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85th Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Sharon, Netanyahu clash

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Benjamin Netanyahu had their first clash hours after Netanyahu was sworn in as foreign minister.

During a meeting Wednesday night, Sharon berated Netanyahu for saying in his first statement as foreign minister that the U.S.-sponsored road map for Middle East peace was "not on the agenda" because of an anticipated U.S. attack on Iraq.

In a related development, the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv, denying media reports to the contrary, said envoy David Satterfield would visit the region early next week to promote the road map.

FBI issues Ramadan terror alert

The FBI issued a bulletin warning of possible terrorist attacks during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan.

"Al-Qaida and sympathetic jihadists may view Ramadan as having religious incentives and symbolic and operational advantages for conducting terrorist attacks," the bulletin said.

Ramadan started Wednesday and runs through Dec. 5.

In another development, the White House invited Islamic leaders to a traditional dinner Thursday to break the daily Ramadan fast. The dinner comes amid a heightened U.S. effort to show that the war on terror is not an attack on Islam.

Judge: Case against P.A. is OK

A judge in a U. S. court refused to dismiss a \$250 million lawsuit against the Palestinian Authority filed by the family of an American victim of Palestinian terror.

A federal court judge in Rhode Island ruled this week that since the Palestinian Authority doesn't meet the criteria for statehood, it can't be granted the immunity of a sovereign state.

The judge ruled that the family of Yaron Ungar therefore can proceed with the lawsuit.

The family charges that the Palestinian Authority is responsible for a 1996 terrorist attack carried out by Hamas.

Ungar and his wife, Efrat, a Kiryat Arba couple, were killed in a drive-by shooting on June 9, 1996, when terrorists opened fire from a passing car near Beit Shemesh.

U.S. ELECTIONS 2002

A disaster or an opportunity?

U.S. Jews are now taking stock

By Rachel Pomerance

NEW YORK (JTA) — The morning after an election in which Republicans swept both houses of Congress, many American Jews are worried.

While they praise the Republican Party and President Bush for their staunch support of Israel at a time of peril for the Jewish state, many fear that the Republican domestic agenda may seriously threaten their own interests.

And with Republicans now in control of the White House, Congress and the Supreme Court, political insiders expect Republicans to push their domestic agenda, which in the past year has taken a backseat to Bush's foreign policy focus on terror.

"It's a disaster," said Washington political media consultant Steve Rabinowitz, who also worked for the Clinton White House.

Jews are "newly vulnerable on policy and on the issues about which we care most," he said, naming education, a woman's right to choose, judgeships, Social Security and the environment.

But not everyone is bemoaning the outcome of the elections.

At the Republican Jewish Coalition, where the hold music played Frank Sinatra on Wednesday, the weather was decidedly sunny.

The outcome of Tuesday's election "means a great opportunity to see firsthand the talent and leadership and commitment that the Republican Party has, and will once and for all put to bed the myth that the Republican Party is a party that is at odds with the interest of the Jewish community," said the group's executive director, Matthew Brooks.

While exit poll data on how Jews voted is still unavailable — except in New Jersey, where Jews voted overwhelmingly to send Frank Lautenberg to the Senate — most political observers suspect that Jews voted the way they always do: largely Democratic.

"The races that were close six years ago were close again," said Democratic pollster Mark Mellman.

Despite the Republican sweep, the Democratic-Republican divide is still fairly evenly split among voters, he said, noting that Democrats lost two Senate seats, but gained four governorships.

"Without big change in the overall voting behavior in the country, it's hard to imagine there was big change in Jewish voting behavior," he said.

But Brooks said it was impossible to estimate how Jews voted. "Unfortunately, we're sort of flying blind without the benefit of any data," he said.

But "given the fact that we saw a tremendous surge in the amount of Jewish community fund raising on behalf of Republican candidates, the fact that we saw major Jewish newspapers endorsing Republican candidates" — Brooks referred to cases in South Florida and New York — "the fact that we elected a Jewish Republican senator in Minnesota and a Jewish Republican governor in Hawaii only supports the position that support for Republicans across the board are strengthening in the Jewish community."

Republican candidates likely find more support among Orthodox Jews than the Jewish community in general, said Harvey Blitz, president of the Orthodox Union.

Apart from surmising that many voted to re-elect Gov. George Pataki in New York, Blitz said he did not know whether most Orthodox Jews vote Republican.

Many Orthodox Jews have found common ground with the Republican Party on

MIDEAST FOCUS

Red Cross official kidnapped

Masked Palestinian gunmen abducted a Red Cross official in the Gaza Strip.

According to Israel Radio, Nikolai Panke was abducted Thursday while distributing food to needy Palestinians. Allowed to speak to Red Cross officials, Panke told them he was not being mistreated.

