



# Daily News Bulletin

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85th Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Sharon hopeful on ending conflict

Ariel Sharon said the upcoming year would be a turning point in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Opening the Knesset's winter session Monday, Israel's prime minister said, "I believe that our Palestinian neighbors will themselves reach a moment of change in their attitude toward Israel" during 2003.

During the same speech, Sharon reiterated that the Palestinians should change their "despotic" leaders in order to end the conflict.

Sharon also said that Israel is ready for any Iraqi retaliation against Israel after a U.S. attack, and said that a failure to pass the 2003 budget would have disastrous effects on the Israeli economy.

### Palestinian killed in phone blast

A Palestinian militant was killed in Bethlehem when the phone booth he was using exploded.

Mohammed Abayat was the third member of the Abayat clan killed during the intifada.

The Abayats are local heads of the militias of Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat's Fatah movement, which have been blamed for terrorist attacks against Israelis.

### Jewish groups support Iraq policy

Two major American Jewish groups came out in support of U.S. policy on Iraq, including the use of force to stop the development of weapons of mass destruction.

The Jewish Council for Public Affairs unanimously passed a statement supporting "diplomatic efforts by the United States, its allies and the United Nations to secure the elimination of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, with the use of force" only "as a last resort."

The organization's executive director said it was important for the focus to be on the elimination of weapons, not regime change.

The Anti-Defamation League, meanwhile, passed a resolution over the weekend supporting U.S. efforts to stop Iraq's development of weapons of mass destruction "through unfettered international inspection of all facilities and by military action if necessary."

The ADL also called on the international community to recognize Israel's right to defend itself and "to actively adopt a tough and sustained stance opposing Palestinian terrorism."

## BEHIND THE HEADLINES

### From 'bomb them' to 'I want proof': U.S. Jews speak out on war with Iraq

JTA Staff Report

NEW YORK (JTA) — When asked about a possible U.S. war on Iraq, Marcy Pepper takes no prisoners. "Bomb them," Pepper, 43, said recently, while working out at Pittsburgh's Jewish Community Center.

"Get rid of him," she said, referring to Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. "The Israelis should have done it already."

But Raymond Schwartz of Louisville, Ky., isn't so sure about war.

The 67-year-old accountant believes President Bush hasn't clearly made the case for military action against Saddam, he's worried about an Iraqi retaliation on Israel — and he's nervous about long-term U.S. involvement in another country.

"We haven't done such a great job in Afghanistan in that respect. Do you think we'll do better in Iraq?" he asked.

As the United States prepares for a possible invasion, U.S. Jews — like other Americans — are weighing issues of war and peace as they come together for private events and for public gatherings at synagogues, JCCs, meetings and dinners.

Like Pepper, a majority of Jews interviewed across the country appear to support a U.S. invasion, especially if all other options are exhausted.

The unscientific sampling of ordinary American Jews seems to reflect the position of the organized Jewish community, which over the weekend issued a statement backing the Bush administration's use of force against Iraq "as a last resort."

Others are skeptical that the Bush administration has done all that it can to avoid war. One thing is certain: U.S. Jews have strong opinions on the matter — like those Iranian Jewish worshippers leaving the Eretz Cultural Center in Reseda, Calif., recently after Saturday morning services.

"This guy, Saddam Hussein, is so crazy, someone has to stop him," said Bijan Fereydouny, 55, a diamond dealer in Los Angeles.

Fereshteh Rochel, a 43-year-old loan officer, was the only one outside the center to express some reservations.

"We should fight Saddam, but not the Iraqi people," she said. "Look at Afghanistan, we bombed the people but didn't get Osama bin Laden."

Mitzi Gollman of Lyndhurst, Ohio, is emphatic that the United States needs more information about the Iraqi threat before taking military action.

"I don't give Bush solo permission to go against Iraq," Gollman said. "I want proof of Hussein's weapons. If Chaim Pupik went and saw them, I want to know what he saw," she said, referring to a Jewish version of John Doe.

Not only is Gollman concerned about the potential loss of American soldiers during an Iraqi invasion, she is worried about the massive amounts of money the U.S. government would have to spend on military actions.

