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TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Tanks move into Kalkilya

Israeli tanks moved into the West Bank city of Kalkilya on Sunday. In addition, Israeli troops continued to control other Palestinian population centers, including Nablus, Jenin, Tulkarm, Bethlehem and areas around Ramallah.

The Israeli army began an extensive new operation in the West Bank last week after the Cabinet, reacting to a series of deadly Palestinian terror attacks, decided that the army would seize and hold Palestinian areas until the attacks cease.

Defense Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer said Sunday that Israel does not want to take control over civilian affairs in the West Bank, as it did for 27 years before the Palestinian Authority was established in 1994.

In another development Sunday, the army called up a brigade of reserve soldiers to back up its regular forces in a widening search for Palestinian terrorists.

Arafat proposal called sellout

The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine accused Yasser Arafat of selling out his people. The Damascus-based group issued the statement Saturday after the Palestinian Authority president was quoted as telling the Israeli daily Ha'aretz that he now accepts a peace plan drawn up in December 2000 by President Clinton following the failure of the Camp David summit several months earlier.

Some observers questioned Arafat's sincerity, saying he issued the statement in an effort to halt the Israel's anti-terror military operation in the West Bank.

According to the Clinton plan, the Palestinians would set up a state in 95 percent of the West Bank and all of Gaza and would gain sovereignty over Arab sections of Jerusalem.

The plan also calls for Palestinian refugees to give up their "right of return" to areas they fled during Israel's 1948 War of Independence.

Expel bombers' families?

Israel is considering expelling the families of Palestinian suicide bombers from the West Bank to the Gaza Strip.

The measure, which was approved in principle by the Security Cabinet last Friday, is now subject to legal review.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

Arrests spark Jewish debate on limits of activism during crisis

By Rachel Pomerance

NEW YORK (JTA) — In Seattle, the community is rocked by the arrest of peace activists at a pro-Israel rally and the local Jewish paper's coverage of the event.

In Portland, Ore., Jews are roiled by a local rabbi's inflammatory quote and the e-mail campaign mounted in response by a federation employee.

And at the national pro-Israel rally in Washington, some demonstrators cringe when Pentagon official Paul Wolfowitz is booed for mentioning Palestinian suffering.

At solidarity rallies, in the pages of Jewish newspapers and around Jewish kitchen tables across the country, a question is surfacing: Are there boundaries to Jewish activism at a time of crisis for Israel?

Martin Raffel, associate executive vice chairman of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, describes a "continuum" of acceptable behavior that permits criticism of Israel but precludes anti-Zionism, comparisons of Israelis with Nazis and delegitimization of the Jewish state.

But it is perfectly appropriate to question Israel's policies and recognize the difficulties Palestinians endure, he said.

There must be an "open and inclusive atmosphere within the community, so different points of view can be raised without concern that they'll be condemned" — provided those viewpoints stay within the boundaries, Raffel said.

Rabbi Irving "Yitz" Greenberg, president of the Jewish Life Network, a philanthropic organization, agreed with Raffel's parameters, but added that those who "cross the line" should be "disowned and denounced."

Letty Cottin Pogrebin, former chair of Americans for Peace Now and founder of Ms. Magazine, firmly disagreed. There never are grounds for excommunication, she said. "I want to hear what people have to say and I want to have the opportunity to shout them down," she said. That gives others a chance to evaluate opinions in the "marketplace of ideas."

According to John Ruskay, executive vice president of the UJA-Federation of New York, the more interpretations there are of what it means to be pro-Israel, the better.

"Under the broad umbrella of standing with Israel, more ideological flags can be a sign of health for the community," he said.

"A unified front," Pogrebin said, is a euphemism "for censorship, for bullying, for coercion."

"Our strength lies in our diversity and our capacity throughout history to balance competing positions to arrive at a consensus through disputation," she said. "We're a disputatious people."

Jewish leaders agree that the current crisis has created some of the broadest community consensus in years, with Jewish groups committed to fighting terror and Israel's security.

The Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations succeeded in drafting a solidarity statement signed by nearly every one of its 52 member organizations. However, there are no guidelines on how to translate pro-Israel words into pro-Israel deeds. Greenberg thinks it should stay that way. The current consensus is enforced by "moral power," not instruction, he said.

The "pressure for uniformity" or against statements that "could rock the boat" is wrong, he said. But certain behavior, like booing Wolfowitz — who is considered one of the strongest supporters of Israel in the Bush administration — "undercuts our own

MIDEAST FOCUS

Israeli officer dies of injuries

An Israeli army officer injured last week in the Gaza Strip died Saturday of his wounds.

Lt. Anatoly Krasik, 22, of Petach Tikva, was seriously wounded June 15 during a clash with Palestinian gunmen near the settlements of Alei Sinai and Dugit. Two other soldiers were killed in the fight.

Settler denies killing Palestinian

An Israeli settler was arrested for alleged involvement in the murder last Friday of a Palestinian. The Israeli denied any connection to the slaying.

Following the funerals last Friday of five Israelis killed by a Palestinian terrorist who infiltrated the settlement of Itamar, settlers allegedly went on a rampage in the villages of Burin and Hawara. Along with murdering 22-year-old Adnan Odeh, the settlers allegedly set fire to a building and two cars.

Cabinet formally OKs fence

Israel's Cabinet formally approved a plan to build a fence between Israel and the West Bank.

Sunday's move made official what has already been under way since last week, when workers began building the fence.

P.A. police making arrests

Palestinian police said Sunday they arrested members of Hamas and the Islamic Jihad in the Gaza Strip. A Hamas spokesman condemned the arrests.

Israeli parks, reserves to close

Israel's national parks and nature reserves were due to close this week because of a budget crisis. The move will affect all parks and reserves, including Masada and Ein Gedi, Israel Radio reported.

The national sites have suffered significantly lower revenues due to the drop in tourism since the start of the intifada.



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credibility" and "embarrasses the cause that we support," Greenberg said.

Indeed, Donna Blankinship, editor of the Jewish Transcript in Seattle, said the paper's coverage of the city's Israel solidarity rally led to accusations that she was anti-Israel. "I am a Zionist," Blankinship said, "an ardent Zionist."

At the community's rally in April, members of a Jewish group called Pursue the Peace began "pulling down Star of David flags held by Israeli demonstrators," according to a police report.

Those members were asked by police to join the counter-rally across the street, and they complied. However, two members of the group, not accused of destroying Israeli flags, were arrested when they refused to join the counter-rally or remove their signs — which called for supporting "the people of Israel," as opposed to the government of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, and for supporting "Palestinian rights."

Demonstrators asked the two to leave, with many shouting, "They do not belong here," according to the police report.

The Jewish Transcript's coverage of the 15,000-strong rally, the largest pro-Israel rally ever in Washington state, featured the incident and reported that rally organizers had called for the two to be arrested.

However, the Anti-Defamation League and the American Jewish Committee, which organized the rally, denied any involvement in the arrests and demanded that the paper apologize for skewed coverage.

In its current issue, the Transcript responded with a clarification: "The person police consulted prior to the arrests did not represent either the Anti-Defamation League or the American Jewish Committee, the two coordinating organizations."

While the heads of both groups wrote a letter in the Transcript expressing their "regret" that individuals felt excluded, both groups maintain they did nothing wrong.

The arrests were symbolic of the way some voices have been silenced in the Jewish community, said Pursue the Peace board member Rainer Waldman Adkins, whose group wants the AJCommittee and ADL to admit they made a mistake.

If the organizers would "take responsibility on some level," it would help prevent such an occurrence from repeating, said Rabbi Jonathan Singer, who coordinated a forum to heal the parties' bruised feelings.

The strife has created a chasm between the paper and the ADL and AJCommittee.

"I feel that the article did a disservice by inflaming the community, and now six weeks, eight weeks later, we'll get some kind of correction" on the back page, said Brian Goldberg, the director of the ADL's Seattle office.

