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83rd Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Barak, Arafat talk in Israeli home

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat met in another effort to break the deadlocked peace talks.

In their first face-to-face talks since the failed Camp David summit in July, the two held discussions late Monday in Barak's private home in the central Israeli village of Kochav Yair.

The United States decided for now not to present proposals aimed at breaking the stalemated talks, according to the Israeli daily Ha'aretz.

U.S. officials reached the decision after identifying "disparities on almost every subject" now being discussed by the two sides.

'No indication' Indyk spied

There is "no indication of espionage" and no "intelligence information has been compromised," U.S. State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said, referring to the weekend decision to suspend the security clearance of the U.S. ambassador to Israel.

Martin Indyk is expected to remain in Washington until his investigation by the State Department is completed. [Page 4]

Syrian missiles concern Israel

Syria is keeping open the option of attacking Israel, Ephraim Sneh, Israel's deputy defense minister told Israel Radio on Monday. Sneh was reacting to reports that Syrian missiles are now capable of reaching almost any target in Israel.

Police probe school rampage

Police in the central Russian town of Ryazan are investigating a youth rampage through a Jewish school. The town's Jewish leaders said that 15 youths, armed with chains, broke furniture, smashed windows and destroyed children's drawings Sept. 17.

Laser system passes test

A joint U.S.-Israel laser weapon shot down successive salvos of Katyusha rockets for the first time in tests at the White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico.

The new weapon, known as Nautilus in Israel and Tactical High Energy Laser in the United States, is being developed to defend Israel's border areas, against short-range rocket attacks.

5760: A Year of Promise and Peril

From peace process to Lebanon, Israel changed the way it thinks

By David Landau

JERUSALEM (JTA) — The two events that dominated the news in Israel during 5760 both divided the nation and brought it together: the peace process and the Lebanon withdrawal.

Even though it faltered just before the finish line and its outcome is still uncertain, 5760 was a groundbreaking year on the peace front. In drawing as close together as they did, under the indefatigable prodding of President Clinton at Camp David in July, the leaders of Israel and the Palestinians made concessions that only a few short years ago would have been considered unthinkable — indeed, tantamount to treason.

Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat agreed to Israel's annexation of territory close to the pre-1967 borders, home to dozens of Jewish settlements and 150,000 Israelis. He agreed to the recognition of ring of suburbs, built by Israel around Jerusalem since 1967, by the Palestinians and by the world community as an integral part of Jewish Jerusalem and capital of the Jewish state.

He agreed, too, to a formula on the vexed issue of Palestinian refugees that would mean, in practice, the return to sovereign Israel of only a few thousand under family reunion schemes. The international community would contribute massively to a resettlement and compensation program for millions of refugees now living throughout the Middle East. Had the two sides managed to resolve their differences over Jerusalem, there would have been agreement on a declaration ending their 100-year-old conflict once and for all.

Arafat also agreed to postpone a declaration of statehood until at least Nov. 15.

These are huge concessions from the Palestinian perspective. Ehud Barak, the Israeli prime minister, went even farther — as Clinton himself said.

Apart from Barak's readiness to recognize Palestinian sovereignty — subject to a strict regime of security limitations — across more than 90 percent of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Barak was prepared to cede some Palestinian suburbs of Jerusalem, and to transfer to Palestinian rule some 50 Israeli settlements. However, Arafat wanted even more on Jerusalem, especially in the Old City and on the Temple Mount.

At this writing, Israel has called an indefinite "timeout" in peace talks. Previously, ministers and diplomats from the two sides were engaged in intensive efforts, through various direct and indirect channels, to find compromises to bridge the gaps over Jerusalem, or else to draft language that can leave Jerusalem unresolved yet nevertheless proclaim the conflict at an end.

