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86th Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Karia to be P.A. prime minister

Ahmed Karia accepted the post of prime minister of the Palestinian Authority.

He made the appointment official Monday night during a meeting of Fatah leaders.

Earlier in the day, Karia, one of the architects of the Oslo accords, said he would accept the post only if Israel were pressed to comply with the "road map" peace plan and the United States and Israel alter their positions regarding P.A. President Yasser Arafat. Both countries have tried to sideline Arafat.

Powell hopes Karia can succeed

Secretary of State Colin Powell said he hopes the new Palestinian Authority nominee for prime minister will "make a commitment to fight terror."

Speaking in Washington on Monday with the Spanish foreign minister, Ana Palacio, Powell said he hoped Ahmed Karia "will be given the political authority, the security forces and the financial assets to complete this task."

Sharon goes to India

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon flew to India for high-level talks with Indian officials.

The three-day trip that began Monday is expected to focus on combating terrorism and on the growing economic and military relationship between the two countries.

The visit is the first by an Israeli prime minister to India since the two countries established diplomatic ties in 1992.

Poll: More Jews voted Republican

The percentage of U.S. Jews who voted Republican in the 2002 midterm congressional elections is up by 9 percent to 14 percent, according to an analysis of exit polls.

The analysis by Voter News Service said 35 percent of Jews backed Republican candidates in 2002, as opposed to 21 percent to 26 percent in congressional elections during the last decade.

The executive director of the Republican Jewish Coalition, Matthew Brooks, said the data "simply confirms what we have been saying all along" — that more Jews are voting Republican.

The National Jewish Democratic Council said it would wait to see the full data before commenting.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Will intransigence on the 'road map' mean the end of the road for Arafat?

By Leslie Susser

JERUSALEM (JTA) — After the resignation of Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas, several key Israeli officials have reached the same conclusion: The time to expel P.A. President Yasser Arafat is fast approaching.

They argue that Arafat deliberately undermined Abbas and that he will do the same to any new Palestinian prime minister who tries to act against terrorism or make progress toward the "road map" peace plan.

Bush administration officials seem to agree with the Israeli analysis but are wary of the diplomatic and regional fallout of expelling Arafat. They prefer to give Arafat another chance and see how things develop under the Palestinian Prime Minister-designate, Ahmed Karia.

In Israel, frustration with Arafat has intensified in recent months.

When the expulsion idea was bounced around earlier this year, most Israeli Cabinet ministers and senior defense officials were against the idea.

They argued that an Arafat gallivanting around the world would be more dangerous to Israel than an Arafat confined to his headquarters in Ramallah, in the West Bank.

But now most Cabinet ministers favor expulsion, and key defense people also are changing their minds.

Perhaps most significantly, Israel Defense Forces Chief of Staff Moshe Ya'alon, Intelligence Chief Aharon Ze'evi and Maj. Gen. Amos Gilad, who is Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz's chief political adviser, all now openly speak out in favor of Arafat's "departure." Several months ago, all were strongly opposed to the idea.

Gilad, who is considered the intelligence community's expert on Arafat, claims that there is a growing understanding in the United States and Europe that Arafat's "departure from the region is a precondition for progress towards peace."

A few months ago, the Americans were vehemently against expulsion. But now, says Dov Weisglass, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's bureau chief, there has been a significant modification of the American position.

Just back from talks with high-ranking U.S. officials in Washington, Weisglass says the Americans no longer reject outright the idea of expulsion.

Clearly, however, the Americans do not yet think the time for Arafat's expulsion is nigh.

In a weekend television interview, National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice described Arafat as an "obstacle to peace," but said "no good would be served" by expelling him.

In another television interview, U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell, while warning against Arafat's expulsion, implied that Washington's position could change depending on Arafat's behavior. Powell said the United States did not support exile "at this stage."

Meanwhile, one of the most ardent advocates of expulsion, Mofaz, is going to Washington next week to convince the Bush administration of the need to expel Arafat sooner rather than later.

When Mofaz returns to Israel from Washington and Sharon returns from a state visit to India, the expulsion issue is set to top the Cabinet agenda.

The American position at that point will be crucial. Sharon is unlikely to go ahead without a green light from Washington.

The logic behind Israeli policy post-Abbas is based on the removal of what Israel

MIDEAST FOCUS

Annan blasts Israeli strike

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan blasted Israel's airstrike against Hamas' spiritual leader, Sheik Ahmed Yassin.

Through a spokesman, Annan said the attack, which failed to kill Yassin, both violated humanitarian law and was a disproportionate use of force in a populated area.

No one was killed in the attack, though several people were injured.

Incognito Palestinian killed

Israel killed a Palestinian who was approaching an Israeli army position wearing an Israeli army uniform.