Blankinship said she was following journalistic standards to "pay attention to the unusual part" of the rally.

Down the coast in Portland, an ideological spat erupted at the community's pro-Israel rally in mid-April when some demonstrators called for an end to Israel's "occupation" of parts of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Subsequently, Jewish Review editor Paul Haist published accounts by local Jewish leaders on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Given the tensions at the rally, Haist said he buried a quote from a local rabbi comparing the Israel Defense Force to the Gestapo.

But the quote spawned a mass e-mail by a federation employee urging a letter-writing campaign to the federation-owned paper condemning the rabbi's statement.

The federation president later discredited the e-mail, saying that "no one at federation or at CRC intended or intends to attack the integrity or sincerity" of the rabbi, or to "stifle dissenting or differing viewpoints."

The term "CRC" refers to a local Jewish community relations council.

Haist said he too was "vilified" by people accusing him of launching a "smear campaign" against the rabbi. But Raffel says conflicts such as those in Portland and Seattle are rare and marginal. Ruskay agreed.

"A few examples which ruffle a few feathers do not necessarily create a national Jewish problem," Ruskay said. Such ideological flaps create "a little messiness which can, in my view, be more than tolerated given the overwhelming consensus that prevails."

Community members in Seattle see the issue somewhat differently.

"We need to come up with some kind of definition for what is pro-Israel activity in our community," Goldberg said, suggesting that the broader Jewish community would be wise to do the same. □

JEWISH WORLD

FBI warns of attacks

The FBI warned of potential terrorist attacks against Jewish schools and synagogues. The agency is telling local law enforcement agencies to be on the lookout for terrorists who may be plotting to use fuel tankers in their attacks against Jewish sites or fuel depots.

The advisory is not for a specific date, time or city.

An FBI spokesperson said the threat level was a code yellow — or “significant risk” — but that the agency was releasing the information out of “an abundance of caution.”

The Anti-Defamation League alerted its regional offices and spoke with other Jewish groups, advising people to be on alert for fuel tankers near Jewish facilities.

Al-Qaida says behind shul attack

A spokesman for Al-Qaida said the terror network was responsible for the explosion in April of a gas truck outside a Tunisian synagogue. The claim of responsibility came in an audio recording broadcast Sunday by the Al-Jazeera network.

The statement also claimed that Osama bin Laden is still alive and threatened to carry out more attacks against Jewish and U.S. targets. Al-Jazeera said it received the tape Saturday, but it was not clear when it was recorded.

Rabbi group sponsors Israel rally

About 1,000 people attended a pro-Israel rally in New York sponsored by a rabbis' group.

Sunday's rally outside the Israeli Consulate was sponsored by the Interdenominational Rabbinic Committee for Israel, along with a coalition of Jewish organizations. Among the other speakers at the rally was Anat Katz, an Israeli whose father was killed by Palestinian terrorists in April.

Ann Landers dies at 83

Ann Landers, who died Saturday at 83, was a Jewish mother who “wanted to make things better,” her daughter said. Ann Landers, whose real name was Esther Lederer, became famous for her no-nonsense advice columns, which ran for more than 40 years and eventually appeared in 1,200 newspapers around the world.

The father of Lederer, who was born in Sioux City, Iowa, immigrated to the United States from Russia.

“I was brought up to be proud of my Jewishness,” she once said. “I'm not devout, but I do light Sabbath candles every Friday at sundown and say a Hebrew prayer. I haven't missed a Yom Kippur service since I was 18.” Her sister, known as Abigail Van Buren, writes the Dear Abby advice column.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

Black, Jewish legislators meet as relationship comes under strain

By Sharon Samber

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Black-Jewish relations on Capitol Hill have never been the easiest to maintain, and a hotly contested primary in Alabama and the volatile Israeli-Palestinian conflict are making things more tense than ever.

On the surface, Jewish and black members of Congress maintain a strong alliance that has its roots in the civil rights movement. Behind the scenes, however, groups and individual members are struggling to shore up what many say is a battered relationship.