Some U.S. Jews see the issue as an American one, with few Jewish aspects. But for many U.S. Jews, the issue has a double edge, since any military action is likely to have ramifications for both the United States and Israel.

Carrying her 3-year-old daughter in her arms recently while buying groceries, Sharon Muskin of Cleveland said she is worried about possible retaliation against Israel.

Like many, Muskin said she hoped that if attacked by Iraq, "Israel would fight back with everything in its arsenal" — and not stand by, as happened during the 1991 Gulf War under strong pressure from the United States.

Whether the Jewish community should speak up for or against war is also open for

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Israeli troops, settlers clash

Israeli troops and settlers clashed at an illegal outpost in the West Bank. Havat Gilad is one of four outposts that Israel has slated to be dismantled.

Last week, 17 outposts were dismantled. Many were dismantled by the settlers themselves in an attempt to pre-empt the evacuation of other settlements that might support more population.

### Karine-A sailors released

Israel released eight Egyptian sailors captured aboard the Karine-A weapons ship in January. Israel's Interior Ministry said the eight had left the country, but it was not clear if they had returned to Egypt.

The ship was captured heading from Iran to the Palestinian Authority, carrying 50 tons of weapons.

### Suicide bombing foiled

Israeli agents arrested a Hamas member allegedly planning a suicide bombing. The man was arrested during an anti-terror raid over the weekend.

During his interrogation, he reportedly revealed that he was planning the attack.

### E.U. tries to solve water issue

The European Union has proposed a development plan for southern Lebanon that could help ease tensions with Israel over water use.

An American envoy currently is in the region to try to ease tensions between Israel and Lebanon over Beirut's plans to pump water from the Wazzani River.

### U.S. docs go to Israel

A team of 15 doctors is slated to arrive in Israel to practice an emergency medical response. Organized by the Jewish Agency for Israel's Partnership 2000, the team of physicians will work in Nahariya. The doctors are from U.S. cities that are partnered with cities in the Western Galilee.

debate. After remaining relatively silent on the issue, the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations issued a statement over the weekend expressing support for Bush and Congress in seeking to make Iraq destroy its weapons of mass destruction and stop weapons development programs.

"Iraq must conform to the resolutions adopted by the Security Council and the other standards which President Bush has specified," the resolution says. "We support the efforts to enlist the United Nations and international cooperation to secure Iraqi compliance, including the use of force as a last resort."

The statement was seen as an attempt to placate both critics who said that an explicit warning of military action was needed and those who said that nonviolent tactics needed to be endorsed as well.

On the local level, Jews are less clear whether the Jewish community should speak up. Take a group of New York Jews at an Oct. 7 dinner of the Orthodox Union's Institute of Public Affairs.

Most supported the war on Iraq and thought Israel can defend itself if drawn into the fire. But differing opinions surfaced when asked whether the U.S. Jewish community should take an active role in backing the war.

Jews should take a "step back" on the issue, said Mark Hametz, 47, who catered the O.U. dinner.

"This isn't a Jewish-Arab issue, but a moral one. It would be good for the "rest of the world" to see someone other than Jews and Israel "standing up for what's right."

Jonah Lobell, a 39-year-old Manhattan attorney, disagrees. Jews should be more outspoken in supporting a U.S. war. Israel has had "unprecedented" support from this administration, and Jews should return such support, he said.

As for Bush's proposed war on Iraq, it's not only inevitable, but "critical to American interests," and to creating an "equilibrium in the world," Lobell said.

Some across the country expressed concern that the United States is acting as the world's policemen, which might antagonize other nations and the United Nations.

But others, aware of the U.N.'s reputation as a hotbed of anti-Israel sentiment, dismissed this concern.

"As far as U.N. backing goes, I don't care. The United Nations is an organization monopolized by third-world countries. I have no problem with unilateral action," Elie Elovic of Highland Park, N.J., said.

Even some of those who back the war have larger questions — and, in some cases, strong opinions — about where the "war on terrorism" should turn to next.

"What George Bush wants to do and what Congress is now prepared to back him to do is correct. But I don't think Iraq is the only country that needs a regime change. Saudi Arabia is just as much a threat, as well as the other Arab countries," said Martin Fox, interviewed at a gathering of ROMEO, the Retired Old Men's Eating Organization, in Kansas City, Kan., last Friday.

