



# Daily News Bulletin

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86th Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Sharon: Slim risk of Iraqi attack

There is a "1 percent" risk that Iraq will lash out at Israel in response to a U.S. military strike on Baghdad, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said. Speaking Wednesday at the opening of a special Cabinet session to discuss Israel's level of preparedness, Sharon said Israel had taken steps to provide the answer to "100 percent of the dangers."

In a further sign of increased civil defense measures, a senior Israeli army officer told Army Radio that Israelis apparently would be ordered later in the day to open their gas mask kits and carry them with them at all times. On Tuesday, the Israeli air force raised its level of alert, launching 24-hour patrols to intercept any hostile planes sent by Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein.

### Israeli killed in West Bank

An Israeli was killed in the West Bank on Wednesday. The 50-year-old man was shot while in his car near the Palestinian city of Jenin.

It is believed he returned fire before he was killed. The Al-Aksa Brigade of Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat's Fatah movement claimed responsibility for the attack.

### Abbas accepts Palestinian post

Mahmoud Abbas accepted the post of Palestinian Authority prime minister. Abbas, also known as Abu Mazen, accepted the post offered Wednesday by P.A. President Yasser Arafat. Arafat made the offer after Palestinian legislators rejected his attempt to limit the prime minister's powers.

### Envoy: Window for peace

There's a new opportunity for Israeli-Palestinian peace talks, the U.N.'s special envoy to the Middle East said.

In a briefing to the U.N. Security Council on Wednesday, Terje Roed-Larsen said, "For the first time in two and a half years, I see a small window of opportunity to get back to the table and out of the abyss of terrorism, violence, economic misery and general human suffering."

An Israeli U.N. official downplayed Larsen's speech. "Our prerequisite is the end of terror," Arye Mekeel, Israel's deputy permanent representative to the United Nations, told JTA.

## CRISIS IN IRAQ

### As Jewish groups brace for war, security and policy top the agenda

By Matthew E. Berger

WASHINGTON (JTA) — When Scud missiles fell on Tel Aviv at the beginning of the 1991 Gulf War, David Harris was there.

"We did not want Israel to face Iraqi Scud missile attacks alone," said the executive director of the American Jewish Committee.

Now, though he does not know what's in store for Israel as U.S. forces return to battle against Iraq, Harris plans to be back in Tel Aviv next week, leading a small contingent of his group's leaders as a show of support for the Jewish state.

Harris is one of many in the Jewish community returning to familiar roles, as the Jewish world again joins the rest of America in gearing up for war.

Jewish organizations are engaged in intense planning for everything from security measures to policy statements — to how to talk to children about war.

In part, they are relying on how they handled the 1991 war and the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks as guides for what they will do and say — and not say — in the weeks and months ahead. By the same token, times have changed, requiring new thinking and strategy to deal with the yet-unknown, organizational leaders say.

Some of the changes are obvious, such as the ubiquity of e-mail in aiding the communications process.

Others are more substantial, including having to deal with the post-Sept. 11 threat of terrorist attacks on American soil and against Israel and Jewish institutions.

In his ultimatum to Saddam Hussein on Monday that he go into exile or face military action, President Bush alluded to the threat of attacks.

"In desperation, he and terrorists groups might try to conduct terrorist operations against the American people and our friends," Bush said. "These attacks are not inevitable. They are, however, possible. And this very fact underscores the reason we cannot live under the threat of blackmail."

As the nation went on high alert again this week, there were no new specific warnings to Jewish institutions. Most Jewish facilities already bolstered their security following the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

Still, several national Jewish groups, which take their cues from law enforcement, are informing their constituents to review and maintain security measures.

The Jewish Community Relations Council of New York issued a security alert Tuesday morning, reminding its constituent agencies to be vigilant.

Referring to Osama bin Laden's fatwa, or religious edict, against "Jews and Crusaders," David Pollock, associate executive director of the New York JCRC, said there's "no reason to believe that there's anything that has changed his mind."

The Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations is coordinating an emergency alert system for its member organizations.

Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents, said war could elicit attacks by Islamic fundamentalist groups such as Hamas or Hezbollah as well. And the Anti-Defamation League rushed out an advanced edition of its manual, *Keeping Your Jewish Institution Safe*, in response to anxiety by Jewish communities around the country.

As they strategize over policy during war, Jewish leaders are reviewing what they said and did in 1991, and how it can be improved this time around.

"We had processes in place in '91," Hoenlein said. "We had constant consultation,

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Israeli army: Carry your masks

The army's Home Front Command told Israelis on Wednesday to make sure their gas masks fit and to carry them at all times. Political sources said the order was influenced by the approaching expiration of President Bush's ultimatum to Saddam Hussein, not by any new intelligence information, Israel's Channel One television reported.

