



# Daily News Bulletin

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## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Sharon: unilateral separation

Israel will separate itself from the Palestinians unilaterally unless they come to the peace table, Ariel Sharon said. Israelis must prepare for "unprecedentedly difficult" steps, including the evacuation of settlements, Israel's prime minister said Thursday in a much-anticipated policy speech in Herzliya. [Page 1]

### JDC launches campaign

The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee will launch its first board-driven fund-raising campaign. The organization's board made the decision at a Monday meeting where JDC senior staff announced the first gift to the campaign — \$100,000 from their own salaries.

The move comes after the North American Jewish federation system recently decided to allocate a base amount of \$43 million to the JDC, \$20 million less than the group had requested, though a further federation allocation still is possible.

The federation decision is "separate and apart from this," said Steven Schwager, executive vice president of the JDC. "The board believes we need to spend \$3 million more than we have, and they have taken it upon themselves to close that deficit." He added that the JDC campaign will be "above and beyond" the contributions board members make to their federations.

### Casbah clash

Israeli soldiers killed five Palestinian gunmen during a West Bank raid aimed at foiling a suicide bombing. The clashes came as special forces conducted their second day of searches in the Nablus casbah.

An army commander said troops involved in Thursday's operation also detained a terrorist who had planned to carry out a suicide bombing in Israel.

### Mubarak to Israel?

Egypt's president may make his first state visit to Israel in an attempt to jump-start peace talks with the Palestinians. Hosni Mubarak is expected to make his final decision following a visit to Israel by Egypt's foreign minister next week. Egypt recently has tried actively, albeit unsuccessfully, to convince Palestinian terrorist groups to agree to a new cease-fire.

In power for more than 20 years, Mubarak until now has refused to make a state visit to Israel.

## NEWS ANALYSIS

### Sharon's De Gaulle moment: parting from Greater Israel, seizing initiative

By Ron Kampeas

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Ariel Sharon had no map, he drew no lines, he spoke in the vaguest of terms, but when he said he would remove settlements, he made the most startling concession of his career — and cornered his rivals like a master tactician.

The Israeli prime minister warned his compatriots Thursday that they would have to face the "extremely difficult" prospect of removing Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, a remarkable statement from the man widely regarded as the architect and driving force behind Israel's settlement movement.

Speaking at the Herzliya Conference, the prime minister ostensibly directed his speech at the Palestinians, telling them they would gain much more if they adhered to the U.S.-led "road map" peace plan and cracked down on terrorist groups. Through negotiations, he said, the Palestinians could gain "a democratic Palestinian state with territorial integrity in Judea and Samaria" — the West Bank.

If the Palestinians abjure peaceful negotiation, he said, "Israel will initiate the unilateral security step of disengagement from the Palestinians."

It was Sharon's De Gaulle moment: Israel's most fearsome warrior and nationalist saying that it was time to give up on a dream — in this case, the right of Jews to live anywhere in the Land of Israel between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea.

"In the framework of a future agreement, Israel will not remain in all the places it is today," he said.

Reaction to the speech was swift. Israelis across the political spectrum, American officials, Palestinians and American Jews all weighed in.

The main pro-Israel lobbying group in Washington, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, noted how far Sharon had come.

"In the face of opposition from his core constituency, Sharon expressed a firm determination to take historic steps on the difficult and painful issues of settlements and outposts," an AIPAC statement said.

David Mack, an analyst with the Middle East Institute, in Washington, said Sharon had taken the strategic high ground.

"People underestimate Prime Minister Sharon. They say he's a tactician but doesn't have a strategy, but this shows he may well have a strategy," said Mack, a former U.S. assistant deputy secretary of state for Near East affairs. "He may know that at some point there would have to be withdrawals. This way, he gets a far better situation for Israel in terms of borders."

In an irony perhaps typical of Middle East diplomacy, prominent members of Israel's right and left wings united in their alarm at a prime ministerial vision they said was short-sighted.

Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom already had called the unilateral moves a reward for terrorism. Now the National Religious Party, a part of the governing coalition with Sharon's Likud Party, is grumbling about a possible walkout.

"We will form a bloc, including members of the Likud, to strike down this preposterous plan," Zvi Hendel, an National Union lawmaker, told JTA.

But there was satisfaction in another corner of Sharon's government — from Shinui, which has billed itself as a pragmatic party with an unvarnished view of both Palestinian diplomatic intentions and the feasibility of the idea of a Greater Israel.

"I hope very much that the extreme right will leave the coalition and make way for

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Pro-Palestinian resolution

A resolution that would have given the Palestinians U.N. credentials was postponed.

The resolution's backers decided to postpone the vote, which would have made the Palestinians representatives of the West Bank, Gaza Strip and parts of eastern Jerusalem, because of a lack of support, said Arye Mekel, deputy permanent representative of Israel to the United Nations.

The European Union planned to vote against the resolution, and dozens of other countries were expected to follow suit, Mekel told JTA.

### Israel sits U.N. vote out

For the first time in 25 years, Israel abstained from a U.N. vote on aiding the Palestinian people.

Israel said it abstained Wednesday due to new language in the resolution that called for implementation of the "road map" peace plan.

Israel usually votes in favor of the annual resolution supporting aid to the Palestinians, but this time Israeli officials said they considered the language in the resolution irrelevant to the issue at hand.

An Israeli official said Israel's views on resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict "have been made clear elsewhere."

### Barenboim to get prize

Conductor Daniel Barenboim, who performed Wagner's music in Israel, will receive Israel's Wolf Prize. Barenboim, music director of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and State Opera House in Berlin, led the Berlin Staatskapelle Orchestra in a performance from Richard Wagner's "Tristan und Isolde" in July 2001, defying an informal Israeli ban on the music of Hitler's favorite composer.

Barenboim did not explicitly apologize for the decision, but he said he regretted if the music offended anyone, The Associated Press said.



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Labor to come in and restore some common sense," said Shinui's leader, Justice Minister Yosef "Tommy" Lapid.

Palestinians were furious at Sharon's speech, calling it an ultimatum.

"It's the mentality of occupation, the delivering of ultimatums and then imposing unilateral conditions," said Hanan Ashrawi, a Palestinian legislator. "It's about time to get down to business and act without imposing impossible conditions."

The problem for the Palestinians is that, for the time being, "getting down to business" is going to happen according to Sharon's timeline.

"The ball is clearly in the Palestinian court," said Steven Spiegel, a professor of political science at UCLA and a national scholar at the Israel Policy Forum. "The Palestinians will want to avoid being in the corner."

Edward Abington, a top U.S. adviser to the Palestinians, said Sharon had made similar promises in the past and failed to make good on them. But, he added, the speech makes clear to the Palestinians that the Israeli prime minister has seized the initiative.

"It requires serious consideration and merits a serious Palestinian response," said Abington, a former U.S. consul in Jerusalem.

It was not only the Palestinians who were cornered. By making the removal of settlements a condition for peace without specifying any settlements by name, Sharon also made it difficult for hard-liners in and out of his government to protest.

"I know you want names, but we have to leave something for later," he said.

Settlers and their supporters clearly were unnerved by Sharon's speech.

To reward Palestinian Authority President Yasser "Arafat and his terror regime by unilaterally giving them land, expelling Jews and removing checkpoints is appeasement and will make it easier for terrorists to operate and teach them that violence leads to more concessions," said Morton Klein, national president of the Zionist Organization of America.

In his speech, Sharon already anticipated flak from his right wing, and he hinted at a startling quid pro quo: "Settlements which will be relocated are those which will not be included in the territory of the State of Israel in the framework of any possible permanent agreement." Other settlements, Sharon noted, would become part of Israel.

Translation: Sharon would annex settlements like Ma'aleh Adumim and the Etzion bloc, areas that even the most conciliatory peace plans keep within Israel. Other settlements — probably many Gaza settlements and far-flung outposts in the West Bank — likely would be relocated or dismantled.

