



Daily News Bulletin

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83rd Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Israeli president sworn in

Moshe Katsav was sworn in as Israel's eighth president during a ceremony in the Knesset.

During his inaugural speech, Katsav made an appeal for tolerance and national unity.

After he took the oath of office, an honor guard blew on rams' horns and legislators called out, "Long live the new president."

Meanwhile, most Israelis would have preferred Shimon Peres as their president, according to a poll published the day after the Nobel Peace Prize laureate's loss in a secret Knesset ballot to Katsav.

The survey of 520 people, published in the Israeli daily Yediot Achronot, found that 54 percent preferred Peres, 42 percent were for Katsav and 4 percent had no response. [Page 3]

Sex harassment panel proceeds

An independent commission investigating the Orthodox Union's handling of complaints that a high-ranking employee in its youth group sexually harassed and molested teen-agers says it expects to interview more than 100 people and review thousands of pages of documents.

Formed three weeks ago amid allegations that the O.U. ignored repeated complaints about Rabbi Baruch Lanner, the commission is urging anyone with information to e-mail inquiryncsy@yahoo.com.

Vatican: Jerusalem key to peace

The Vatican's foreign minister told visiting U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright that an international status for Jerusalem is a prerequisite for a "just and lasting" Middle East peace. [Page 4]

Barak to 'rearrange' coalition

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak plans to begin "to rearrange his government and his coalition" next week, according to the premier's spokeswoman.

Merav Parsi-Tzadok said the three-month parliamentary recess that begins next week gives Barak plenty of time to set up a new government and continue efforts to forge a peace deal with the Palestinians.

"In approximately two to two-and-a-half months, we will know if we have a new government and what kind of a government, wide or narrow, and if there is a peace agreement or not," she said.

NEWS ANALYSIS

GOP courts Jewish vote with a pro-Israel platform

By Lisa Hostein

PHILADELPHIA (JTA) — Rarely in recent U.S. elections have a candidate's views on Israel and the Middle East been a make-or-break issue for Jewish voters.

It's generally a given these days that most candidates are pro-Israel, or at least they espouse the traditional pro-Israel slogans during the campaign — support for a strong U.S.-Israel relationship, a commitment to Israel's security and a pledge to support a united Jerusalem as the eternal capital of the Jewish state.

At the same time, many Jewish voters must feel a certain comfort level on the Israel issue before they move on to other criteria by which to cast their votes.

Which perhaps explains in part why Republican Party leaders addressing Jewish delegate functions at the Republican National Convention in Philadelphia this week emphasized what they see as Texas Gov. George W. Bush's support for Israel and the party's strong pro-Israel platform.

Republican leaders know that their presidential candidate has to overcome the legacy of his father, former President Bush, who — along with his secretary of state, James Baker — was viewed by many Jews as hostile to Israel. They also know that many Jews are uncomfortable with some of the domestic positions being espoused by Bush, including his views on abortion and religion in public life.

So instead of focusing on economic and other public policy issues — issues that seem to attract Republican Jews to the party — most of the party leaders addressing Jewish events touted the Middle East-related planks in the party platform and, in several cases, criticized the Clinton administration for pressuring Israel to make difficult decisions without getting anything in return from the Palestinians.

"It is wrong" that at the Camp David summit, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak gave and Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat took, and "the United States never said anything," Newt Gingrich, former speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, declared Sunday to hundreds of cheering supporters gathered at a Jewish community event co-sponsored by the American Israel Public Affairs Committee and the United Jewish Communities, the umbrella organization of local federations.

Gingrich also took the Clinton administration to task for not yet implementing the U.S. law requiring that the U.S. Embassy in Israel be moved from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. House Speaker Dennis Hastert sounded similar themes at the AIPAC-UJC event, warning the Palestinians not to "back away from the peace table" and unilaterally declare statehood in September, as they have threatened to do.

