

IN THE NEWS

Jewish groups congratulate Bush

Jewish groups congratulated President Bush on his electoral victory. The American Israel Public Affairs Committee, the pro-Israel lobby in the United States, said it looks forward to "continuing to work with the president and his administration on issues vital to the U.S.-Israel relationship."

The Anti-Defamation League said, "In the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the president has been steadfast in his support for Israel's right to defend itself against terrorism and as a democratic ally of the United States."

Americans for Peace Now called on the president "to support Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's disengagement plan and to renew active American participation in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process."

From French hospital, Arafat wishes Bush well

Yasser Arafat congratulated President Bush on his re-election.

"President Arafat congratulates U.S. President George W. Bush on his election triumph," Palestinian official Mohammed Rashid said Wednesday in France, where Arafat is undergoing medical treatment for a mysterious ailment.

"Arafat voiced hope that Bush's second term in office will be an opportunity for the rights of the Palestinian people to be realized." Bush has refused to meet with Arafat because of his ties to terrorism.

Knesset gives first OK to payments for settlers

Israel's Parliament gave preliminary approval to payments for Jews agreeing to evacuate their homes in the Gaza Strip and four West Bank settlements.

By a 64-44 vote with nine abstentions, the Knesset passed the first of three votes on compensation packages expected to give hundreds of thousands of dollars to each family of the 8,800 settlers in Gaza and parts of the West Bank.

The compensation bill must pass two more votes before becoming law.

WORLD REPORT

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Despite Republicans' best efforts, Jews still vote strongly Democratic

By RON KAMPEAS

WASHINGTON (JTA) — The past four years have seen a defining terrorist attack, a divisive war and a radically different economy, but at the ballot box, it seemed, not much had changed:

Election night produced pretty much the same electoral map, pretty much the same angry, polarized nation and pretty much the same anxious obsession with a single state and how it counts its ballots.

And Jews, for their part, voted pretty much the way they did four years ago.

Expectations that Republicans would make inroads into decades of Jewish support for the Democratic Party ran into a wall of Jewish votes for Sen. John Kerry of Massachusetts, the Democratic candidate.

President Bush's unprecedented closeness to Israel and his reputation for toughness on terrorism did little to shake the traditional 3-1 Jewish break for Democrats.

Two national exit polls showed that Bush gained modestly over the 19 percent of the Jewish vote he scored in 2000: One, from the Associated Press, split Kerry-Bush 77 percent to 23 percent; another, from CNN, went 76 percent to 24 percent.

A phone poll by pollster Frank Luntz in Florida and Ohio, two battleground states, split the vote 72 percent to 25 percent in Kerry's favor, suggesting that the Bush campaign's blitz in those states in the final days might have had a small degree of success.

But local networks said both Florida and New York split the Jewish vote, with 80 percent for Kerry, 20 percent for Bush.

Luntz's poll also showed a strong Orthodox trend toward Bush, with 69 percent of Orthodox respondents in Florida and Ohio saying they voted for the president. That conforms with earlier data in American Jewish Committee polling.

Despite the unprecedented resources — by both campaigns — devoted to swaying the Jewish vote, in the end, it was doubtful that Jewish voters played a central role in determining the outcome in any of the swing states.

Republican jubilation at Bush's showing was more muted among his Jewish supporters.

"It's not adequate from my point of view," said Ed Koch, a former mayor of New York City who stumped hard for Bush among Jews from Iowa to Florida.

Koch, a Democrat who said Bush deserved Jewish votes because of his unstinting support for Israel, sounded a familiar Republican Jewish theme: The president deserves Jewish gratitude.

"I'm glad it was an improvement," Koch told JTA, but added, "I think he deserved much more."

It was a theme that played itself out in a flurry of Op-Eds targeting Jewish readers in the final days of the campaign.

"I believe that more Jews than expected will vote for President Bush," conservative Jewish scholar Dennis Prager said in his column last week. "There is no trait as ugly as ingratitude."

Others said that expecting any voter to cast a ballot in thanks was unrealistic.