Israel tests Patriot missile

Israel conducted a successful test of the Patriot anti-missile system.

The test, conducted Thursday in southern Israel, came as Israeli defense officials prepare for a possible Iraqi attack as retaliation for a U.S. attack on Baghdad. A military source called the test a routine exercise, Israel Radio reported.

Kristallnacht remembered

The Yad Vashem Memorial in Jerusalem held events Thursday marking the 64th anniversary of Kristallnacht.

Among the events, a memorial ceremony was held to recall the night of Nov. 9, 1938, when Nazi thugs ransacked Jewish-owned shops and set synagogues ablaze across Germany and Austria.

Federation sends mission

The UJA-Federation of New York is sending its latest solidarity mission to Israel.

Slated to arrive in Israel on Sunday, the mission will include 70 people. It is the fourth UJA-Federation mission to Israel this year.

Iran bans ads for U.S. goods

Iran banned advertising for U.S. goods because of America's support for Israel. Iranian state TV announced Thursday that the government imposed the ban on the recommendation of the Society for Defending Palestine, a nongovernmental body.



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domestic policies such as school vouchers — an issue that in fact divides the Jewish community.

But even Orthodox leaders were reluctant to pronounce the election a clear victory. "Yesterday's election is very meaningful and creates certain opportunities" like President Bush's faith-based initiative, which allows government funding to religious groups to provide social services, said David Zwiebel, executive vice president for government and public affairs of Agudath Israel of America, a fervently Orthodox group.

But he added, "it may create certain problems as well" in the realm of civil rights, where Democrats may be more sympathetic to some of the group's other priorities.

Zwiebel cited the Workplace Religious Freedom Act, which includes protection for Sabbath observers. It "could be on that particular issue, we'll find less of an ability to move forward," Zwiebel said.

Ambivalence may, in fact, characterize much of the Jewish community in the wake of Tuesday's election.

"I think that parts of the Jewish community are quietly okay with what happened because Bush is such a friend of Israel," said Democratic strategist Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi.

But others feel like "they're standing in the middle of a blizzard and nobody's offering them a coat."

Brooks, of the Republican Jewish group, described the Republican domestic agenda as one of economic growth, protection for senior citizens, Social Security savings and prescription drug savings.

But most Jewish leaders name different priorities: church-state separation, public education and care for the poor.

And according to Mellman, total Republican control will ignite the far right to push their domestic agenda.

"The far right's going to say we've given you complete and total power, what do we have to do to get our agenda through?" Mellman said.

That "creates the possibility for renewed conflict" between the Jewish community and the far right — whose relations have recently softened due to mutual support for Israel, and Republican inactivity on the domestic front, he said.

But Brooks disagreed.

"Those that are preaching some sort of notion that this is going to usher in a wave of far-right political activity are doing nothing than playing to the worst fears of the Jewish community," he said.

"There's been nothing in the first two years that would lead to that conclusion. The president has governed in a very practical, pragmatic" and inclusive manner, he said, giving as an example the education legislation Bush developed with Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.).

Furthermore, "this is not a 61-seat majority," meaning a filibuster-proof Congress, Brooks said.

"There's going to be a need for a lot of bipartisan cooperation between Republicans and Democrats to pass legislation."

According to Hannah Rosenthal, executive director of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs and a former Clinton staffer, the domestic agenda that the Jewish community has historically favored would suffer under either party.

"Because of the economy, there's no money to put into investment in building the social safety net," Rosenthal said, "and that statement would not have changed dramatically" had the votes shifted to the Democrats.

In the meantime, Jews will have to position themselves within the new power structure.

"Politics can create strange bedfellows," Mizrahi said. "Who would have thought years ago that the Christian right will be our best friend on Israel?" she asked.

And Mellman believes the Jewish community will take a wait-and-see attitude.

"I think the Jewish community is fairly outcome and policy-oriented," he said.

Others are less hopeful.

"There's no getting around the fact that American Jews are traditional, Democratic liberals, and Tuesday was a very bad day for us," Rabinowitz said. "And it's very sad and very frustrating, and worst of all, very worrisome." □

JEWISH WORLD

Obit causes firestorm

A paid obituary in the Hartford Courant newspaper has caused an uproar. The obituary for a Palestinian woman who died in the West Bank city of Nablus had inflammatory language indicating that Israeli soldiers had deliberately killed the woman, according to hundreds of callers who contacted the Connecticut Jewish Ledger. Callers also wondered why the obituary appeared in the Courant, considering that the woman did not live in Connecticut and had no relatives in the Hartford area.

Richard Greenfield, publisher of the Ledger, said the obituary is a "horrific example of the Hartford Courant's desperate use of any material that is anti-Israel."