For his part, Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), who was defeated by Bush in the Republican primaries and was greeted with a hero's welcome during the convention, including at the AIPAC event, emphasized the importance of an undivided Jerusalem. But at the same time, McCain seemed to back the idea of a compromise that would include a sharing of sovereignty with the Palestinians.

"It is difficult to imagine that a compromise can be found involving Jerusalem, but to ignore the possibility is to accept the inevitability of further conflict," he said.

But he also said, "The United States should play no part in any agreement that is not consistent" with the premise that "Jerusalem remain the undivided capital of Israel."

Bush's chief foreign policy adviser, Condoleezza Rice, was less specific about the future of Jerusalem. Without mentioning a united Jerusalem, she said she hoped an agreement on Jerusalem could be worked out between Israel and the Palestinians that

MIDEAST FOCUS

More U.N. troops to deploy

Lebanon is expected to authorize the deployment of more U.N. peacekeepers along its border with Israel. U.N. peacekeepers completed the first phase of their deployment in southern Lebanon on Sunday, when troops moved to four positions along the frontier.

Lebanon, under pressure to take control of the south from Hezbollah, said it will send 500 army soldiers and 500 policemen once the peacekeepers fan out completely along the border.

Israelis running Ecstasy trade

Israelis are running a global trade in the drug Ecstasy, according to Israeli police.

The business newspaper *Globes* quoted sources as saying that 1.5 million Ecstasy pills were seized from individuals holding Israeli citizenship in 1999.

The Israeli gangs involved in producing and selling the drug, which affects the brain's pleasure centers, live mainly in Europe and North America.

Israeli jet catches fire

An Israeli F-16 jet caught fire during a training exercise.

No one was hurt in the incident.

As a result of the incident, Israel has temporarily grounded all of its F-16 jets, which forms the backbone of the Israeli Air Force.

Israel's air force plans to buy 50 updated F-16s from the United States for \$2.5 billion.

Woman pilots commercial plane

A woman piloted a commercial airplane in Israel for the first time.

Smadar Schechter, 29, flew an Arkia Airlines plane from Tel Aviv to the Red Sea resort of Eilat.

She said she was not insulted by some expressions of skepticism made by male passengers on the plane.



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maintains the holy status of the city. She also reiterated Bush's position that he would move the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

Speaking to the RJC on Tuesday, Rice said she did not think that the failed Camp David summit was a waste of time because the parties focused on difficult issues.

There must be an agreement under which "both parties have to feel secure, particularly Israel," said Rice, whom observers say would likely get a top foreign policy post in a Bush administration.

Mel Sembler, the national finance chairman of the Republican National Committee and an honorary chairman of the RJC, organized a trip to Israel in 1998 for Bush and his wife, Laura, under the auspices of the RJC. Calling Bush "very vocal on Israel," Sembler recalls being moved to tears when Bush, at Sembler's request, read from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount at the Sea of Galilee.

"He's a deeply religious man, and I think that's wonderful," said Sembler, a developer in St. Petersburg, Fla., who has served as the U.S. ambassador to Australia.

Many delegates at the convention appeared convinced that Bush would be there for Israel. "George Bush would have done better" at Camp David than President Clinton, said Phil Hellreich, a delegate from Hawaii who served on the platform committee.

Others, however, were skeptical.

"He still has to convince me" on Israel, said Lee Bender, a Philadelphia attorney who was not a delegate but attended several of the Jewish events.

It was clearly those like Bender the Bush backers were trying — and will keep trying — to persuade. □

Planks in GOP's Mideast platform

PHILADELPHIA (JTA) — The following are excerpts from the Middle East and Persian Gulf section of the Republican Party platform, adopted at the party's national convention here this week:

- We have four priorities for the Middle East. First, we seek to promote and maintain peace throughout the region. Second, we must ensure that Israel remains safe and secure. Third, we must protect our economic interests and ensure the reliable flow of oil from the Persian Gulf. And fourth, we must reduce the threat of weapons of mass destruction in the region.