Monday's incident occurred near the Erez Crossing separating Israel from the Gaza Strip.

Amnesty International: Fence bad

Israel's security fence in the West Bank is hurting Palestinian livelihood, Amnesty International said.

Israel condemned the report, saying it ignores the "fundamental right of the Israeli people to live in security."

The Amnesty report, "Israel and the Occupied Territories: Surviving Under Siege," said the fence "cuts off scores of Palestinian villages from the rest of the West Bank or from their farming land. The land is among the most fertile in the West Bank, with better water resources than elsewhere."

Diaspora museum to close?

Israel's Diaspora Museum is closing for three months. Staff at the museum in Tel Aviv began an unpaid three-month vacation Monday.

The temporary closure comes amid rumors that the museum, which features models and Judaica from Jewish communities around the world, will close permanently.

sees as the main obstacles to peace: Arafat and Hamas.

The Arafat problem would be eliminated by expulsion or by forcing Arafat to change course under the threat of expulsion, and the Hamas problem would be eliminated by targeting the group's political and military leaders.

Israeli leaders believe the policy of striking at Hamas' leadership — which began before Abbas stepped down — is working.

They say a combination of factors has combined to make Hamas particularly vulnerable:

- Since the Aug. 19 Hamas bus bombing in Jerusalem, which killed 22, American criticism of Israel's targeted killings — including Saturday's failed strike on Hamas' spiritual leader, Sheik Ahmed Yassin — has been muted.

- The European Union has declared both the military and political wings of Hamas a terrorist organization.

- The Palestinian Authority has confiscated Hamas funds.

- Hamas terrorism is coming under increasing criticism in the Palestinian-populated territories because of Israel's military responses.

All this leads Israeli planners to believe that although they can't destroy Hamas as an ideological movement, they can smash its terrorist infrastructure and help clear the way to peace talks.

Labor opposition leaders are less sanguine. They contend that fighting terrorists is an insufficient bulwark against terrorism and that what the government needs in the post-Abbas era is a new peace strategy.

Former Prime Minister Ehud Barak argues that the Abbas experience proves there can be no genuine peace partner on the Palestinian side. Therefore, he says, Israel should withdraw unilaterally behind a security fence while putting a detailed peace plan of its own on the table as a basis for negotiation whenever the Palestinians are ready.

But the Sharon government still is hoping for a negotiated agreement along the lines of the road map.

Much could depend on how expelling Arafat affects Palestinian politics, or, if Arafat stays, whether Karia is able to maintain better ties with the Palestinian Authority president than Abbas did while meeting basic Israeli and American conditions for fighting terrorism.

The botched assassination attempt on Yassin was a warning to Arafat that no Palestinian leader is immune from Israeli action and that, if he doesn't cooperate with the new prime minister, Israel will take drastic measures against him.

Some right-wing Israelis even have called for Arafat's assassination.

So far, however, Israeli and American pressure has left the Palestinian Authority president unfazed. Arafat has ignored the expulsion threats, which he read as a ploy to persuade him to reappoint Abbas.

But with Abbas gone, it seems that Karia is now the key player.

An Arafat loyalist, Karia also is a pragmatist with the interpersonal skills and political ties that the more reticent Abbas lacked.

Karia used his expertise to good effect in negotiating the 1993 Oslo accords with Israel.

The key question now is whether Karia will be able to use his skills to gain the political power that Abbas lacked, and then use that power to move the peace process forward. □

Leslie Susser is the diplomatic correspondent for the Jerusalem Report.

Russia: No extremists allowed

MOSCOW (JTA) — Extremist groups will not be allowed to run for Parliament in elections slated for December, Russia's justice minister vowed.

Yuri Chaika said last Friday that his ministry would seek to keep the representatives of radical and ultranationalist parties and organizations out of the race.

The U.S.-based Union of Councils for Jews in the Former Soviet Union is questioning the accuracy of the Russian minister's statement, saying that at least three parties with a history of anti-Semitism have been approved by the Justice Ministry to take part in the election. □



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JEWISH WORLD

Lieberman criticizes Dean remark

Sen. Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.) is blasting comments made on Israel by fellow Democratic candidate for president, Howard Dean.

Dean, the former Vermont governor, said Wednesday that "it's not our place to take sides" in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, according to news reports.

Lieberman said Dean's comments could be a "major break from a half century of American foreign policy."

A spokesman for Dean, Eric Schmelzer, said the candidate believes in a continued commitment to Israel's security, "but when you're trying to bring peace, especially to that region, you need a president who is personally engaged in the peace process and treating both sides fairly."

Site aims to get artwork returned

A new Web site is aimed at speeding up the return of Nazi-looted art to its rightful owners.

