

Senator warns of new threat

Islamic terror groups such as Hezbollah and Egypt's Islamic Jihad could be planning to attack the United States, a senator said. "Our enemy is not Al-Qaida alone," Sen. Bob Graham (D-Fla.) said Monday on NBC-TV's "Today" show.

"There are several international terrorist groups which have abilities, in some cases greater abilities than Al-Qaida, and a similar desire to attack the United States," said Graham, chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee.

Bombers coming to Britain?

British security sources reportedly are worried that Islamic suicide bombers soon may strike in Britain. According to the Israeli daily Ha'aretz, this assessment was reinforced several months ago after Scotland Yard officials visited Israel and Sri Lanka to study how those countries deal with suicide attacks.

"Suicide attacks are regarded today in Britain and among other security services in Europe as a general threat," a source knowledgeable about British security forces told the newspaper.

The report also said pro-Palestinian activists in Britain have received logistic and financial support from left-wing organizations, as well as encouragement from some Labor Party legislators, including George Galloway, who is married to a Palestinian. At a discussion at the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies on May 2, Galloway was reported as saying: "The suicide bombers are freedom fighters, not terrorists."

Do cigarettes cause terror?

Jury selection in a U.S. court is slated to begin Monday in the case of two brothers accused of funneling profits from illegal cigarette sales to Hezbollah terrorists.

Mohamad Youssef Hammoud, 28, is charged under a 1996 U.S. anti-terrorism law with providing material support to Hezbollah, labeled a terrorist group by the State Department.

His brother, Chawki Youssef Hammoud, 37, faces lesser charges of immigration fraud, cigarette smuggling, money laundering and racketeering. U.S. officials say the two smuggled cigarettes from North Carolina and sold them in Michigan without paying Michigan's higher cigarette taxes, allegedly to generate cash for Hezbollah.

Pro-Israel rally in Johannesburg

More than 12,000 people attended an Israel solidarity rally in Johannesburg on Sunday.

All of South Africa's leading Jewish groups participated in the rally, described by organizers as the nation's largest Jewish communal event in decades.

Jewish denominations unite to raise extra funds for Israel

By Rachel Pomerance

NEW YORK (JTA) — In a rare show of unity, the four major Jewish streams are folding their individual fund-raising efforts for Israel into the broad emergency campaign sponsored by the United Jewish Communities, the umbrella group of North American Jewish federations.

The effort is a "show of unity among the streams of Judaism that is not seen often enough," Harvey Blitz, president of the Orthodox Union, said at a news conference announcing the joining of forces on Monday.

Leaders of the Reform, Conservative, Orthodox and Reconstructionist movements pledged their support of the UJC's Israel Emergency Campaign, which aims to raise \$300 million.

Since its launch on April 8, the campaign has raised \$120 million, according to UJC officials.

The funds are being directed to child safety and recreational programs; hospitals; security measures; aid to terror victims; and immigration to Israel by Argentine Jews facing severe economic challenges.

Between \$750,000 and \$1 million of those funds will be apportioned to each of the four streams to carry out services through their branches in Israel.

The movements have identified certain projects for the funds to UJC — and officials will, in turn, respond to those requests.

Distancing themselves from the acrimony that often shapes interdenominational relations when it comes to Israel, where only the Orthodox movement is officially recognized, the religious leaders said they did not mind that the even apportionment might not reflect member-populations or even dollars contributed to the UJC.

For the UJC, it's a chance to partner with the religious streams, said Rabbi Eric Lankin, director of UJC's religious and educational activities.

In a nod to the issue of pluralism that has divided American Jewry, Lankin said the UJC "recognizes that all the religious movements have successful programs in Israel" and the organization is "committed to supporting all of them."

The Reform movement was the first to wed its fund-raising campaign to the UJC's on April 29. Rabbi Eric Yoffie, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, said that when UJC officials said they would finance the Reform movement's programs in Israel in the interest of unity, "there was every reason to join together and no reason not to."

The Reform movement's request for the funds has been approved, the Conservative movement's is currently being reviewed and the Orthodox and Reconstructionist streams have not yet been submitted.

Now that the other streams have followed suit, Yoffie said the American Jewish community has come to resemble the United States when Americans came together to raise money for victims of the Sept. 11 terror attacks.

After an intifada that has killed 500 Israelis — proportionally more than the number of Americans killed on Sept. 11, Yoffie said — and wounded and maimed seven times that many, American Jews have "come together to do what the American people did" — to tell the victims they are not alone and to tell the terrorists they are. □

Letter protests cost of Jewish life

NEW YORK (JTA) — A North American feminist group is protesting the cost of participating in Jewish life.

The letter sent by Jewish Women Watching to those working in the Jewish world was sent to coincide with last week's holiday of Shavuot, which celebrates the giving of the Torah to the Jewish people. On the card, price tags are superimposed over images of Jewish summer camp, day school and the interior of a synagogue.

"There's all this talk about community being a priority, but if access to Jewish resources is limited by our bank books, then what sort of community are we really building?" the card asks. □

BEHIND THE HEADLINES**Palestinian struggle deepens
as Gaza chief gains some ground***By Gil Sedan*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Gaza Strip security chief Mohammad Dahlan appears to be emerging as the winner in the power struggle that has followed Israel's counterterrorism sweep in the West Bank in late March and April.