- It is important for the United States to support and honor Israel, the only true democracy in the Middle East.

- We will ensure that Israel maintains a qualitative edge in defensive technology over any potential adversaries.

- The United States has a moral and legal obligation to maintain its embassy and ambassador in Jerusalem. Immediately upon taking office, the next Republican president will begin the process of moving the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Israel's capital, Jerusalem.

- The United States seeks a comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East. America can use its prestige to encourage discussions and negotiations. But we will not impose our view or an artificial timetable.

- A new Republican administration would oppose any such declaration [of Palestinian independence]. It will also do everything possible to promote the conclusion of a genuine peace in the Middle East. While we have hopes for the peace process, our commitment to the security of Israel is an overriding moral and strategic concern.

- Iran's record of supporting terrorism, opposing the Middle East peace process, developing weapons of mass destruction and long-range missiles, and its denial of human rights, most recently demonstrated in the trial and conviction of Iranian Jews on unfounded espionage charges, demonstrates that Tehran remains a dangerous threat to the United States and our interests in the region. The next Republican administration will stop making unilateral gestures toward the Iranian government which, to date, have failed to result in a change in Iranian behavior.

- Republicans endorse continued assistance and support for countries that have made peace with Israel — led by Egypt and Jordan. We will take steps to bolster relations with Amman, including negotiating a U.S.-Jordan Free Trade Agreement. □

JEWISH WORLD

Diver looks for refugee ship

A British diver is preparing an expedition to determine whether a shipwreck discovered off Istanbul is the remains of a vessel carrying Holocaust refugees that was torpedoed and sunk.

Earlier this month, Turkish divers said they located the wreck of the *Struma*, believed to have been sunk by a Russian torpedo in February 1942, killing 778 people.

The grandparents of British diver Greg Buxton were among the passengers, mainly Jews from Romania, who had boarded the steamer.

Group calls for Yahoo! boycott

A French anti-racist group called for a worldwide boycott of Yahoo! for allowing access to a site selling Nazi memorabilia.

The Movement against Racism and for Friendship Among People also urged schools not to use the California-based Internet portal and called on the media to refuse its advertising.

In May, a French court ordered the Internet portal to prevent French Web surfers from taking part in any auctions on its Web site that deal in Nazi items.

Germany plans crackdown

German officials drafted plans for a crackdown on right-wing violence.

The move comes after Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer said there may be a silent majority of Germans who are aiding the violence by not speaking out against it.

There have been a spate of recent attacks, including a bombing that wounded a group of Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union.

Ritual slaughterer sues O.U.

A ritual slaughterer in Baltimore is suing the Orthodox Union and his local kosher certifiers for refusing to resolve a dispute with him through a rabbinical court.

According to the Baltimore Jewish Times, Rabbi Barry Ephraim Abramson, a longtime shochet for Empire poultry, filed a \$1.4 million lawsuit after the boards removed their approval for his work.

The O.U. and Vaad HaKashrus of Baltimore are denying that they refused to go before a rabbinical court.

Film to highlight Jewish rescuer

Filming is under way in Hungary on a documentary about the life of a Swiss diplomat instrumental in saving thousands of Hungarian Jews during World War II. Carl Lutz is credited with being one of the largest issuers of Schutzbriefs, or protective letters, during the war.

Israel's new president promises to guide 'quieter, calmer' country

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israel's new president has vowed to pursue tolerance and national unity.

Moshe Katsav made the promise during his inaugural speech at a Knesset ceremony Tuesday evening, when he became Israel's eighth president.

After the Likud Party legislator took the oath of office, an honor guard blew on rams' horns and legislators called out, "Long live the new president."

In a secret parliamentary vote the previous day, Katsav beat the odds-on favorite, Nobel Peace Prize laureate and former Labor Prime Minister Shimon Peres.