They were variously assisted, spurred, cajoled and pressured by statesmen not only from the United States and Europe, but from Russia, China, the Third World and the Muslim world. Arafat is taking the brunt of the heat, because there is widespread recognition that Barak went as far — and perhaps farther — as any Israeli political leader can afford to go. Regardless of whether the suspension of talks continues, the historical record will not — cannot — be expunged.

The concessions offered, even though they were offered tentatively and conditionally, have become facts of political life.

Even if the two leaders' respective oppositions rail against them and threaten to vitiate them, each opposition will oppose the vitiation of the other side's concessions.

The partition of the Greater Land of Israel, or, more accurately, its repartition, begun at Oslo in 1993 — or some would say at Madrid in 1991, or, as others insist, at

MIDEAST FOCUS

Likud leader's plans spark anger

Palestinians are reacting angrily to reports that Ariel Sharon, head of Israel's opposition Likud Party, intends to visit the Temple Mount later this week.

The Palestinians described the planned visit as a provocation.

Meanwhile, a Knesset committee approved a bill that bans any Israeli territorial concessions in Jerusalem.

In another development, Sharon appealed to American Jews to take a stand on Jerusalem and help it remain the "undivided" capital of Israel.

"Jerusalem is yours not any less than it is ours," he told a meeting of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations in New York last week.

Museum to check Shoah policies

French insurer AXA will let the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial in Jerusalem examine whether any of more than 650,000 policies sold from 1933 to 1945 belonged to Jews who perished in the Holocaust, according to the World Jewish Congress.

The WJC said AXA's move would help restitution by "significantly" adding "to the database of unpaid Holocaust-era policies."

Israel forms green police

Israel is creating a special police team to enforce environmental legislation.

The new force will include at least 100 officers who will fine and arrest polluters.

Kickboxer poses as haredi Jew

The actor and kickboxer known as the "Muscles from Brussels" donned the black garb of a fervently Orthodox Jew for a film being shot in Jerusalem.

In "The Order," Jean Claude Van Damme plays an art thief searching for his archaeologist father, who is missing in Israel.



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Camp David in 1978 — and became in the year 5760 an irrevocable reality. It waits now only for its formal implementation. Some in Israel see this as cause for dismay. They feel Barak went too far and surrendered the Jewish people's historic claim to exclusivity in the Holy City. Jerusalem, after all, was the City of David more than a millennium before Islam was founded.

But few delude themselves that Barak's concessions, having been articulated in an international forum, can ever be rescinded. The "consensus" among Israelis, which for more than three decades was predicated on the permanent and sole sovereignty of the Jewish state over all of what is now municipal Jerusalem, will have to make way for another, more complex and less rigid consensus.

In the meantime, 5760 was relatively quiet on the terrorism front. A triple bombing struck the northern coastal town of Netanya in November, lightly to moderately wounding dozens of people just one day before Israeli and Palestinian officials were to begin final-status negotiations. But this was a rare event in 5760, and security cooperation between Israel and the Palestinians in combating terrorism appeared to be increasing. For many Israelis, 5760 will be remembered as the year when, at last, the Israel Defense Force disengaged from their long and hopeless embroilment in Lebanon. The end, when it came in May, came suddenly and without much dignity. It came, moreover, accompanied by much criticism from the political opposition and from within the ruling coalition.

But Ehud Barak, having come to power on an explicit commitment to end the two-decades-old Israeli presence across the border within a year, was determined to abide by his word. While the image of Lebanese celebrating and throwing stones over the border in the weeks after the withdrawal did not please many Israelis, Barak has been vindicated so far.

The pullback was not without its complications. The 2,500 or so members of the Israel-allied South Lebanon Army were caught unaware by Israel's sudden withdrawal. Many felt deserted and angry. Israel offered to take in these militia fighters and their families, and many of the Christian fighters took Israel up on its offer.

But the United Nations and the Lebanese army have deployed in the areas along the border vacated by the Israel Defense Force, no soldiers were hurt during the withdrawal and no civilians have been hurt since.

