



Daily News Bulletin

Vol. 81, No. 96

Tuesday, May 27, 2003

86th Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Mideast summit in the offing

Israel's foreign minister said Monday that President Bush is likely to hold a summit with the Israeli and Palestinian prime ministers in Jordan next week.

Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom's remarks came a day after Israel's government approved the "road map" toward Israeli-Palestinian peace. [Page 1]

Sharon, Abbas to meet

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and his counterpart in the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, are expected to meet again this week.

Sources in Jerusalem said the talks would take place in Jerusalem, possibly as early as Tuesday or Wednesday, Israel Radio reported. The two met for the first time May 17.

Arabs, Jews to visit Auschwitz

Some 300 Israeli Arabs and Jews toured the former Jewish district of Krakow on Monday, beginning a visit that aims to help Muslims understand what Jews suffered in the Holocaust.

The group of 150 Israeli Arab intellectuals, athletes and businessmen, joined by as many Jews, were to spend the next two days touring and learning about what happened at Auschwitz.

"Arabs have asked to learn about the Jewish suffering," Eleonora Lew, a Jewish participant on the trip, told The Associated Press in a telephone interview from her home in Tel Aviv before departing for Poland.

A delegation of about 200 Arabs and Jews from France also are set to join the group.

Ethiopians protest

Ethiopian immigrants demonstrated outside the Knesset on Sunday to protest the government's failure to implement its decision to airlift the Falash Mura.

Some 5,000 people took part in the rally, with some carrying stretchers wrapped in prayer shawls to represent the 26 refugees who have died in transit camps in Ethiopia since the government's decision in February, the Israeli daily Ha'aretz reported.

Meanwhile, a ceremony was held Sunday at a Jewish Agency for Israel absorption center outside Jerusalem to mark the twelfth anniversary of Operation Solomon, which brought some 14,000 Ethiopian Jews to Israel in 36 hours.

NEWS ANALYSIS

'Road map' vote seen as historic, but the hard part is just beginning

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — The Israeli Cabinet's approval of the "road map" toward Israeli-Palestinian peace, the first time an Israeli government has explicitly endorsed the creation of a Palestinian state, was hailed as a historic development.

But Sunday's decision — welcomed by the United States — left Palestinians wary, Israeli settlers worried and commentators wondering whether the vote was a tactical move to avoid confrontation with the United States or whether Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon truly had changed his approach to peacemaking.

Many analysts saw the vote as the latest volley in a complex game of diplomatic pingpong, with each side maneuvering to tap the ball into the other's court in hopes of exposing his adversary's lack of commitment to the plan.

In a 12-7 vote, with four abstentions, Sharon's government voted to accept the "steps set out in the road map," which its drafters hope will lead to a phased ending of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

But the Cabinet also appended 14 reservations to the road map, which the United States has agreed to "address" — though not necessarily to accept.

The Cabinet also ruled out the Palestinian demand that refugees from Israel's 1948 War of Independence and their descendants — several million people in all — be granted a "right of return" to their former homes inside Israel.

Israelis see this as tantamount to calling for an end to the Jewish state. Sharon had demanded — unsuccessfully — that just as Israel was asked to commit at the start of the process to the establishment of a Palestinian state, the Palestinians should be forced to forego the "right of return" and acknowledge in advance that refugees would be resettled only in the future Palestinian state.

Still, Israel's acceptance was enough for officials to continue preparations for an anticipated June summit in Jordan with President Bush, Sharon and Abbas. The leaders of Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia also might attend, according to reports.

Sources in Jerusalem also said Monday that a second bilateral meeting between Sharon and his Palestinian Authority counterpart, Mahmoud Abbas, is likely sometime this week.

But the Palestinians were wary of Israel's decision, arguing that the attached reservations rob the initiative of its content. The Palestinians have accepted the road map as is, and insist that Israel do so as well.

Speaking after talks in Ramallah on Monday with the visiting French foreign minister, Dominique de Villepin, P.A. President Yasser Arafat welcomed the Israeli move but said Israel's reservations raised "question marks."