"Jews are multi-issue voters," said Hannah Rosenthal, executive director of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, the umbrella body

Continued on page 2

**AMERICA
DECIDES
2004**

■ *GOP worked to woo Jews, but in the end they voted largely Democratic*

Continued from page 1

for local community relations groups.

Rosenthal cited as an example the strength that evangelical Christians enjoyed in the Bush administration and in the Republican-controlled Congress.

"There has been a nervousness on the part of the organized Jewish community, not just at the national agency level, but also at the community level, at the close association with evangelical values," she said.

"It is perceived by many in this country as intolerant, and Jews as a people, as a religion and as voters look toward tolerance, big-tent pluralism and outreach."

Concerns about keeping the church out of state affairs figured large in questionnaires returned to American Jewish Committee pollsters in four swing states where both parties had targeted the Jewish community in an ad blitz.

"People voting for Kerry cited domestic policy, church-state separation, abortion, stem-cell research, Supreme Court nominations and President Bush's leadership qualities," said David Harris, the AJCommittee's executive director.

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The increasingly tangled Iraq war and an economy dogged by joblessness also figured in the pro-Kerry vote among Jews.

"Where the Bush campaign failed with the Jewish vote was to swing the undecided, because the Bush campaign had not tacked to the center," Harris said.

Jews supporting the president cited his support for Israel and his tough stance against terrorism in the wake of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on New York

and Washington, Harris said.

Those were the themes Republicans hammered in advertising and campaign blitzes in swing states.

The campaigning might have made a difference. Frank Luntz, the Republican pollster who conducted the phone survey in Ohio and Florida showing a 72-25 split in Kerry's favor, said the improvement from 2000 helped put Bush over the top in both states.

"It wasn't the margin of victory, but it contributed to the margin of victory," he told JTA.

Still, in some cases it might have backfired.

Koch's ubiquitous campaigning for Bush as the best choice for Israel "really annoys the hell out of me," said Maury Shulman, 62, a longtime registered Republican who cast his vote for Kerry at Temple Beth Hillel-Beth El in Wynnewood, Pa., another swing state.

"I don't think any American president would abandon Israel."

Harris said the small minority of voters who changed their vote from 2000 tended overwhelmingly to switch from Kerry to Bush — and also tended to cite terrorism and Israel as reasons for their switch.

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Republicans were especially determined in Ohio. Party activists urged fervently Orthodox Jews to get out the vote, knowing that the community trends heavily to Republicans.

Yehiel Kalish organized babysitting and bussing for fervently Orthodox communities in Cleveland and Cincinnati.

"The turnout was phenomenal," he said.

He said that most of his community probably voted for Bush, but said that wasn't the main consideration in his organization.

"In Ohio, we knew it was going to be looked upon who voted and who didn't, and if the haredi community was looked upon as to who voted and who didn't, it would be a 'hillul Hashem' if we didn't," Kalish said, using a Hebrew expression meaning sacrilege. "Our ultimate goal was whatever would be best for our community."

Another community trending strongly to Bush was the Russian Jewish community, Harris said.

An AJCommittee Election Day survey among Russian Jews in Pennsylvania, New York and New Jersey showed a 75-25

split for Bush. Respondents tended to explain their vote by citing Bush's strong leadership qualities.

Such trends, buried in statistical data, encouraged Republicans to look beyond their disappointment at what was only a small Jewish shift toward Bush.

"We know the demographic shift favors us: The more

senior are more loyal to the Democrats, but the younger have open minds," said Matt Brooks, executive director of the Republican Jewish Coalition.

He said the comparison should not be to the 19 percent of the Jewish vote that Bush won in 2000, but to the 11 percent his father won in 1992.

Luntz agreed, saying his polling showed higher Republican support among younger Jews.

"The Republicans will need to be patient, but their outreach strategy will pay off — it already did tonight," he said.

Democrats scoffed, noting that the results fell well short of the 30 percent Luntz had predicted just months ago, and the 40-plus percent that Brooks had predicted three years ago.