Matters have come to a head over Jewish support for the challenger to Rep. Earl Hilliard (D-Ala.), a member of the Congressional Black Caucus, and frustration from Jewish legislators who do not understand their black colleagues' lack of support on Israel votes.

The two issues come together in the case of Hilliard, who voted in the U.S. House of Representatives against resolutions expressing American solidarity with Israel and blaming Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat for violence in the region.

Jewish groups also point to Hilliard's longtime voting record against Israel.

Jewish supporters have rallied behind challenger Artur Davis, a lawyer. Though Davis also is black, members of the Black Caucus see the rejection of the incumbent as a slap in the face.

Democratic activists say Jewish support simply is swinging to someone who will vote for Israel, especially during a period of crisis in the Middle East.

The American Israel Public Affairs Committee notes that many caucus members have strong records on Israel.

“Some individuals have an interest in making a bigger issue out of the status of black-Jewish relations than what really exists,” one AIPAC official said.

A number of caucus members joined with Hilliard in voting against a House resolution backing Israel and condemning Palestinian suicide bombings.

But black and Jewish lawmakers often find themselves on the same side on many issues — such as housing, education, and gun control.

Indeed, it seems much of the problem is one of perception. Some black members believe Jewish representatives are not supportive of black candidates, and some do not seem to realize the importance of votes on Israel, said a senior staffer for a Jewish legislator. Yet at the same time as Jewish and black lawmakers recognize that tensions are mounting, they also are sure relations will improve.

Signs of strain were evident at the Black/Jewish Congressional Awards Ceremony on June 20, but lawmakers still spoke with optimism about the future.

The black and Jewish members of Congress are “like a family,” said Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-Texas), chair of the Black Caucus. “The family needs dialogue right now.”

Rep. Charles Rangel (D-N.Y.) said each side needs to show respect for the other. Legislators need “to figure out what causes others pain,” he said.

The chairwoman of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, Nita Lowey (D-N.Y.), who did not sign a letter encouraging members to contribute to Hilliard's campaign, said Jewish and black legislators still have a strong bond.

Rep. Jerrold Nadler (D-N.Y.) speculated about how the outcome of a runoff Tuesday between Hilliard and Davis could affect relations between the two groups. Tensions will recede if Hilliard wins.

Like many others, Nadler promised there would be more meetings and private conversations among black and Jewish legislators.

Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League, said the “eruptions of anger” from the black side come around election time, but that the Jewish community has a right to be upset with candidates who do not support Israel.

When legislators vote against Israel, “The Jewish community feels the same way, whatever their color,” Foxman said. The ADL is meeting with members of the caucus, as well as other black and Jewish legislators, so “this does not become a crisis,” he added. □

BEHIND THE HEADLINES**On Ben Yehuda, traces of blood are gone, but the memories remain***By Matthew E. Berger*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Standing on the corner of Ben Yehuda and Luntz streets here, Moshe Kupfer turns 360 degrees, his arm and one finger extended.

The 21-year-old University of Pittsburgh student is showing visitors where suicide bombings have taken place near the Ben Yehuda pedestrian mall in recent months, and it seems like he is pointing in every direction.

“Almost everywhere you walk in the street, there is the stain of blood,” says Kupfer, a Canadian who is spending the summer working for Magen David Adom, the Israeli equivalent of the American Red Cross.

Kupfer lived in Jerusalem for two years, beginning in 1998, when the country was in the midst of the Oslo peace process. At the time, Ben Yehuda Street was the main attraction for young visitors from North America, and a frequent nightspot for Israelis, too. But Ben Yehuda and its neighboring streets now are considered probable targets for terror attacks. Visitors stay away, choosing not to play the odds.

On a recent Saturday night, the “new normal” is marked by caution. The few tourists who still come to Israel, as well as the locals, make their calculations about safety. Some refuse to ride in buses, where suicide bombers may board and detonate themselves. Others avoid spots that have “risky” concentrations of civilians, such as shopping malls and main pedestrian areas.