"We are not talking about gestures, but rather about a policy that Sharon will have to implement, article by article, with the same seriousness that he wants us to fight terror," one P.A. Cabinet minister told the Israeli daily Ha'aretz.

The road map calls on Israel to uproot illegal settlement outposts, withdraw troops to the positions they held before the Palestinian intifada began in September 2000 and stop military measures that target terrorist kingpins but sometimes harm civilians.

Meanwhile, Israeli right-wingers assailed Sharon for agreeing to what settler leaders decried as a proposal "worse than the Oslo accords."

Settler ideologue Elyakim Haetzni compared supporters of the peace plan to Holocaust-era Jews who "willingly boarded those trains" to the concentration camps,

MIDEAST FOCUS

Bombing memorial dedicated

A memorial to the victims of last summer's Hebrew University bombing was dedicated Monday.

The living sculpture, "Tilted Tree," was created by Ran Morin and consists of an actual tree planted at an angle, as if disturbed by the physical blast of the explosion.

"This tree, whose roots were shaken, will continue to grow, will continue to bear fruit," university president Menachem Magidor said. Four Americans and a French-American citizen were among the nine people killed in the July 31, 2002 attack.

Lebanese mark Israel's pullout

Lebanese protesters threw stones at Israel during a weekend demonstration at a former border crossing to mark three years since the Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon.

The Lebanese government announced that it would not send its army to replace Hezbollah as the dominant force near the border. That pledge violates U.N. Security Council Resolution 425, which called on Israel to withdraw and on the Lebanese government to maintain security at the border.

Judaica collection ransacked

Valuable silver artifacts from a Judaica collection were stolen from the Diaspora Museum in Tel Aviv.

Some 35 objects worth tens of thousands of dollars were stolen from a private collection of Judaica, the daily Yediot Achronot reported. The break-in was discovered last Friday.

The greatest trip of all

Singers Whitney Houston and Bobby Brown arrived in Israel on Sunday on a private visit.

The couple is on a one-week trip as guests of the Black Hebrew community in Dimona, the daily Yediot Achronot reported.



Daily News Bulletin

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

"believing everything that the Germans told them."

Responding to descriptions of the vote as a historic development, Haetzni said it was historic "in the same sense that the destruction of the Temple was historic."

Settler leaders who met with legislators in the Knesset on Monday said they would launch a campaign to oppose Israeli implementation of the accord.

The far-right National Union bloc was debating whether to quit the government.

Though they were outraged by the vote, some members of the bloc said they believed they could more effectively scuttle the plan from inside the government than from outside.

Even Sharon's defense minister, Shaul Mofaz, appeared to distance himself from the decision, a day after he voted for the proposal.

Mofaz said Monday that the Cabinet vote was not legally binding, but was merely a "declaration of diplomatic intentions."

Even Sharon, who said Israel must be willing to pay a "painful price" to resolve the conflict with the Palestinians, acknowledged that the Cabinet vote was "not a happy decision."

Addressing angry members of his Likud Party on Monday, Sharon said that Israel's continued occupation of 3.5 million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip would be "bad for Israel, bad for the Palestinians and bad for the economy."

Israel does not want to sit indefinitely in the West Bank cities of Jenin and Nablus, Sharon said, adding that diplomatic progress is critical for economic improvement.

"I know that there are doubts," Sharon continued. "Everyone has doubts. I have doubts as well. But I know one thing: We must try."

But Sharon's critics within the party were relentless. Former Foreign Minister David Levy called the road map "the document containing the worst things ever faced by the government of Israel."

After insisting for two years that he would not negotiate under fire, Sharon in fact has restarted the diplomatic process while Palestinian terrorism is continuing.

In addition, the road map allows for unprecedented international involvement in the process, even by parties — such as the European Union, Russia and the United Nations — that Israel feels are biased in favor of the Palestinians.

In addition, one of the conditions for restarting the diplomatic process was to be the removal of Arafat, as called for in President Bush's landmark policy speech last June 24.

But while Abbas was appointed prime minister as a way of easing Arafat aside, Arafat retains control over most of the Palestinian security services and much of the P.A. government — levers that Israel says he is using to foment terrorism, even as the international community gives the Palestinians credit for changing leaders.