For some, thought of war hits home personally. Sue Ann Lipsey of Memphis is thinking about getting her daughter home from Israel.

Lipsey's daughter is studying in Israel and her mother, worried about an Iraqi retaliation, wants her on the next plane home if the United States attacks Saddam.

Still, Lipsey thinks Bush ought to be supported if action is deemed necessary.

"We should have taken care of it in 1991," she said while attending the United Jewish Communities' Lion of Judah women's meeting in Washington on Monday.

That sense of inevitability with resolve is what many people have about the impending action against Iraq. In the teen lounge recently at the JCC of Omaha, Danny Morris, 17, was worried about the effect war with Iraq would have on the already weak economy.

"We might have to raise taxes to pay for war," he said, "and pay for the rebuilding of Iraq's infrastructure.

"The leaders in Iraq think that both Israel and America are 'evil' and 'run by Jews,'" Morris said. "It's easier for Iraq to hit Israel than America." □

*(JTA staff writer Rachel Pomerance in New York and correspondents Sharon Samber in Washington and Tom Tugend in Los Angeles contributed to this report. So did the Cleveland Jewish News, the Community of Louisville, Ky., the Jewish Chronicle of Pittsburgh, the Jewish Press of Omaha, the Kansas City Jewish Chronicle and the New Jersey Jewish News. The piece was compiled by JTA staff writer Peter Ephross.)*



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## JEWISH WORLD

### Prosecutor: Suspects after Jews

A suspected terrorist in the United States said he wanted to shoot Jews, a prosecutor alleged. Jeffrey Leon Battle, his wife October Lewis and four other people were indicted in Portland, Ore. last week on charges of conspiring to wage war against the United States.

Battle's alleged statement came up at a detention hearing last Friday in Portland, Ore. During a conversation in his home in May, Battle allegedly told an FBI informant that he wanted to take two Kalashnikov assault rifles and "go for the synagogues."

He hoped to get away, but would be willing to die or get caught "if we could do at least 100 or 1,000, big numbers," prosecutors said.

### Goldhagen spars with church

Scholar Daniel Goldhagen accused Germany's Roman Catholic Church of trying to stop the publication of his book in order to cover up the church's role in the Holocaust.

Acting on complaints that a photo caption was incorrect, a German court recently issued a recall of some of the books in Germany.

Goldhagen said the injunction was a ploy by the church.

"This is a desperate attempt on the part of the church to try and torpedo this book and avoid a real discussion," he said last Friday at the Frankfurt Book Fair.

The book, "A Moral Reckoning: The Role of the Catholic Church During the Holocaust," is slated to be released in the United States on Oct. 29.

### Romanian Jewish theater defaced

A Jewish theater in Romania was defaced with swastikas and Nazi slogans.

Police are investigating the incident, which occurred over the weekend.

Romania recently passed a law outlawing fascist symbols.

### \$5 million for universities

The Jewish studies program at the University of California at Berkeley and Israel's Ben-Gurion University of the Negev were given \$5 million each.

The Helen and Sanford Diller Supporting Foundation of the Jewish Community Endowment Fund of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma awarded the Beersheva-based school \$5 million for a new humanities building bearing the family's name. The building will house many Jewish studies areas, among others.

The Berkeley grant will establish a Jewish studies program in the family's name and bring a visiting Israeli scholar to lecture there each year.

## Poll: Most evangelical Christians back Israel cause it's a democracy

By Sharon Samber

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Most of the support for Israel from the evangelical Christian community is not based on theological reasons, according to a new poll.

More than half of evangelicals say they support Israel because the country is a democracy and an important ally of the United States in the war against terrorism, according to a survey by Stand for Israel, a project of the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews.

The group is a strong backer of the evangelical-Jewish alliance.

The release of the poll came just days before approximately 5,000 people attended a Christian Solidarity with Israel rally last Friday in Washington.

Thirty-five percent of evangelicals support Israel for theological reasons, the poll said.

The poll, which showed continued skepticism among Jews about evangelical support, also showed high levels of support for the Jewish state among Catholics and Protestants.