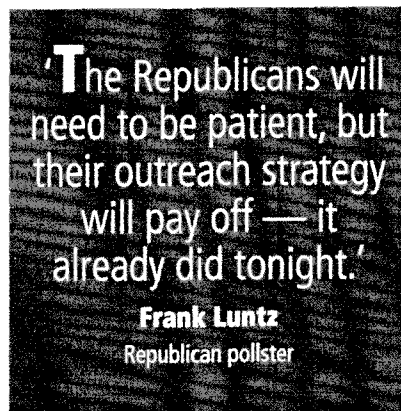
They said Bush's performance was especially weak considering that he did not face a Jewish vice presidential candidate, as he did in 2000 with Sen. Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.).

"Last time, we had the first Jewish candidate on a national ticket, and this time there's no statistical movement?" Ira Forman, executive director of the National Jewish Democratic Council said, noting that Bush's 22 percent performance in one exit poll on Tuesday was within the statistical margin of error of the 19 percent he polled in 2000.

"It's embarrassing, like the boy who cried wolf."

Forman said it had been a hard-fought battle with Jewish Republican activists — one that saw both sides spending unprecedented cash to target Jewish voters.

"There is no automatic Jewish majority for the Democratic Party," he said. "We've got to work every election." ■



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Bush's victory means status quo in Mideast

By RON KAMPEAS

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Having prevailed in a tight re-election contest, President Bush can forever put behind him questions about his mandate: He will use his clear majority of the popular vote and the increased Republican strength in both houses of Congress to effect dramatic change at home and abroad.

Just don't expect change in Israel.

The intractability of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, coupled with Bush's sincere sympathy for the Jewish state, suggests that the president will not use his second term to pressure Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon into peace talks with an unreformed Palestinian Authority.

"I don't see any shift in Bush's policy or his attitude toward the Israeli-Palestinian situation," said Jack Rosen, president of the American Jewish Congress and a friend of Bush.

Some Americans had feared — or hoped, depending on their political outlook — that a Bush freed of concerns about re-election would get tough on Israel.

"There were those in my community that would wink and say a second-term president who is free from pressure" would press Israel to stem settlement expansion, among other things, said James Zogby, president of the Arab American Institute. "But I don't think this government did what it did for electoral reasons. It's an ideological administration, and its ideology hasn't changed."

Bush's black-and-white worldview makes a shift on Middle East policy unlikely, agreed David Harris, executive director of the American Jewish Committee.

"He's driven very much by his own moral code of what's right and wrong, and that will determine his policy," Harris said.

"He has a strong sense of those nations that are friends and those nations that are foes, and that won't change because of voting patterns on Nov. 2."

Instead, look for bold shifts in domestic and social policy — and an even more assertive American posture abroad.

Hannah Rosenthal, executive director of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, the umbrella body for local Jewish community relations councils, said the Republican retention of the White House and

both houses of Congress creates dangers for the Jewish community.

"With the branches of government all appearing to be Republican, I think many of our domestic issues, how we fund programs, are in big trouble," she said.

Congressional Republicans reportedly already are discussing more tax cuts, and Rosenthal said funding for Medicaid — a centerpiece of Jewish community assistance to the impoverished elderly — topped her list of concerns.

With as many as 55 seats in the Senate — an increase of four — Republicans will be better positioned to pressure Democrats into at least reducing their use of the filibuster, the Senate maneuver that allows a party to block Senate action. A filibuster can be broken with the vote of 60 senators.

Democrats have used the filibuster to block Bush appointments to the judiciary who are considered extreme right.

With a 5-4 split on the U.S. Supreme Court against the liberal social issues most Jews favor — reproductive rights, church-state separation and gay rights — Jews anxiously are watching the health of the oldest liberal judge, 84-year-old John Paul Stevens.

"As a woman, as a Jew, as a mother of two daughters, I am very concerned where the Supreme Court will be, how it will protect my rights as a woman, the important separation of religion and government," Rosenthal said.