It also is not clear to what extent the plan will be performance-based. After the disastrous experience of the Oslo accords, Israel insists that the sides proceed from stage to stage of the road map only after each has fulfilled its commitments.

The Palestinians, in contrast, say the plan must proceed according to a strict timetable that calls for the establishment of a Palestinian state in three years.

Israelis fear the plan's timeline is so compressed that it will be impossible for the Palestinians to fulfill their commitments — such as dismantling the terrorist organizations and collecting illegal weapons — in the few months allotted for each stage.

Many fear this will lead to international pressure for Israeli concessions after only token Palestinian steps, in order to keep to the timetable.

"Israel's policy must be clear: It must do everything possible to reach a political settlement" that doesn't compromise its security, Sharon said.

Coming from the man who was Israel's leading hawk for years and a patron of the Israeli settlement movement, Sharon's remarks left commentators wondering whether the prime minister had executed a deft political maneuver or had really changed his approach.

In leading the government toward acceptance of the plan, Sharon avoided pressure from the Bush administration and the international community. He also placed the onus temporarily on the Palestinians, who have committed yet again to fight terrorism but had said they couldn't do so until Israel accepted the road map.

Sharon's gamble is that, if the Palestinians do take real steps against terror, he will be called on to answer with tangible Israeli moves — the "painful concessions" he has talked about for so long but until now has never revealed. □

JEWISH WORLD

Cartoon complaint dismissed

Britain's press watchdog dismissed a complaint that a cartoon showing Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon eating a baby was anti-Semitic.

The Press Complaints Commission accepted the assertion by the Independent newspaper that the cartoon was based on the Goya painting "Saturn Devouring One of His Children" and rejected the Israeli embassy position that the cartoon referred to a blood libel against Jews.

"The Commission considered that it would be unreasonable to expect editors to take into account all possible interpretations of material that they intend to publish, no matter what their own motive for publishing it," the ruling said.

London feared Jewish terrorism

London feared Jewish terrorism that aimed to drive Britain out of Palestine in the years before the establishment of the State of Israel, newly declassified documents reveal.

The director of Britain's MI5 intelligence organization warned in 1946 that then-Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin was a potential target for assassination and that Jewish militants from the Stern Gang and Irgun could join forces and "send five cells to London to work on IRA lines."

In fact, no Jewish groups carried out attacks in Britain.

Australian Jew goes for prize

An Australian Jew has been nominated for the Miles Franklin Award, Australia's most prestigious literary prize.

The fifth book by Andrea Goldsmith, "The Prosperous Thief," is set mostly in Germany and tracks the history of two Jewish families affected by the Shoah.

Goldsmith, 53, a fifth-generation Australian with no family Holocaust connections, will have to compete against 43 other nominees, including Thomas Keneally, author of "Schindler's List," who was nominated for his latest book, "Angel in Australia."

But her most interesting rival is Dorothy Porter, an Australian poet who has been Goldsmith's romantic partner since 1992.

Chirac pledges to help Jews

French President Jacques Chirac reiterated that France would fight anti-Semitism.

"France stands with you against anti-Semitism," Chirac told French Jewish leaders last week at a reception at the Elysee Palace, held to mark the 60th anniversary of the founding of the CRIF umbrella organization of French Jews. CRIF originally was set up as a clandestine organization during the Nazi occupation of France.

British Jews not 'bowling alone,' says study that lauds community

By Andrew Morris

LONDON (JTA) — The British Jewish community should be a role model for successful minority communities and a cohesive civil society, British policy makers say.

The assessment is based on the findings of a major new report, published last month, of the "social capital" of the Jewish community of Manchester.

The report by the Institute of Jewish Policy Research, a London-based think tank, focused on the 30,000-strong community, the biggest in Britain after London's.

Named "Creating Community and Accumulating Social Capital: Jews Associating with Other Jews in Manchester," the report casts a light on how cultural bonds and associations hold communities together.

The concept of social capital, basically the premise that social networks have value and are integral to a cohesive civil society, was popularized by Harvard scholar Robert Putnam in his 2000 book, "Bowling Alone."

