

IN THE NEWS
On Jerusalem Day, violence breaks out

Palestinians threw rocks at Jews on Jerusalem's Temple Mount.

Two groups of Jewish tourists were allowed up to the holy site Monday as Israel marked Jerusalem Day, but came under a barrage of rocks thrown by hundreds of Palestinians who had gathered at the mosques there.

Two tourists were lightly hurt before police dispersed the crowd.

UJC approves fund-raising initiative

The North American Jewish federation system approved a major fund-raising initiative.

The United Jewish Communities' Board of Trustees voted Sunday for a campaign to raise funds for Ethiopian aliyah and for elderly Jews in the former Soviet Union.

The \$160 million campaign will take place over several years and is a separate and additional campaign from the federation system's annual campaign.

Some \$100 million will go toward the expedited immigration and absorption of the Falash Mura, Ethiopian Jews whose ancestors converted to Christianity, and for the integration of Ethiopian Jews already living in Israel.

The remaining funds are intended to support poor, elderly Jews in the former Soviet Union and for Jewish identity-building programs for youth there.

Israel eyes Hezbollah victory

Israel called on Hezbollah to disarm after the group won regional elections in Lebanon.

After the Lebanese militia and a smaller Shi'ite group, Amal, took all 23 parliamentary seats in southern Lebanon in elections this week, Israel said the terrorist group should use the victory as an opportunity to change its strategy.

Hezbollah has vowed never to give up its arms, and cited this defiance as one reason for its success at the polls.

WORLD REPORT

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In parting interview, army chief leaves imprint on Israeli agenda

By LESLIE SUSSER

JERUSALEM (JTA) — It's not every day that Israel's No. 1 soldier expresses doubts about the country's long-term survival. But that was part of a bleak message from Lt. Gen. Moshe Ya'alon, as he stepped down as the Israeli army's chief of staff, that has shaken the country's political establishment.

In a wide-reaching, early June interview in Ha'aretz, Ya'alon pulled no punches as he put key existential issues on the table, questioned the wisdom of Israel's planned withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and northern West Bank, debunked the notion of a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and said it could lead to a "situation in which there will be no Israel here in the end."

Left-wing and centrist critics are appalled at Ya'alon's pessimism and accuse him of failing to understand the rationale behind Israel's withdrawal plan. Some, including Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, suggest Ya'alon's comments stem from bitterness at not having had his term as chief of staff extended for another year.

But right-wingers, including the "rebels" in Sharon's own Likud Party, have welcomed Ya'alon's critique. They intend to use it and similar reservations from the former head of the Shin Bet security service, Avi Dichter, as central pillars of a new, last-ditch campaign against the planned withdrawal.

In the interview, Ya'alon says his doubts about the peace process with the Palestinians began a decade ago, when as chief of military intelligence he saw troubling signs

on the ground, began asking questions and "did not get convincing answers."

The core problem in his view is that the Palestinians, even under new leader Mahmoud Abbas, are unwilling to recognize the legitimacy of a Jewish state, regardless of its borders.

"The State of Israel is ready to give the Palestinians an independent Palestinian state, but the Palestinians are not ready to give us an independent Jewish state," he says.

Therefore, he believes Palestinian violence against Israel will continue even if the Palestinians get a state of their own. In fact, Ya'alon rejects the two-state solution as "an illusory and dangerous paradigm" that will not bring stability, but will become a platform for future war.

The two-state solution "is a story that the Western world tells through Western eyes. And that story fails to understand the enormity of the gap between Israelis and Palestinians, and the scale of the problem," he argues.

If a Palestinian state is established, it will "try to undermine Israel. As long as there is no internalization of our right to exist as a Jewish state, and as long as there is insistence on concrete elements of the 'right of return' for Palestinian refugees, any such agreement will be like the construction of a house in which you plant a bomb," he declares. "At some stage, the bomb will explode."

In Ya'alon's view, the ongoing conflict eventually could pose an existential threat to Israel.

"I see a combination of terrorism and demagoguery, with question marks among

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NEWS ANALYSIS

■ Israel's former army chief is pessimistic about the Palestinian situation

Continued from page 1

us about the justice of our cause, as a recipe for a situation in which there will not be a Jewish state here in the end," he maintains.

As for the withdrawal, scheduled to begin in August, Ya'alon predicts that sooner or later it will be followed by a new outbreak of terrorism, worse than any Israel has experienced before.