The AJCongress' Rosen, who is close to the congressional Democratic leadership — and who was mourning the defeat Tuesday of an old friend, Minority Leader Sen. Tom Daschle (D-S.D.) — said such concerns were valid, but not as pressing as some might think.

"As for the domestic agenda, I know it seems that the Republicans have increased their numbers in the Senate, but if there are any dramatic attempts to change some of the domestic policy issues, the Democrats still have enough strength to pull that back," said Rosen, whose organization, has been in the forefront of battles to maintain a high wall between church and state.

"The president and the country are engaged in a war against terrorism, a war in Iraq, a lot of priorities internationally that I think will engage the Bush administration for the next several years and probably not enable them to get too proactive on the domestic agenda."

Among those issues are the war in Iraq — where Bush has yet to reveal how he plans to contain a rampaging insurgency — as well as Iran, which could soon pose a nuclear threat.

Yossi Alpher, an Israeli analyst with bitterlemons.org, an idea-exchange Web site, said Iran would probably ignore any

sanctions that the U.N. Security Council might impose in coming months, raising the stakes for Bush.

"He will have to ask, does he or does he not use military force, or does he let Iran go nuclear on his watch?" Alpher said.

Should Bush choose force, he would probably have the domestic backing he recently has lacked for the war in Iraq, when some dismissed him as a president who lost the popular vote in 2000 and who had a bare majority of a single vote in the Senate.

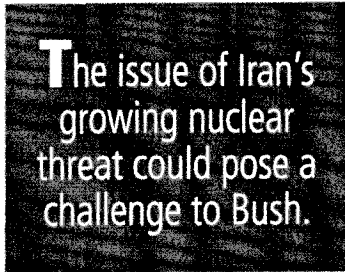
One signal of his direction would be Cabinet replacements.

Secretary of State Colin Powell and Condoleezza Rice, his national security adviser, both have hinted that they're ready to go. Powell especially has been an emblem of moderation and outreach to allies.

Whatever direction Bush takes, the circumstances of the Israeli-Palestinian relationship are as much a hindrance to increased action as is Bush's reluctance to cross Sharon.

Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat's ongoing political isolation — necessitated, Israelis and Americans say, by his support for terrorism — would hinder engagement as long as Arafat has influence, as he continues to have from a Paris hospital bed.

"If Arafat is still leader, that reduces the likelihood of Bush getting involved," Alpher said. "He won't be prepared to interact with Arafat. We're unlikely to see a major shift in the coming year."



The issue of Iran's growing nuclear threat could pose a challenge to Bush.

NEWS IN BRIEF

MIDDLE EAST

Suffer not the children

A leading human rights group called on Palestinians not to recruit children for terror attacks.

"Any attack on civilians is prohibited by international law, but using children for suicide attacks is particularly egregious," Jo Becker of Human Rights Watch said Wednesday.

"Palestinian armed groups must clearly and publicly condemn all use of children under the age of 18 for military activities, and make sure these policies are carried out."

The statement followed Monday's suicide bombing by a West Bank teenager at a Tel Aviv market, which killed three people.

Human Rights Watch said at least 10 Palestinian minors have carried out terrorist attacks since September 2000.

Israel arrests 16 Palestinians

Israel arrested 16 Palestinians in the West Bank suspected of involvement in terrorist plots.

Israeli police said the recent arrests of the Bethlehem residents prevented at least two terror attacks.

The cells the men belonged to are said to have received instructions from Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

Stolen scrolls, letters, coins found

Correspondence from early Israeli leaders was among stolen documents seized by Israeli police Tuesday.

The letters by Israel's first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, and first president, Chaim Weizmann, were among papers found in apartments and storerooms throughout Israel, Ha'aretz reported. Also found were ancient coins, Torah scrolls and menorahs, police said.

NORTH AMERICA

Nader says Palestinians want solution

Ralph Nader told supporters that he believes the Palestinians are interested in a two-state solution to their conflict with Israel.