But the picture of the evangelical Christian community was muddied last week, when an evangelical association affirmed Jewish conversions.

In response to an August report from U.S. Roman Catholic bishops that opposes efforts to target Jews for conversion, the World Evangelical Alliance issued a statement saying they have a right to share Christianity with Jews.

In a statement that reaffirmed a 1989 declaration defending Jewish evangelism, the statement defends such evangelism and denies that "any person can enjoy God's favor apart from the mediation of Jesus Christ."

The statement also decries anti-Semitism and says that Christian churches have "been much to blame for tolerating and encouraging it."

The alliance represents 120 national and regional church fellowships and 75 nondenominational ministries.

The Stand for Israel poll did show continued Jewish skepticism of evangelical support but, despite these concerns, Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein, the fellowship's founder and president, pronounced Jewish fears of evangelicals "bogus."

"Hopefully this poll will change perceptions," he said.

Eckstein is also pleasantly surprised by levels of support for Israel above 50 percent from the Catholic and Protestant communities.

"It's important for American Jews to continue to reach out to Catholics and Protestants," Eckstein said, acknowledging the general support from mainstream Christians as well.

Other highlights of the poll include:

- Almost two-thirds of evangelical Christians say they support Israeli actions against Palestinian terrorism, compared with 54 percent of the general population.
- While 67 percent of evangelicals believe they share the same viewpoint as Jews when it comes to Israel, only 49 percent of Jews indicate they believe their viewpoint is similar to evangelicals.
- Fifty-three percent of Jews agree evangelical Christians are strong supporters of Israel.

At last Friday's rally in Washington, Christian Coalition founder Pat Robertson and the minority whip of the U.S. House of Representatives, Tom DeLay, were among the evangelical Christian and conservative political leaders who proclaimed their support for Israel, according to the Washington Jewish Week.

Robertson was one of a number of speakers who emphasized the biblical connection of the Jewish people to the Land of Israel.

He added that "Palestine has been occupied by Yasser Arafat and his thugs," and said that other than Jews themselves, evangelical Christians provide the "strongest support for Israel."

DeLay said that when he visited the Jewish state, "I didn't see any occupied territory. What I saw was Israel." □

**BEHIND THE HEADLINES****Conflict between Hamas, P.A. could escalate into a civil war***By Gil Sedan*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Some 60 miles southwest of Yasser Arafat's besieged Ramallah headquarters, supporters of the Palestinian Authority president are engaged in another confrontation. The new front is not against Israel but against their Palestinian brethren — Hamas supporters in the Gaza Strip, who are now openly challenging the Palestinian Authority.

This latest confrontation could lead the Palestinian society to a fitna — the Arabic term for civil war.

The fear has a precedent: In the Arab Revolt of 1936-1939, thousands of Palestinian Arabs were killed in bloody internal strife.

The current unrest in Gaza began with a blood vengeance. Imad Akel, 27, a resident of the Nusseirat refugee camp, and a number of his friends shot dead Palestinian Authority riot police chief Col. Rajah Abu-Lihyeh.

Abu-Lihyeh allegedly was responsible for the shooting of Imad Akel's younger brother Yussuf in violent protests last year against the American war in Afghanistan. Five others were killed and dozens wounded in that unrest.

Palestinian Authority police tried to detain Abu-Lihyeh's killers, to no avail. Akel, a senior activist in Hamas' military wing, found shelter among his friends.

Riots broke out as P.A. officers tried to arrest Akel and the other perpetrators. Four people were killed, but so far the Palestinian Authority has failed to bring Akel and his associates to trial.

As commander of the riot police, Abu-Lihyeh was one of the most hated persons in the Palestinian Authority. His people are responsible for the rough handling of any demonstration not to the P.A.'s liking.

It's no wonder, therefore, that Hamas enjoys growing popular support in its confrontation with the authorities.

But if one thing is considered off-limits in Arab regimes, it is a challenge to the security forces, which is seen as an attack on the legitimacy of the regime. Given Abu-Lihyeh's position among the elite of the P.A. security forces, his assassination could be seen as a challenge to the Palestinian Authority's very existence.