In his view, if Israel stays put on the new, post-withdrawal lines, the eruption will be immediate. Further withdrawals will win it a bit of breathing space, but the reprieve will be temporary: Eventually, Israel's capacity to meet Palestinian demands will be exhausted.

"It's as clear as day to me. If we get into a confrontation at the political level, if we do not give the Palestinians more and more, there will be a violent outburst. It will begin in the West Bank," he says, adding that it will include Kassam rockets across the border and suicide bombers all over the country.

The issues raised by Ya'alon are at the cutting edge of today's political debate in Israel. The fundamental question is how best to consolidate Israel's existence.

The main argument against Ya'alon is that if his outlook results in continued occupation of land the Palestinians covet, it will lead to Israel's delegitimization in the international community and to Palestinian demands for a binational state with a Palestinian majority, threatening the Zionist idea of a Jewish state with a Jewish majority.

Proponents of the two-state solution say it will ensure a Jewish majority in Israel, be endorsed by the international community and underpinned by international law and give Israel, no longer seen as an occupier, the moral high ground.

In a best-case scenario, the two-state solution is seen as a paradigm for reconciliation and cooperation that could lead to the end of the conflict.

Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz rejected Ya'alon's prediction of violence after this summer's withdrawal.

"There are several possible scenarios, and we don't have to embrace the most pessimistic one," he told the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee on Monday.

Sharon professed surprise at Ya'alon's analysis, saying he had never heard anything like it while Ya'alon was still on the job.

For Ha'aretz, in an editorial, the implication was clear: Ya'alon was attacking the withdrawal plan because of Sharon's decision not to extend his term.

Others on the left were less dismissive. In an article titled the "Bogey Horror Show," Ha'aretz satirist Doron Rosenblum wrote, "Ya'alon's bleak prophecies should worry us. Most of them make sense. But at least we can take some consolation from the fact that Ya'alon won't be around to help make them come true."

Ya'alon's parting remarks were perfectly timed for the withdrawal's right-wing opponents. Ehud Yatom, a Likud Party legislator who opposes withdrawal, confirmed Sunday that both Ya'alon and Dichter would feature prominently in a final campaign to stop the withdrawal.

A booklet on the "security dangers of withdrawal," citing both former security bosses, will be distributed to households across the country. The campaign slogan seems to paraphrase Ya'alon: "The withdrawal will bring terror; we need to

rethink things," it reads.

The demonstrations, protests and high-profile statements against the withdrawal seem to be having an effect. A poll published in the Ma'ariv newspaper last Friday showed that public support for the plan now stands at 50 percent, a fall of 9 percent in just two weeks.

The Likud rebels hope their new campaign will bring that figure down further and influence key Likud ministers to come out openly against the plan. Finance Minister Benjamin Netanyahu already has, and others could follow suit.

For Ya'alon, the reaction to his views can hardly be surprising: As chief of staff, he says, he grew accustomed to the fact that many Israelis were so desperate for quick peace that they would reject all evidence and arguments to the contrary. ■

The two-state solution is a story that 'fails to understand the enormity of the gap between Israelis and Palestinians.'

Moshe Ya'alon

Former chief of staff, Israeli army

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Peres circumspect on capital

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Shimon Peres said Israel made a mistake in annexing all of eastern Jerusalem.

"Whoever thinks 240,000 Arabs from east Jerusalem could be annexed while Jerusalem remains a Jewish capital is as mistaken as those who say the city can be divided with fences and walls," the vice prime minister said Sunday at a Labor Party event marking Jerusalem Day.

He apparently was referring to the se-

curity barrier going up in parts of eastern Jerusalem and the West Bank. Thirty-eight years after Israel united Jerusalem in the Six-Day War, it has yet to bring peace to the Holy City, Peres said — but the upcoming withdrawal from the Gaza Strip would be a good start.

"If there is no peace in Jerusalem, there will not be peace in the country, and if we don't leave the Gaza Strip, there won't be peace in Jerusalem," he said. ■

Spots of orange appear at annual Israel parade

By RACHEL POMERANCE

NEW YORK (JTA) — A casual observer might have thought Israel's national colors were blue, white — and orange.

Sunday marked the annual rite of passage for Zionist New Yorkers, hundreds of thousands of whom took to Fifth Avenue to cheer for Israel on a blistering summer day.

Prominent in the crowd, however, were opponents of Israel's upcoming Gaza withdrawal, wearing orange T-shirts, carrying signs and handing out literature against the government's plan.

As usual, the Salute to Israel parade brought out the community — scores of day-school students sporting tie-dyed versions of the parade T-shirts advanced along the avenue, while parents searched for their marching children.