### Israel extends closure

Israel extended until Sunday a closure on the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The extension of the closure came amid concerns of possible terrorist attacks after a U.S.-led war begins in Iraq.

The closure, imposed on Saturday night, was originally due to have been lifted on Thursday, following the Purim holiday.

At a special Cabinet meeting Wednesday, the head of military intelligence, Maj.-Gen. Aharon Ze'evi, told ministers that Israel is more concerned about possible terrorist attacks than Iraqi missile attacks. Israeli police were to go on the highest level of alert on Wednesday afternoon.

### Israeli, Palestinian official met

Israeli President Moshe Katsav reportedly met secretly with a Palestinian official to discuss a possible cease-fire between Israel and the Palestinians.

The head of Israel's Shin Bet security service took part in the meeting last Thursday, which was held with Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's knowledge, reports said.

Reports said Palestinian Authority Interior Minister Hani Hassan proposed a cease-fire and an end to terrorist attacks, with Israeli troops withdrawing from Palestinian cities in the West Bank and transferring security responsibilities to the Palestinians.

Katsav was quoted as saying that the initiative may be taken seriously if terrorism against Israel ends, Israel's Itim news agency reported.

were convening regularly and we had regular communication."

Conference calls and emergency meetings are expected to coordinate the messages that emerge from the organized Jewish community again. The goal is to form a consensus, but little has been decided in advance because of the belief that developments will dictate the response.

While many Jewish leaders support the goal of regime change in Iraq, the Jewish people in the United States are divided, with many having participated in anti-war rallies over the past few months. That makes it even harder for the Jewish community to give a statement.

"Our job is to try and find the consensus, the common denominator and not meander into territory that is divisive," said Martin Raffel, associate executive director of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs.

At the same time, there is concern about being out in front on the war.

"There are concerns about the Jewish community speaking out, being highly visible," Hoenlein said.

As in 1991, Jewish leaders are apprehensive that military action against Iraq is being perceived as being done for the benefit of Israel. The goal, leaders say, is to express support for American troops and a peaceful conclusion, but without giving the impression that the Jewish community is embracing military action.

But not everyone believes Jews should be so cautious.

"There's always the question of should one keep silent," said Abraham Foxman, national director for the Anti-Defamation League. "We as Jews don't have that luxury."

The need for nuanced responses became even more clear this month, as Rep. James Moran (D-Va.) became the latest person to insinuate that the Jewish community is responsible for war.

And new comments by conservative columnist Patrick Buchanan have reawakened discussions of what he called a U.S. "amen corner," claiming Jewish neoconservative leaders with influence in the White House have pushed for the war to help Israel.

American Jewish groups want their support to be seen from an American standpoint, not a Jewish one.

"I don't think the fact that we are Jews should mandate one way or another on how we react to war," Foxman said. "It's a moral issue."

Meanwhile, the United Jewish Communities and the Jewish Council for Public Affairs have been distributing talking points to local federations and Jewish groups, outlining what local Jewish leaders might say when faced with different questions.

The talking points stress that the Iraq war has nothing to do with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, that Israel has a right to defend itself if attacked and that the Jewish community hopes that military action will lead to democracy in the region.

For its part, UJC is ready to implement a response room, staffed around the clock, to aid communal members who want to know more about the latest developments in the war. It will also be used for crisis communication.

"Any type of emergency that occurs will require communication by the national office and facilitation of responsibilities by organizations across the nation," said Glenn Rosenkrantz, UJC's director of media affairs.

That includes if Israel is attacked.

"If, God forbid, Israel is involved in this, the Jewish community must be in a position to speak out and take effective action," said Raffel of the JCPA.

Among the other issues Jewish leaders will be watching for is a resurgence of interest in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Some Jews are concerned that Israel could be forced to make concessions by the United States, in order to garner support for the war in the European and Arab worlds.

Bush's address last Friday — in which he said the "road map" for peace would be distributed to the parties after a Palestinian prime minister with real authority was confirmed — raised eyebrows among some Jewish leaders because of its timing, just days before the deadline in Iraq.

On the grass-roots level, synagogue leaders are preparing for questions that will inevitably come from their own congregations.

Many religious organizations have distributed suggested prayers that synagogues can recite for the American troops, for Israel and for peace. □

(JTA staff writer Rachel Pomerance in New York contributed to this report.)



## Daily News Bulletin

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## JEWISH WORLD

### Austria's Haider praises Saddam

An Austrian far-right leader praised Saddam Hussein. Jorg Haider said the Iraqi dictator is "well educated" and is "open to different arguments."

Haider, who met Saddam last year, said at a news conference Wednesday promoting his new book that Saddam "explained the dangers Israel poses for the Arab world, especially for the Palestinians."

Years ago, Haider praised Hitler's employment policies and members of the Nazi SS, though he has repeatedly apologized for the remarks.