The site, operated by the American Association of Museums at www.nepip.org, lists nearly 6,000 artworks in American museums that changed hands in Europe during the Nazi era.

Court petitioned on scholarships

Orthodox groups have filed a brief with the U.S. Supreme Court asking that students studying religion be allowed to receive state-funded scholarships.

The brief, principally authored by the National Jewish Coalition on Law and Political Affairs — which includes the Orthodox Union and Agudath Israel of America — argues that the study of religious texts is an essential component of the free exercise of religion.

The American Jewish Congress has filed an opposing brief.

Joshua Davey was denied a Washington state scholarship because he was to study pastoral studies at Northwest College.

Jews welcome in South Africa

South African President Thabo Mbeki said the country's Jews will always have a home in South Africa.

Mbeki's comments, made Saturday, come on the heels of a report that said 60 percent of South African Jews do not see a future for themselves in the country partly because of increased anti-Semitism.

Mbeki responded to the report at a conference in Johannesburg of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies.

"We, as government, are prepared to spend as much time as need be talking to the Jewish community about that unease and about other concerns they have regarding their future here," Mbeki said.

BACKGROUNDER

The new Palestinian prime minister, Ahmed Karia, was an Oslo negotiator

By JTA Staff

NEW YORK (JTA) — Ahmed Karia, who was named the new Palestinian Authority prime minister this week, has long had ties both to P.A. President Yasser Arafat and to some Israeli officials.

Karia, 65, was one of the architects of the Oslo accords and led the Palestinians in negotiations for several years during the 1990s.

Even since then, when secret negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians took place, Karia — known for his charm and humor — was often one of the Palestinian representatives.

Karia is a moderate who has long been considered the No. 3 man in Arafat's Fatah movement, behind Arafat and Mahmoud Abbas, whom Karia replaced as prime minister two days after Abbas' resignation on Saturday.

Karia has served as Palestinian minister of economy and trade, then minister for industry and, most recently, the speaker of the Palestinian legislative council.

During that time, he built a positive rapport with some dovish Israeli leaders.

Karia, also known as Abu Ala, was born in 1937 to a wealthy family in Abu Dis, a village near Jerusalem.

He joined Fatah in 1968 and quickly moved up the organizational ladder, eventually becoming director-general of the Palestine Liberation Organization's economic department.

After the PLO was forced out of Lebanon in 1982, Karia went to Tunisia with Arafat and other officials.

A banker by profession, he helped draft a Palestinian economic development plan that was presented to a World Bank conference in 1993, according to the BBC.

During peace talks in 1995, he suffered a heart attack and traveled to the hospital with then-Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres by his side, according to the Jerusalem Post.

In 2002, Peres and then-Knesset speaker Avraham Burg phoned Karia after Israeli soldiers shot at his car at a West Bank checkpoint.

Also in 2002, Karia told Palestinian TV that Palestinian mistakes were among the reasons that many Israelis no longer supported peace and the reason why the right had come to power in Israel, according to the Jerusalem Post.

The peace movement "has begun to dwindle in Israel apparently due to some of the methods that we use," he was quoted as saying.

"We are not talking about legitimate resistance here. But I do say that some of the actions that harm us need to stop."

At the same time, Karia also has been critical of Israeli policy — including the Camp David offer in 2000 by former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak.

Karia said that the offer — which would have given Palestinians control over 91 percent of the West Bank — would have resulted in Israeli-controlled cantons in the West Bank.

At least twice during the Palestinian intifada, Karia has made remarks seen as legitimizing Palestinian violence.

"Resistance of this Israeli policy, using all means, has now become legitimate as well as a national and religious duty," he said in August 2001.

Before accepting the post on Monday, Karia offered additional criticism of the Jewish state.

He told reporters "it would be pointless to form a new government if Israel doesn't change its policy toward the Palestinians."

He also said he wants both the United States and Europe to guarantee Israeli compliance with the U.S.-backed "road map" peace plan, including "a halt to military strikes and a change of policy toward Arafat."

Both Israel and the United States have been trying to sideline Arafat, who has been isolated in his compound in the West Bank city of Ramallah for more than a year. □

Amendment on Soviet emigration won't go away — blame the birds

By Matthew E. Berger

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Legislation that once tied trade with Russia to its willingness to let its Jews out has outlasted the Cold War — in part because of U.S. farmers who want to get their chickens in.

Tough Russian restrictions on U.S. poultry exports have hampered the lifting of the 1974 Jackson-Vanik Amendment, the legislation credited with forcing the Soviet Union to let Jews out by tying trade policy to human rights.

Many Jewish leaders want Russia to graduate from the restrictions, as an acknowledgment of its progress on extradition rights. Observers believe Russian President Vladimir Putin will ask President Bush to help end Jackson-Vanik when they meet at Camp David later this month, but the talk could soon turn to turkey and chickens.