Sharon's speech also protected his left flank, taking the air out of the sails of unofficial peace proposals touted in recent weeks as alternative solutions to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

"The fact that you have the godfather of the settlement movement talking publicly about removing outposts and some settlements is positive," said Lewis Roth, assistant executive director of Americans for Peace Now.

Roth otherwise dismissed Sharon's speech as a plan for annexation.

Coupled with the promise to remove settlements, Sharon's repeated pledges to adhere to the U.S.-backed road map made it harder for the Bush administration to criticize the plan's unilateralism.

Additionally, Sharon said he immediately would dismantle illegal settlement outposts and was more specific than he ever has been about freezing settlements. He pledged no further land expropriation, no building beyond existing settlement borders and no new financial incentives. That pleased the White House.

"For the first time, he said flatly that there would be no new settlements, no confiscation of land for construction, no special economic incentives for settlers and no construction beyond present construction zones," White House spokesman Scott McClellan said.

U.S. diplomats were left treading a fine line between commending Sharon for his apparent concessions and expressing their distaste for any unilateral moves.

"We welcome Sharon's reaffirmation of his wholehearted commitment to the road map and his commitment to making life easier for the Palestinians and his commitment to the president last summer to remove outposts," a State Department official said. "We also restate our opposition to any unilateral steps." □

(JTA correspondent Dan Baron in Tel Aviv contributed to this report.)

## JEWISH WORLD

### Lawmakers: Iraq-Israel ties

The Bush administration should push the new Iraqi government to forge diplomatic ties with Israel, two U.S. lawmakers said.

Sen. Jon Kyl (R-Ariz.) and Rep. Jane Harman (D-Calif.) called for such ties Wednesday while visiting the Jewish state. Kyl said the United States must persuade Iraq that such ties are in its best interest.

On the trip, the two also met with Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Ahmed Qurei. Kyl said Qurei "did not give any sense that he right now is prepared to crack down on terrorist organizations in the Palestinian area."

### Students expelled for abuse

Two Muslim students were expelled from a prestigious Paris school for abusing an 11-year-old Jewish student.

The Lycee Montaigne expelled the student following complaints by parents associations and the parents of the Jewish boy that the school had failed to deal with the matter over a protracted period. The school refused to comment on the issue to JTA.

### Tourism to Israel up

Tourism to Israel rose by 46 percent in November compared to November 2002.

The rise is being attributed to the United Jewish Communities' General Assembly, held in Israel, increased efforts by the U.S. Jewish community to market tourism to Israel and the U.S.-led war in Iraq, which reduced fears of a possible Iraqi attack on Israel. Israeli officials are predicting that 1.2 million tourists will have visited the Jewish state in 2003.

### Holocaust money deadline nears

The deadline to recoup Holocaust-era insurance claims is less than two weeks away. The International Commission for Holocaust Era Insurance Claims will stop accepting claims after Dec. 31 and hopes to end its mission by the end of 2004.

ICHEIC and its chairman, former Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger, have been accused of not working fast enough to get payments to Holocaust survivors and their heirs. This fall, the commission was sued by three Holocaust survivors in California.

### Folk of Ages

A concert in New York will feature Jewish-themed music by legendary folk singer Woody Guthrie.

Saturday night's concert, "Holy Ground: The Jewish Songs of Woody Guthrie," will highlight unknown songs written by the troubadour in the 1940s and 1950s, when he lived in Coney Island with his second wife's Jewish family. The songs include tunes about Chanukah, Jewish history and the Holocaust.

## AROUND THE JEWISH WORLD

### New chief rabbi, just 32, hopes to energize South Africa's Jews

By Geoff Sifrin

JOHANNESBURG (JTA) — At a time when South Africa's Jews are anxious over the future of the Jewish community, the religious body representing most Jews has taken a bold step by choosing a young man with little experience as chief rabbi.