While no attacks occurred on this Saturday night, 19 people — the victims included many children on their way to school — were killed three days later when a suicide bomber boarded a bus in southern Jerusalem, near the Arab neighborhood of Beit Safafa.

The June 18 attack, along with another one in Jerusalem a day later, underscores the constant threat of terror that Jerusalem residents face, and the need to be selective in choosing when to venture outside.

Errands are run en masse instead of individually, and luxuries like a night out on the town largely are avoided. The omnipresent fear makes Ben Yehuda seem like any other block in Jerusalem, not the bustling entertainment center it once was.

On this Saturday, some youngsters gather at the bottom of the street, talking and dancing to music from a boom box, but the crowd is nowhere near as large as it used to be.

Some stores are open for business, selling religious items and food, but many more are closed permanently or temporarily, choosing only to open certain weeks to save money.

“The place where I had my birthday party last year is gone,” Kupfer laments.

The Moshiko Falafel and Shawarma shop, easily identified by its bright yellow awning, is open but empty, except for three staffers.

“On a Saturday night, before, I couldn’t speak to you” at this hour, Youel Sabthe, the store manager, tells a reporter at 11 p.m.

“Before” means pre-September 2000, when the Oslo process crumbled and the Palestinians erupted in violence.

In some sense, “before” even means before Dec. 1, 2001 — a Saturday night when two suicide bombers detonated themselves minutes apart on Ben Yehuda Street.

A third bomb exploded nearby 20 minutes later, timed to kill emergency workers arriving at the scene of the first attacks.

Ten people, mostly young men, were killed, and more than 180 people were injured.

While business was bad before the December attacks, many people see that day as the turning point, when people stopped coming.

Cracked tiles in Sabthe’s shop, one of the few remaining scars from the suicide bombing, are vestiges of the December attack. Israel is quick to sweep away the remnants of attacks and bring the situation back to normal, an act of defiance.

What cannot be washed away are people’s memories.

Four yeshiva students from New York walk from their school to an ice cream shop, order some desserts and sit down, only a few feet from the site of the December attack.

Pausing frequently to admire young female passers-by, they speak of why they are here — not just in Israel, but on Ben Yehuda Street.

“I definitely think that we are walking into a place where we could die,” says Ya’akov Klein, an 18-year old from Brooklyn. “But you can’t live your life stuck in school.”

They don’t come here as often as they used to, choosing to stay on campus most nights instead of venturing out.

“You know in the back of your mind that stuff goes down here, so you find other stuff to do,” says Avi Singer, 19, from Far Rockaway, N.Y.

When he is on the way to Ben Yehuda, he thinks about what could happen, and what has happened in months past, he says. But he chooses to come anyway, in part blaming his decision on his youth.

“It’s not the logical choice to make, but you need to get out once in a while,” Singer says.

Also out tonight are a handful of female police officers, observing the evening’s activities from the top of Ben Yehuda Street’s incline. They carry weapons almost as large as their frames, and say they’re looking for people “who seem strange.”

“It’s very scary to do this,” one young officer admits, but notes that Ben Yehuda Street is a voluntary assignment for women.

On this night, the officers have been placed on specific alert: They are on the lookout for an Arab man whose name and picture they have been given.

That knowledge sends some American visitors back to their hotel, but it doesn’t faze Avi Mizrhy, owner of an ice cream store on Ben Yehuda.

Mizrhy says he was about seven yards from the December attack. He had left his usual spot — observing the nightlife from his store window — to take money from a customer, when the first bomb hit.

“If I was there . . .” he says, knocking on the concrete wall of his store with his fist. He doesn’t need to finish the sentence.

A high alert means nothing to him, he says; he is always on alert. “We’re very strong to stay here; we must stay here,” Mizrhy says.

The money is not good, barely enough to feed his family. But he remains defiant, pledging to stay as long as he can put food on the table.

To end a conversation, he says the same thing as the volunteer from Canada, the falafel shop owner, the soldier and the yeshiva students. It has replaced “goodbye” and “shalom” as the customary parting words in the area: “Stay safe.” □