Written by social researcher Ernest Schlesinger, the JPR study looked at 13 recreational associations, including soccer leagues, golf clubs and Jewish theater.

Among its findings, the study shows how cultural rather than just religious bonds have become the common denominator in ensuring a sense of kinship for many Jews in the northern English city — a phenomenon inherent throughout Jewish communities in Britain, the research finds.

"This is a groundbreaking report," said JPR's director of research, Stanley Waterman. "It casts a light on a critical dimension of U.K. Jewish life by showing the power of the nonideological and nonreligious links that hold our communities together."

Waterman points to the implications for other ethnic communities and the wider society.

"While the general feeling is that overall social capital is in a state of decline, studies such as this show that among key ethnic and religious groups, voluntary, grassroots associations still play a key role in holding individual communities, and society in general, together."

The Manchester report also has been acclaimed by British government officials as giving insight into how public policy may be executed to ensure that communities remain vibrant in an increasingly individualistic society.

"Often in public policy we tend to think we're the ones who can bring social capital about. In fact, as this study shows, more often than not it is the 'hands-off' approach that allows social capital to grow," said David Rayner, an urban policy official in the British government. "This is the kind of analysis that can serve as a model for other groups throughout the U.K."

Leaders from other minority faith communities have praised the picture of Manchester's Jews as a potential role model.

Rumman Ahmed, the Muslim chairman of the Faith-Based Regeneration Network, a national body that promotes the role of religious groups in community building, said his own community could draw hope from the JPR study.

"I was delighted to see the tremendous range of activities taking place in Manchester, where the Jewish community is more than 100 years old," Ahmed said. "While the Muslim community is younger and has been active for some 50 years, what is clear from this report is that in many ways, both are on parallel trajectories."

The research also shows how, despite high standards of living and integration into British society, Manchester Jews show a strong tendency to stick together as an ethno-religious group.

It highlights the central role played by informal voluntary links through "associational activities" — for some Jews, the only link with others outside their family.

The study is part of a five-year JPR undertaking to record the current state of the Jewish voluntary sector in the United Kingdom.

As part of the Long-Term Planning for British Jewry project, the JPR has published recommendations on the future of Jewish schooling and the state of social welfare, among other topics. □

In Holland, rise of anti-Semitism starts to attract public attention

By Rachel Levy

AMSTERDAM (JTA) — “Fascists are Zionists, just like Micha,” one participant writes on the Moroccan Web site www.maghreb.nl — just before Micha, a Dutch-born Jew living in Israel, blasts Israeli policy.

Anyone who frequents the site knows that Micha very often is critical of Israeli policy. But attacks like the one on Micha on the Moroccan Web site are commonplace in the virtual community of Moroccans in the Netherlands.

Moroccan anti-Semitism is on the rise in Holland. Dutch Jews already have known it for several years: According to the Center for Information and Documentation about Israel, or CIDI, the Dutch equivalent of the Anti-Defamation League, the number of anti-Jewish incidents has been increasing since 1997.

Since the Palestinian intifada began in September 2000, however, the number of incidents has increased greatly and their nature has changed, becoming more violent and physical.

Muslim immigrants — primarily Moroccan youths — are responsible for the sharp rise in incidents, according to CIDI.

In its 2000 annual report, Tel Aviv University’s Institute for the Study of anti-Semitism and Racism reached a similar conclusion: It registered an increase of 50 percent in violent anti-Semitic incidents in Western Europe, most of them in countries with large Muslim communities.

In cities like Amsterdam, Jews who until recently walked freely with their yarmulkes now prefer not to. Many say they have been subjected to name calling, physical attacks and aggressive behavior from Moroccan youths.

It began in neighborhoods such as West Amsterdam that are populated mainly by Moroccan immigrants. But even in the southern parts of Amsterdam, which since World War II have had a large Jewish population, many Jews prefer not to walk outside with visible signs of their faith.

Dutch society long has ignored or downplayed the situation. Common responses were that the situation really couldn’t be as bad as it seemed, or that Jews were too quick to label all criticism of Israel as anti-Semitism.