The decision by the Union of Orthodox Synagogues to appoint as chief rabbi Warren Goldstein, 32, has been hailed by many as an inspired move that will inject fresh energy into the troubled Jewish community of 80,000. Goldstein will take over in January 2005 when the current chief rabbi, Cyril Harris, retires after 17 years.

Goldstein is rabbi of a dynamic Orthodox congregation in Johannesburg and a scholar of Judaism and law — but some say he's too young to be chief rabbi.

The role of chief rabbi is high-profile and political. He must interact with the government and participate in national interfaith and interracial forums.

Because the government relates to the chief rabbi as the public face of South African Jewry, he must be accepted as a spokesman by a broad cross-section of the community, from secular to fervently Orthodox.

South Africa is a religious society, with most citizens identifying with some faith — Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, traditional African faiths or others. The chief rabbi sits on national bodies with other religious leaders, such as the National Religious Leaders Forum, which deals with the moral regeneration of society, among other issues.

Those who applaud Goldstein's appointment say his youth will contribute to his effectiveness. He was in school when apartheid reached its decline and is untainted by it. The first time he voted was in the 1994 elections that ushered in democracy.

"His youth is a huge asset. The younger generation looks up to him," the president of the Union of Orthodox Synagogues, Harold Novick, told JTA.

Harris said in an interview that Goldstein's selection is "a statement of being proudly South African Jewish. It is his generation who will stay here and build this community. This is an admirable and forward-looking appointment."

The selection committee, which included a diverse range of Jewish groups, recommended Goldstein from a list of five. Others were older and more experienced.

One criterion was that the appointee be South African-born or someone who had lived in the country during the transition from apartheid to democracy, and who understood South African politics. Previous chief rabbis all have been born abroad. The candidate also had to be a Zionist.

Goldstein, who as a lawyer is licensed to appear before the country's High Court, is a fourth-generation South African who was ordained in 1996. His father is a High Court judge.

Together with Dumani Mandela, Nelson Mandela's grandson, Goldstein wrote a book this year called "African Soul Talk" about values for the new South Africa.

"Apartheid poisoned our national soul and now we need to heal it," Goldstein writes in his book. "We have had our political miracle; now we need our human miracle of the rebirth of the South African soul."

During Harris' 17-year tenure, South Africa went through a dramatic period as it negotiated the road to democracy. Harris was a high-profile public figure, urging Jews to help end apartheid and embrace the changes of the rebuilt country.

But older Jewish leaders have pushed for young people with fresh ideas and fewer axes to grind, and who had less experience of apartheid, to be placed in key leadership positions in the community.

Goldstein said he sees three main goals for the future: strengthening the Jewish community, which has lost many members due to large-scale emigration; promoting healthy interaction between Jews and broader South African society, including advocating for Israel in a country where most sympathies lie with the Palestinians, and building South Africa economically.

On emigration, he said, "We must encourage young people to remain and build the country." □

## BEHIND THE HEADLINES

**Did military officer do enough to accommodate Yom Kippur?**

By Joe Berkofsky

NEW YORK (JTA) — The Vietnam War was raging and Jack Zimmermann was stationed in the dangerous demilitarized zone along the north-south border when the High Holidays arrived in the fall of 1965.

When combat with the Viet Cong quieted, Zimmermann, who commanded an artillery battery, got approval to attend High Holiday services in a rear position in Da Nang, along with a few other Jewish Marines.

The request was not unreasonable: The military requires its branches to meet the religious needs of troops unless doing so harms individual or unit readiness, morale, discipline or safety.

"The army is very, very cognizant of the obligations of Jewish service personnel for Yom Kippur" and other religious observances, Zimmermann says.

So when Zimmermann — a decorated combat officer, ex-Marine prosecutor and trial judge who now is a Houston attorney — heard about a recent case of alleged anti-Semitism in the military, he quickly got involved.

Refael and Margaret Chaiken of Houston say they were discharged from the military this fall because they attended Yom Kippur services.