John Zakarian, the Courant's editorial page editor, was quoted as telling the Jerusalem Post that the "decision to accept the paid ad was made by the advertising department. No one in the news or editorial departments knew about it."

ADL questions U.S. stance

The Anti-Defamation League asked the State Department to reverse its criticism of Israel's targeted killings of terrorists. On Tuesday, a day after a missile fired by a CIA drone plane killed six Al-Qaida terrorists in Yemen, department spokesman Richard Boucher said the United States still stands firm in its opposition to the Israeli policy.

On Wednesday, ADL National Director Abraham Foxman sent a letter to Secretary of State Colin Powell expressing dismay at Boucher's statement that Israel's policy had little in common with the U.S. actions in Yemen. "Israel is engaged in a parallel struggle to prevent terrorists from continuing their sustained, almost daily barrage of suicide attacks on civilians while seeking to cling to international norms and standards of engagement," Foxman wrote.

Russian rally features venom

Anti-Israeli and anti-American posters were prominent at a Moscow rally marking the 85th anniversary of the Russian Revolution. One of the posters at Thursday's march, which had 15,000 demonstrators, read, "Israel is the Enemy."

Jewish center opens in India

A Jewish educational center opened this week in northeastern India, according to the Jerusalem Post. The center is run by the Jerusalem-based Amishav organization, which seeks out and assists "lost Jews" wishing to return to Judaism.

The Bnei Menashe, some 5,000 to 6,000 people residing primarily in northeastern India, claim descent from a lost tribe of Israel. Some 700 have made aliyah during the past 12 years, the paper reported.

U.S. ELECTIONS 2002

Jewish woman says aloha to rival, and hello to the governor's mansion

By Sharon Samber

WASHINGTON (JTA) — A Republican Jewish woman is probably looking to say thank you — or "mahalo" — to the national Jewish political community for its support.

Linda Lingle, 49, won the Hawaii governor's race Tuesday, beating the state's Democratic lieutenant governor, Mazie Hirono.

Lingle was one of two Jewish governors elected Tuesday: The former mayor of Philadelphia, Ed Rendell, beat state Attorney General Mike Fisher to become Pennsylvania's next governor.

When Lingle came to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee annual policy conference in April, she mused about her Jewish support around the country.

She met a number of people at the conference who introduced her around and gave her advice. On a previous trip to New York, AIPAC and Chabad helped Lingle campaign, she said.

"My race has sort of been adopted," she told JTA at the time. "There is pride in having me as a Jewish candidate."

Lingle, Hawaii's first Republican governor in 40 years, found herself attracting national attention, as Jewish, Republican and women's groups all lent their support for her run.

"She was committed to reaching out to Jewish communities across the country," said Matthew Brooks, executive director of the Republican Jewish Coalition.

The RJC leadership raised money for her and the group's political action committee gave her \$6,000, Brooks said.

The Jewish vote could not have been a huge factor in the race, as there are only an estimated 10,000 Jews in Hawaii out of a total population of more than 1.2 million people.

Moreover, Hawaii's Jewish community, like the general Jewish population, tends to vote Democratic.

But Lingle, a moderate Republican who is pro-choice and against school prayer, thinks she will relate well to the Jewish community and to a lot of Democrats.

"I can't think of anything we'd be differing on," she said.

Lingle says her Jewish heritage has aided her political career in Hawaii because it has given her a better understanding of diversity, helping her connect with citizens of different religious and ethnic backgrounds.

When she was a young girl in a St. Louis Sunday school, Lingle gave a dime every week to plant trees in Israel. She still remembers how that experience taught her about a safe haven where Jews could go.

"I thought, 'We have to help them,'" she said.

Lingle likes to tell the story because it reflects both her Jewish background and her emphasis on helping people.

Growing up in Missouri and California, Lingle's friends were all Jewish. It was only when she went to college that she took a course on world religions and learned about other beliefs.

Lingle is a member of a Jewish congregation on the island of Maui and attends Lubavitch services in Honolulu on the island of Oahu.

There also are a Reform synagogue and a Conservative synagogue in Honolulu, and Lingle says she gets support from all the congregations.

During the campaign Lingle received anti-Semitic mail. Last month she received death threats and some postcards with swastikas, including one that read: "Go Back Home! Haole (foreigner) Jew! Your (sic) Evil!" with a drawing of a swastika and the letters "SS."

Lingle also received anti-Semitic calls and notes on a smaller scale during her 1998 campaign for governor, a campaign spokesman said.