Katsav is the first Likud candidate to be elected Israel's head of state.

After the election, Katsav, 55, promised he was "locking up" his conservative political views during his single, seven-year term, saying he would instead focus on the internal problems confronting Israeli society.

At the swearing-in ceremony, Katsav, who is religiously observant, offered a prayer seeking guidance.

"I ask you, God of Israel, to make me succeed in my role," Katsav said at the Knesset ceremony.

"I will do everything to justify your trust in me, and I accept my duty with humility."

The new president also noted his own humble beginnings as a child who immigrated with his family to Israel from Iran.

Katsav spent his first few years in Israel in the transit camps set up for the absorption of Jews who immigrated mainly from Arab countries during the 1950s.

Knesset Speaker Avraham Burg hailed Katsav's election as proof that anyone, from any means or background, could attain the position of "Israel's No. 1 citizen."

Burg also advised Katsav to rise above the political debate.

Katsav's promise to help nurture a "quieter, calmer" Israel contrasted with the more turbulent dynamic that characterized the presidency of his predecessor, Ezer Weizman.

Weizman, who stepped down three years before his second five-year term was to end, resigned three months after police probing his financial affairs recommended that he not be charged — but at the same time gave him a less-than-blemish-free verdict.

A veteran public figure who held key posts in the military and politics before becoming president, Weizman served as president during a period that spanned both left- and right-wing governments.

The outspoken Weizman — the nephew of Israel's first president, Chaim Weizmann — has frequently been a counterbalance to government policy, pushing for progress when the peace process faltered and urging a slowdown during waves of terrorist attacks.

In an emotional speech at Tuesday's ceremony, Weizman made an appeal to the politically divided Knesset not to abandon the pursuit of peace, "no matter how complicated or difficult it may be."

During his speech, Weizman offered some words of advice to Katsav.

"Try not to get into trouble. It's not easy, but perhaps you were elected because your nature is different from mine."

Some 1,200 people participated in the swearing-in ceremony, including Supreme Court justices, diplomats, former lawmakers and top military and police officials.

Notably absent was Peres.

Considered the popular favorite for the post, Peres was openly stunned following his defeat. In an Israel Radio interview on Tuesday, Peres acknowledged disappointment, but said he "blamed no one" for it.

Peres, who remains regional development minister in the Cabinet of Prime Minister Ehud Barak, said he preferred not to dwell in the past, but to look forward to the future.

Peres' defeat was widely seen as a political slap in the face to Barak, who is struggling to hold on to power in the face of an onslaught from his political opponents against his peace policies. □

BEHIND THE HEADLINES**U.S. Jews try to get accustomed to the idea of a divided Jerusalem**

By Michael J. Jordan

NEW YORK (JTA) — Ever since the 1967 Six-Day War, when Israeli forces captured eastern Jerusalem, North American Jews have generally echoed the mantra of an “eternal and undivided” Jerusalem.

But with compromises on the status of Jerusalem dangled at Camp David, all that may dramatically change.

Many segments of the community were and continue to be in “extreme shock and disappointment” — in the words of Mandell Ganchrow, president of the Orthodox Union — that Jerusalem is suddenly on the table.

But if Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak can convince most Israelis that such concessions will bring peace, some observers and polling data suggest that most Diaspora Jews can be assuaged as well.

After all, American Jewish leaders and the Jewish community at large have stated time and again that the terms of any peace deal are up to Israel, and Israelis alone, to decide.

“If Israelis indicate some sort of willingness to share Jerusalem, it’s hard to imagine that that wouldn’t also become the dominant attitude among American Jews,” said Jerome Segal, a research scholar at the University of Maryland’s Center of International and Security Studies.

According to reports that emerged after the failure of the Camp David summit, Barak displayed a willingness to accept an American proposal calling for Israel to transfer parts of Jerusalem — including some religious sites and predominantly Arab neighborhoods — to Palestinian sovereignty.