Palestinians rallied around Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat while Israel's Operation Protective Wall was still in progress. But they have been unprecedentedly vocal in criticizing Arafat and demanding reforms as they survey the massive damage the P.A.'s involvement with terrorism brought down on Palestinian society.

One idea gradually gaining momentum is to preserve Arafat as the symbol of Palestinian leadership while gradually transferring much of his power to a second in command.

In the emerging power struggle, Dahlan, 41, has vaulted over other expected contenders to become the most powerful figure in the Palestinian territories after Arafat himself.

The rise in Dahlan's political stock has coincided with the fall from grace of his West Bank counterpart, Col. Jibril Rajoub. Rajoub lost favor with Arafat, the political establishment and the general Palestinian public because he was not in Arafat's headquarters during the month it was besieged, and because Rajoub's own headquarters capitulated quickly to the Israeli forces.

In contrast, Dahlan, who heads the Preventive Security Service in the Gaza Strip, enjoys Arafat's trust and maintains good contacts with the Americans, the Egyptians, Hamas — and even the Israelis. In addition, the security apparatus he heads has remained virtually intact during the 20-month intifada.

Before Operation Protective Wall, it was generally believed that the Palestinian succession struggle would focus on two political-security axes. One comprised Rajoub, West Bank Fatah Party head Marwan Barghouti, Arafat deputy Mahmoud Abbas and PLO Jerusalem official Sari Nusseibeh.

On the other side was West Bank General Intelligence chief Tawfik Tirawi, the leadership of Arafat's Force 17 bodyguard force, other leading PLO officials who returned from exile in Tunis along with Arafat, and the fundamentalist group Hamas.

But the Israeli military operation wreaked havoc with those groupings. Rajoub is out of favor, Barghouti is in an Israeli jail, the popularity of Abbas and Nusseibeh has plummeted, Hamas is reportedly under heavy pressure from its Saudi financial mentors to hold its fire, Tirawi and Force 17 leaders are heavily implicated in terrorism, and the Tunis clique is perceived by the Palestinian public as hopelessly corrupt.

Enter Dahlan. As a student leader, Dahlan organized Fatah's youth movement, which became the driving force behind the first intifada in the late 1980s. He served time in Israeli jails and eventually was deported.

Dahlan continued to orchestrate intifada protests from exile in Tunis, where he won Arafat's confidence. He returned to Gaza in 1994 following the Oslo accords, was put in charge of the Preventive Security Service and also took over control of Arafat's Fatah movement in Gaza.

The control of two strong organizations made Dahlan one of the strongest officials in the Palestinian Authority.

The Israeli defense establishment has its doubts regarding Dahlan. His deputy, Rashid Abu-Shabak, was involved in terrorism against Israel a few months before the current intifada began in September 2000 — probably with the knowledge, if not the support, of Dahlan. On the other hand, with the absence of other potential partners, Dahlan is seen as a pragmatic politician with whom Israel could reach an agreement.

Longtime observers of the Palestinian political scene, like reserve Col. Shalom Harari, former Arab affairs advisor at the Defense Ministry, do not pin much hope on Dahlan. According to Harari, as long as Arafat is around, Dahlan will not move an inch without his approval.

And even in the post-Arafat period, Harari argues, Dahlan will not aim for the throne, but will be satisfied with his present role as the behind-the-scenes strongman.

In addition to reshuffling the personalities at the top, the Israeli military operation has opened floodgates of criticism within Palestinian society.

Though no Palestinians are yet calling for Arafat to leave the scene, many of them — and the international community — are demanding fundamental reforms from the Palestinian Authority.

International demands have focused on the need to put the numerous security services and various militias operating under the Palestinian Authority rubric under one unified command, with accountability and clear lines of authority.

Internal demands stress the need for democratization, including a clearer separation of powers that would weaken Arafat's autocratic rule and, presumably, lessen corruption.

Political scientist Khalil Shikaki of Bir-Zeit University, who directs the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research in Ramallah, argued last November that the intifada was a clearly articulated and organized response by the "Young Guard" in the Palestinian national movement not only to the failure of the peace process, but also to the failure of established PLO officials to lead the process of independence, state building and governance.

Influenced by the Hezbollah tactics in Lebanon that forced Israel to withdraw from its southern Lebanon security zone, the young guard sought to force Israel to unilaterally withdraw from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The younger generation also sought to weaken and eventually displace the PLO's "Old Guard," Shikaki argued.

But the young leaders were not willing to depose Arafat outright — like in a Bedouin tribe, where members will never demand that a sheik vacate his position, even if he is old, sick or politically worthless. Instead, the discreet way to pass the scepter of authority is to appoint an additional person alongside the leader.

Alternatively, younger leaders will accumulate power and gradually take on authority. The analogy can be applied to Arafat, who often is referred to in Arabic as the "leader of the tribe."

Very few influential Palestinians have dared to challenge Arafat's leadership openly. One such person is Nabil Amer, who resigned two weeks ago from the Palestinian Cabinet after demanding internal reforms.

Arafat initially jumped on the reform bandwagon when he saw the groundswell of pressure, but lately he has been dragging his feet. Last week he declared that there would be no elections "as long as Israeli occupation continues."

Amer's resignation was followed last weekend by a string of 15 resignations from the Palestinian Authority Cabinet — none of which Arafat has accepted. □