Another of Israel's neighbors provided major news in June, when Syrian President Hafez Assad died at the age of 69.

In the final year of his life, Assad — as he had throughout the three decades that he ruled Syria — proved an elusive foe for Israel. Barak had vowed soon after he was elected in the spring of 1999 that he would reach peace with Syria in a year.

But, again despite Barak and Clinton's best efforts, Assad refused to reach a deal with Israel, apparently because of disputes over borders in the Golan Heights, which Israel captured from Syria in the 1967 Six-Day War, and which would be returned as part of any peace deal. Assad's death left Barak without a partner in his goal of reaching a peace deal with Syria.

There is hope that Assad's son and successor, Bashar — who lived in the West for a time and is known to be champion of the Internet — will open up further to the Israelis. But these hopes have yet to be realized.

Also in 5760, the visit of Pope John Paul in March moved and thrilled millions around the world. The pope's sensitive and imaginative comportment will have a lasting influence on Catholic theology and Catholic-Jewish relations for a long time to come. Another piece of history made this year was the election by the Knesset of Sephardi politician Moshe Katsav as Israel's eighth president in a surprise victory over former Prime Minister Shimon Peres. The victory was seen both as a coming of age for Sephardim in Israel and as a rebuke to Barak.

In May, Israel's High Court of Justice ruled that women can pray at the Western Wall while wearing prayer shawls, marking a victory in an 11-year effort by the group Women of the Wall.

But as later events proved, this ruling was far from the final word on this issue. In July, Israel's High Court of Justice agreed to reconsider the decision, which had prompted an outcry from fervently Orthodox politicians, who immediately proposed legislation to circumvent the ruling. □

JEWISH WORLD

Swiss referendum result praised

Swiss newspapers ran headlines applauding the defeat of a referendum on whether to limit the number of foreigners in Switzerland to 18 percent of the population.

The Swiss daily *Le Temps* called the proposal's defeat Sunday by 63 percent of the voters a blow to xenophobia.

The vote was the sixth time Swiss voters struck down a plan to impose a limit on foreigners.

Jews blamed for sub sinking

Protesters in Moscow held anti-Semitic and anti-Western signs in a demonstration against what they believe to be the sinking last month of a Russian submarine by the United States.

"Death to American Fascism" and "No to Jewish Zionism" were among the posters held by the demonstrators at last week's rally outside the U.S. Embassy in Moscow. Russia has said the submarine *Kursk* sank Aug. 12 after a collision with another vessel, but other experts say it probably sank after an explosion from a defective torpedo.

Shoah forum planned for Vilnius

Thirty-nine nations have been invited to attend a meeting next month in Lithuania that will focus on Nazi-looted intellectual and cultural property, including patents and religious objects.

The Oct. 3-5 meeting in Vilnius is the latest in a series of international gatherings focusing on Holocaust-era restitution.

In 1997, a conference was held in London about Nazi-looted gold.

In 1998, a meeting was held in Washington on looted assets. In January of this year, Stockholm hosted a meeting on Holocaust education.

Czech shul hosts exhibit

A 130-year-old restored synagogue in the Czech town of Breclav is to host an exhibition on the history of its Jewish community.

The exhibition includes documents that confirm Jews were present in the town as early as 1414.

Jews, Latinos hold festival

Jews and Latinos from the Los Angeles area participated in their first joint festival. Sunday's *Fiesta Shalom* was timed to take place between the Sept. 16 Mexican Independence Day and the start of Rosh Hashanah.

It was developed to heal the rift that developed two years ago in a state Senate race, when the Mexican-American candidate narrowly beat a Jewish opponent amid mutual charges of racist campaign tactics.

Vatican decisions upset rabbis; Jewish-Christian dialogue canceled

By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME (JTA) — Recent moves by the Vatican have soured its relations with Jews to the point where a scheduled "Day of Jewish-Christian Dialogue" has been postponed indefinitely.