Regarding American Jewry’s attitude toward Jerusalem, Segal discounted as “irrelevant” polls such as those conducted over the past decade by the American Jewish Committee that showed a majority consistently opposed to any compromise on Jerusalem’s status.

“We’ve had a staggering change in the realities,” said Segal, who is currently in Israel lobbying for “divine sovereignty” over Jerusalem, in which neither Israelis nor Palestinians would claim ownership of the city, but both would share administrative duties.

“Nobody would have believed even a month ago that there would have been a proposal to divide the Old City.”

In the AJCommittee polls, those most strenuously opposed to compromise were more religious Jews or those who feel most connected with Israel. During the past two years, however, there have already been signs of a shift in American Jewish opinion.

While the AJCommittee polls throughout the 1990s indicated that just one-third of American Jews would accept a change in Jerusalem’s status, by May 1999 the figure had risen to 42 percent.

The rise may have been because as an earlier deadline for a peace deal approached in September 1999, and more Israeli media, think tanks and politicians openly discussed how to resolve the conflict with the Palestinians, “it dawned on” more American Jews that loss of part of the holy city might be necessary, said Kenneth Bandler, spokesman for the AJCommittee.

And in January, Segal, who is also president of the Jewish Peace Lobby and author of the recent book “Negotiating Jerusa-

lem,” published a statement signed by 314 American rabbis that called for Jerusalem to be shared. The statement was met with an avalanche of criticism, especially from the leading U.S. Conservative and Orthodox rabbinical groups.

The AJCommittee has not yet conducted its poll this year, nor have there been surveys of Jewish reaction in light of the Camp David summit.

However, with Barak having broached the de facto division of Jerusalem — traditionally a taboo “third rail” of Israeli politics — and the entire Israeli media now weighing in on the issue, some observers believe the process of conditioning Jewish public opinion is under way.

Not so, said Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

“I don’t think this sacred cow has been slaughtered,” Hoenlein said.

“The principle remains the same: No compromise on the sovereignty or unity of Jerusalem. The feeling and commitment to the unity of Jerusalem as capital of Israel remains undiminished. There may be some redefinition” in administrative issues, “but it has nothing to do with the sovereignty of Israel over Jerusalem, or its status as the capital of Israel.”

Clearly, no change to that would come about without at least symbolic resistance from many corners of American Jewry.

“For us, it’s not just rhetoric when we say that Jerusalem must remain the undivided capital of Israel,” said the O.U.’s Ganchrow.

“Contrary to any other Israeli security policy, when it comes to Jerusalem, while we don’t have the ability to impose our will, every Jew in the world has a right to an opinion.”

“If I really believed that at the end of the day, a settlement that included concessions on Jerusalem would lead to a true peace, where Palestinians accept Jews like cousins and preach love for Jews in their schools and Arafat includes a Jewish Jerusalem on the map behind his desk, then I would accept it.”

“But I don’t believe Arafat is sincere, or that there will be a real peace.” □

Vatican: Jerusalem key to deal

ROME (JTA) — The Vatican’s foreign minister has informed visiting U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright that an international status for Jerusalem is a prerequisite for a “just and lasting” Middle East peace.

A Vatican spokesman said Archbishop Jean-Louis Tauran stressed to Albright on Tuesday “the priority of dialogue; respect for international decisions, particularly U.N. resolutions; and the necessity of a special, internationally guaranteed status for the holy places of the three monotheistic religions.”

The Vatican, which sees itself as the protector of Christian interests in Jerusalem and at other Holy Land sites, has long sought to be an active player in Middle East peace negotiations.

Albright stopped off in Rome on her way home from Asia to brief Tauran on last month’s failed talks at Camp David between Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak.

Earlier Tuesday, following talks with Italian Foreign Minister Lamberto Dini, Albright said that at Camp David, Arafat had insisted on full Palestinian sovereignty over eastern Jerusalem. □