### Rocker won't rock against terror

A Russian radio station withdrew its support for an anti-terror concert sponsored by the Russian Jewish Congress.

The decision by the Our Radio station, a leading Moscow FM music station that broadcasts Russian pop and rock music, came after one of the participants in the show planned for Thursday night in a Moscow stadium refused to play in a five-hour-long marathon showcasing Russia's leading rock stars.

Garik Sukachev, a popular Russian rock musician, said he made a last-minute decision not to play because the organizers "take a one-sided stand on terror" and do not oppose "Israeli fascists killing innocent Palestinian civilians."

### Serbian Jews cancel celebrations

Serbia's Jewish community canceled some of its Purim celebrations this week.

The move was made due to the ongoing state of emergency in Serbia following the assassination of Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic, Serbian Jewish leader Davor Salom told JTA. Around 200 members of the community were due to attend a party in a Belgrade hotel. Synagogue services went ahead as planned, however.

### Medieval documents found

Some 1,000 Jewish documents from medieval Spain have been discovered hidden inside other books.

The Hebrew manuscripts were found inside other books that were being restored in Girona, one of the centers of Spanish Jewish life before the Inquisition. The documents apparently were abandoned by Jews fleeing in the 15th century.

### ADL: NCAA move a slam dunk

The Anti-Defamation League is praising the NCAA for its willingness to rearrange its schedule to accommodate the religious needs of Brigham Young University. The planners of the college basketball tournament said the Mormon university could change its third round game from Sunday if the team makes it that far in the tournament, which begins Thursday.

## CRISIS IN IRAQ

### Virtual community links Jews in the military, and their families

By Joe Berkofsky

NEW YORK (JTA) — One note came from Major Jonas Vogelhut, who has been leading Shabbat services at a U.S. Army base in Kuwait.

Vogelhut has been searching for a Jewish chaplain for Camp Doha, so services would continue "if we head north by order of the president."

Another message came from a San Diego mother of three young children whose husband is a Jewish chaplain with the First Marine Expeditionary Force "somewhere near Iraq."

The woman wondered "how other families are helping their children through the deployment."

One father, whose son is a medic stationed in South Korea, said he spent Purim flying in a Chinook helicopter, taking target practice and recalling a recent Shabbat service at a base in Seoul "nibbling on store-bought challah and sipping Manischewitz."

For Debbie Astor, executive director of Temple Israel in Sharon, Mass., these stories herald the birth of a new kind of "community" for Jews in the armed forces and their families.

The messages were posted to The Brave, a kind of Web-based bulletin board called a "list serv" that was launched last month. It is believed to be the first devoted to Jews in the military. Hosted on the Conservative movement's United Synagogue Web servers, The Brave, at thebrave@uscj.org, was Astor's brainchild, and for good reason.

Her 28-year-old son, a Marine lieutenant, shipped out from Camp Pendleton, Calif., recently and arrived in northern Kuwait at the end of last month. Like in so many other wars, soldiers there must rely on snail mail to connect with the world.

"In a society where we assume we should have instant access to anybody we want to talk to, it's very stressful," Astor said.

Astor came up with the idea for The Brave when she remembered that a rabbi in California had a son who was also a soldier, and she contacted him.

"I said, 'If you're going to say goodbye to your son, will you hug mine for me?'" she said. "Then I realized how terrific it was to have somebody to talk to about the kind of challenges parents and spouses of people in military service" face, she said.

There are more Jews in the armed forces than one might think. Estimates range from 5,000 to 8,000, though Astor said Jews are 1.5 percent of the 1.5 million soldiers on active duty, or some 22,500.

She hopes The Brave will also spur efforts toward a more long-term support system for military Jews, a kind of digital form of outreach.

These Jews need one another, members add, since there are only 24 Jewish chaplains stationed around the world, and only seven are "in theater," or in the war zone, Astor added.

One religious leader who has joined the list is Rabbi Maurice Kaprow, Deputy Fleet Chaplain for the Sixth Fleet, who e-mailed JTA Tuesday from aboard ship in the Mediterranean.

Kaprow, who lauded The Brave as an "important tool" to connect military Jews, said the world needs to know that Jews exist in the military "365 days a year," not just in time of war.

"I would like to see the day come when the American Jewish community remembers us continually," he wrote.

Already, The Brave has gained 155 subscribers. Many of the messages concern practical questions, such as how to send Passover care packages to South Korea or how to deal with car insurance for someone in the armed forces.

But like any Jewish community, The Brave has its share of debate.