Rome's chief rabbi, Elio Toaff, and his deputy, Rabbi Abramo Piattelli, pulled out of the scheduled Oct. 3 symposium — long scheduled as part of the Holy See's Millennium Holy Year program.

The rabbis were responding to two developments earlier this month that deeply upset Jews.

One was the Sept. 3 beatification of Pope Pius IX, the 19th century pontiff who was the last pope to keep Jews in the ghetto and who was behind the 1858 kidnapping of a young Jewish boy who had been secretly baptized as a baby.

The other was a Vatican document released Sept. 5 that rejected the idea that other faiths are equal to Catholicism.

The document, issued by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the Vatican's guardian of orthodoxy, said followers of other religions are "in a gravely deficient situation in comparison with those who, in the church, have the fullness of the means of salvation."

Even other Christian denominations had "defects," it said.

"There exists a single Church of Christ, which subsists in the Catholic Church, governed by the Successor of Peter and by the bishops in communion with him," it said.

The document sparked anger and dismay among Jewish and non-Catholic Christian leaders, and prompted concern that it could set back the course of interfaith dialogue that started with the Second Vatican Council during the 1960s.

To many observers, both the document and the beatification of Pius IX seemed out of step with the outreach to Jews and other faiths that has been a pillar of the papacy of Pope John Paul II.

The pope made self-examination and repentance for past sins — including anti-Semitism — a major theme of the 2000 Jubilee or Holy Year.

This culminated with the pope's praying at the Western Wall during his pilgrimage last March to the Holy Land.

These new "pronouncements of the church are surprising and inconsistent with the courageous steps of John Paul II," Leone Paserman, president of the Rome Jewish community, told reporters.

Tullia Zevi, a former president of Italy's Jewish community, called the two developments "a cold shower after the optimism generated by the development of dialogue."

Jews were not the only voices of protest against the Vatican document.

"The idea that Anglican and other churches are not 'proper churches' seems to question the considerable ecumenical gains we have made," Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey, the spiritual leader of 70 million Anglicans, said in a statement.

Some saw the developments as dramatic evidence of an inner struggle within the Vatican hierarchy as 80-year-old John Paul's reign draws to its inevitable close.

But others saw them as consistent with Catholic theology and belief.

"It is the Roman Catholic formula of confession, extended to behavior," said one Rome observer. "The assumption is that you apologize, ask forgiveness and the slate is wiped clean." □

Czech court sentences extremist

PRAGUE (JTA) — A Czech court has sentenced a member of a far-right political party to 10 months in prison for inciting national hatred.

The 24-year-old had placed photographs of Czech President Vaclav Havel and other political leaders in the center of the town of Decin with a message that read: "The aim of these Jews is to destroy the state and to liquidate the nation." □

BEHIND THE HEADLINES**Ambassador's career filled with intrigue from the start***By Sharon Samber*

WASHINGTON (JTA) — From the start, Martin Indyk's career as a U.S. official has been filled with intrigue.

As the first Jewish ambassador to Israel and later the top State Department official in charge of Middle East policy, Indyk's words and actions have been scrutinized by Jews and Arabs, by proponents and opponents of the peace process.

Now, with his security clearance suspended, both Indyk's words and actions are on hold until the State Department finishes its investigation of his "suspected violations" of security procedures.

Indyk, now back in Washington, is being investigated over whether he mishandled classified material, including the use of unclassified, government-owned laptop computers to write classified documents.

Indyk has expressed regret that "my trying to do the best possible job under very difficult conditions has led to the temporary suspension of my security clearances."

Other current and former State Department officials say what Indyk is accused of doing has been practiced by many.

State Department officials have emphasized that there is "no indication of espionage in this matter" and that no "intelligence information has been compromised."

Not since former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger has an American Jew had such a strong say in overall U.S. Middle East policy.