Russia and its supporters here had wanted the amendment lifted by the summit, tentatively set for Sept. 26-27, but they now concede that is unlikely and hope it will be gone by year's end.

"We're working with the administration and various members of Congress to move this thing forward," said Mark Levin, executive director of NCSJ: Advocates on Behalf of Jews in Russia, Ukraine, the Baltic States and Eurasia, among the groups supporting removing Jackson-Vanik.

"Poultry is a dollars-and-cents issue," Levin said. "This impacted farmers and processors in 37 out of 50 states."

Rep. Curt Weldon (R-Pa.), a leading congressional advocate for Russia, called last week for the amendment to be lifted by the time of the summit, saying it would recognize Russia's advances since the end of the Cold War. But his spokesman, Bud DeFlaviis, acknowledged that was unlikely unless the White House stepped in and urged Congress to act.

That was a disappointment, DeFlaviis said. "We don't have to dangle Jackson-Vanik over their heads because of poultry issues."

Poultry farmers and their advocates in Washington seized on the legislation to press their case against Russian regulations introduced last year that restricted U.S. imports, ostensibly for health reasons. U.S. poultry farmers said the standards Russia sought were much tougher than those it imposes on its own farmers and were a pretext for restricting trade.

Russia lifted the restrictions earlier this year, but the farmers say they are still encountering problems in exporting the birds to Russia. Successive U.S. administrations have annually waived the Jackson-Vanik requirements since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Jews are now free to travel and lifting the amendment would be a largely symbolic victory for the Russians, who see it more as a validation of post-Soviet Russia.

It's not just the chicken farmers who are keeping Jackson-Vanik alive; there's residual anger at Russia for its refusal to back the U.S.-led action against Iraq.

"If it wasn't the administration saying 'Why should we move forward now,' it was many members of Congress," Levin said.

Those sentiments have contributed to the drop in administration enthusiasm for lifting Jackson-Vanik. There are also concerns about protecting intellectual property rights of U.S. companies that do business with Russia, the terms of Russia's entry into the World

Trade Organization, and Russia's relationship to Iran's nuclear program.

Some Jewish groups are concerned that lifting the legislation could paper over Russian attitudes to Jews that remain troubling. UCSJ: Union of Councils for Jews in the Former Soviet Union is concerned that human rights issues, including xenophobia and the rise of extremist groups in Russia, will not be monitored as closely if the Jackson-Vanik issues are not evaluated each year.

Jewish leaders who have supported lifting Jackson Vanik want any new legislation to call on Russia to take measures to ensure human rights. Similar language has been in bills graduating Georgia and other formerly Soviet countries from the Jackson-Vanik provisions. □

In deference to Jewish justices, Supreme Court to delay opening

By Ron Kampeas

WASHINGTON (JTA) — The only pleas Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Stephen Breyer will be hearing the first Monday of this October are their own, for atonement.

For the first time in its 28-year tradition of opening its sessions on the first Monday of October, the Supreme Court will forego arguments in deference to its two Jewish judges, who will be observing Yom Kippur.

Instead, the seven other judges will convene only to admit new attorneys to the highest court's bar and to announce which cases they have decided to hear in the new season and which they have rejected. Arguments will begin only on Tuesday.

This is not the first time the court has suspended arguments for the holiday. In 1995, the court suspended arguments when Yom Kippur fell on the first Wednesday of October. Ginsburg, Breyer and Chief Justice William Rehnquist — who had undergone back surgery — all were absent that day. But the justices heard arguments on Monday and Tuesday of that week.

Additionally, that suspension was not explicitly in deference to the holiday, even if that implicitly was the case, court spokeswoman Kathy Arberg said. This year's announcement said the decision was made "so that Yom Kippur may be observed."

According to a clerk of Justice Felix Frankfurter in the mid-1940s, Louis Henkin, such deference was unimaginable in the time of Frankfurter, a Jewish justice who served on the court from 1939 to 1962.

Jews were just happy to be employed by the court and would never have dreamed of asking for the day off, he said.

"Things have changed. Religious demands have become more open, more insistent," said Henkin, who is Sabbath observant and lives in New York.

Henkin, now in his 80s, slept Friday nights on the couch in Frankfurter's chambers in order to attend the court's weekly conference on Saturday. At the conference meetings, Henkin was careful not to write.

Henkin's observance was so subtle that Frankfurter, who did not observe the Sabbath or holidays, might not even have noticed that his clerk was keeping the religious laws. "I don't even know if Frankfurter knew I was sleeping on the couch," said Henkin, a professor emeritus at Columbia University. "I did my job as well as I could, observing Shabbat as well as I could." □