Couples fanned sleepy babies or held them atop their shoulders for a look at the festivities. All along the way, sweaty hugs of reunion took place between old friends and acquaintances.

"It's like a village," said Brigitte Dayan, a Jewish communal worker in New York.

"You walk down the street and you see many people you know," she said. "I'm here because it's the next best thing to being in Israel."

But this year, the traditional sea of blue and white flags was spotted with orange.

The parade took place against the backdrop of Israel's withdrawal plan. Anti-withdrawal activists could hardly be missed, with their vivid orange T-shirts stating a bold warning: "Jews should not expel Jews."

The activists had peacefully joined the crowd and were selling the T-shirts and handing out literature to a crowd — much of which was Orthodox and politically conservative — that seemed to take kindly to them.

Jason Koenig, 30, who attended the parade with his wife and three kids, said all the activists were unified in their support of Israel.

"Everyone has a different view of what that support is," he said. "If they were sitting here booing, obviously I would have a different opinion."

Chani Holzer, 44, and Karyn Feinberg, 49, think the protesters have a point.

"I don't know that I'd want to leave my house in Lawrence now after living there seven years," Holzer said, referring to her Long Island town. "It's my community. It's the place where my kids go to school."

But Feinberg objected to the strategy.

"They're killing us, and we're handing them something on a silver platter," she said.

Daniella Vloch, 28, an Israeli dancer, said she identifies with the right-wing in Israeli politics, and opposes the withdrawal plan.

"From our side, we see this as one more step toward peace. From their side, it means nothing," Vloch said, referring to the Palestinians. "In their eyes, until we clean out of every single part of the State of Israel, there will never be peace and quiet."

Richard Baum and Barbara Baum, attending the parade with relatives, were discussing their concern about the withdrawal.

"I don't really know how I personally feel about it," Barbara Baum said. "I'm very torn. I think everyone's very torn."

But even some who were torn felt that it wasn't appropriate to protest at the event.

Daniel Bettinger, a Manhattan businessman attending the parade with his Israeli-born wife, Nava, and two children, said Americans should not object to Israeli government policy.

"Frankly, I'm not putting my sons at risk," Bettinger said. "An Israeli mother sending her sons into Gaza and into harm's way, it's her decision and the people of Israel's decision."

Nava added that the protests were offensive to those marching in the parade, who were the true supporters of Israel, she said.

"The American people have to side with the government of Israel. The government of Israel has to make a decision what is best for Israel, and we must support the government of Israel," she said.

But orange-clad Joshua Fogelman, 34, had a more nuanced message.

"Instead of against the government, we're for the residents," he said.

After the

parade, roughly 1,000 people — far fewer than the 35,000 estimated by organizers — gathered in Central Park for a rally and concert to protest the withdrawal plan.

The rally featured addresses by Israeli legislators Effie Eitam and Uzi Landau, New York State Assembly speaker Sheldon Silver, New York State Assemblyman Dov Hikind and Rabbi Pesach Lerner, executive vice president of the National Council of Young Israel, among others.

"Our message is that the Land of Israel belongs to the Jewish people forever," said Dr. Joseph Frager, the rally's organizer. "This year the land of Gush Katif is slated to be surrendered to terrorists. We do not think it will bring peace."

The post-parade concert and rally have become an annual event since 1993 at the initiative of Frager, who felt the parade would be an ideal forum to protest the Oslo accords.

The event was sponsored by a host of right-wing groups, including the Chevron Fund, Americans for a Safe Israel, the Zionist Organization of America, Coalition for Gush Katif and the National Council of Young Israel.

"The most important message to the Jews of Gush Katif," said Gil Margulis, 36, a volunteer at the rally, "is that you are not alone, that your fight is our fight."

(JTA correspondent Tzvi Kahn contributed to this report.)

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Brigitte Dayan

Parade attendee

NEWS IN BRIEF

NORTH AMERICA

AJCommittee rebukes Texas governor

The American Jewish Committee criticized Texas' governor for signing two "values-related" bills in a Christian school.

Rick Perry signed measures requiring parental consent for abortion and expressing support for a constitutional ban on same-sex marriage on a visit Sunday to the Calvary Christian Academy in Fort Worth, Texas, prompting the AJCommittee's general counsel, Jeffrey Sinensky, to accuse the governor of "blatantly mixing political and religious affairs."

Perry sent a message that he is "politically aligned with one particular religious movement, working to advance its interests while they work to advance his," Sinensky said.