It's not the first time Palestinian groups have flouted Palestinian Authority directives: When groups ignore Arafat's statements against terror attacks, the Palestinian Authority has not challenged the defiance, and indeed Israelis suspect a tacit division of labor. But the Palestinian Authority is not likely to allow a challenge of such magnitude to its security forces.

On Monday, thousands of Palestinians from Fatah marched through Gaza, warning Hamas not to undermine the Palestinian Authority. "This is a clear message to Hamas that if it tries to undermine or destroy the Palestinian Authority, Fatah will fight it to defend the authority," a senior Fatah official told Reuters.

Masked gunmen fired in the air and supporters carried posters of Arafat.

Despite the growing popularity of Hamas' uncompromising outlook, the Islamic fundamentalist movement also finds itself at a difficult crossroads. Hamas infrastructure in the West Bank is in ruins. Its top military leader, Mohammad Deif, barely escaped a recent Israeli assassination attempt in the Gaza Strip, which left him seriously wounded. Frequent Israeli raids on Gaza Strip targets

strike at Hamas' power base. For years, Arafat has ignored his commitments to disarm Hamas and make them subject to P.A. law. Analysts say it's not just because he doesn't want to fragment Palestinian society, but also because it has served his purposes to have militant groups carry out terror attacks supposedly outside of Arafat's control.

But some warn that Arafat will have to bring all Palestinian factions to heel if the Palestinian Authority is to stay in power.

The example often cited is the Altalena ship, a 1948 incident in which Jewish militias tried to defy the nascent Israeli government and import arms illegally. Despite his reluctance to fight other Jews, Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion ordered the ship bombed before it reached port; it sank, killing several men.

The dissident Jewish groups condemned Ben-Gurion for the attack. But it was a watershed in Israeli history that made clear that challenges to the central authority would not be tolerated.

Israelis believe Arafat must eventually have his own Altalena, which would benefit not just Israel — by eliminating the threat from nominally renegade groups — but the Palestinian Authority itself by strengthening order and central control.

Mohammad Dahlan, former head of Palestinian security forces in Gaza and now Arafat's security adviser, is pushing for such a confrontation. He knows that unless the killers are handed in, the Palestinian Authority may lose its grip on the population.

Dahlan, sometimes mentioned as a successor to Arafat, reportedly has grown so frustrated with Arafat's unwillingness to impose his rule that he recently tendered his resignation, the Israeli daily Ha'aretz reported Monday. Arafat has yet to act on the letter.

Yet Arafat may keep postponing the showdown. In the face of growing Israeli pressure, Arafat feels that his only chance to survive is to avoid internal rifts at all costs.

Hamas, however, is not willing to play by Arafat's rules. In addition to the Gaza riots, two suicide bombings last week — one near Bnei Brak that killed an Israeli, another that was foiled near the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv — show that Hamas is determined to pursue its violent agenda, provoking Israeli countermeasures that further weaken Arafat.

In addition to his fronts against Israel and Hamas, Arafat also faces pressure from the Palestinian street — and the U.S. administration — to reform his corrupt and ineffective administration.

Experts expect Arafat to struggle to buy time. He spent last weekend holding intensive consultations on a new Cabinet, ahead of planned elections early next year. His associates promised over the weekend that a new Cabinet would be named within 10 days.

One of the first victims of the reshuffle may be Interior Minister Abdel Razek Yehiyeh, who was appointed recently to restructure the P.A.'s armed forces.

Arafat apparently wants to put the blame on Yehiyeh for having failed to dismantle the various militias, particularly Hamas.

It's not clear how that would go over in Jerusalem, Washington or even Ramallah. Domestic criticism of Arafat, which abated somewhat during Israel's siege of Arafat's presidential compound earlier this month, remains strong.

The Israeli daily Ma'ariv reported last weekend that Mahmoud Abbas, mentioned as another possible Arafat successor, strongly criticized Arafat during his recent visit to Moscow. Abbas, known as Abu Mazen, agreed with the Israeli argument that terrorism should be stopped before negotiations resume — but predicted that "the Palestinian Authority would find it extremely difficult to exert its authority over the rejectionist organizations." □