When one anti-war critic posted a message, a Jewish soldier stationed abroad shot back:

"I care about not dying risking my neck so that you can continue to complain and badmouth my country," the soldier wrote. "Remember, lashon hara," or gossip, "is one of the greatest sins in Judaism, and you're committing it." □

## NEWS ANALYSIS

**Differences on 'road map' presage potential U.S.-Israel rift after war**

By Leslie Susser

JERUSALEM (JTA) — As soon as the dust settles in Baghdad, President George Bush and Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon could be heading for a showdown.

The looming bone of contention is the "road map" toward Israeli-Palestinian peace prepared by the diplomatic quartet of the United States, United Nations, European Union and Russia.

Bush wants to use the road map to break the current impasse between Israel and the Palestinians, but Sharon fears the plan may offer the Palestinians rewards without ensuring real change in their approach to Israel.

Israeli officials make light of the possible clash, giving many reasons why it won't happen. But they could be in for a surprise.

After victory in Iraq, Bush may want to show the international community that he's serious about imposing a Pax Americana on the Middle East as a whole.

Bush has underlined his commitment to the road map twice in recent weeks.

In a Feb. 26 speech to the American Enterprise Institute in Washington, he declared that "it is the commitment of our government — and my personal commitment — to implement the road map."

Then, in a brief White House appearance on March 14, Bush insisted that "the time has come to move beyond entrenched positions and to take concrete actions to achieve peace."

As soon as a Palestinian prime minister with real authority is confirmed in office, he said, the United States would present the road map to both Israel and the Palestinians.

Israeli officials suggest Bush's comments were designed to help embattled European allies and put pressure on the Palestinian leadership, and in no way signaled a coming clash with Israel.

They argue that Bush wanted primarily to help British Prime Minister Tony Blair deflect domestic criticism of his support for war against Iraq.

According to this logic, presenting the road map would show Blair's opponents that the campaign against Iraq is not directed against the Arabs per se, but was a first step in a wider plan to stabilize the region.

Bush, the officials continue, also wanted to force Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat to grant extensive powers to his new prime minister, Mahmoud Abbas, by making it clear that he would present the road map only after a prime minister "with real authority" was appointed.

Still, there could be trouble for Israel down the road. Sharon first received a draft of the road map during a visit to the United States last October.

Soon after that, it underwent a process of amendment and refinement by the Quartet.

Israel received the revised draft on Dec. 20.

Israeli officials have been drafting amendments and reservations of its own since then.

Israel's objections to the plan are numerous and profound. As one pundit put it, on the Israeli copy of the draft "there are more erasures, additions and amendments than original text."

Israel objects both to the plan's end goal and the mechanism

for achieving it.

The road map sets as its final goal an "independent Palestinian state" in three years.

But Israel wants it to be crystal clear that the state will have limited sovereignty: It will be demilitarized and barred from making military alliances, and its border crossings and air space will be controlled by Israel.

Israel also insists that each step on the way to statehood be completed to its satisfaction before the next step starts.

In other words, progress towards statehood must be "performance-based."

The Israelis further argue that the notions of performance-based benchmarks and strict timetables are mutually exclusive.

If the Palestinians know they will achieve statehood in three years come what may, what incentive do they have to carry out reforms that ostensibly are conditions for receiving statehood?

The Israelis have many more reservations. For example, they insist that before there can be real progress, there must be "a new and different Palestinian leadership," and that Abbas still has to prove himself.

They also say:

- The section on security reforms should be underpinned by inserting the very clear, verifiable proposals made in March 2002 by American envoy Gen. Anthony Zinni.

- It is absurd to demand a parallel Israeli renunciation of violence and incitement, as if Israel's war against terror is on the same moral footing as the terror itself.

- Mention of the "Saudi peace initiative" — which Israel has never officially received — be removed from the preamble.

- Israel must have a say on whether the Palestinians have completed security-related steps such as the collection of illegal weapons.

The Americans are aware of the Israeli objections — but, in the main, reject them. A senior American official made it clear to JTA that as things stand, the United States does not see eye to eye with Israel.

"The road map is more of a simultaneous thing," the official said. "I know Sharon's vision is 'one after the other' — first total reform, removal of Arafat and, only then, being able to talk about a Palestinian state. But that's not the road map as it stands. And Bush says he supports the road map, not the road map as revised by the Sharon government."

Still, Israeli officials say the breach between the United States and Europe over Iraq might widen after the war, perhaps making the Americans more inclined to see things Israel's way.

They hope a victorious United States will squeeze out the other members of the Quartet and deal with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict primarily on its own.

If that happens, they say, the United States will be less likely to pressure Israel, especially in the run-up to a presidential election year in the United States.

But some Israeli analysts dismiss this as wishful thinking. In fact, they say, it's more likely that after the war in Iraq, America will do its best to mend fences with Europe.

For one thing, the United States will want European help in funding Iraq's postwar reconstruction — and pundits say this transatlantic rapprochement could very well come, at least partly, at Israel's expense. □

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