Perry and his spokesmen earlier had dismissed such criticism, saying it was an excuse to target the values in the bill.

A rabbi for a congregation of "messianic Jews" — who try to convince Jews that they should accept Jesus as their messiah — blessed the event.

Canadian conviction blasted

Canadian Jewish officials expressed frustration at the sentence given to a man who vandalized a Jewish cemetery.

The man, who toppled 25 Jewish tombstones and committed other acts of anti-Semitic vandalism with two younger partners, was prosecuted on five counts of mischief rather than on more serious charges of mischief against religious property, which would have required prosecutors to demonstrate motivation by hatred, bias or prejudice.

An Ontario judge recently accepted a guilty plea from Steven Vandermeij, 19, on the mischief charges rather than go to trial on the hate-crime charges.

Vandermeij was convicted of mischief, as were his two underage accomplices.

The formula for terrorism

Proceeds from black-market sales of baby formula are being used to finance terrorist groups, the FBI director said.

On Sunday, The New York Times cited Robert Mueller as saying that some of the millions of dollars earned from stolen baby formula in the United States finances Hamas and Hezbollah.

Presidential fund helps tsunami project

A tsunami relief project partially funded by a Jewish group received a matching contribution from the fund headed by former Presidents Bush and Clinton.

The playground project in Sri Lanka now has \$2 million pledged to it, half from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and the U.S. Agency for International Development, and half from the Bush-Clinton Fund.

The project is focused on rebuilding and upgrading playgrounds and parks in regions of the country ravaged by the Dec. 26 tsunami.

Weiner wants Pollard info released

A U.S. congressman asked the attorney general to release classified information relating to Jonathan Pollard's life sentence.

The judge set aside a plea deal in issuing a sentence on charges of spying for Israel, relying on classified information to sentence Pollard to life in 1987.

In his letter last Friday to Alberto Gonzales, Rep. Anthony Weiner (D-N.Y.) said Pollard's sentence was disproportionate to his crime and that his lawyers deserve to examine the classified information so they can challenge it.

WORLD

Preparing for anti-Semitism meeting

Jewish officials and students affiliated with the World Jewish Congress are meeting in Spain, two days before an OSCE meeting on anti-Semitism.

The group, which includes representatives from Jewish communities in more than 40 countries, met Monday with Gert Wisskirchen, the OSCE's liaison for anti-Semitism.

On Tuesday, the WJC will hold a dinner with Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Moratinos and Gov. George Pataki (R-N.Y.), head of the U.S. delegation to the talks, which are slated for Wednesday and Thursday.

Speakers: Pre-empt the boycotts

Israeli universities must act proactively to prevent future educational boycotts, speakers at a forum on the matter warned.

The warnings came last week at a University of Haifa conference.

Along with Bar-Ilan University, Haifa recently was the subject of a brief boycott by a British teachers association.

French teens get in trouble

Two French teenagers were sentenced to three months in a detention center for hurling anti-Semitic slurs at a French Israeli singer.

The teens were ordered to pay a symbolic fine to the singer known as Shirel for their comments at a January 2004 concert.

They plan to appeal the prison term, their lawyers stated.

The acts took place at a charity benefit concert.

El Salvadoran: Relations with Israel OK

Relations between El Salvador and Israel are strong, despite tensions over a Yasser Arafat Plaza in San Salvador, El Salvador's president said.

"I believe it's clear that the Israeli Embassy is upset with the mayor of San Salvador. It's not an issue between the states, because we haven't built the bust," Tony Saca told reporters last Friday.

MIDDLE EAST

Suffer not the children

Israel's defense minister called on settlers slated for removal from the Gaza Strip and northern West Bank to evacuate their children voluntarily.

Addressing the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee on Monday, Shaul Mofaz said that while some settlers may resist the upcoming Israeli withdrawals, their children should be spared the sight and relocated in advance.

Affirmative action for Ethiopian Jews?

Ethiopian Jews in Israel should receive affirmative action, Israel's president said.

Moshe Katsav made the comments Monday while speaking at an annual memorial ceremony for Ethiopian Jews who died while immigrating to Israel.

Alliance runs deep?

A spy submarine that entered Israeli waters last year reportedly was American.

Israel's Channel Two reported Sunday that the U.S. Navy sent the submarine, which was turned away from the coast near Haifa in November, apparently to gather intelligence on military developments in Israel.

Such forays are commonplace, even between allies such as Israel and the United States, the television station said.

Israeli and U.S. officials had no comment on the Channel Two report.