Indyk helped signal the end of the days when so-called Arabists determined U.S. policy in the Middle East.

At the same time, critics of U.S. policy in general and Indyk in particular have termed him a "Jewish Arabist" for his approach to the peace process and his early push for a land-for-peace approach in Israeli-Palestinian negotiations.

Indyk, a native Australian who only became a U.S. citizen in 1993, one week before President Clinton appointed him as the National Security Council's senior director for Near Eastern and South Asian affairs, worked as a research associate at the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, the pro-Israel lobby, in 1982.

Later, he was the founding executive director of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, a pro-Israel think tank.

He was appointed U.S. ambassador to Israel in 1995.

In 1997, he became the assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs, and was reappointed ambassador last year.

Since the start of his diplomatic career, Indyk, who is in his late 40s, has received praise for his work on the Middle East, but he has also seen his share of controversies.

Arab Americans had protested Indyk's nomination, citing what they called his partisan background.

But much of the controversy emanated from the Jewish and Israeli perspective, centering on the Clinton administration's pursuit of peace in the region, and its policy on Jerusalem in particular.

Indyk caused something of a stir in 1995 when he did not show up for Israel's opening ceremonies of a 15-month festival celebrating the 3,000th anniversary of the founding of Jerusalem.

Coming at a critical time in Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, the event had taken on political overtones, leading to the suggestion that Indyk purposely stayed away from the event.

For his part, Indyk said he had seen it only as a "cultural" event and had a prior commitment, but that he was not boycotting the event. He later showed up in New York for the first official U.S. celebration of "Jerusalem 3000."

Indyk has also been credited with crafting the Clinton administration's controversial policy on the U.S. Embassy in Israel.

Despite congressional legislation requiring that the embassy be moved from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem by 1999, Clinton invoked waivers to postpone any action on the embassy until the Palestinians and Israelis agree on the status of Jerusalem in peace talks.

Indyk's assessment was that moving the embassy would "explode the peace process."

Just last week, he ruffled feathers again with a comment that Israel should share Jerusalem with the Palestinians.

Jerusalem "is not, and cannot be, the exclusive preserve of one religion, and the solution cannot come from one side challenging or denying another side's beliefs," he was quoted as saying as he received an honorary doctorate from the Reform movement's Hebrew Union College in Jerusalem.

Some see the statement as a basic reiteration of Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak's current thinking; others see it as a shift in U.S. policy.

During his tenure, Indyk was also accused by Likud officials of crafting Clinton's strategy of openly backing then-Labor leader Shimon Peres in his 1996 contest for prime minister against Benjamin Netanyahu.

In 1997 a right-wing Knesset member hurled an anti-Semitic epithet at Indyk, apparently because he believed the ambassador was pressuring Israel to make concessions to the Palestinians.

The lawmaker, Rehavam Ze'evi of the Moledet Party, later apologized to Indyk. The Israeli Foreign Ministry criticized Ze'evi's behavior and called Indyk with an apology.

Indyk was challenged on many of these issues during 1997 Senate confirmation hearings for his appointment to become assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs, boosting him to the top Middle East policy post.

Nevertheless, he was easily confirmed for the post in September 1997. In November 1999, Indyk and Edward Walker, then ambassador to Israel, switched jobs.

Barak, who made peace in the region his administration's top priority, reportedly wanted Indyk back in his old position.

This coincided with the U.S. being interested in maintaining a high-level dialogue between the United States and Israel and refocusing efforts on the peace process.

His second stint as ambassador, where he has continued to be a key player in the past several months of peace efforts, had been relatively controversy-free until now. □

Rabbi, pop star to talk to kids

NEW YORK (JTA) — Pop star Michael Jackson and Rabbi Shmuley Boteach are planning to announce an initiative emphasizing children welfare's next February.

The announcement will take place at Oxford University's student union. The Israeli psychic Uri Geller introduced Boteach and Jackson, who have become good friends. □