In recent weeks, however, the tide seems to be changing. On May 4, the day Holland commemorates its soldiers, Jews and other civilians who died in World War II, Moroccan youths disturbed various commemoration ceremonies in Dutch cities, mainly in Amsterdam.

It took a week until Michel Rog, a local politician for the center-left party D’66, filed an official complaint of anti-Semitism with Amsterdam police. Rog is a member of the neighborhood council in the De Baarsjes area of West Amsterdam and participated actively in the local commemoration ceremony.

“Suddenly a group of 10, 20 young Moroccans came and began to shout ‘Joden moeten we doden,’ ” he said. They repeated the slogan, which means “We should kill the Jews,” again and again. Similar incidents took place in other Amsterdam neighborhoods, where Moroccans disturbed speeches and the traditional two minutes of silence for the dead.

Elsewhere in Amsterdam, Moroccan youths destroyed flowers after the ceremonies, set them on fire or played soccer with them.

Non-Jewish participants in the ceremony were perplexed but

remain divided over what the Moroccan youths could have meant.

Some, like Rog, feel the youngsters intentionally used anti-Semitic slogans on a day commemorating Jewish victims of Nazi persecution. Others think the incidents have no political meaning.

“They’re just bored and want attention,” one man said on a popular talk show on Dutch public television. “They don’t even know what they’re saying because they’re not familiar with Dutch and Jewish history. So how can they have bad intentions?”

Other Dutch media picked up the debate. Where does this come from, people asked, and who is responsible? Is it a lack of education? Incorrect information from their Moroccan parents?

“I hear outrageous things from my students,” said Gideon Simon, a young Jewish teacher at an Amsterdam high school. “This morning I was told that there were never 6 million Jews killed in the Holocaust. This Moroccan student told me that ‘to the extent that Jews were killed, they wanted it themselves, because they had struck a deal about it with the Germans, so that the Jews could steal our country Palestine.’ ”

The maghreb Web site’s chat forum appears to confirm Simon’s theory that Moroccan youths are continuously misinformed by anti-Semitic information coming from Middle Eastern and North African media.

“So go and tell the youth about the inhumane treatment of the Jews in the middle of the previous century,” one participant said this week. “But please be so kind, now that you are providing extra education about Jewish suffering, not to stop in 1945.

“Tell the youths exactly about the second Holocaust, of the Palestinians, that continued decades long,” the participant wrote. “And please explain to those youngsters, then, that a people that has experienced something horrific does not hesitate to perform the very same on other peoples.”

Another chat participant, writing after last week’s terror attacks in Casablanca, wrote, “I’m sure that it’s the Ku Klux Klan. Or would it be the Jews themselves? After all, the Jewish center” that was bombed “was empty due to the Sabbath.”

Since the May 4 incidents, the number of anti-Semitic incidents reported in the media is rising. On May 20, the daily newspaper *Trouw* published a picture from a leaflet with a hand-written message that had been displayed in the window of an Amsterdam restaurant: “All parked bikes here will be eliminated, as will descendants of Sharon,” a reference to the Israeli prime minister.

One of the people most criticized after the May 4 incidents is Amsterdam Mayor Job Cohen. Several months ago, when he was mooted as the Labor Party’s candidate for the premiership, Cohen was widely praised for the diplomatic way he has maintained tolerance and understanding in the Dutch capital, which has residents of 168 different nationalities.

In his two years as mayor, Cohen — a secular Jew married to a non-Jewish woman — has cultivated good relations with all ethnic and cultural groups in the city. He often invites Muslim leaders to his office and visits Muslim cultural centers or mosques.

Following the May 4 incidents, many felt Cohen should stop talking to the Muslims and “take some action.”

“It’s time to establish clear limits, and you can only do that when you file official complaints with the police and prosecute people accordingly,” said Rog, the local politician who reported the May 4 incident. “Mr. Cohen only wants to talk.”

Cohen denies the allegations. But in his many media appearances since May 4, he has refrained from specifying how he plans to act against the increase in anti-Semitic incidents. □