Lingle, who narrowly lost the 1998 race, was chairman of the Hawaii Republican Party and plans to use her connections to the national party — especially valuable since the Republicans' strong showing on Tuesday — to help Hawaii. □

NEWS ANALYSIS

U.S. prefers new Israeli elections, even if new peace map is on hold

By Matthew E. Berger

WASHINGTON (JTA) — With elections set for early next year in Israel, the Bush administration seems resigned to putting on hold its road map for a final Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement.

Analysts say that very little is expected to change in the next 90 days, as Israel prepares to elect a new prime minister after the fall of the unity government last week.

While the hawkish trifecta of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, Foreign Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz might worry some, the circumstances of the next three months leaves Bush administration officials and lawmakers confident that at least the status quo will remain.

Sharon has pledged to President Bush that Israel would not make any offensive moves against the Palestinians that could harm the United States' main focus in the Middle East, potential military action against Iraq.

"I don't think it changes the bottom line," said one congressional official. "Sharon gave a commitment to Bush that the pot wouldn't boil, and he has shown no desire to change that commitment."

David Makovsky, senior fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, said he believes that the few months before Israel's new elections will be marked more by continuity than by radical changes in Israeli policy.

Makovsky said he believes that Sharon will be unlikely to move aggressively because it could harm the U.S.-Israeli relationship, which Sharon praised last month at the White House as the best it has ever been, and because it could hurt his chances of galvanizing moderate Israeli voters in the upcoming election.

Still, the fluctuation in Israeli politics is likely to thwart progress on the road map, which details steps toward a final Israel-Palestinian deal.

The road map, presented to both the Israelis and the Palestinians last month, is based on recommendations of the "Quartet" — the United States, United Nations, European Union and Russia.

The document, which lays the groundwork for several years of initiatives and negotiations leading to a provisional Palestinian state by 2005, was seen by political observers as important for establishing what the United States would do in the Middle East after it leaves Iraq.

Both Israel and the Palestinians have expressed objections to the road map, which calls on the Palestinians to create a new constitution and security reform, with the eventual creation of new leadership within the Palestinian Authority.

It also seeks Israel's return to its pre-September 2000 borders, prior to the outbreak of the Palestinian uprising, and the eventual end of all settlement development.

The document was also seen as important for garnering Arab support for U.S. military action against Iraq.

It's not clear how the Arab world will view putting the road map on hold.

But one State Department official said the preliminary tasks of the road map are to be completed by the Palestinians, and they can continue regardless of who is in power in Jerusalem for the next few months.

"Nothing can change until violence stops on the Palestinian side and there's a new leadership developing through reform; that gives us a process for restoration of trust and confidence," the official said.

To that end, David Satterfield, U.S. deputy assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs, is expected to travel to the region next week to check the progress of Palestinian reform.

Washington officials argue that progress on the road map was moving at a slow pace even before the shakeup in the Israeli political landscape.

And they are stressing that three months is a short period of time for uncertainty.

"The most significant thing is that the elections will be finished before Congress comes back" to start a new term in the United States in January, one pro-Israel Jewish leader said.

For the time being, the road map is likely to remain the guiding document of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

"I don't think that the United States and the international partners are going to depart from it," the congressional official said. "The question is whether it will be the topic or conversation at the dinner table."

To a large extent, official Washington breathed a sigh of relief that Sharon chose new elections over forming a coalition with right-wing members of the Knesset.

In addition to believing the Sharon assurances that he will not harm Arafat, officials here do not believe that Israel would be more eager to retaliate against Iraqi attacks if the U.S. takes military action in the region,

There is also an understanding that the possible move toward a more right-wing government in Israel once elections are over — with Netanyahu vying for power to head Likud — represents Israeli frustration over two years of violence, the State Department official said.

"We recognize the rise of hawkish candidates is a response to the fact that violence has continued on the Palestinian side," the official said.

"We are confident that if we can get the Palestinians to move forward, Israel's willingness to engage in a dialogue will change as well," the official said, indicating he believed that would be the case no matter who wins Israel's elections.

Former President Clinton agrees.

Speaking to reporters in Washington on Tuesday, he said he believed Sharon and Netanyahu are capable of doing "the right thing."

Clinton noted their participation at the Wye River talks that produced an agreement with the Palestinians in 1998.

But while Washington is expressing confidence in the new interim government, Israel is by no means getting a green light to act as it sees fit.

Responding to questions about U.S. military action in Yemen, State Department spokesman Richard Boucher stood firm in the government's opposition to the Jewish state's targeted killing of terrorists.

"Our policy on targeted killings in the Israeli-Palestinian context has not changed," Boucher said.

"If you look back at what we have said about targeted killings in the Israeli-Palestinian context, you will find that the reasons we have given do not necessarily apply in other circumstances."

A day earlier in Yemen, a missile fired by a CIA drone plane killed six Al-Qaida terrorists. □