In his concession speech in Washington on Tuesday night, the third-party candidate suggested his candidacy was different from the Republican and Democratic tickets because he advocates increased U.S. engagement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

"And we talk about how U.S. government should settle the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by connecting with the broad and deep Israeli movement and their Palestinian counterparts, who have long ago developed an accord for a two-state solution to that seemingly interminable conflict," Nader said.

Grant to help Hebrew school principals

A \$1.8 million grant aims to help Hebrew schools from three denominations in the New York area.

The grant from the UJA-Federation of New York will help establish the Leadership Institute for Congregational School Principals, a joint project of the Reform movement's Hebrew Union-Jewish Institute of Religion and the Conservative movement's Jewish Theological Seminary.

Forty Hebrew school principals at Conservative, Reform, and Reconstructionist congregational and communal schools in the New York area will be selected for a two-year program at the institute.

Weiner urges hiring of Orthodox cop

A congressman in New York City wants the city's transportation authority to reconsider its decision not to hire an Orthodox Jewish policeman.

Harvey Silver says the Metropolitan Transportation Authority turned him down for a police job when he told them he couldn't

work on the Sabbath. Silver has worked for nine years as a policeman for the city's Health and Hospitals Corporation.

Rep. Anthony Weiner (D-N.Y.) urged the MTA to reconsider its decision, writing Monday that it probably had violated at least two articles of the New York State Constitution protecting freedom of religious practice. "This is morally wrong," Weiner said.

WORLD

Jewish tombstones desecrated

Anti-Semitic and neo-Nazi slogans were daubed on some 30 tombstones in a Christian cemetery in France.

Inscriptions including "Death to the Jews," swastikas and SS markings were found Tuesday at the Genlis cemetery in the Burgundy region.

The desecration comes just three days after neo-Nazi graffiti was daubed on some 100 tombs at a Jewish cemetery near Strasbourg.

A number of Jewish, Christian and Muslim cemeteries have been desecrated across France in recent months.

Police believe the culprits are neo-Nazi groups.

Survivors call for Israeli bank boycott

Holocaust survivors in Israel are calling for a boycott of Israeli banks that have not published lists of Holocaust-era accounts.

A committee looking into the issue has found about 5,000 such accounts, Ha'aretz reported. But leading Israeli banks have delayed publication of the committee's report because they disagree with its findings.

British mag blasts Israeli policy

The official magazine of British doctors published an article claiming Israeli soldiers were "routinely authorized" to kill children.

The British Medical Journal was inundated with complaints from Jewish doctors, community groups and the Israeli Embassy over "Palestine: The assault on health and other war crimes," published on Oct. 16.

Its author, psychiatrist Derek Summerfield, accused Israeli soldiers of being "routinely authorized to shoot to kill children in situations of minimal or no threat," and described the West Bank security barrier as a sign of Israel's "expansive, aggressive colonization."

The journal, sent to some 100,000 medical professionals in Britain, has published three anti-Israel articles by Summerfield in the last year.

Its deputy editor, Jane Smith, defended the decision to publish the latest piece and said she intends to publish a response from an Israeli doctor.

French honor Israeli novelist

Israeli author Aharon Appelfeld received a prestigious French literary award.

Appelfeld, a Holocaust survivor, was awarded the Medici Prize on Wednesday for a foreign work, one of France's leading literary awards.

Appelfeld received the prize for his book "Story of a Life," a semi-autobiographical work that deals with memory and human relations.

The author of some 30 books — most of which deal with the Holocaust — Appelfeld, 72, lost his parents in the Holocaust, immigrating to Israel in 1946.

Hitler out of Carnival parade

Brazilian Jewish officials managed to prevent a samba school from featuring an image of Hitler in an annual parade.

The Vai Vai Samba School recently announced it would feature Jesus, Buddha, Gandhi and Hitler under the theme "I am immortal, too," as part of Sao Paulo's 2005 Carnival parade in February.

Supported by the police, members of the Sao Paulo State Jewish Federation persuaded the samba school not to include Hitler among the "immortals." Vai Vai directors promptly apologized to the Jewish community and said the Nazi leader would not be included.