The army denies the charge, insisting that it tried to accommodate the Chaikens' religious needs but that they disobeyed orders anyway.

"The command was really involved and very active in working with them, but at the same time they had a military mission they needed to meet," Tanja Linton, media relations officer for Fort Huachuca, Ariz., where the Chaikens were stationed, told JTA.

The fight began last October when the couple disobeyed orders not to attend daylong Yom Kippur services at the military base, where they were training to become interrogators in the war on terrorism.

"I have never seen anything like it," said Zimmermann, 62, who is serving as the Chaikens' spokesman and has advised them not to talk with the media further about their case.

Last week the conflict escalated, when the Anti-Defamation League and two members of Congress appealed to the army to review the couple's case.

In a Dec. 12 letter to Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, ADL National Director Abraham Foxman said that if the couple's story proves true, their civil rights may have been violated.

"It is our understanding that the Army customarily accommodates the religious beliefs of its personnel," Foxman wrote.

"We believe these accusations to be uncharacteristic of the military."

The couple was participating in a "human intelligence collector" course at the base.

Refael, 27, an Orthodox Jew and a former resident of the West Bank city of Hebron who holds dual citizenship and is an Israel Defense Forces veteran, speaks Hebrew and Arabic.

Margaret, 26, a graduate of the Sorbonne, speaks French and Hebrew.

Zimmermann said the couple, both privates, got permission

from class supervisors to attend daylong Yom Kippur services at the military base on Oct. 6.

But the base battalion commander, Lt. Col. Dennis Perkins, warned the couple two days before the holiday that if they missed a full day's class, they would have to start the entire four-month course again, Zimmermann says.

Margaret, who was two weeks away from completing the course, agreed, as did Refael, who was two months into the course, according to Zimmermann.

Perkins determined that "military necessity required that they attend training," Linton said.

Instead, Perkins said the couple could skip a class formation the evening before Yom Kippur and did not have to attend the formation at the end of Yom Kippur so that they could attend services later in the day after class, Linton said.

The couple also was allowed to forgo wearing leather army boots on Yom Kippur, Refael was allowed to abstain from shaving and both were allowed to skip a physical-fitness session because they would be fasting, Linton said.

The army also took other steps to accommodate the couple religiously, Linton said.

For Rosh Hashanah, they were driven to an Orthodox synagogue in Tucson, though intelligence trainees typically are banned from straying far from the base.

The army also arranged a phone call with an Orthodox chaplain to discuss observing Jewish law in the military, and they were put in touch with a local Orthodox layperson, she said.

The couple attended early-morning formation on Yom Kippur but could not be found the rest of the day, Linton said.

Zimmermann insisted that the couple believed they had the approval of class supervisors to attend services all day.

"They had what they thought was appropriate military approval to attend what they believe is a religious obligation," Zimmermann said.

Other details remain unclear. Zimmermann maintains that base officials could easily have found the couple at services, though Linton said they were "unaccounted for."

In the days that followed, the couple filed a discrimination complaint with the Army's Equal Opportunity Department.

On Nov. 14, the couple was given general discharge papers alleging what Linton called "a pattern of misconduct."

In addition to defying orders, the Chaikens violated a rule against fraternizing with superiors by attending a "non-religious event" one week after the high holiday, Linton said.

Zimmermann countered that the couple simply accepted the invitation of the wife of a local Jewish officer stationed in Iraq to attend a Yom Kippur break-fast meal.

Now the Chaikens are considering their options, Zimmermann said.

Meanwhile, Reps. Robert Wexler (D-Fla.) and Chris Bell (D-Texas) wrote Dec. 9 to the undersecretary of the Army, Les Brownlee, asking him to look into changing the Chaikens' discharge from dishonorable to honorable, which would help their civilian job prospects.

"We certainly understand the importance of maintaining order within the military. We do, however, question why, absent any apparent necessity, the Chaikens were denied the opportunity to attend services," Bell and Wexler wrote.

Zimmermann said the couple should fight back. "In my opinion, an injustice has occurred," he said. □